



## Term 4

### Week 10 – 10 December 2014

*Distributed weekly on Wednesday*

*A year calendar of events was distributed at the start of the year.  
This section includes those events and any updates.*

#### **Term 4**

**6<sup>th</sup> October – 17<sup>th</sup> December**

*10½ weeks*

*1 public holiday – Melbourne Cup 4<sup>th</sup> November*

*1 pupil free day – Report Writing 3<sup>rd</sup> November*

#### **December**

8<sup>th</sup> Mon – 12<sup>th</sup> Fri – Cycle 1 Prep Parent Teacher Interviews.

10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – Volunteer Afternoon Tea 1.30-2.30pm

10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – Major raffle tickets returned

12<sup>th</sup> Friday – Reports distributed

16<sup>th</sup> Tuesday – Major raffle drawn – at school

17<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Last day for students, end of Term 4, 3.15pm finish

***More dates to be added throughout the term.***

***Keep checking this section to stay informed***

## From the Principal

### Trivia Event

Despite the disappointment for Indigo, a year six student, who had to cancel his event; the Trivia Night, he was eventually able to hold it for the students. On Monday all Cycle 2&3 came together for the event. It was a very enthusiastic gathering with much good hearted competition. Children were organised into mixed groups of ages and gender and they had to apply their knowledge to questions on curriculum. Thanks to Terie for her support of Indigo throughout this and to the other staff for their commitment to following the children.

### Bluearth

We will be continuing Bluearth in 2015 as part of a two year agreement however we have been advised that our coach in 2015 won't be Daniel. We

wish him well and are sad to see him go but he will continue with bluearth in Melbourne so it's great that others will be able to benefit from his gentle instruction. He is as disappointed as us not to be continuing but with home and university in Melbourne it is a necessary move for him. We will introduce the children and staff to the new coach when possible.

### Carols by Candlelight

I received a call from a member of the public who rang to acknowledge the wonderful public presence of the Montessori children at Carols by Candlelight. In particular it was that they were respectful audience members who participated positively, and listened and watched. Feedback is always welcome and I proudly share this with our community. Thanks and well done to the children who were willing (and enthusiastic) to represent the school and sing. We had some technical issues with the music (including a tone limited) adult working with them (me!) but they appeared to enjoy themselves and that's always the aim. Thanks also to Feona for stepping in to assist. Our skills lie in admin, not music!

### Volunteer Afternoon Tea

The children baked and prepared some delightful treats, and sharpened their hospitality skills. Despite the low attendance, the children who were participating enjoyed doing so; even doing the dishes. Consolidation of their learning though practical application is fundamental to the Montessori way. We discussed that hospitality staff don't eat with their guests but wait until after work – this was a shock to some of the children. It created a wonderful learning opportunity for them. Thanks to those who did attend.

### Staffing 2015

Zoe Pinard has been in the role of inclusion support in Amethyst and as an assistant within the room previously. Zoe has decided not to continue in a designated role in 2015 however you will sometimes see her here as a relief assistant.

Zoe's contribution though her role has been greatly appreciated and it's our hope to see her back here in a working role in the future. Thanks Zoe – stay connected.

Applications for the two advertised positions – Kindergarten Director Amethyst and Italian Director – close on Friday. We will communicate staffing once finalised however it is anticipated that this won't be until after school is finished. At this stage we will not be advertising for an inclusion support person but filling the role from within the existing Amethyst team. Any further positions that are available will be communicated to our community via the newsletter or emails.

Next week will be a very brief newsletter finalising matters for 2014. There won't be any room reports.

## Positions Vacant

**Italian Language and Cultural Studies Director (part time)**  
Commencement 2015, ongoing

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced persons who are able to think outside the mainstream model of education to create and implement a rich, diverse specialist subject to deliver to primary aged Montessori students.

**Essential criteria**

- Ability to speak and teach the Italian language.
- VET registration.
- Certification in First Aid, Anaphylaxis and CPR.
- Experience in managing a multi-aged classroom.
- Demonstrated capacity to develop and implement curriculum for children aged 5-12 years.
- Ability to work independently but also collaborate with other staff.
- Strong communication skills.

