## **School Talk**

## **March 8, 2019**

**Inside this edition:**

* **Thank You!**
* **Internet Hoax Addressed By APS**
* **Program News**
* **Black Parents Alliance Meeting**
* **Montessori Students Selected for 2019 Art Exhibit**
* **Teacher’s Corner**
* **Reminders**
* **PTA News**
* **Upcoming Dates**
* **Links**
* **A Montessori Moment**

**THANK YOU!**

The Montessori staff would like to thank everyone for a wonderful Teacher Appreciation luncheon today! Everything was wonderful and these gestures mean so much!

**INTERNET HOAX ADDRESSED BY APS**

**From APS Information Services:**

First, it has to be stated that the “Momo Challenge” is a hoax. This hoax depicts a disturbing image and character that encourages self-harm and dares, while warning children not to tell their parents. It reached worldwide proportions in July 2018 and has recently resurfaced.

This hoax provides an excellent opportunity to talk with your children and remind them of internet best practices:

* Remind your child information shared on social media is not always true and how quickly misinformation can create a panic online.
* Children should never engage in conversations with strangers online.
* Be aware of the sites and apps your children are using and know their usernames and passwords.
* Turn off suggested autoplay on videos to stop children from viewing content they have not selected, and you have not approved.
* If appropriate, tell your children that Momo is not real and will not hurt them.
* Encourage open dialogue with them around any concerns.

*\*Note: Our ITC, Mr. Gildea, will be speaking to students about appropriate internet use. He will not be mentioning “Momo” specifically as to not encourage curious students to seek out information on it.*

**Outside Resources**

This Washington Post details how the hoax began,

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/03/01/momo-challenge-isnt-viral-danger-children-online-it-sure-is-viral/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.a524a9171496>

This NBC News report contains an image connected with the “Momo Challenge” and traces its origin,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/how-momo-global-social-media-hoax-about-paranormal-threat-kids-n977961>

A Forbes article outlines what parents should know about the “Momo Challenge,”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/andyrobertson/2019/02/27/dont-panic-what-parents-really-need-to-know-about-momo-challenge/#6bc120463a4b>

An article in The Atlantic explains how the hoax spread,

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/02/momo-challenge-hoax/583825/>

An article from the Ohio Department of Education contains talking points to use when speaking with your child,

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/News/Know-Momo-and-her-Deadly-Challenge-to-our-Youth>

**PROGRAM NEWS**

**-Montessori Information Session, March 12.** Know anyone who is considering Montessori? Have them come find out more about our Montessori program during our Montessori Information Session. 9:15AM to 10:45AM, meet in the front lobby of Drew. They will have an opportunity to tour classrooms and have a Q&A session with an administrator. The next information session will be April 4th from 12:45PM to 2:15PM.

**-3rd Grade Swimming Starts Next Week!** Starting March 14th, our 3rd graders will begin their swimming program at Wakefield HS. All students who are participating need to bring their swimsuit (or wear under their clothes), and a towel. Goggles are permitted. If you are able to volunteer to assist our students in the dressing room, please e-mail Yoki Ford at [yoki.ford@apsva.us](mailto:yoki.ford@apsva.us). The course runs March 14, 15, 18, 19 and 20.

**-Intent to Return Forms** have gone home. Please return as soon as possible so that we may start planning for next year. If you have yet to receive one, please ask your child’s teacher to send one home.

**BLACK PARENTS ALLIANCE MEETING**

Join the [APS Office of Equity & Excellence](https://www.apsva.us/equity-and-excellence/) for the **Black Parent Alliance Meeting** at the Arlington Career Center on March 26 from 6 – 8 p.m. The Black Parent Alliance is a group of parents coming together to discuss relevant topics, gain information, and make decisions to better the education of their children. At this meeting, a variety of workshops and resources will be available to meet the needs of students in all grade levels. All are welcome to attend. Childcare available for ages 3 to 10.

