



HMS

monthly news

ARTICLES, EVENTS, PHOTOS, & MORE!

March 2023



The March Ahead

March is here! It's wild to think we are closer to the end of the school year than the beginning. Time really does fly. We are busy this month at HMS and are excited that you will be able to participate in some of the fun happening on campus this month. I believe by press time our Upper Elementary parent night will have already passed. However, as I type this it has not yet happened and I'm certainly looking forward to it. The Upper El students will be presenting their studies on the thirteen colonies. They have been busy researching and creating their poster boards and other visual aids. This month we also have parent and student evenings where parents can come to the classroom and work with their students, this will be in the Early Childhood and Lower Elementary levels. Our infant and toddler team is working on a Zoom presentation for parent education. Date TBD. We value these opportunities to have parents in the classroom and to give you a peek at the great work happening with our students!

We love parent education opportunities and also place a high value on professional education for our staff. On Saturday several of our assistant teachers will be attending an all-day Montessori workshop in Tacoma. This is the culmination of several weeks of an online learning course specifically directed at Montessori assistant teachers. Midmonth, nine of us will be flying to Boston for The Montessori Event. This is an international conference put on by the American Montessori Society. Cheyenne (Maple), Nichole (Juniper), Grace (Cedar), Jeanie (Alder), Carrie (EC program Director), Lisa and Maria (Tracyton), and I will all be attending. Additionally, a few of our teachers will attend the virtual version of the conference. Teachers who aren't attending the conference will be observing at other schools on March 17th. Observing other schools is also a great way to grow in their practice.

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In addition to attending workshops and keynote addresses in Boston, several of us will be volunteering at an organization called Daily Table. Daily Table is a community grocery store dedicated to providing delicious and nutritious food in underserved communities in the Boston area. We will be helping to stock shelves, greet customers, do inventory, and more. Every year AMS focuses on giving back to the city that is hosting the conference-we have done several projects over the years from a river clean up in San Diego, to working at a food pantry in Washington DC, to working in a Head Start program in Chicago. Schools are also encouraged to do similar projects in their own communities throughout the year. This is one of my favorite activities and something that I have been co-leading for the past eight years. It's pretty amazing to work side by side with other Montessori educators from around the world. We have so much in common, yet each story is unique.

Meanwhile, back at school, the kindergarteners are excited for their field trip to see a performance by Bremerton Westsound Symphony called OrKIDstra. Our older students are gearing up for auditions for Maria Montessori the Musical. Auditions will happen at the end of the month. More details coming soon! Whether your child is old enough to perform (1st-8th grade) or is just a budding audience member, please save the date for Friday May 19th, at 6:00 pm. We are so excited for this event.

And while you have your pen out to mark your calendar, please don't forget about our Annual Auction on April 22nd. It is going to be a lot of fun! We still have opportunities for volunteers, please reach out to Brittany if you have interest in donating an item or in volunteering your time to support the event.

I hope this is a great month for everyone. I look forward to seeing the flowers and trees begin to bloom and look forward to all the wonderful things this month has in store for all of us!

Cheers!

Aimee



Upcoming Events

March 2nd Student & Parent Upper El Night

March 6th Auction Tickets on sale!
(Purchase tickets [HERE](#))



March 7th Student & Parent Early Childhood Night

March 8th Student & Parent Lower El Night

March 17th School Closed - Staff In-Service
(Unlimited childcare - Early Childhood - Jr High only)

April 10th - 14th Spring Break
(Infant & Toddler regular schedule, Unlimited childcare - Early Childhood - Jr High Only)

April 22 Lights! Camera! Auction!
(Tickets on sale March 6th at 9am!)



Around Campus



The Developing Child Birth to Thirty-Six Months

By Nichole Pullman



In the past children were thought to not begin developing important skills until they were learning to walk and talk but luckily Dr. Maria Montessori did not believe that; "Watching a child makes it obvious that the development of his mind comes through his movements." - Dr. Maria Montessori. Now many studies have been done proving that development happens from the start. Many major physical developments happen from birth to thirty-six months.