**Highly desirable:**

- Montessori qualification or experience in a Montessori educational environment, understanding of Montessori philosophy.

Some flexibility around work arrangements regarding day/times.  
6.5 hrs per wk – 5 hrs contact

Position description, selection criteria and details are available upon request.

Please contact the Principal Heather Gerrard  
[principal@beechworthmontessori.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@beechworthmontessori.vic.edu.au)  
03 5728 2940

Applications close Friday December 12<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Kindergarten Director Cycle 1 (3-5 years)**  
Full time, 12 month appointment Jan – Dec 2015

An exciting opportunity exists for the right person at our progressive Montessori school that caters for children aged from birth – 12 years.

Following a temporary restructure of roles due to qualification compliance and training, this opportunity for a leadership role in our school will be pivotal to maintaining the delivery of a high quality program.

**Shared responsibility role working alongside other Directors**

**Essential criteria:**

- Early Childhood qualification approved under the DEECD funding requirements.
- Current certification in First Aid, Anaphylaxis and CPR.
- Montessori qualification or experience in a Montessori educational environment, detailed knowledge of Montessori philosophy.
- Experience working towards and understanding of the NQF and development of the QIP.
- Experience in managing a multi-aged classroom and developing lessons and materials for this age group.
- Flexibility and ability to lead and work in a team.
- Strong communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively with other staff across a broad range of programs.

Provide current CV and evidence and examples addressing the essential criteria.

Phone 03 5728 2940 or email [info@beechworthmontessori.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@beechworthmontessori.vic.edu.au)  
Applications close Fri 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014

*Kind regards, Heather*

## General News

- Missing Montessori Polo top. The Cherry girls have had one of their polos swapped during the play last week at the concert. They have acquired a size 12 polo and lost their size 8 polo. If all cast and crew members could please check their tops and return if found that would be appreciated.
- Did you know that you can use the SchoolStream app to notify of your child's absence from school. We received our first one last week– just click on the contact, choose email and complete the email and send.
- School photos are anticipated for delivery this week.



**Outside the Box!**

Yoga Classes being held at Beechworth  
Montessori School starting 6<sup>th</sup> February  
**MONDAYS 6-12yo & FRIDAYS 4-8yo**  
**3.15-4pm**

Maximum 8 kids per class

Cost: \$49 for 7 weeks

Phone Deb Reeves (Matilda & Kendra's Mum)  
0407 531 510 to enrol

## Wanted

A responsible person to supervise children aged between 5-12 for approx. 30 minutes per day (maximum) in the afternoon after school at the Vline bus stop in Beechworth – commencing 2015. These children then catch a Vline bus to Bright via Myrtleford. Mon – Friday 3.20 – approx. 3.45pm. Please see Heather if you are interested. Could be a young adult or a responsible teenager. If an adult – a current working with children check would be required. For more information or to register your interest please see Heather. Please pass this onto anyone who you think may be interested, including grandparents and those members of the community seeking to be engaged with young children.

## Lost Property

Cycle 2&3 – please check the area over the next week as all unnamed items will be donated to the local welfare agencies after this time. Students are reminded that any items left on the floor or out in the playground or courtyard are placed into lost property. Named items are returned to the owners.

## P&F News

A huge thank you to all those who helped out with the Community Christmas Market on Saturday. Too many people to name but a huge effort by many families was greatly appreciated! Thank you. We made approximately \$300 on the stall and still have many left over products for sale in the school foyer. Check them out - the reusable squeeze pouches are great!

Also, a general THANK YOU to everyone who has contributed to P&F for 2014. Although P&F is not the core business of the school, for many families it provides a way for them to be involved and contributes to the overall experience of a school community! It is also an avenue for us to raise much needed funds for particular projects within the school. Thank you to everyone for your efforts! It has been a great year.

### **Parents and Friends End of Year Get Together**

Another big year nearly over. Let's all catch up before the Christmas break. Please join us at Lake Sambell - Tuesday 16th December from 5pm. Bring a salad to share and the P&F will cook up sausages and vegies burgers for all. BYO picnic gear (plates, knives, forks, chairs, rugs, drinks etc). Please rsvp to the office.

