

# The Montessorian

## AMS Newsletter



October 2010



### ***A Message From The Principal***

It is wonderful to have our hallways filled with the heartwarming sounds of our children once again! September is a month of great excitement and discoveries for everyone: Becoming acquainted with new students and their parents, new teachers and new environments; starting on another exciting journey towards academic and emotional success. Please remember that my door is always open. If you have any ideas or concerns, please book an appointment and share them with me. You may also call me directly at extension 306 at AMS or e-mail me at [principal@insideams.net](mailto:principal@insideams.net).

I hope that this year we will have an enthusiastic response to our Peace Tree in the front lobby. Whether you are Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Hindu, we are one big happy, united family. Please help us celebrate our diverse cultures and religions by bringing in symbols and pictures of your special occasions to adorn our lobby in order that we may honour your heritage.

Once again our Parent Action Committee overwhelmed us with their outstanding accomplishments in organizing the Founder's Day Fair. Great fun was enjoyed by all and the food was sensational. Thank you from all of our AMS staff.

We are enjoying the splendor of Canada's magnificent fall colours. I hope you will have the opportunity to spend some quality family time: go for long walks with your children or drive up north with them and enjoy Mother Nature's paintings.

With Love, Brenda Glashan

*Thank you – together we raised \$2,700 for Meaghan's Walk, in support of Children's Brain Cancer Research. The children really enjoyed this event - we plan continue to hold this event every year.*

### ***Please Do Not Disturb the Classroom!***

We want our students to make use of every moment of learning time available to them. If you need to pick your child up before the regular dismissal time, you must sign them out at the office and bring the dismissal form to the classroom teacher. Dropping off forgotten lunches, homework or instruments can be done at the office. Thank you for your help!

### ***Standardized Testing at Aurora Montessori School***

Commencing the spring of 2011, AMS students in grades 3 to 8 only will be participating in Canadian standardized testing. We have found that the testing was too intimidating and stressful for some of our younger students, resulting in the testing being an inaccurate assessment of their abilities.

Unlike the mainstream education, Montessori does not teach to the test. Our interest in using the test is as a diagnostic tool; to make sure our programmes compare favourably with programmes across the country. Moreover, we use it to identify strengths and weaknesses in our individual student's development in Mathematics and Language. Other aspects of education, including history, arts and science are not included in the standardized testing.

### ***Uniform News:***

As of October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Uniform Service will be on site just one day per week, located in front of the uniform storage area. Hours will be **Wednesday mornings from 8:00 – 10:00 am and after school from 3:00 – 5:30 pm.**

Uniforms can be ordered online at [www.aurorauniforms.ca](http://www.aurorauniforms.ca) or email your orders to [aurorauniforms@rogers.com](mailto:aurorauniforms@rogers.com).

Other contact information can be located on the website. To facilitate the private sale of uniforms, parents can post a notice on the board in the front hall.

### ***Upcoming Events***

**Info Night for Casa Parents- Montessori in Motion -**  
November 3

**Scholastic Book Fair-** November 8 - 12

**TMS/ High School Info Night -** November 10

**Internet Security Symposium –** November 18

**Parent/Teacher Interviews-** November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

**Dufflebag Theatre Presentation of "A Christmas Carol" -** December 1

**Skating for Elementary classes -** December 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>

## *Elementary News*

### **Toronto History Tour**

There is more to Toronto than you will ever learn by taking in the panorama from the CN Tower, or by checking out a Raptors game at the Air Canada Centre. That is what the grades 5 and 6 students experienced in their full day Toronto History Tour in October.

The tour started at the historic **St. Lawrence Market** where the students had a chance to browse different shops in the market and see for themselves amuse themselves the variety of different cheeses, fish, and international food. They learned that the modern city of Toronto is a cosmopolitan centre for all of Canada. Culture, business, and entertainment flourish and we have the largest multicultural population of any city in the world, but Toronto has not always been such a model city. Epidemics, invasions, revolutions and disaster were all part of early Toronto. The students travelled back over 200 years in time, and were told the origins of Toronto. The truth behind Historic Toronto indeed amazed all of us.

