



WATERDOWN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

1921 SNAKE ROAD, BURLINGTON L7P 4Y2

www.waterdownmontessori.com

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2010

From the Principal's Desk

Perhaps it is a case of prophetic fallacy. I am writing this page on the day that spring turned to winter in a matter of hours. Change is in the air!

We can either moan about the reversal, or embrace the beauty of the snow. Change can be challenging, but it can also be exciting. Several of our staff members have been working towards change in their lives this year.

Most of you are aware that Mrs. Julie has been attending The Canadian Montessori Teacher Education Institute this year in order to become a Casa directress. She will soon be graduating, with flying colours. And I am delighted to announce that she will be **staying** at WMS! She and Ms. Wyn will be trading places next year, meaning that Mrs. Julie will be the full time teacher in that class, and Ms. Wyn will work with her in the mornings. For while Mrs. Julie has been broadening her horizons, so, too, has Ms. Wyn. She decided that this was the year to pursue another of her passions, and has qualified as a yoga instructor. Switching roles with Mrs. Julie will give her a chance to balance those two areas of her life.

The children are the real beneficiaries of this arrangement. They retain the same teaching team, Mrs. Julie's new knowledge balanced by Ms. Wyn's experience. Planning is already in place, and will be implemented between now and the end of the year to ensure a smooth transition in September.

Mrs. Phyllis, too, has been feeling for a while that the time was coming for a change in her life. She has dedicated twelve years to Waterdown Montessori School. No one could ask for a more committed and gifted teacher. It gives me great sadness to inform you that this will be her last year here. At the same time, in all fairness, I can't help but support her in her decision and cheer for her courage as she embarks on a new chapter in her life.

I am sure that subsequent newsletters will speak again of Mrs. Phyllis: all she means to the school and to the children who have passed through her hands.

There have been other changes behind the scenes. We have **Tony**, one of our new board members to thank for a revitalised WMS website. Once he had the site up and running, he began patiently coaching me through another learning curve.

Our goal is for the site to be a useful tool for current WMS families in addition to those people searching for a Montessori school. As such, you will easily be able to check the calendar on the main page for dates of events, holidays, and after school programs, for example. Hot lunch days are posted, and we are planning to add the casa snack calendar in the near future.

Please take some time to explore www.waterdownmontessori.com. Enjoy finding pictures of your children. Read the newsletters online and in colour. Let us know what you think, and give us some ideas of what you would like to see included in the future.

Sue Reid-Kulpaka
Principal

Thought for the day:

In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

Eric Hoffer

Change is a fact of life. As a Montessori school, we say that one of our goals is to create life-long learners. Isn't it wonderful to find that our staff members are as interested as our children in continuing to learn!

March Birthdays

Sophia will be 8 on March 10.
Michael will be 5 on March 14.
Audrey will be 6 on March 16.
Damien will be 4 on March 27.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OF YOU!

New Arrival

Eddie is a big brother! **Andrew** was born on January 4, 2009, and was welcomed home on February 5, 2010. Congratulations, Mary Ann and Brad, and welcome, Andy!

Creative Works

The Centre for Arts Exploration

Create - Discover - Explore

Dear parents,

It is my vision and goal to bring a Stimulating and Creative Art program to our children, right here at Waterdown Montessori School.

Enrolling your child in such a program is an excellent investment in the minds and hearts and imaginings of your child. This program is meant to encourage, substantiate and confirm that all children are artists and to validate the importance of art and art making in their lives.

Projects will focus on observation, imagination and process, through the introduction of drawing, painting, collage and sculpture. Your children will be amazed by the special artworks they will create.

The spring term begins Thursday April 15 and runs through till Thursday June 3, from 4:00-5:30. Please sign up early, as class sizes are kept small to ensure quality interaction with the instructor.

Registration forms are available in the office. Friends from outside the school are welcome.

