

John XXIII Montessori Children's Center

CGS Atrium Newsletter ~ Ordinary Time, Fall 2004

A Note from Maria

Your children are a joy! I feel so blessed to be in the Atrium, working and praying with them. The children have quickly adjusted to the routines and rituals of the Atrium. They have been introduced to the Liturgical colors, singing a favorite song: *"Purple and green and red and white are the colors of the year. Purple and green and red and white remind us of the light. Purple's for preparation, white's for celebration, green is for the growing time, red is for Pentecost . . ."*

We are quickly learning the language of the altar and enjoy lighting and extinguishing the candles. Returning children are revisiting and meditating on their favorites, such as the Good Shepherd and the Mustard Seed, and the new children are beginning to hear these parables for the first time in the Atrium. *"I wonder what it means that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep?" "I think it means He gives love to His sheep."*

The Level II children are busy workers, returning to favorite work and friends. We were able to go outside one beautiful day and roll out the long 80 foot Fettucia (ribbon)– giving them a sense of the breadth of salvation history and highlighting three moments: Creation, Redemption, and Parousia. *"My mind can't really understand how God always was, that he didn't have a beginning . . ."*

I am blessed in my work. It is your children who remind me of what is important and essential. For that I am filled with Joy.

Assistants Needed

We are looking for a few adults who can make a long-term commitment of their time to periodic CGS Assistant's training and weekly attendance at the Atrium.

By now you have all seen our terrific group of Christendom students who volunteer their time at the Atrium. We really appreciate their willingness and enthusiasm, and the children enjoy seeing their familiar faces each week. However, due to the periodic demands of exams, or College vacation breaks, our student assistants find that they are occasionally unable to attend their Atrium session. This situation is coupled with the simple reality that once the students are well-trained as assistants, they will eventually graduate and move on!

For the sake of consistency for the children and the long-term stability of our CGS program, we are putting out a call for adults in more settled situations. Grandparents, single adults, or parents with older children are likely candidates. Please consider whether you, or someone you know would enjoy sharing 2 hours of their time each week with the children at the Atrium. In addition to benefiting the children, assistants will find their own spirituality enriched as they share in the joy and wonder of the children's prayer. Please contact Maria: ellismaria@verizon.net, or (703)585-8693

Next Parent's Gathering:
Wed. Dec. 1st, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
at the CGS Atrium ~
"Advent in the Atrium"

Change of Spare Clothing

Now that cooler weather has arrived, you may wish to exchange your 3-6 yr. child's spare clothing at the Atrium with clothing appropriate for the winter months ahead. Please send the change of clothes in a Ziploc bag marked with your child's name. Maria or one of the Assistants can exchange it for you at the end of your child's session.

Fresh Flower Delivery Needed for the Atrium – Can You Help?

Arranging fresh flowers for placement in the Atrium is an important work often chosen by the children to beautify their prayer environment. Debbie's Ivy Garden, on N. Shenandoah Ave., generously donates the flowers to our Atrium each week. (Please patronize them and mention your appreciation whenever possible!) In order to get the donated flowers delivered to the Atrium, we have need of the assistance of 4 families; 2 per semester. These families would cooperate in fulfilling the following responsibilities:

- 1) Call Debbie's each Monday to remind them to put flowers aside for the Montessori Atrium for pick-up on Tuesday. Give them a time range for the arranged pick-up.
- 2) Pick up the flowers each Tuesday during Debbie's regular hours and deliver them to HLI. The flowers should be placed in the bucket outside the Atrium door, and the bucket be filled with water from the bathroom down the hall.

We need one family to be in charge for the fall semester, and one for the spring semester, with two additional families agreeing to be a back-up as needed for one or the other semester. Please consider whether you are usually in town, or come to Mass at HLI on Tuesdays and could add just a brief stop to your trip by doing this each week. Please contact Karen, 636-8035, musikids7@rappahonnockcellars.com,

The Child in the Church, by Maria Montessori, has recently been re-printed by The Catholic Shop. This is an excellent book that every Catholic parent should read in order to understand not only the God-given nature of the child, but also what the child has to teach the adult.

To facilitate getting a copy of this book into the hands of all interested Atrium parents, we will be taking orders and bringing copies to our next Parent's Gathering for you to purchase for \$17.00. Please notify Laura: accettullo@lynxconnect.com, or 636-3236, if you would like to order a copy.

When you vacation or your child is sick, please call Maria, or send word with another family that your child will not be attending the Atrium that week. In this way our Assistants are not left waiting at the door, and Maria and the other children do not wait before beginning a lesson in which your child was a planned participant.

Cultivating the Gift of Wonder

Attached to this newsletter you will find a copy of an article written by Rebekah Rojcewicz. Primarily responsible for bringing the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program to the U.S. over 20 years ago, Rebekah studied for 2 years in Rome with Sofia Cavaletti. Sofia, now in her 90's, knew Maria Montessori personally and was chosen to carry on Montessori's work begun with the Atrium in Rome. Since her training with Sofia, Rebekah has spent the last 23 years working in the Atrium and as a trainer of CGS Catechists. She continues to work with Sofia and has recently translated Sofia's latest book: The Religious Potential of the Child, 9-12 Years Old.

We hope you find this, and future articles we reprint here, enriching and an assist to understanding both the work of the child at home and in the Atrium.

