

# Élan Vital Newsletter

*Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.*

-Maria Montessori



Élan Vital Montessori School

## Inside this issue:

Watch for a New Education Tax Deduction	1
Fundraising—Invest in your Child	1
Healthy Snack Recipe	2
Montessori Concepts and Terminology	2
Primary News	3
Elementary News	3
Student Reporter	3
Avoiding Power Struggles - The Montessori Way	4

## Important Contacts

**London Van Oss— Administrator**  
London@elanvitalmontessori.org

**Laura Rempert Kraeuter—Director**  
Laura@elanvitalmontessori.org

**Katie Guell—Primary**  
Katie-Lauren@elanvitalmontessori.org

**Catherine Lawrence—Primary**  
Catherine@elanvitalmontessori.org

**Ivy Lewis—Afternoon/Extended Care**  
Ivy@elanvitalmontessori.org

**Heather Niemic—Elementary**  
Heather@elanvitalmontessori.org



## Watch for New Education Tax Deduction

The cost of education can be high, even if your kids go to public schools. Uniforms, supplies, study materials, maybe you pay tuition. It adds up fast.

The Louisiana Department of Revenue reminds anyone paying school expenses that a new tax deduction is available starting with expenses paid during 2009.

LDR tax legislation researcher Leonore Heavey says, "In 2008, the Louisiana legislature created a new deduction for school expenses. It applies whether a child is enrolled in public, private, parochial school - or is home schooled. The deduction is for 50 percent of the money you spend on education, up to \$5,000 per student.

To claim the Louisiana School Tuition and Expense Tax Deduction, you don't have to be the student's parent, but you must be able to claim the student as a dependent on your Louisiana Resident Individual Income Tax Return.

Heavey advises anyone paying education expenses to be ready to benefit from the deduction. "Gather together all your receipts for tuition, uniforms, books, supplies... all those education expenses paid in 2009.

For the first time, you're going to be able to deduct these when you file your state income tax forms that are due May 15, 2010," she says.

The total amount of the deduction may not exceed your

total taxable income. Besides tuition, there are other expenses you can deduct if they're required by the school.

This is a tax deduction that can reduce your Louisiana taxable income. It is not a tax credit. Eligible expenses are to be reported on Schedule E of the Louisiana Resident Individual Income Tax Return, Form IT-540, as an adjustment to income.

For instructions, forms and more information including a video on this topic, visit

[www.revenue.louisiana.gov](http://www.revenue.louisiana.gov)



## Fundraising—Invest in your Child

We strive to constantly stimulate your children with new and engaging activities and materials. But these materials cost money and are not inexpensive.

Because we are such a small and close knit community, at times it seems we are always being asked to give to the school, whether it's time, materials, or

money. Every little bit counts.

As outlined in a couple of recent emails I sent, we can earn contributions for Élan Vital Montessori without asking for money out-of-pocket when you make purchases through our For Small Hands Promotion and by ordering from our Online Scholastic Book Club.

For more information, please visit our website's *Make a Donation* page which is dedicated to this effort of raising funds for our school. From this page you can learn more about the programs and find links to the appropriate websites. You can also select items from the **Teacher Wish Lists Sign Up** which will be sent in the near future.

élan vital

MONTESSORI SCHOOL Inc.  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

5228 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808 225.767.6620 fax 225.769.8122



Savory Snail Snack

## Healthy Snack Recipe— Savory Snail Snack

from **FamilyFun Magazine**



**This silly-looking snack may appear to be moving at a snail's pace, but it goes together -- and disappears -- quick as a wink.**

### Ingredients

- Mayonnaise or whipped cream cheese
- Large tortilla (square if possible)
- Lettuce or baby spinach
- Sliced deli meat of your choice
- Sliced cheese of your choice
- Gherkin pickles
- Chive stalks

### Instructions

1. If necessary, trim the rounded edges of the tortilla to make it square, then spread on a thin layer of the mayo or cream cheese.
2. Layer on the lettuce or baby spinach, then the meat and cheese, and roll it up tightly.
3. With the seam on the bottom, slice the tortilla into 2-inch-wide pinwheels. For the snail's heads, cut a pickle in half at an angle. Poke two small holes in the uncut ends and stick pieces of chive with knots at one end in each for antennae.