## **Ruby Room News**

Merry Christmas from the Ruby Room staff and we look forward to seeing you again in 2015 for Tiny Tots, Transition or After Session Care.

**Michaela, Mel and Lisa**

## **Cycle 1 News**

It's hard to believe we have reached the end of the year. To those families leaving us next week, thank you so much for everything you have contributed to our school and our classroom communities. Your involvement has been greatly appreciated and we will miss our regular contact with you and your children. We wish you all the best for the future and welcome visits when you have time.

We are seeking assistance from people to maintain our garden over the hot summer period. We have an automatic timer and sprinklers for the grass, but need someone (or several someone's) to come in and shift hoses occasionally and water pot plants. If you are able to help out, could you please see Lynda or Tameeka to discuss this.

Our hens are enjoying their enlarged home and have started wandering out into the playground at large each morning to peck around in the grass and plants. Thanks to Libby Boyd who has offered to take our chickens home over the holidays to care for them.

It has been a busy, productive first full year in our new venue. Thanks so much for your contributions to our programs and our garden projects. We wish you all the best for a peaceful and happy festive season and hope that you all get to enjoy some family time. We look forward to seeing you all again next year.

## **Amethyst**



This is our final newsletter for 2014. What a busy year it has been. Thank you for your continued support and involvement in our program.



## Farewells

We are saying to say goodbye to Isaac, Jasmine, Harry and Eli. We wish them and their families well on their future journeys.

## Grandparents Day

Thank you to the grandparents and families who attended Grandparents Day. It is always rewarding to watch the children interacting with their families and interesting to note what activities they choose to engage in with their special visitors.



## Herman the German Friendship Cake

Taj came last Wednesday with 'Herman the German Friendship Cake' (sourdough) to share with his peers in Amethyst room. We have had to care for the sourdough: stirring it; making sure it is still bubbling; adding milk, sugar and flour; stirring it some more; watching it grow and bubble; and stirring again. Thank to the Chabaud family for looking after our friendship cake over the weekend. On Thursday we will be ready to make the cake. This has been an all-inclusive project, with lots of discussion and learning about sourdough. Thanks Taj for thinking of us.

## Sunflowers

As you are walking down the steps cast your eye to the Cycle 1 vegetable garden to view the beautiful sunflowers we planted earlier in the term. Oliver Baker gave us the seeds from his own sunflower at home.

## 2015

I would like to thank the Amethyst families for their support and understanding of the need to restructure the staffing in our room for next year. You will be all notified as soon as more information is available.

- Melissa and I will be working half time and studying full time ready to return to our usual roles in 2016 with our ACECQA recognised Montessori Diploma of Early Childhood and Primary Education.
- Lisa will remain in her position as part time assistant, she is the ever-faithful constant thread of Amethyst room.
- We say a heart felt goodbye to Zoe, she is not returning to the role of Inclusion Support next year. Thank you for all you have done in Amethyst over the past 2 years. The staff, children and parents will miss your work and presence in the room.



We wish all the children and their families a very happy and safe holiday.

***Tameeka, Melissa, Lisa, Zoe***

## Emerald

Thanks to those grandparents and special people who were able to join us for grandparents day recently. It was terrific for staff to meet these important people in children's lives and to hear a little of their experiences of and responses to children's Montessori learning.



This year we farewell Claudia, Nyika and Amelie as they head off to other schools, and wish Spencer, Tilly and Luka all the best as they complete the transition to Cycle 2 – our classroom will certainly feel different at the start of next year.

Parent/ teacher interviews are being held for school aged Cycle 1 children this week. You should all have received your child's end of year reports yesterday and the opportunity to discuss them in person will be invaluable.

Thanks to the Showers and Ritchie families for adopting our ducklings and chickens permanently. Hatching them in the classroom and having them available for families to take home overnight was an important learning experience and one we are keen to repeat in future.





We are seeking a family to look after Emmanuel our classroom canary over the summer period. He comes with a large cage and plenty of food and is a joy to listen to. If you are able to accommodate him, please let one of us know.