DONNA REDL

CreativWorks
Registration info 905 – 689 – 1992
Creativworks.artex@gmail.com

EASTER EGG HUNT!

It's back! Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Saturday, April 3 this year.



Bring your ideas to the Coffee Club morning, on **Thursday, March 4!**

Everyone is welcome.

The good news is that this event involves far less work than the Valentines Party! ***The most important requirement is lots of volunteers on the day itself.***

RBG TRIP

The ***whole school*** will be going by bus to the Royal Botanical Gardens the morning of ***Thursday, March 4*** to visit their traveling exhibit "Amazon Voyage: Vicious Fishes and Other Riches"!

*2010 is International Year of Biodiversity and RBG has brought the earth's most biodiverse area, the Amazon, to our own backyard with our Amazon Voyage Vicious Fishes and other Riches Exhibit. We are offering **special curriculum-based school programs that connect the Amazon environment to our own area.***

This 5,000 square-foot international traveling exhibition explores the rich habitats of the Amazon River, and the threats to its biodiversity. Depending on the program booked, our educators will guide your voyage through amazing interactive exhibits, close-up encounters with a variety of live Amazon animals, investigations in our classroom lab and time to explore our greenhouse or nature trails.

Amazon Experience

Let our educators take your young explorers on a hands-on tropical journey. Meet rainforest animals and plants, learn about their characteristics and needs and find out how they grow, change and interact. Explore Amazon culture and life, and see how our own lives connect with the people of the Amazon. Dance to their music, play local instruments, listen to Amazon stories and myths and more.

Please ensure that your child arrives on time, as the bus is scheduled to leave the school at 9:00am. It will return by lunch time.

Two parent volunteers will accompany each casa class. We now have enough people. Thank you!

VALENTINE'S FAMILY PARTY

Thanks to everyone who contributed to, participated in, and supported Waterdown Montessori's Annual Valentine's Family Party. Just over 75% of our families attended this year, bringing friends, grandparents and even great-grandparents!

The following people won the various raffles:

All Sorts of Sports: The S. Family
Arts and Crafts: The J. Family
Family Night: The P. Family
The Wine Raffle: The R. Family
The 50/50 Draw: The P. Family

Congratulations to all of you, and to those who won items at the penny sale, too!

WMS wishes to thank all those who helped to make the event a success. Special thanks have to go to a few people. Mrs. Ann and her husband John worked hard on the program to get it just right! We had an auctioneer for the live auction courtesy of the Vaughan family, adding some excitement to the evening. Thanks to the B. family and the Burlington Springs Golf Course, the dishes were once again loaned to us at no charge, and were even returned unwashed. Now *that* is generosity, indeed!

We were determined to have plenty of food this year, and ended up with some extra manicotti and cannelloni. We are very grateful that **Jenn** was able to arrange its delivery to several refugee families in the area.

A big thank you to Mrs. Barbara's elementary class for creating such beautiful centerpieces and artwork.

Thank you too...to all the Waterdown Montessori School students, who are once again helping with the Valentine's Party Thank You letters. Parent volunteers write all the many thank you's on computer. The children are drawing wonderful pictures on the back of each and every one. I am sure the recipients will be delighted with the personal touch.

Thank you to all WMS parents for your help and generosity.

To see pictures of the event, please visit our website.

Great Job Everyone!!

Summer Camp Registration

Registration forms accompany this newsletter. Please let us know as soon as possible if your child will be attending.

Extra information packages and registration forms will be available in the office.

Montessori Madness

In Ms. Wyn's classroom, Mrs. Julie was working on letter sounds with a three year old. They came to the letter "I" and began to play a game; Mrs. Julie and the child would take turns naming something starting with the sound "I". Mrs. Julie showed me the list that resulted. Now THIS is an engaged child!