The following workshops and resources will be offered for families at this meeting:

* Transition to High School
* Transition to Middle School
* Choosing Great Books for Your Children
* Elementary Math Workshop
* Profile of a Virginia Graduate
* Career and College Preparation Courses with a Focus on Cyber and STEM
* Arlington County Summer Teen Enrichment Program (AC STEP)
* Northern Virginia Community College
* ParentVUE Training
* National Coalition of 100 Black Women
* School Options and Transfers

For additional information or questions about this event, please contact Jennifer Gross at 703-228-8628 or [jennifer.gross@apsva.us](mailto:jennifer.gross@apsva.us). Register here: <https://bit.ly/2C6sBxC>

**MONTESSORI STUDENTS SELECTED FOR 2019 ART EXHIBIT**

March is **ARTS in the Schools** month.  We are very honored to have so many students selected for the **2019 March Elementary School Art Exhibit**.  This is a very special event for our students! They were honored this past Wednesday with a reception and open-house walkthrough of the exhibit.

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This year's honorees from our program are:

**Primary Montessori**

* Layan Al-Anbari
* Victoria Araujo
* Finn Ostrawski
* Cameron Steen

**Lower Elementary Montessori**

* Victoria Baamonde
* Maia Corson
* Yassine Destour
* Noah Golden
* Siddharth Gowthaman
* Jayla Henderson
* Miqueas Hernandez
* Nathaniel Knauer
* Tristan Mehnert
* Ashley Park
* Jude Rainer
* Jal Sawant
* Lillian Sorkin
* Angie Turcios-Monjaras

**Upper Elementary Montessori**

* Joniah Drayton
* Henry Gee
* Dominique Harris
* Sabrine Lakbail
* Samar Osman
* Kaiya Ovando

**TEACHER’S CORNER**

From Orchestra teacher Ms. Molly Jackson:

Our advanced orchestra students have been invited to play at the **Wakefield High School Pyramid Festival**, on **Wednesday, April 3, 2019**! It is a great opportunity for our students to play with other Arlington elementary students, to meet the middle school directors, and to hear the middle and high school ensembles.

We will perform in the Wakefield auditorium at 7:00 PM. The elementary combined strings will perform first, followed by performances by the combined Middle School Orchestra from Jefferson, Kenmore and Gunston Middle Schools. The Wakefield High School Orchestra will conclude the program.

We encourage our families to come out and support this program and our Drew Model/Montessori players. So mark your calendars!

**REMINDERS**

**-The Extended Day registration process has changed**! Extended Day and Check-in (Middle School) has now become a double blind lottery process. Families may submit registration information anytime between **April 1 – May 15**, for participation in the 2019 Summer Program and the 2019-20 School Year.  *All registrations received between April 1–May 15 will be considered equally.* <https://www.apsva.us/extended-day/registration/>

-**Summer School Registration Begins March 7**. APS provides a variety of summer programs for students in Pre-K through Grade 12. Most classes begin on July 8. Registration for Summer School begins on Thursday, March 7. To see a list of registration dates and other information as well as the Summer School Catalog: https://www.apsva.us/post/summer-school-registration-begins-march-7/

**-Order Your 2018-2019 Yearbook!** Orders are currently being taken for the 2018-2019 Drew Model School Yearbook. This yearbook includes BOTH Programs, so Montessori students should order this one if they would like a memoire of the year. Order forms went home in this past Thursday’s backpack mail. Send back to school with a check or money order (NO cash please!) made out to “Drew Model School”. Or you may order online at [www.ybpay.lifetouch.com](http://www.ybpay.lifetouch.com) today!

**PTA NEWS**

**SPECIAL PTA GUEST FROM AMSTERDAM**

Author and Montessorian, **Simone Davies**, *(author of the “Montessori Toddler”)* will be hosting a workshop at our next PTA meeting on March 20th.

Applying “How to Talk So Kids Will Listen” with author Simone Davies

* Are you struggling to get your kids to listen?
* Finding yourself saying no all the time?
* Would you love to bring some calm back into your home?

