

**August 1, 2008**

**Dear Parents,**

**August always signals the move toward autumn and the end of summer. Can you tell my favorite season is autumn....cooler weather, changing colors of nature, and being outside without the heat and humidity. This has been a wonderful summer with many outdoor projects involving the children :**

- \* new gardens and outdoor area on the north side of the Building**
- new windows in the fence**
- new stone planters and retaining wall and gardens**
- new water tables and water play area (in process)**
- new natural materials building area in the play yard (in process)**

**Our thanks goes to Marion Stansbury and Mike and Steve for their incredible design skills. They listened to the children and teachers and implemented all ideas into our new areas for children.**

**The children have created "thank you" books for them and we are now collecting thank you notes from our parents. So many of you shared our enthusiasm and gratitude for the beautification project, please take the paper by the front door to write a short note for these wonderful men.**

**The children were lined up with their noses pressed to the fence windows watching their every move and asking 100 questions which they patiently answered. The children and teachers are planning a thank you party for them on August 19<sup>th</sup> - we would like your thank you notes in by then. Thanks in advance.**

**Marion, Mike and Steve will be around during August and September as they clean the outside of the building. They will have a huge lift to clean the upper brick and stone and this should provoke more interest from the children and many drawings.**

**ANOTHER SUMMER EXPERIENCE was the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance summer conference in Boulder, Colorado. Five Italian educators came to present and celebrate the arrival on the new North American version of *The Hundred Languages of Children - The Wonder of Learning* Exhibit. Over 600 educators from 11 countries and almost every state came to hear our colleagues from Italy and see the Exhibit**

held at UCAR and ENCAR. Liz Watzl and Kari Ryg (Shell room teachers) presented at the conference. They shared their year long classroom project of the children's exploration of the landscape artist, Andy Goldsworthy. It was a wonderful presentation evoking high interest and emotions from fellow educators. Sara Schulte (Peace room) and Jenny Togstad (Wind Song room) went to the first conference with Liz, Kari and myself and our Collaboration Support Team of Monica Malley, Lori ScottRussell, Karen Potyandy and Clare Tures joined me for the second conference. These teachers have returned with new insights and new enthusiasm to deepen their classroom learning experiences with your children.

**COLLABORATION SUPPORT TEAM** will continue this fall providing enriching classroom experiences with children in each classroom while the classroom teachers meet for two hours with their educational coordinator to follow the learning of the children and strategize with new experiences. Each classroom team will have an additional two hour prep time. This support of our teachers is modeled after the schools in Reggio Emilia and deepens our work with the children. Monica Malley, our studio teacher will continue her work with groups of children in the studio with an expanded schedule to offer studio time in the afternoon.

#### **NEW PANELING AND CUPBOARDS IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM**

Our thanks go to Mike Pietan (MMS parent) who designed and executed the beautiful paneling in the Community room. It far exceeds our expectations of what that space could be for children. Eric Leja built the stage and Jane Schmidt (Mary Schmidt's mother - Garden room) sewed the curtains for the stage + many other sewing projects around the building. Thank you to ALL.

Sincerely,  
Beth MacDonald and the MMS Staff

Words from Sergio Spaggiari :

*"We decided in Reggio to walk down new roads, see and embrace other points of view or convictions. Our conviction is the child is social. Our conviction is that people are not islands. Children are individuals who are in relationship with others. We value the person and the relationship."*

*"The child from birth hungers for encounter and dialog. The child has*

***100 Languages, 100 forms of intelligence, 100 forms of desire, 100 forms of will.”***

***“We assign more value to the mind. Educators feel it is more important that the individual has a head. Education feel our job is filling up heads – very large heads of children. Children have their own proportions. We must embrace the entire person - the exterior to the interior - the head, the brain, the heart and the body. Loris Malaguzzi (founder of the Reggio Schools, Italy) felt the most unfortunate animal is the giraffe, his heart is far away from his brain (head). He could fall in love on Monday and not find out until Saturday. How many giraffe schools do we have around the world ? We pay attention to Brains and do not pay attention to Hearts. We emphasize thinking and forget sentiment/ affect and emotions. We have to sew things back together. We are reconstructing schools. We need a revolution in education.”***

***“Educational systems can’t see children for the first time at age six. It would be like constructing a building beginning at the sixth floor! We need a strong, solid foundation. Ask construction workers and architects. People used to think that the Brain was decided at the date of birth –that destiny was decided at birth. They felt the brain was not plastic. Scientists have discovered that the brain is elastic and plastic and very open to development in the first six to seven years. This responsibility makes me shake and tremble.”***

***“We have incredible horizons. Reggio Emilia bears witness to the quality and commitment of enacting another way of Education. Education is on the side of children. Education respects children’s rights. Nothing without Joy is Loris Malaguzzi’s motto.***

***—Sergio Spaggiari  
Director, Reggio Emilia Schools***