<u>Child</u>	<u>Mrs. Julie</u>
Lime	lemur
Lift	lemon
Loop	later
Letter	lap
Long	lint
Love	left
Like	leaf
Lynne	little
Light	listen
Lick	Labrador
Law	laugh
Line	loose
Lion	loon
Live	last
Lop	lazy
Let	lend
Lizard	loft
Lung	load
Lose	leap
Loot	linguine
Late	loam
Life	lee
Land	
Lets	
Loan	
Lip	
Longo's	
Learn	
Loaf	
Low	

Choking Alert

It has come to our attention that hot dogs can pose a choking hazard. From now on we will cut hot dogs lengthwise before putting them into buns on hot dog days.

News from the French Room

In March we will review all the vocabulary and sentences previously introduced. The three and four year olds are now quite comfortable with repeating many words and some short sentences, such as: C'est lundi, c'est mercredi / allons-y, on s'en va.

The five year olds are enjoying various books that include winter activities and many of the students are reading some of the words that accompany the pictures. One interesting activity has been the puzzle pictures with words of opposites, for example: blanc, noir, froid, chaud. We will continue to learn our song: "ma tête, mes yeux, mes oreilles, ma bouche.

The program for the months of March and April is available in the French room.

Madame Grace

Elementary French

It is always beneficial to observe different classrooms in different schools. I recently visited another Montessori school and observed the elementary French program there. Upon my return, I told the students a bit about what I had observed, in particular that there is no English spoken in that classroom. To my delight, the first year students latched on to that idea. Now when they come to French they cross "la ligne magique" (the magic line) as they enter, after which they try to remember "Pas d'anglais, s'il te plait." (No English, please.) Of course it is very early days yet, but I am as thrilled and excited as they are with their efforts.

The second and third years are doing extremely well too! The second years are thoroughly enjoying their reader series about a boy and a lost dog. They are soaking up the new vocabulary, and can easily and efficiently analyze sentences, sorting words into nouns, verbs, adjectives, articles prepositions and even adverbs! The third years continue to work on the "Promenades" program in addition to other activities.

Madame Sue

Why Learn to Speak French?: Thoughts from Madame Grace

Canada is an officially bilingual country with both French and English spoken in all regions of the country. Ontario has the second largest population of Francophones in the country after the province of Quebec.

It is evident all around us that foreign languages play an important role in our society and it has become more and more necessary to know more than one language. There are more than 200 million people across five continents who speak French, and it is the second most largely learned language in the world after English.

The French National Education Development Project gives many reasons for learning French:

French is spoken worldwide. It is a top language in commerce. The knowledge of French opens doors for business prospects all over the world, and allows opportunities in the teaching sector, in translation, tourism, journalism and many more areas of employment.

French is a language of famous culture with great works by writers and artists like Molière, Sartre and Piaf.

It is a language that is useful when travelling, making it easier to communicate with locals in so many areas of the world.

French helps in the understanding of other languages, mainly Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, but also English, since 50% of everyday vocabulary is derived from French. Internationally, French is both the working language and the official language at the United Nations in the European Union, NATO, at the IOC, and at the International Red Cross to name just a few organizations.

It is an analytical language which structures thought and critical spirit during discussions and negotiations. French is the third most commonly used language on the Internet.

A strong knowledge of French raises the level of education of the child and opens doors for a bright future. Many jobs in Canada require the ability to speak French and some public and private institutions now require some knowledge of French. It is an asset in reaching more senior positions.

The process of learning to speak and read a second language instills an appreciation for another culture and provides an alternative way to think about and value the world. It also encourages children to become more objective and open-minded. Learning more than one language at a young age implies being given the chance to develop another side of a child's personality.

Prospective families are often surprised – and pleased - to learn that even our very youngest students are introduced to French classes. When they move on in their education, this will be yet another strength to take with them.

WILL MY CHILD BE READY FOR GRADE 4?

Walk into any Montessori classroom and it is immediately obvious that you are in a different sort of school.