The tour ended in the historic and beautiful **Distillery District**, an internationally acclaimed village of brick-lined streets and dozens of vibrantly restored Victorian Industrial buildings. The students enjoyed their time indulging in a couple scoops of ice cream / gelato. Many thanks to Mrs. Cork and Mr. Palubiski who accompanied us on this trip.

### **Astronomy Night at AMS**

AMS's annual astronomy night was held on Friday October 15. The students from grades 5 - 8 were invited to bring their blankets, sleeping bags, lawn chairs, binoculars and enjoy a couple hours of stargazing, bonfire, camp songs, marshmallow roasting and of course hot chocolate on the beautiful AMS outdoor grounds. Mr. Dan Bortollotti, a writer who was invited by Mrs. Middleton, AMS grade 1-2 teacher, amused the students by revealing the latest space discoveries. The students were able to have a close up look at the moon, its craters, Jupiter and a few constellations. It was indeed a night of discovery for many.

### **Skiing for Elementary**

Elementary students will be going skiing at Snow Valley again this year. In order to better coordinate and organize the students, they will be divided into two groups. Students in Grades 1 to 3 will be going on Friday, January 28, and students in Grades 4 to 8 will be going on Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.

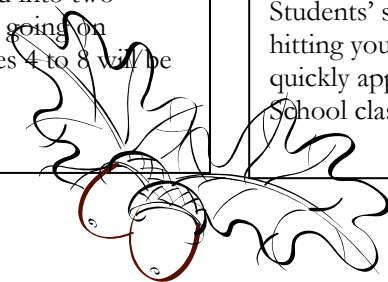
AMS students from grades 6, 7 and 8 participated in the **AMS Fall bike ride**. The event provided an out of school opportunity for these students of different grades to have the chance to be together in a unique outing of their own. The approximate 5 hour outing started at the Aurora Arboretum ending at Fairy Lake in Newmarket, where they had lunch, played a game of Ultimate Frisbee and walked through the historic Main Street in Newmarket. The students enjoyed the outing and physical challenge! We hope to have our annual grades 6-8 Caledon Rail Trail bike ride in late spring, it was enjoyed by all students last year! Many thanks to Mr. Rossiter for organizing this event.

The students in Rooms 119 and 120 and 123 went to **Pioneer Village** on Oct. 5th. They participated in two programs - "Many Hands" and "Hands of History". We had a fantastic time cooking, building and learning. A big thank you to Dawn Torisawa (Meagan's mom) for the beautiful book of photographs which she made as a souvenir for our class. Mrs. Torisawa took all the pictures of our trip and put them together in book form for us to enjoy. Thanks so much! From all the students in Rooms 119, 120 & 123.

The **Middle School** students enjoyed many exciting events in the fast paced fall action of the new school year. Once again, we commenced our learning with a trip to YMCA Camp Pinecrest for 3 days of team building, personal challenges and phenomenal fun!!! Highlights included the ever popular Gaga Ball, a predator prey game, and the half day canoe trip. Despite some rain, the smiles continued and the group camaraderie and support even encouraged Mr. Rossiter to plunge off the diving platform into the lake below! A new RECORD number of students participated in the 'morning dip' braving cold water and COLDER early morning air!!!

Shortly after returning from the wilds of Muskoka, another small but hardy band of adventurers volunteered to camp for 3 days within **Bruce Peninsula National Park**. Highlights include the spectacular student food prep, spelunking along the shoreline cliffs, 'singing while you hike', and the majestic beauty of wild, natural Georgian Bay. Congratulations to ALL student and parent hikers on an adventure well done!!!

Finally, as part of our Extended PE program, in addition to the bike outing, the Middle School class is taking golf lessons at **Bathurst Glen Golf Course** in Richmond Hill. Students' skills are visibly improving each visit! Just try hitting your stroke while perched on one leg, and you'll quickly appreciate the developing skill of the Middle School class!