We will have a new look classroom next year with new floor coverings being installed over the holiday period. Whilst this will be lovely and has been long awaited, it means a lot of work for staff with the entire classroom and storeroom to be packed up and relocated then set up again before the end of the year. Thanks to those who have offered their assistance to move furniture but we have the heavy lifting sourced out and are intending to pack the room quickly and methodically on the day after children finish at school. Once again, your generosity is greatly appreciated.

There is still a great deal of hard work occurring in our classrooms – there is no such thing as an end of year wind down in a Montessori classroom as the following pictures show:



## Montessori Matters

### 100+ Non-Toy Gifts for Toddlers to Teens

What do we really want when we offer gifts to our kids? I'm guessing excitement, happiness, hopefully some lasting joy. It's disheartening to give a highly anticipated toy or the newest gadget, only to see it ignored a week or two later. The antidote? Fewer presents of better quality, as well as an emphasis on experiences. According to science, these are the gifts that result in real pleasure.

#### Real Tools for Real Work

Young kids beg to help out. Saying yes to those offers is more important than we might imagine and helps us raise kids who are more likely to take on household responsibilities as they get older. Rather than toy versions of tools, get them

appropriately sized real tools (to use with supervision). You can get plenty of useful, not-too-large tools at your local hardware and home goods store. As kids get older, invest in adult-sized tools they can use for a lifetime. Starting at four years old we got our kids woodworking tools, plus access to scrap wood. We also kept a stool handy for little kids to help at the counter, and whenever possible let them pour their own drinks from a tiny jug into a tiny cup during mealtimes—cultivating coordination as well as a sense of involvement. When our oldest was three, and loved to turn machines on and off, we got him a hand vac as a gift. He used it for years, immediately on the scene to vacuum up crumbs like a man on a mission.

**Woodworking tools:** *Rubber mallet, vintage manual hand drill, work gloves, level, safety glasses, tool belt, battery-powered drill, cordless screwdriver, tool box, plus books such as Builder Boards: How to Build the Take-Apart Playhouse, 14 Woodworking Projects For Parents and Kids To Build Together, and The Kids' Building Workshop. For teens, more complex project books as well as power tools, adult-sized hand tools, a sturdy workbench, and the freedom to work on their own.*

**Kitchen-y enticements.** *Apron, egg slicer, small rolling pin, rotary egg beater, small mixing bowls, a step stool or adjustable kitchen helper stool. Engaging cookbooks like The Do It Myself Kids' Cookbook, Twist It Up, and Kids' First Cookbook. For teens, a high quality kitchen utensil of their own (a good chef's knife is a classic gift) along with cookbooks they'll be eager to test out such as Cooking for Geeks, The Everything College Cookbook, or a cookbook aimed at particular tastes.*

**Gardening tools:** *Seeds, small gloves, trowel, bucket, small rake and shovel, (there are lots of child-sized tools, containers to start indoor plants from sprouting vegetables like sweet potatoes, a kit to grow sprouts for salads and stir fries, books such as Gardening Lab for Kids and Gardening Projects for Kids. Teens with horticultural interests will appreciate adult-sized tools, gift certificates for seed companies, and specialty books.*

**Outdoor adventure tools:** *magnifying glass, collapsible cup or collapsible water bottle, water bottle sling, spork, sleeping bag, flashlight, hand-warmers, vest with lots of pockets for gear, binoculars, raincoat or rain parka, headlamp, compass, lantern, multi-tool.*

### Interest-Based Classes

Favorite lessons for one of my kids were surprisingly affordable one-on-one bagpiping lessons with a gentleman who'd once been Pipe Major for Scotland's Black Watch. One-time or ongoing classes geared for enjoyment as well as competence can expand on an interest. For teens, one-on-one mentoring in an area of passionate interest is even better. *Coding, whittling, horseback riding, yoga, fencing, skiing, dance, pottery, rock climbing, archery, gymnastics, glass blowing*

### Membership or Season Passes

My oldest son was the youngest member of a model railroad club and almost never missed their regular meetings. Consider a membership to an organization that fits your child's passions. You might join local historical society, rock collector's group, chess club, amateur archaeology organization, herpetology society, magician's guild, whatever builds on a young person's fascination. Be sure to read newsletters, attend classes, and otherwise enjoy member benefits. Other possibilities include: *museum, aviary, botanical garden, wildlife area, amusement park, recreation centre, aquarium*

### One Time Passes

Make this a parent-child activity for young children, for older kids buy two or more passes so they can go with friends. *ski slopes, challenge courses, paintball range, climbing gym, skating, golf course, bowling*

### Event Tickets

These are special occasions, ones that'll stay in their memories. Don't forget to take pictures when you arrive.