It is my observation that the question most frequently asked by parents whose children are in the casa program is whether or not they will be bored in grade one. Somewhere during the elementary years, however, the question seems to shift to “will my child be ready for grade 4”? They don’t see a lot of homework coming home; there are no math drills to complete and no unit tests. We reassure them by recounting the successes of so many students who have left our school but there is still that niggling worry.

We tell parents that we administer the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) to the third year students every spring to ensure that we are indeed meeting or exceeding expectations – but what does that mean? The CTBS is a standardized test used across Canada where results are tallied and assigned a grade equivalent. For example a score of 5.3 in Problem Solving and Data Interpretation means that that child is working at a level expected of a child in their third month of Grade 5 (Figure 1).

For the past several years I have been recording the results of those tests. This year **Amanda** joined the board and one of the skills that she offered was her expertise with data management. When I asked if she would be able to graph my records, she assured me she could and in next to no time I had a pictorial representation of pages of numbers.

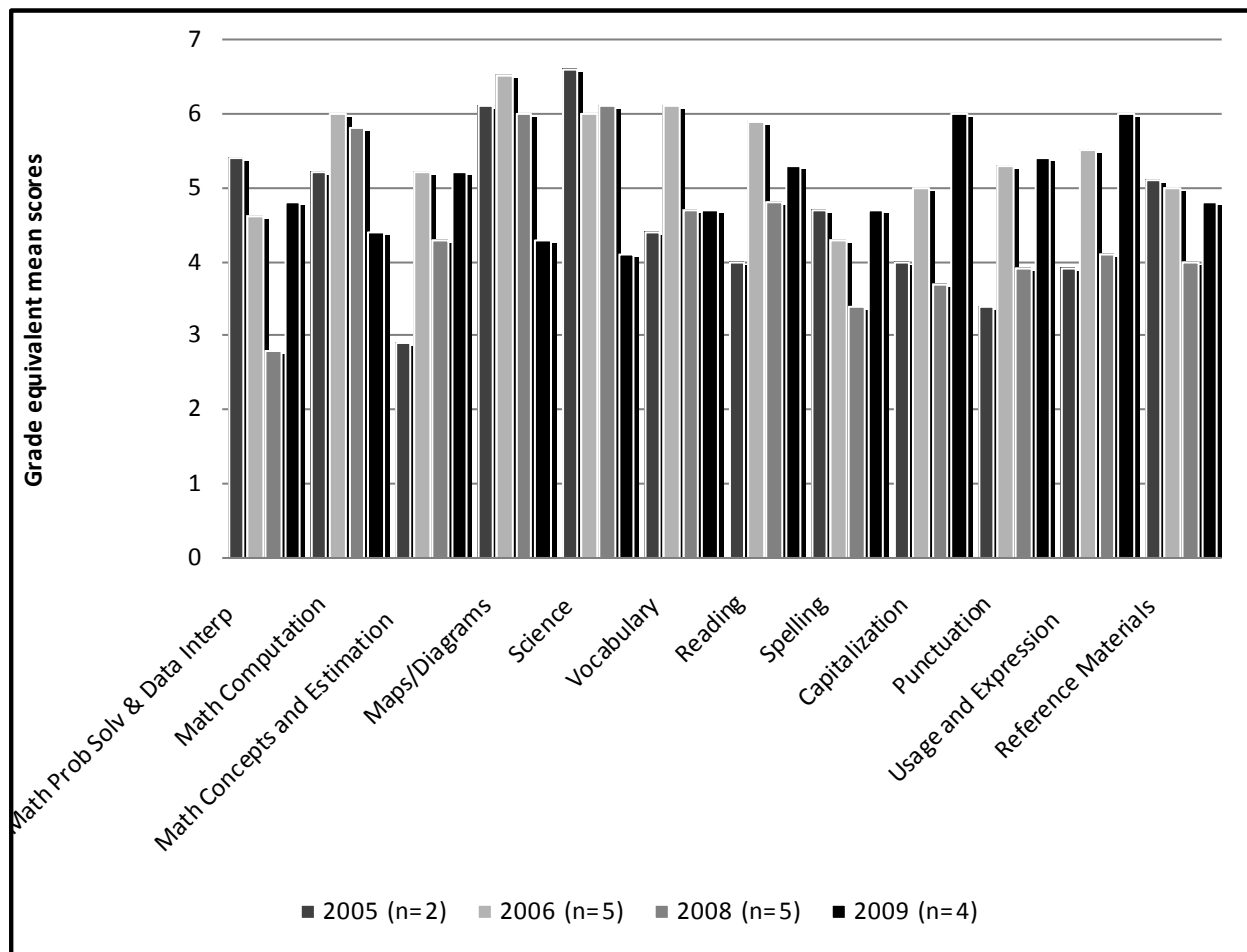


Figure 1. Grade equivalent mean scores for Canadian Test of Basic Skills (Form K/Level 9) for Waterdown Montessori School from 2005-2009.

It is evident that our students are doing extremely well (keeping in mind that these averages are based on small groups of children due to our class sizes). In addition, these groups include all our students, even those with identified difficulties such as attention deficits or auditory processing, whereas such students are often not included in the publicized test results given by public schools.

Using information that was available for only the 2009 year, figure 2 shows which percentile the students fall into as a group for each area of the test. Scoring in the 72nd percentile in Math Problem solving and Data Interpretation means that across Canada only 28% of students scored higher than this number, while 71% had a lower score.

