

From the Head of School

The Courage to Fail

Several weeks ago, my high schooler asked me if she could skip school that day, or at least the first few periods. My initial response “Of course not!” was confronted with tears and pleadings. Turns out, she had a test that she had not studied for and she was certain that she would fail. “You don’t want me to fail, do you?” The knee-jerk reaction is, “no, of course not.” But, after thinking it over for a moment, my husband and I decided that maybe we did want her to fail. Not because failing is fun or that it would teach her to prioritize her time better, but because only by failing would she realize that failure doesn’t mean the end of the world.

It’s a tough time to be a kid. Failure at anything has become so taboo, children are afraid to make any mistakes. As adults, we try to set them up to succeed at everything, because ultimately, we want them to be successful at life. We do it out of caring, wanting our children to be happy and to have all the things in life that they deserve. But at the end of the day, we forget that part of growing up is making mistakes and failing at things.

I have noticed several articles popping up on my Facebook feed about how this pressure to succeed has led to a generation of children who are not only risk adverse, but also more stressed out and depressed. Experts speculate that failure is a key component to self-discovery. By allowing children to be brave explorers, acknowledging that the path will have plenty of highs and lows, we allow them to discover who they really are and what their true passions are.

Perhaps you are thinking that this is an article better aimed at older children, not for the young pupils who attend our school. I would argue that this is the best time of all for children to practice failing. Not only do both the educational philosophies that our school is founded on allow for failure, but Montessori and Reggio-based curriculums encourage failure. Maria Montessori imbedded self-correction into her activities, believing that as children tried and failed, they would change their approach until they figured out how to succeed. This is why we fill our environments with trays laden with breakable materials. Yes, we wince when we see a child crossing the room with an unbalanced tea set, knowing that if he does not straighten out the tray, all the items will soon come crashing to the floor. And,

we try to show children how to carefully balance materials so that things don’t break. But, we know that the lesson to walk slowly and mindfully will only really sink in after they have experienced the consequences of breaking something beautiful or precious.



A couple of years back, the staff read an article by David Hawkins titled “Messing About in Science” while we were exploring ways of including Reggio explorations in our curriculum. One of the points the Hawkins makes is that teaching the facts

of science does nothing to help children internalize the concepts. Children learn about scientific properties by experimenting and experiencing the results first hand. Infants learn about gravity by dropping their toys and watching them fall. Toddlers learn about volume by experimenting with how their bodies fit in different spaces. Young artists learn about color mixing and the absorption properties of paper by using copious amounts of paint. We used to have a studio teacher who would whisk away each painting when it was a

NOVEMBER 2015

Dates to Remember

- 11/4** **Father’s Night for Primary Classes**
AM 5:30—6:30 pm
PM & XP 6:00-7:00 pm
- 11/7** **Open House for Prospective Parents**
10 :00 am & 12:00pm
- 11/9** **NO SCHOOL**
In-Service
Staff/Board Workshop
- 11/19** **Extended Primary Information Night**
6-7 pm
- 11/20** **NO SCHOOL**
Teacher Work Day
- 11/24** **Grandparent’s Day for Primary Classes**
- 11/25**
thru **Thanksgiving Break**
11/27

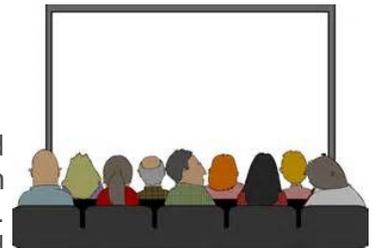
Details for these events are included within the newsletter or on the attached calendar.

bright burst of color, but before there was so much paint that there were holes and blotchy brown patches. The art was nicer to look at, but she was unwittingly robbing the children of learning when to stop adding paint all on their own.

So, I encourage all of you to take a moment this month and really think about what you want for your children. Then, I want you to have the courage to let them fail. Encourage them to try. Celebrate their accomplishments. Empathize with their pain and frustration. But, most of all, step back and let them make their own mistakes. Then, help them brush themselves off and try again when they fail.