## ***Toddler News***

The toddlers always amaze us with how quickly they settle into their new surroundings and routines. The tears are long gone and the teachers are greeted with smiles every morning.

It has been a busy few weeks since school began. The children enjoyed the apple unit in September. They especially liked the apple peeling and tasting. They have also learned about the season of the fall, Thanksgiving and turkeys. Some of them have already impressed their families with new songs and knowledge. Halloween will come next with lots of fun and activities.

The weather has certainly been co-operating. The toddlers loved their walks to see and feed the animals. Now they are enjoying playing in the fall leaves. The children are getting stronger and faster each week.

## ***News from the Library***

October is library month. Libraries across Canada will celebrate **Canadian Library Month**. The idea for a month dedicated to library and information services in Canada was developed by library partners from across the country to help raise awareness of the valuable role that libraries play in the lives of Canadians. School libraries promote the literacy skills needed for students to become lifelong learners. Research has shown a direct correlation between student achievement, information literacy and the presence of trained staff and accessible school libraries.

Come by and check out the new chapter books (hard and soft cover) in our library. Titles include: *Geronimo Stilton*, *Magic Tree House*, *A to Z Mysteries*, *Jigsaw Jones*, *The Littles* and *The Magic School Bus*. Halloween and autumn books continue to be on display in the library. There's nothing like a spooky story to set the tone for trick or treating!

Mark your calendars for the upcoming **Scholastic Book Fair** which runs from *Monday November 8 to Friday November 12*. Don't miss out on all the latest titles. Get your Christmas shopping done early by buying at the fair. See you there!

## **September birthday celebration**

AMS students celebrating their birthday in September were joined by their friends in the AMS gymnasium for sharing such joy together. A few of the birthday students presented their musical, magic and sports talents to make the event even more memorable. The monthly birthday celebration event generally happens the last Thursday of each month at the AMS gymnasium at 3:30 pm. We would be thrilled to have you join us, share a few minutes with us and let's extend the joy of sharing!

## ***Casa News***

The Casa children, as always, enjoyed their visit with the **Grandparents** on Thursday, October 21st and Friday, October 22nd. The Grandparents were treated to some refreshments and entertainment put on by some students in the gym, followed by visiting the classrooms, where the children were thrilled to show off the work that they have been doing. A fun time was had by all!

**Halloween** is fast approaching with lots of excitement from the children. We are looking forward to our annual Halloween parade where the children love to show off their costumes and then back to the class for some treats.

A big thank you to all the parents and students who have donated food and supplies to our **Thanksgiving Food Drive**.

At the end of September, the Casa students had a wonderful time visiting the **Country Apple Orchard** in King City. They learned about the different types of apples and got to pick a nice juicy apple to take home.

## ***Recipe from Room 108: Monster Pops***

### ***What you need:***

Wooden Popsicle sticks  
Fig Newtons  
Decorating gel  
Jet-puffed Miniature Marshmallows  
Colored sprinkles  
Assorted Halloween candies  
Ring shaped chewy fruit snacks

### ***To make it:***

Insert wooden pop stick into each Fig Newton cookie. Decorate cookie with assorted decorating gels and frostings. Jet-puffed mini marshmallows, ring shaped chewy fruit snacks, colored sprinkles, and Halloween candies to create Monster faces. Let stand to set. If desired, stand pops in a floral foam block inserted into Halloween container to use as a centerpiece.



## **Hallowe'en Safety Tips**

1. Have adult supervision
2. Trick or Treat with friends
3. Map out your plan ahead of time and stick to it
4. Avoid short cuts, stay around other people, and well lit areas
5. Don't go into the houses you are Trick or Treating
6. Remain visible – use reflectors or bright costumes, glow sticks or flashlights
7. Make sure children won't trip on their costumes and can see properly out of their masks
8. Quality check the treats before eating

# Living with Allergies

-submitted by Jill Moore

Our youngest son Joshua is two years old and this is his second year in the Toddler Program. We learned that he was “at risk for anaphylaxis” (the new jargon for severe, life-threatening allergy or anaphylaxis) at 18 months. At first, we were terrified. Now, we know that it is possible to keep our son safe in a normal environment by just following a few rules and asking for the help of those around him to do the same. While I don’t have all the answers, I will try to make sense of the resources I have reviewed.