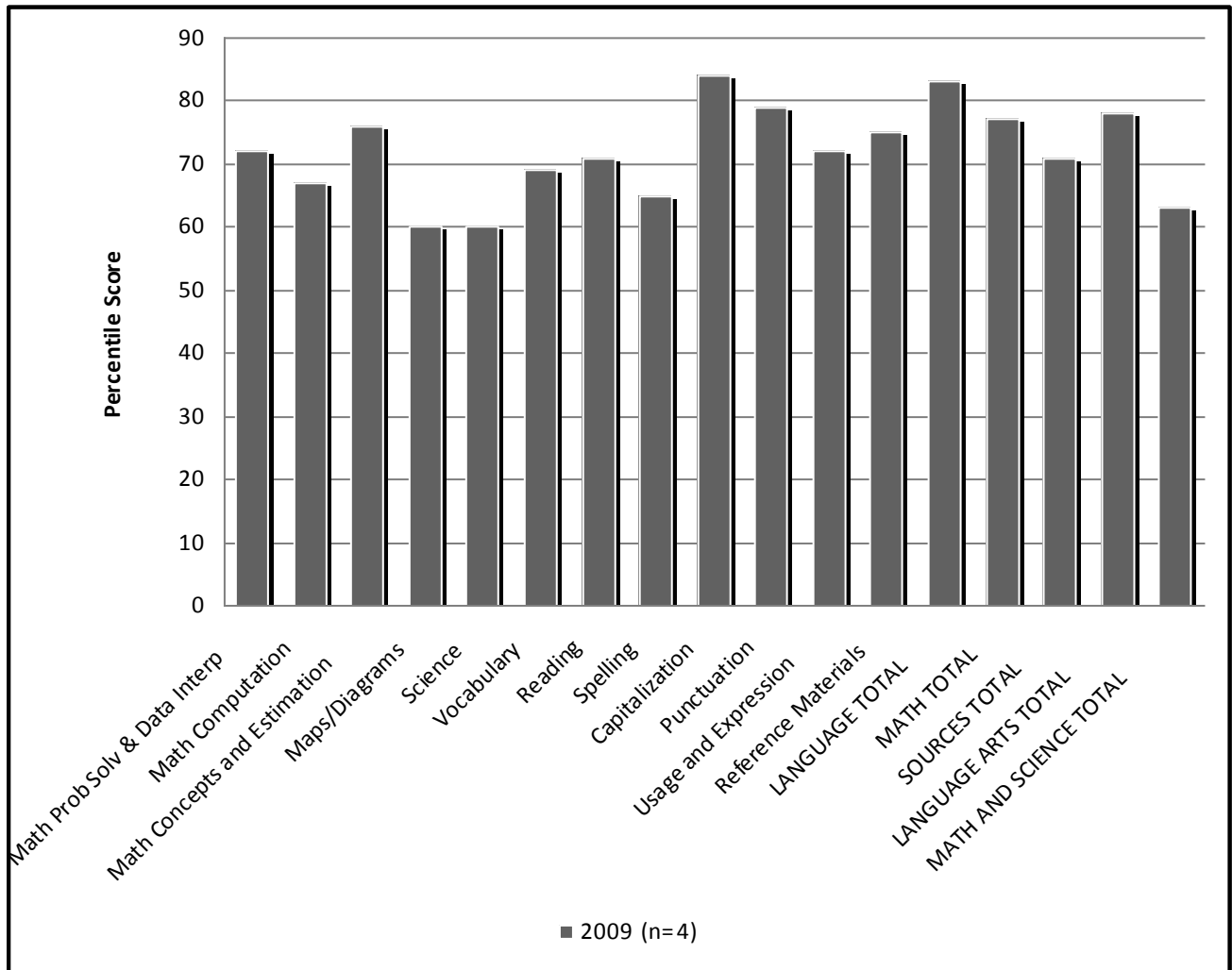


Figure 2. Percentile scores for Canadian Test of Basic Skills (Form K/Level 9) for Waterdown Montessori School for 2009.

These results are for children who do not write tests as part of their curriculum, and who have not been “taught to the test”. If we do find an area that needs work we address it. A few years ago, for example, results in the problem solving area were weaker than we would have liked, so Mrs. Barbara made some changes in that area.

Tests can be useful tools when used in moderation and for the right reasons. This is the first time this information has been made public; perhaps it is time to stop being so modest, and to begin to blow our own horn a bit!

Will YOUR child be ready for Grade 4???



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Charitable Registration # 13492-2475 RR0001

Sue Reid-Kulpaka
Waterdown Montessori School
1921 Snake Road
Burlington, Ont
L7P 4Y2

January 28, 2010

Dear Sue, Staff, Students & Parents of Waterdown Montessori School,

Thank you!

We at the Children's Aid Foundation of Halton are extremely grateful for your support. The outpouring of care, concern and generosity shown by the people of Halton & beyond, for the children and families we serve through the Halton Children's Aid Society is simply outstanding.

We have many families and children involved with CAS, not because they are poor but because they have experienced some kind of significant trauma in their home. CAS staff work year round to help families overcome challenges and get their lives back on track. When winter and the holiday season comes around those challenges are often compounded by the fact that families are often living separately or that other expenses take priority over Christmas gifts. Parents feel pressured to provide but can't afford gifts for their children; our young adult Crown Wards (with no parental support) feel isolated and lonely at the best of times, and require more emotional support to help them through the holidays; young children in care because of terminal illness; families who have been evicted; a young boy who needs 24 hour supervision because he is considered a danger to himself or others; siblings whose parents are in jail; ALL these children and so many more, needed your support this Christmas and because of your generosity and thoughtfulness we were able to touch the lives of all the children in our care and those families in the community who continue to struggle to keep their loved ones together.

The Board of Directors, staff, foster parents and volunteers of the Halton Children's Aid Society & Foundation and especially the families and children that received your help, thank you for your great efforts of kindness. We hope 2010 is kind to you and that you take pride in knowing that you made a real and very positive difference in the lives of children in need right here in Halton. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tina Blatchford
Executive Director
Children's Aid Foundation of Halton

Clara Costa
Coordinator of Volunteers
Halton Children's Aid Society