*live theatre, concert, sporting event,*

### **Out-of-the-Ordinary Things to do Together**

These ideas are great coming from a parent, they may be even more thrilling coming from relatives who want to spend more one-on-one time with younger members of the family. Simply give materials, instructions, or brochures for something you'll be doing together. When you give the gift, make sure to set a date!

*Print out a recipe you've never tried, include ingredients, set a date to make it together.*

*Go on a train ride.*

*Make a garden together. Gift a few supplies for the project.*

*Give a bunch of boxes along with the inspiration of Welcome to Your Awesome Robot or find even bigger boxes to throw a kids BYOB party (bring-your-own-box).*

*Give fabric markers and white or light-colored plain pillowcases (well-worn ones from thrift stores are perfect for this) to decorate your dreams with drawings, quotes, or wishes.*

*Take a road trip, maybe aiming to see oddball attractions.*

*Give some beanbags and learn to juggle together.*

*Go on a hike. Give hike-related gear and maybe a book like My Nature Book or any of Jane Kirland's books in the Take a Walk series*

*Go on a more challenging hike with teens, maybe take along a book like Wreck This Journal Everywhere.*

*Try stand up paddle boarding together.*

*Take kayaking lessons together.*

*Give coins to play at a place that still has arcade games.*

*Try geocaching. This modern-day treasure hunt is made possible with a GPS. Learn more at [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) or [navicache.com](http://navicache.com)*

*Participate in a mud run.*

*Construct an insect hotel together, you might pair it with a book like Insectigations. Teens may enjoy creating larger-scale insect habitat.*

*Build a clay oven together. Test it out by baking homemade pizza.*

*Give a bird feeder or binoculars, and sign up together to log your bird sightings at eBird or participate together in the Great Backyard Bird Count.*

*Give rubber stamps and a logbook to go letterboxing together. Learn more at [letterboxing.org](http://letterboxing.org) and [atlasquest.com](http://atlasquest.com)*

*Go cloud watching. Consult The Cloud Collector's Handbook as you "collect" different cloud types. Post photos to the online gallery of the Cloud Appreciation Society.*

*Make treats for birds and animals including pinecones rolled in peanut butter and birdseed, popcorn strings, and cranberry garlands. Then go outside to hang them on a tree together.*

*Mark cardboard squares with Scrabble letters for a giant game to be played outside.*

*Set aside open-ended project time together. Get inspiration from books such as Robotics, Tinkerlab, and Unbored.*

### **Subscriptions**

Magazines are often the only things kids receive in the mail. There are wonderful magazine for kids. For babies there's *Babybug*, toddler to preschool ages consider *Ladybug*, *National Geographic Little Kids*, *Click*, and *Ranger Rick Jr.*.

*For elementary-age kids, New Moon Girls, Muse, Faces, and OWL.*



*Boomerang subscriptions are one of the best things ever and a favorite with my kids. We saved every one we got. It's like a radio show wrapped up in an audio magazine, covered with a delicious layer of smart. Perfect to save for a long trip, great to pass along to younger siblings.*

*For teens, find a publication that meets their interests, whether hip hop or high fashion. Look for indie magazines if you can't find something that's just right.*

### **Quality Musical Instruments**

Real instruments, scaled for a child's size, sound great and inspire interest. Even very young children can pluck along to sheet music tucked under the strings of a lap harp. For impromptu playing at my house we leave out a number of instruments including a wooden flute, set of panpipes, ukulele, small pentatonic scale harp, and a small accordion. And one of the best gifts we gave one of our sons was a much-desired, even if used, electric guitar when he turned 13. You might want to start with something affordable, such as a harmonica or ocarina. Here are some sources for child-sized instruments.