**Anaphylaxis** is the most severe form of an allergic reaction. It can happen quickly, affect different parts of the body, and can be life-threatening. In Canada, the most common **food** allergens are: Peanut, Tree Nuts (i.e. almond, cashew, hazelnut, pine nut), Milk, Egg, Fish, Shellfish and Crustaceans (i.e. shrimp, crab, lobster), Wheat, Sesame seeds, Soy, Mustard

Symptoms of a severe allergic reaction can start within minutes of coming into contact with an allergen. **Think F.A.S.T. to spot the symptoms of Anaphylaxis!** Symptoms can vary between people or between reactions in the same person.

**F**ace: itching, redness, swelling

**A**irway: trouble breathing, swallowing, or speaking

**S**tomach: pain, vomiting, diarrhea

**T**otal body: hives, rash, weakness, paleness, sense of doom, loss of consciousness

Treatment is: use of an epinephrine auto-injector, Dial 911, and transfer to a hospital immediately.

## Keeping Joshua and his friends safe

There are two parts to an Anaphylaxis Management Plan.

The first is:

### **1.) Provide an allergy-safe school environment.**

As you know, AMS is a nut-free environment. So, what are some things to consider when preparing your child’s lunch bag for school?

#### **Celebrations and Food Drives**

Use only AMS endorsed caterers for school celebrations.

Some examples include: Deli House Catering, Cakes by Robert. Nut-free extends to Food Drive items too!

#### **Food labels**

Checking food labels and ingredients can keep someone with a food allergy safe. The list of ingredients in a food can change, so a food that was once safe could now include the allergen.

Look for the The Peanut-Free Label. This label means the manufacturer guarantees the absence of peanut protein in their product. Some manufacturers will state “nut-free” because nuts are not an ingredient. Currently, there is not a Nut-free Label. This is because there are currently no commercially available tests to measure the presence of tree nut proteins.

Foods without labels, and those with warnings such as “may contain” or “processed in a facility which also manufactures nuts” may be contaminated.

## **Be sure to avoid foods that contain any of the following ingredients:**

- cold pressed, expressed, or expelled peanut oil
- ground nuts
- hydrolyzed plant protein
- hydrolyzed vegetable protein
- mixed nuts
- peanuts, almonds, pecans, pine nuts, etc..
- peanut butter
- peanut flour

## **Foods that may indicate the presence of peanut protein include:**

- African, Chinese, Thai, and other ethnic dishes
- baked goods
- candy
- cereals
- chili, spaghetti sauce
- chocolate (candy, candy bars) – *did you know that most chocolate manufactured outside of North America is made from recycled chocolate. So, while the new chocolate bar does not contain nuts, the original bar might have and nuts would not be listed in the ingredients!*
- crackers
- egg rolls
- ice creams, frozen yogurts, tofutti
- marzipan
- nougat

## **Cross-contamination**

Sharing food or food utensils, or using a cutting board or utensil that has not been cleaned properly can expose someone to their food allergen. Cross-contamination can occur in the form of food-to-food, utensil-to-food, hand-to-food, and/or surface-to-food contact. If your child is enjoying peanut butter before attending school, please have them thoroughly brush their teeth and wash their hands.

## **2.) Emergency preparedness**

We hope it never happens, but there may come a time when Joshua comes in contact with his allergen. Ontario passed Sabrina’s Law in 2005, which requires schools to have anaphylaxis policies, to reduce allergen exposure, and to regularly train all staff in the use of an epinephrine auto-injector. Further, here are the expert’s recommendations for parents with kids at risk for anaphylaxis:

- Wear MedicAlert® identification;
- No epinephrine auto-injector = No Food;
- Younger children (i.e. toddler and CASA) must have **two** epinephrine auto-injectors close at hand;
- Mature children (i.e. elementary) should carry **two** epinephrine auto-injectors in a fanny-pack, on their person at all times.  
\*\*This does not mean that young children would be expected to inject themselves. This is only to establish the life-long habit of taking responsibility for carrying their medication.
- Replace epinephrine auto-injector before they expire
- Keep medical records and your child’s emergency plan up to date with AMS administration.