At birth, children are already able to turn toward the breast to receive food when their cheek is touched, at this time they can recognize the sound of their mother's voice and will startle at noise. All hand, arm, leg, and rooting movements are all reflex motions at this time. At one month children will begin smiling at people and recognizing familiar faces and they can follow bright objects with their eyes maintaining eye contact. All newborn reflexes are still present, such as startle response, rooting reflex, stepping reflex, and hand grasp. Two to four months in a child's growth is rapid, and temperature and heart rate are more regular. When children at this age come upon a new experience they will try and recreate it and that is how the child coordinates movements through attempts and failures. Vision and hearing are coordinated, the child's head becomes more stable and needs less support as their neck muscles become stronger, and children can lift their heads around forty-five degrees when lying on their stomachs. During this period of life, a child can grasp objects and bring them to their mouths and can display controlled movements of their arms and legs, an example of this would be when a child is shaking a rattle. Children will push down their legs when their feet are placed on the floor or other flat surfaces, and at this point, newborn reflexes start to go away, like the moro (startle) reflex and tonic reflex (fencer's pose).

At four to eight months children are becoming more settled in eating and sleeping patterns, children may soothe themselves when tired or upset by sucking their thumb. At this time the child may show wariness with strangers and may fret when parents leave the room. They will react happily to faces they know and will laugh especially in social interactions. At six months the stomach starts to produce an acid necessary for digestion and their first tooth may appear. Children who are closer to 8 months occupy themselves and will repeat tasks such as batting objects with their hands and feet. Eight to twelve months is the time when two big physical developments take place; walking and talking. By one year of age, a child reaches 1 ½ times their birth weight and will usually have had four teeth come in by then. At this time their hands are more developed than their feet and legs. Both their eyes will work in unison, they can see distant objects, and they can walk with something in their hands.

Twelve to eighteen months is what some call the stage of the "E baby": Exploration, experience, experimentation. Children will use maximum physical effort when trying to complete a task, at this stage a child can go up and down stairs, and walk slopes with one-handed assistance. Children may still have a hard time eating with spoons--forks tend to be easier. Children should be able to cross the midline during this age.

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Eighteen to twenty-four months is an active time for children, at this time they can squat, stand on tippy toes, and use their feet to propel non-motorized ride-on toys such as push bikes. Along with being able to use a spoon, glass or straw, and a fork with fewer accidents than before, they are now eating a combination of textures and chopped foods. Children can assist with dressing by pushing their arms through armholes and undressing themselves to an extent.

By twenty-four to thirty months, children are running without falling, can walk backward and sideways, go up and down stairs alone place both feet on one stair, and can jump in place lifting both feet off the ground. Children at this stage have a lot of dexterity, they can string beads by picking the beads up with their thumb and index finger, scribble using one hand, copy drawing side to side and up and down, and remove lids by turning their wrists. At this time children will participate in parallel play and be okay with physical separation from their parents.

At thirty to thirty-six months can undress and dress themselves rather confidently, and can cut using child-size scissors but may not be able to cut on a line. Children can walk forwards and backward and walk on a balance beam placing one foot in front of the other. They now hold pencils or other writing utensils correctly and can copy multiple images such as crosses, circles, and swirls. At this age, children are incredibly physically independent. The physical development from birth to thirty-six months is rapid and extreme, many view these early stages as ones where the child is completely dependent on the mother or caregiver, but children come out with so much capability and that continues to grow with them during their physical development.

Throughout the piece when I state a child “can do” these things during this stage of development doesn't mean your child will always hit these milestones at this time. Seeing what children are capable of is absolutely amazing and knowing the milestones is incredibly helpful in supporting their development.



AUCTION FAQ



When and where will the auction be held?

The auction will be on Saturday, April 22 at the McCormick Woods Clubhouse in Port Orchard.

What is the theme? What is the dress attire?

The auction theme this year is Lights! Camera! Auction! Inspired by Old Hollywood, think semi formal attire for your red carpet entrance. With all the glitz and glam at this event the paparazzi just might show up!