*HearthSong lap harp and extra sheet music*

*Schylling accordian or Woodstock accordion*

*For Small Hands percussion instruments such as shakers and drums*

*Harps of Lorien child-sized or larger lyre*

*ocarinas and harmonicas*

*Woodstock chimes and children's hand bells*

*guitars, variable sizes*

*pentatonic flute*

### **Parent-Made Gifts**

There's something special about gifts you make. A snugly fleece blanket, a second-hand riding toy with a custom paint job, a refinished child-sized rocking chair. You can find plenty of ideas online, but don't forget these old standbys.

*Homemade coupons they can "spend."*

- *Get-out-of-one "job/chore".*
- *Kid's choice movie night.*
- *Stay up an hour past bedtime.*
- *Solo time with mum or dad all Saturday, kid's choice of activities.*
- *Sleep-over party.*
- *After dark walk.*
- *Scary storytelling around a fire.*
- *A "yes" to any one project on Instructibles.com.*
- *A dress-up trunk with lengths of fabric for capes, interesting hats, strange shirts and skirts, badges, belts, purses, jewelry, masks, and more.*
- *A legacy present. If you're lucky enough to have things from earlier generations, pass them on. Give grandpa's fountain pen to your daughter, explaining that he loved to write as much as she does. Give a great uncle's watch to a teen who shares his wanderlust. Give the funky afghan your aunt made to the kid who is as offbeat as she was. Tell them some stories about these relatives when you give such gifts!*

And in keeping with the theme ... here's another article

# 16 Montessori-Inspired Gifts for Ages 0 to 18



*Are you tired of buying meaningless toys that become clutter and dust collectors after the holiday season? Here is a list of great ideas from Montessori educators, parents and students that fit Montessori's planes of development. Let our list help you with choosing the right gift for the right age. We assure you that what you purchase will be used over and over again, all while contributing to the development of your child.*

## The First Plane of Development- Ages 0-6

During the ages 0-3 the child is discovering who they are to become but they are not clearly conscious of their learning. As they progress through this plane, the 3-6 year-old becomes conscious of their work and can often be found reciting the words "I can do it myself." As the child nears the age of six, we should be observing a confident and independent child. During this plane, your child's mind is absorbing information like a sponge. Let these gift ideas help your child to explore and take it all in.

1. **Infant Coordinator Mirror** - This gift will allow your infant to develop motor skills and gain independence on their own. They will learn to pull themselves up and balance and be entertained all at the same time. Providing the infant with an independent way to practice a skill helps them to understand that they are capable and can practice the skill for as long as they would like.
2. **Magna Tiles** – Magna Tiles are an all-time favorite for children of all ages and there is no right or wrong way to play with them. Your child will glow with accomplishment as he connects each Manga Tile and imagines a unique and complex creation. Magna Tiles are sure to be a hit in your home and are well worth the investment. But shhh! Don't tell the kids that parents sometimes play with the Magna Tiles after they go to bed!
3. **Sand Tray**- Your child will be smiling from ear to ear when they open the Sand Tray. Just as they practice in a Montessori classroom, the Sand Tray is used to help the child form letters and numbers in sensorial way. It can also be used to teach pre-writing and assist with fine motor skills. The great part about this gift is that you don't need to purchase this item from a Montessori supplier but it can easily be created with colored sand, sugar or salt and a simple pie tin.
4. **Super Sorting Pie**- The Super Sorting Pie is something that your child will play with for years to come and will engage your child for hours on end. The best part about the Super Sorting Pie is that the "crust" of the pie comes with interchangeable cards that guide the child through different sorting, counting, and matching activities. When your child is done with sorting, counting, matching, and pattern making, they will absolutely love engaging in pretend play as they become pie makers, servers, and party hosts. Add a chef's hat or an apron to the Super Sorting Pie and your child will be happy as can be! Please be mindful that the small fruit pieces are not safe for babies and toddlers who may still enjoy putting objects in their mouths.
5. **Toy Cleaning Set**- Mirroring that of a practical life in the classroom, the toy cleaning set gives children an opportunity to participate in caring for their home environment and tidying up their messes. The toy cleaning set is child sized for easy handling and made out of wood so it mirrors the quality items that we use as adults. Give the Toy Cleaning Set from Melissa & Doug a try... before you know it your child will be wiping counters, cleaning baseboards with socks on their hands, folding towels, and matching socks!