In-Service vs. Teacher Work Days

When you look over this month's calendar, you will notice that we are closed on November 9th for a Teacher In-Service day and then on November 20th for a Teacher Work Day. What is the difference, you are no doubt wondering. In-Service days are those days that the staff takes to come together and work on Professional Development. On the ninth, we will be meeting with the board to work on communication and to begin designing a formal employee review process. Work Days are times set aside for teachers to work in their classrooms developing curriculum. Our most recent work day was October 12th and our next will be on January 5th. In order to support the interests of the children as well as to explore the activity packed holiday season, the teachers need this November day to keep their classrooms fresh and enticing for your children.





OPEN HOUSE

This is the time of year when prospective families visit the school and begin the application process. Please remind your friends and family who are interested in applying to Children's Garden to schedule to attend our Open House on **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7th @ 10:00am and 12:00pm**. There will be another Open House in January. The application deadline for new students for the fall 2015 is February 10th. They can go to the Admissions page of our website and sign up to attend.

Father's Night

Wednesday, November 4th

5:30-6:30 pm - Primary Morning Classes

6:00-7:00 pm - Afternoon Primary Class

XP either time



Dads or special friends are invited to join the children in their classrooms to try your hand at some of the "works" they have told you about. The children delight in giving an adult a lesson on a work they have mastered! There is also opportunity for a studio experience. Be prepared to sit on the floor and in our child-size chairs.

Extended Primary Information Night

Thursday, November 19th 6:00 - 7:00 pm

If you are interested in learning more about the Extended Primary Program at Children's Garden, you are encouraged to attend this meeting. Emily and Vida will discuss all of the details, benefits, and expectations of the program. Please rsvp to xp@cqmontessori.com if you plan to attend.



We want to thank Emily Stone for the crumb cake she made for the staff; the Bursteins for the cinnamon cake; the Noori family for generously sharing food and Persian culture with the children; Megan Gaddis for music in the studio and for singing with the children at an assembly; Sylvia Rojas for cooking in the studio, and all of the volunteers included in projects for the Community Benefit. Thanks to everyone for your involvement in the school community.

Grandparent's and Special Friend's Day

Tuesday, November 24th

DROP IN BETWEEN 8:15 - 11:15 am or 12:00 - 3:00 pm

Grandparents' Day provides an opportunity for the children in the **Primary (3-6) classes** to proudly share their school with their grandparents, a special aunt or uncle, or another special guest. It is an informal occasion where the visitors will have a chance to work with the children in the classrooms as well as the art studio. Parents are welcome to come if your child does not have a special guest (not to imply that parents aren't special) - this event is always well-attended and we don't want anyone to feel left out. If your child's grandparents or special friends are not able to attend, we encourage you to schedule a visit when they are available.

Studio Notes:

Mark your calendars for December 2nd! The studio will be hosting a mini show in preparation for your classroom parent/teacher conferences. I will be available 8:30-3:00 to talk about the studio and my work with your children (and theirs with me). There will be art on display and a slide show presentation (times for the presentation to follow). This is a great opportunity to learn about the Reggio Emilia philosophy that inspires our program and ask any studio related questions you might have. I look forward to seeing each of you there.

Also, if you have any cultural traditions to share, please stop by the studio to talk... or you can email me at lloydangelina@yahoo.com

Thank you so much for the chance to learn alongside your incredible children!

Your studio teacher,
Angelina



Parent/Teacher Conferences

Thursday, December 3rd & Friday, December 4th



Please keep these dates open for the conference with your child's teacher. The schedule will be emailed the second week of November. Hours of preparation go into these thoughtful, detailed observations that give you a perspective on your child in our community.

Please remember that we set these two days aside for conferences so the teachers don't have to use additional personal time at lunch or after school to meet with you.