(Thanks to the Ontario Medical Association, Peanut Allergy.com and Anaphylaxis Canada for their information).

Please forward any questions, comments and references to AMS administration or Jill Moore [jillmoore200@rogers.com](mailto:jillmoore200@rogers.com) . And remember, and this is not meant to replace a conversation with your healthcare practitioner.

## “Hummingbird Parents”

*Seven actions parents can take to reduce risk and still get their kids outside*

Parenting advice can go to extremes. Regarding outdoor play, some experts sternly warn parents about all the assumed dangers – from strangers to noxious weeds – lurking outside the front door. At the same time, parents sometimes find themselves shamed for their fear. Even if many of our fears are based on media hype, parental fear is real. It should be respected and not dismissed. But we also need to make sure that children have as much play, and independent as possible, in the natural world. Some parents will be comfortable encouraging their kids to roam freely, but the truth is most won't. So here are seven suggestions for ways to manage our fear, reduce risk, and still get our kids outside.

1. **Take your kids outdoors** If we want our children or grandchildren to experience nature, we'll need to be more proactive than parents of past generations. Our sons experienced nature – in the canyon behind our house, building their forts, digging their holes all within our eyesight. We took them hiking, and I took them fishing, often. And we tried to stay out of their way so they could explore on their own.
2. **Be a “hummingbird parent”** Bethel Almeras writes, “I range from helicopter to neglect – I probably fall a bit more toward helicopter. In fact, I call myself a hummingbird parent. I tend to stay physically distant to let them explore and problem solve, but zoom in at moments when safety is an issue (which isn't very often).” Notice that Bethel isn't hovering over her kids with nature flash cards. She stands back and makes space for independent nature play – albeit not as free as she experienced as a child, this play is important nonetheless.
3. **Teach your child to watch for behaviours more than for strangers** That's the advice of family psychologist John Rosemond. “Telling a child to stay away from strangers is relatively ineffective. ‘Stranger’ is not a concept young children understand easily,” he maintains. “Instead, children ought to be taught to be on the lookout for specific threatening behaviours and situations.” Also, get to know your neighbours. Create a play-watch group and ask fellow parents to sit on front stoops or porches or lawns several hours a week; that way, they are available at a distance as children play.
4. **Develop a walking/activity buddy system** Encourage kids to do nature activities together. “it's cheap and grassroots based,” suggests Juliet Robertson, a nature play specialist in Scotland. “If there were agreed times and routes then fold could meet up and walk together or bike together.” Some young people are creating their own kids' nature clubs.
5. **Create or join a family nature club** Nature Clubs for Families are beginning to catch on across the country; some have membership lists of over 400 families. The idea is that multiple families meet to go for a hike, garden together, or even do stream reclamation. We hear from family nature club leaders that when families get together, the kids tend to play more creatively – with other kids or independently – than during single family outings. **C&NN's Nature Clubs for Families** offers a free downloadable guide on how to start your own.
6. **Take back the trails** Patty Born Selly makes this suggestion for dealing with fear: “The best thing we can do as a community is to take back our trails – slowly, over time, we will reach a tipping point of sorts. The more people are out there, using our parks, using our trails, enjoying our natural areas, the more our collective comfort with this sort of thing increases.”
7. **Get the safety information you need** Become familiar with good resources for safety tips in the outdoors, including those with information on how to guard against ticks. One such site is the Centers for Disease Control Website, or the Provincial government site: <http://www.ontario.ca/en/communities>

Yes, there are risks outdoors, but there are huge psychological, physical and spiritual risks in raising future generations under protective house arrest. Child obesity is just one of them. So, rather than giving in to those fears, we need to give our children the appropriate freedom they deserve.

[www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org) [www.naturerocks.com](http://www.naturerocks.com)