## The Second Plane of Development- Ages 6-12

During this plane, the child must consciously make an effort to understand the information that is being absorbed. In Montessori, we call this the "absorbent mind." The child's personality becomes more complex and the child seeks to understand reasons rather than facts. The child yearns for independence and becomes interested in learning about everything. The imagination of the child craves to explore the world around them and

they soon learn the interconnectedness of the life in which they live. The gifts at this age focus on independence and imagination.

1. **A Pet-** Children crave independence and responsibility. A small pet is a great way for a child to learn how to care for others, be responsible, and respect all life forms. It also shows the child that the adult trust them enough to take care of another life. Parents who take care of their child's pet for them are missing out on teaching so many valuable life lessons. If you are feeling a bit uneasy, start with something as simple as a goldfish or hermit crab.
2. **A "Travelling" Box-** Will you be traveling this holiday season? A great way to teach a child about the geography and culture of a place is to gift them a box to fill with items as you travel. The possibilities that could go inside a box are endless. The key to making this "informational" box successful is to make it inviting to your child, to introduce the box prior to your travels and to introduce it a little at a time. You do not have to take the box on the travels with you but a good suggestion would be to offer an empty bag inside the box that your child could take on a trip and fill it with things he/she find during his travels.
3. **Legos, K'nex, Erector or Keva planks-** The key to these popular items is to give basic sets rather than ones that are meant to produce one thing. This enables the child to create his or her own design, plan the construction, and fit the pieces together in the most intuitive way. Working with these building sets, helps the child to plan and organize thoughts, material and process. This work is both logical/sequential (left brain) and spatial (right brain) while also engaging the child's fine motor skills. If they collapse or fall apart, they can simply be rebuilt, which is a great metaphor to learn for the rest of one's life.
4. **A Magazine Subscription-** This is a gift that keeps on giving long after the holiday season is over. Giving the gift of a magazine that meets the child's interests is a great idea for this holiday season and the choices are endless. Support a child that loves cooking by gifting "ChopChop," a magazine that includes healthy, inexpensive and diverse recipes for families to create together. There are also the traditional favorites such as "Ranger Rick" and "Highlights for Kids" which every child is sure to love!
5. **Money to Shop for Someone in Need-** A great way to empower a child is to allow them to shop for someone less fortunate than themselves. Maybe you selected a family to sponsor this season or a local church or library is collecting items for the holidays, whatever the case may be, hand over the money and let your child do the shopping. This leads into great conversations about needs and wants and helps your child to see a different perspective on the world around them. Not only are they helping a person in need, but they are spending quality time with an adult who is teaching them a life lesson they will never forget!
6. **A Moon Jar-** The Moon Jar teaches children the importance of spending, saving and sharing their money. Not only does it help children learn about money, it allows them the independence to choose how their money will be spent. A great read for parents on this topic is entitled **The Opposite of Spoiled by Ron Lieber**, pre-order your copy on Amazon today before it hits the shelves this February!

### The Third Plane of Development- Ages 12-18

This stage of development focuses on the child growing into an active member of society. Although the children in this plane are learning to accept each other socially and explore their world, this plane often mirrors that of the 1<sup>st</sup> plane of development. The children in this plane seek to find their identity and become individuals in their community. Time with friends and time on their own sleeping or eating become routine for children during these ages. Adolescents can be tricky to buy for but these ideas are sure to spark their interests!