When do tickets go on sale?

Tickets go on sale March 6th at 9am! Set your calendar reminder now so that you don't miss out on this fabulous event. Tickets are \$65 per person and if you are interested in a full table that offering will be available with a special discount.

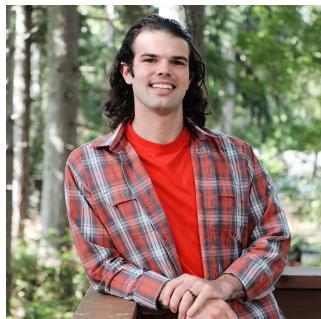
How do I get involved?

Currently we are still accepting donations and volunteers! If you would like more information on how to give or volunteer contact one of your auction co-chairs or check out the auction minute [**HERE!**](#)

Your auction co-chairs this year are Melisa Parish (melisa.parish@gmail.com) and Sarah Baker (sarah@harbormontessori.org)

Dynamic Breath

By Mason Ward



The Power of Your Breath

When you take a breath there is more than just the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Breath has many influences that go deeper than the lungs. The art of breathing is on a resurgence as more western communities look towards eastern countries and their historic practices surrounding the cultivation of breath. While I am not a Yogi I have spent many years practicing and understanding the dynamics of breath. I have come to the conclusion that if you can control and understand your breath, you can control and understand your actions.

Your breath has many influences on your body. The first one we think of most is the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. This is a very important task but not the only important task. Breathing also regulates our pH levels, hormone levels, massages our organs, controls the pressurization of expansion and contraction, integrates our movements, regulates circulation, and regulates our nerve tone.

These alone are sometimes skipped when we look at breathing. This is partly because of the way we think. We dissect the parts of our anatomy and label them as separate. We have scholarly courses solely focused on a narrow scope of work. It's not bad to have these courses, but it isn't the way we should look at our health. What I hope you gain from this article is that breathing is the key to accessing the deeper parts of yourself and that it is one of the greatest regulatory tools you have.

The 7 Breathing Layers

There are many ways to approach breathing but one of the best models that overviews the power of breathing are the 7 breathing layers. These layers are all happening but by focusing on certain aspects of breathing your overall breathing health will benefit. Working on any of the layers will support the other layers.

1. Path

Path way is the first layer to work on in understanding the power of your breath. In through your nose and out through your nose is the goal but depending upon work load is not always accessible. In through your nose and out through your mouth is a good place to start. Breathing through your nose is only acceptable when you can't breath through your nose.

In order to understand the importance of breathing through your nose I want you to make a fist. Now that fist is about the space your sinus and nasal passageways take up in your head. By breathing through your nose you start to activate these passageways. The nose is responsible for appropriately gauging the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels entering and leaving your passageways. It warms or cools the air depending upon the outside temperature. It creates more surface area for adding moisture to your breath. It also catches harmful bacteria/foreign objects trying to enter your respiratory system.

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The power of your nasal breathing should not be underestimated. It is a powerful tool that needs to be exercised. From what I've read, part of the reason why many heads are shrinking, skulls and jawlines are moving, and more invasive surgeries are being performed from orthodontists is because we do not breathe through our nose. For children in particular it is important to breathe through their nose because it helps with the development of their skull so that everything fits such as their teeth, jaw line, and sinus/nasal passageways.

So what should you do? Close your mouth and breath through your nose. If you are daring, sleep with some mouth tape. I do it occasionally, and I wake up well rested. If that's too concerning, watch a movie with some tape over your mouth so you can't breathe through your mouth. If you need to you can easily remove it.

2. Leading

Your breath begins your movement. A way to see this is to simply squat down and pick something up. Do this three times and get a feel for your movement. On the fourth squat first start by breathing out and imagine your breath is making room for your squat. When you want to go back up, breathe in first and feel the pressure building in your body as you want to go up. This is a basic understanding of how your breath leads your movements. You can do this for every movement. Picking up your kids' toys? Do this exercise. Make sure it's in through your nose as stated before.