4. Slip each pickle half under the edge of a pinwheel, securing them together with a toothpick, if necessary.

Makes 4 to 6 pinwheel sandwiches.

### Primary Snacks for the week of:

- 11/02—EVM
- 11/09—Amelia J.
- 11/16—Nilufer K.
- 11/23—Django H.
- 11/30—Camille L.



**Don't Forget:**

**Our Thanksgiving Feast is on November 24. Be on the lookout for a Sign Up email for food your family can share!**



## Montessori Concepts and Terminology

### The Prepared Environment

The "prepared environment" is Maria Montessori's concept that the environment can be designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child.

In the prepared environment, there is a variety of activity, as well as, a great deal of movement. In a pre-school classroom, for example, a three-year-old may be washing clothes by hand while a four-year-old nearby is composing words and phrases with letters known as the movable alphabet, and a five-year-old is performing multiplication using a specially designed set of beads.



In an elementary classroom, a small group of six- to nine-year-old children may be using a timeline to learn about extinct animals while another child chooses to work alone, analyzing a poem using special grammar symbols. Sometimes an entire class may be involved in a group activity, such as storytelling, singing, or movement.

In the calm, ordered space of the Montessori **prepared environment**, children work on activities of their own choice at their own pace. They experience a blend of freedom and self-discipline in a place especially designed to meet their developmental needs.



© North American Montessori Teachers' Association

## Primary News

October was a great month for the primary class. We have introduced many new things to the children, both half day and full day programs.

Our practical life area has started to grow and the children enjoy the new tasks of pouring, spooning, and exploring with beans. Last Friday we had our first cooking lesson, and plan to improve our cooking skills in the coming weeks!

Our full day students absolutely loved physical education time with Ms. Heather outside every day. She has been teaching them to play games like red rover, tag, and how to

jump rope! They come back to class happy and ready for new lessons.

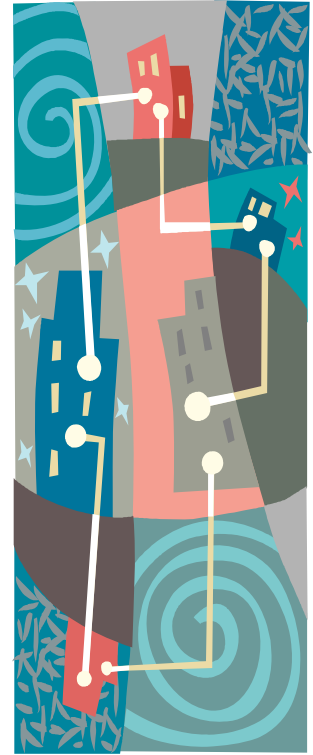
Our French, Art, Science, and Geography lessons in the afternoon have been a success. The children enjoy practicing letters, colors, and animals in French. We have been working on cutting and gluing skills in Art. All of these lessons have been exciting for both teacher and student and we will continue to grow these programs throughout the year.

This week we will start Tai Chi for physical education and will soon be adding Music.

Thank you to all of the parents who have observed and had a conference. We always love reading everyone's notes and talking with you. We appreciate being able to work with your children and value our time to talk with you about your child's progress. Here is to another great month!

Peace,

Catherine and Katie-Lauren



## Elementary News

The elementary class has been very excited to start working on multiplication. They are learning their facts through laying out the "bead chains" from 1-10. Armed with this knowledge, they were finally able to use the "checkerboard" to complete large multiplication problems.

We have also been exploring the States of Matter. Through

experiments, we have discovered how things can go from a solid, to a liquid, and then to a gas.