1. **"Wreck This Journal"-** This book encourages creations, mistakes and a "learn-by-doing" approach. Children at this age can very easily fall into the trap of being afraid to make mistakes and this is great practice to allow them to take risks. This deviously delightful book allows students to "rub this page on a dirty car," "figure out a way to attach these pages together," or "collect a 'W'." It is creative and destructive all at the same time.
2. **Games of Strategy** such as Chess or Perplexus- These games require hand-eye coordination, problem-solving, ingenuity, perseverance, teach resilience and patience, and incorporate kinesthetic activity as well as visualization skills. The Montessori method conceals lessons for the student into a fun learning experience similar to the way these games operate.
3. **Erin Condren Life Planner-** This gift supports the adolescent (gender specific due to the flavor of the planner itself) as a whole child as she learns to support herself as a student, athlete, actor, daughter, dancer, or any other role she may have to balance in the hectic schedule. A large part of the adolescent program is the learning of time-management and organizational skills that can be translated from the middle grade years, through the college years, and into the rest of her life. The Life Planner particularly supports the Montessori adolescent program ideal of color-coding for compartmentalization of areas of your life, long- and short-term time management, consistent use of tools and strategies for personal success, and goal setting and tracking. Any girl would be lucky to receive one of these beautiful planners for 2015.
4. **A DIY Kit (that fits their interest)-** Does your child love lip gloss, tennis shoes, comic books or felting? Uncommongoods.com offers multiple do-it-yourself kits for the creative child that wants to explore. From the "Knitty Kitty Kit" to "Penny Portraits" and the "Sneaker Customization Kit" you are sure to find the perfect project for the adolescent in your life.



5. **An Opportunity for Healthy Risk Taking-** Give your adolescent the gift of “taking a risk” this holiday season. Some ideas include kite-boarding lessons, a drama class, bungee jumping, a helicopter rider, cooking class, a henna tattoo, or a rock climbing membership. Healthy risk taking allows for the child to understand that not all risks are harmful. Risk taking behaviors peak during the adolescent years so why not give them the opportunity to embrace positive risk taking? This will help them to feel independent and embrace finding their identity.

No matter the age of the child, a variety of gifts can reach each child’s interest, promote independence, and allow for imaginative play. Our simple and condensed list is just a snip-it of ideas to support the growth and development of a Montessori child. Keep in mind these ideas as you begin the holiday gift-giving season. From our family at Montessori Rocks to yours, we wish you a peaceful holiday season!



Amanda Witulski has been dedicated to Montessori education for the past six years. She received a bachelor’s in Education from Wayne State University and holds an elementary credential through the American Montessori Society. Currently, she is working on the completion of her master’s in Educational Leadership. Both in and out of the classroom, Amanda has spread the love of Montessori with teachers, students, parents and the community. She has a love for differentiated instruction and a true passion for meeting the interests of her students. She is extremely excited to be a part of the Montessori Rocks blogging team to share her knowledge with you and the entire Montessori community.

## Community News

(Family Day Care)

Reserve your child's spot for 2015.  
Call Cinda on 0415170642

### Free to caring home

Beautiful, tiny and handsome purebred Japanese Bantam rooster. Interested? Call Khy 0438 801 968

#### ~ Circus In Yackandandah - 2015 ~

*International circus artists, Xavier and Zoe Pinard, are pleased to offer circus classes in Yackandandah.*

*With 25 years experience as artists and 10 years experience as teachers the classes deliver an exciting and varied circus training program.*

*Through skills such as tumbling, trapeze, handstands, juggling and pyramids, your children will have fun while developing core strength, balance and agility.*

*In 2015, class options will look something like this;*

Monday    4pm - 5pm (acrobatics classes)  
              5pm - 6pm (aerial classes)  
              6pm - 7pm (Adults classes)

Tuesday    3.50pm - 4.50pm (younger primary)  
              4.50pm - 5.50pm (older primary)

Wednesday 3pm - 3.45pm (3-4 year old classes)  
              4pm - 5pm (older primary)  
              5pm - 6.30pm (advanced class)

Cost - \$160 per term (5% off for first sibling, 10% off for second or more)

3 - 4yrs classes \$140 per term

Adults classes - \$150 per term or a term card of 5 classes for \$80

\* To secure a place, please contact Zoe via email or mobile. [xavierzoe@mac.com](mailto:xavierzoe@mac.com) or 0478 055 091