3. Relaxation

Your breath has the power to relax you. Primarily the relaxation comes through the out breath. Your inhale has a small tension pattern so breathing out is normally paired with relaxation. However the in breath starts to move and massage parts of your thoracic cavity. Later on you'll be able to even massage your limbs through breath. As you walk, or lay down, notice your breath circulating. The tension points are places where breath and circulation are not properly mixing. Imagine that as you breath in your breath takes that spot and physically grabs it. As you breathe out, allow your breath to move the tension and spread it out. Localizing the breathing promotes circulation and massages the tissues around the tension. Doing five minutes of this can be very beneficial to your overall mobility and circulation.

4. Sufficiency

In short, we breathe too much. Most of us breathe about 20,000 cycles a day. The goal should be anywhere from 5,000 to 8,000 breaths a day. In some meditative states I've seen even fewer breaths but for daily life our bodies should be sufficient to sustain all bodily functions with 8,000 breaths. The negative part of breathing too much is the resemblance and fight or flight responses. When you're scared or nervous you switch into a state of fight or flight which is a sympathetic response as mentioned in last month's newsletter. In those states your respiration cycles become shallow and rapid. This is needed when being threatened. It pumps circulation and preps the body for huge oxygen and hormone dumps. When we are not threatened and just sitting however we cause a change in chemistry that can have some negative reactions to the body.

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By lowering your breath counts you actually take in more oxygen because of the increase of CO₂ production. This is needed for the release of oxygen from hemoglobin. This high burn state also increases the oxygen reserve in the spleen. By working the spleen with breathing exercises you'll be able to handle stressful situations without high elevations because your body will have a reserve of oxygen ready.

The exercises to try are breathing pyramids. The first pyramid is simple and should be the baseline work for sufficiency. While walking count your steps. You're going to start with counting to one and take a full breath. When taking another step, breathe all the way out. You'll then take two steps breathing in but not breathing in deeper. You'll keep the same volume of air as the first breath but then extend the fill time over two steps. You'll do the same on the exhale. You'll go up to three, four, and the goal is to go all the way up to twenty breaths sustained. After getting up make sure you go back down. If you stop at ten steps and you max out, that's fine, walk back down to one breath per step. If your breath breaks that's fine go back down to and sustain that count. Make sure you go back down.

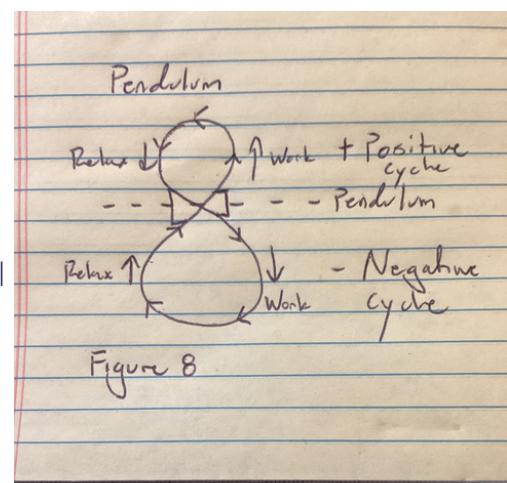
Only after you have sustained 15 steps with your inhale and exhale can you add suspensions to your pyramids. You'll inhale, exhale, and hold your breath empty. This still follows the same rhythm as above.

5. Continuous

Unless doing purposeful suspensions ensure you don't hold your breath. While doing the lead squatting or the walking sufficiency exercises make sure you cycle through your breaths without a hold. You want to be able to continuously cycle to start breaking apart tension patterns. A lot of times we hold our breath to cheat but we are trying to learn how to use our breath through many modes. Hunkering down on breaths and restraining them is not beneficial. Breath holds have benefits but only after some work of cleaning out dysfunction.

6. Pendulum

Breathing pendulums are one of the greatest tools in breath work. You'll notice I'm the picture that the breath has many cycles. Inhales can be relaxing and working. Exhales can be relaxing and working depending upon tidal volume. The important part to note is the middle pendulum shift. When you switch from that work to relaxation your body responds differently. Most of us have a natural disposition to be in the upper figure eight with positive breath cycles and are foreign to negative cycle breathing. It's okay but part of understanding the power of your breath, as well as to open up the diversity of breath, you need to be able to work with negative breathing cycles.