The biggest change in the classroom this month has been the addition of a weekly work plan. This work plan helps the students to see what "pieces of work" should be accomplished during the week. This encourages plan-

ning and independence as the students decide what subject to work on and when they will complete it.

The class is really looking forward to discovering all about our solar system in November.

Heather

## Student Reporter

This month's student reporter is **Michael Hoard** in the Primary class.

**Katie:** Michael, come here a sec. I want to ask you some questions.

**Michael:** What ya doing to me?

**K:** What have you been doing at school?

**M:** Um I am working so much on my work.

**K:** What's your favorite work?

**M:** Coloring

**K:** What's your favorite color?

**M:** Red

**K:** What do you like to color?

**M:** Big Machines with dots on it. It rolls toward the road and fixes the road.

**K:** Tell me some Math work.

**M:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

**K:** What's your favorite thing to do?

**M:** Play

**K:** Where do you like to play?

**M:** Outside

**K:** What do you play outside?

**M:** Star Wars

**K:** What's your part of the day?

**M:** Group Time!!!



Each Month we will be featuring a different student reporter to give us a child's perspective of Élan Vital.

## Avoiding Power Struggles with Children The Montessori Way



Everyone wants to feel powerful. Our children are not exempt from these feelings, so the more we can do to give them appropriate ways to feel powerful, the less power STRUGGLES we will have with them. If a child feels valued, loved, and respected, he will still create power struggles because he is human. But if parents consistently keep in mind why their child does this, the struggles can be effectively handled and many times avoided altogether.

Here are a few suggestions to help minimize power struggles with your children:

1. Give your child appropriate ways to be powerful. We all want to feel powerful and if we don't have opportunities to do it appropriately, we will create ways to feel powerful that are inappropriate—like power struggles or picking on siblings. In the middle of a battle with your child, stop and ask yourself, "How can I give my child more power in this particular situation?" It might be as simple as asking him for his help or giving him a particular job to do that he is totally in charge of.

2. Give your child choices. We all like to feel powerful and influential and our children are no different. Let them make as many choices as they can that will give them control over what happens to them. For instance, "Do you want to wear your red pajamas or your blue ones?" or "Do you want to take your bath before I read you a story or after?"

3. Use win-win negotiation to resolve conflict. Most of us were not taught the concept of win-win negotiation. We most likely experienced situations that were win-lose or lose-lose. In a power struggle the most effective negotiations are when both sides win and are happy with the end results. It can be challenging since you must listen intently to what the other person wants while staying committed to what you want. Ask your child, "I see how you can win and that's great, because I want you to win. How can I win, too?" When children see that you are just as interested in seeing them win as yourself, they are more than willing to help figure out ways that you both can win.

4. Let your children know how valuable they are to you. The more they feel valuable to us, the less likely they are to misbehave. Ask their advice on buying clothes, or how to decorate your home. Have them teach you a game or a fun activity.

5. Take care of yourself. Have you ever noticed that when you are tired, overworked, and overscheduled that you become irritable and controlling of your children? Probably the most important thing you can do for your children is to take care of yourself. To be effective and loving parents we need a lot of energy and encouragement. Make time for you whether it is a bubble bath, a workout at the gym, or meditation. Knowing your early warning signs of burnout is also helpful. It might be feeling overwhelmed, or your shoulders getting tight, or just a sense of being grumpy. These are symptoms of not taking enough time for you and if you don't take that time, you'll begin resenting the time others demand from you.

— Kathryn Kvols

---

**Parent Education  
Night is November 19,  
2009 at 6:30. We'll  
have our Montessori  
consultant here to  
teach us "Why  
Montessori Works."**

*Childcare will be  
provided*

---

***"Preventing conflicts is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education." - Maria Montessori***



**élan vital**

**MONTESSORI SCHOOL Inc.**  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

5228 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808 225.767.6620 fax 225.769.8122