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A simple figure eight exercise is nice to start. While walking, notice your breath. When you inhale your body expands out. When you exhale you to a neutral moment of switching, a neutral point. After the calming point, breathe out more to a negative cycle. After all the way out, breathe in again and expand to a neutral comfy. You'll repeat this over and over again and take note of your bodily sensations. Do this while stretching and feel your breath push and pull through the tissues. It's a breath massage.

7. Independence

This last one is putting everything together without you even working on it. A few of these exercises today decreases your baseline stress and immobility. You'll start taking fewer breaths or breathe deeper into yourself. Pain can come and go and you'll be able to work them out. Sleep will get better as your resting breath will make sleeping a more powerful tool. Allowing your breath to independently do what it needs to do is important but currently we only have a limited bandwidth of possibilities. Fifteen minutes a day while walking or exercising with these breathing principles can drastically improve your health. Doing these with your child will have long lasting effects on overall health and resilience.

Breathing clearer improves focus and concentration. These are after all another way to meditate. By regulating chemistry with your breath processing will be easier. Your body temperature can regulate better. Your hunger can change. Your irritability can diminish.

Enjoy these exercises. Remember to always treat yourself kindly. When doing these with your child remember that they are children and that they'll get distracted. That doesn't mean they're not watching you.

Resources

Breath - James Nestor

The Oxygen Advantage - Patrick McKeown

The Miracle of Breath - Andy Caponigro



Board Corner

My name is Danielle Cole Pasquale and I am in my 3rd year as a Board Trustee. I am the mother of 4 children. My daughter Saoirse (age 4) is in the Spruce room. Our family joined HMS the year Saoirse was born just a few short months after moving to the area. Her brother, Taran, also attended HMS in the Maple room.

Before moving to the area, my husband and I visited Gig Harbor to tour schools. We spent two days touring what felt like every option Gig Harbor offered. After walking out of the last scheduled tour, my husband turned to me and said, "We can't move here." Our last effort was to knock on the door of HMS. We were hesitant because we wanted both of our younger children to attend the same school and our previous experience with Montessori was limited. We were warmly greeted and offered to tour the school. We were impressed by the peaceful serenity of the classrooms, and infant room, the curriculum environment even for the youngest ages, and the openness and warmth of the HMS staff. We immediately signed up on the waiting list, crossing our fingers in hopes we would be able to enroll that fall. We were very lucky to be able to enroll and watch our children blossom at HMS whether in Maple, Spruce, Juniper or Willow rooms.

Now each day I feel a sense of peace, trust, and confidence in dropping my daughter off and watch as she hops out of the car singing "goodbye mom" and skips off to meet up with friends, and her trusted teachers to do her "work". She joyously attends school, and is sad any day the school is closed. It's a wonderful feeling we were able to find such warm and peaceful learning environment in which she has blossomed. She can't wait to tackle her kindergarten year. We are eternally grateful for HMS in having provided a solid foundation of learning and preparing our two youngest children on a trajectory for success.



**Danielle Cole Pasquale
Board Trustee**

CALLING ALL FAMILIES!

Do you have a special knack?

Do you like to host events?

Throw theme parties?

Raise money?

OR

Do you like the big picture?

Be in the know?

Want to help HMS succeed for another 40+ years?

OR

Is money your thing?

Budgets, P&Ls, investments, banking?

How about numbers on spreadsheets, setting financial goals?

OR

Is planning spaces a love you have?

What about building and creating?

Handyman projects?

If any of these strike your fancy, please reach out to me:

boardchair@harbormontessori.org

We are always looking for potential people to serve on one of our many HMS Board committees &/or join us as a trustee on the Board.

We can meet, have a coffee, you can share your passion, and I can answer any questions you may have.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Wendy Holt



Around Campus