Focusing on children under 4 years, Simone will look at lots of practical examples to move you from shouting, threatening and bribing, to a calmer, more respectful approach with your kids. ***Wednesday, March 20th at Clarendon United Methodist Church*** *(606 N. Irving Street)* ***at 7PM****.* This event is co-hosted by the **Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC)** and sponsored by **One More Page Books**. Read more about Ms. Davies and her Montessori school in Amsterdam here: <https://www.jacarandatreemontessori.nl/directress-simone-davies/>

**UPCOMING DATES**

* March 12 – Montessori Information Session, 9:15AM
* March 13 – EARLY RELEASE, Students dismissed at 1:26PM
* March 14 – 20: 3rd Grade Swimming at Wakefield

**LINKS**

* Arlington Montessori Program on APS: <https://drew.apsva.us/the-montessori-program/>
* Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
* Engage with APS https://www.apsva.us/engage/
* Lunch Menus: https://apsva.nutrislice.com/menus-eula-splash
* Arlington Montessori PTA: <https://acmpta.com/>.

**A MONTESSORI MOMENT**

**Montessori Vocabulary 101**

**Adaptation**: Related to the idea of an absorbent mind (Haines, 1993) is a special power of the young child that can be called the power of adaptation. This power is a process whereby the young child uses the environment to develop and, in so doing, becomes a part of that environment. The young child absorbs the culture of her time and place, taking in all the spirit, the customs, the ambitions/aspirations and attitudes of a society simply by living in that society.

**How Jeff Bezos Can Make Good on the Promise of Montessori Schools**

*by Lisa Guernsey for NewAmerica.org*

Last September, in a [surprise announcement on Twitter](https://twitter.com/JeffBezos/status/1040253796293795842), Amazon founder Jeff Bezos declared that he would give away $2 billion to support struggling families and develop a preschool network. The news sent a lightning bolt through the world of early childhood, which is much more familiar with scarcity and budget cuts than it is with billion-dollar investments.

Today, six months later, the air is still charged with speculation about what Bezos has in mind—but it is now coupled with some concern about if and how these words might be put into action.

His Twitter message said that he would “launch and operate a network of high-quality, full scholarship, Montessori-inspired preschools in underserved communities,” and Montessori experts in particular were celebrating. If designed well, such a preschool network could help thousands of children, plus lead to positive ripple effects for existing programs. Education leaders, including the [Montessori Leaders Collaborative](https://trustforlearning.org/montessori-leaders-collaborative/), sent Bezos letters and packets of information to help him formulate his ideas. “It is very exciting for Montessori to get this spotlight, and it is ready to shine,” Elizabeth Bruno, president of the Brady Education Foundation, which funds research on public Montessori programs, told me a few weeks after the announcement.

To date, however, Bruno and other leaders in the field of Montessori education have not heard anything from Bezos, nor from the [Day 1 Academies Fund](https://www.bezosdayonefund.org/day1academiesfund), the organization Bezos founded to distribute his donations. In January, Bezos announced the appointment of Michael M. George, a former vice president at Amazon who was in charge of Alexa and Echo, to run the fund. George’s background on his [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mgeorge2/) page does not include any reference to having worked in early childhood or social services. Amazon’s spokesperson would not comment on George’s appointment, and there are no outward signs of George gathering information on preschool programs or conducting listening sessions with early education leaders.

Does this portend the creation of a program that falls way short of its promise? Or does it simply show a willingness to take it slow? Bezos might not have recognized this when he tweeted about preschool, but creating a network of early childhood programs will not be a simple matter. It may seem very different from his [Blue Origin](https://www.blueorigin.com/) enterprise, but in many ways, supporting the brain development and learning capabilities of our next generation is no less complex than—and certainly as important as—sending humans into space. And modeling a program on the insights of Maria Montessori, the physician-scientist who became an international giant in the field of child development, requires real attention to what works.

Spend a morning at Breakthrough Montessori, a publicly funded school in Washington, D.C., and you can start to see that complexity. For example, if you came to observe one day recently, you might notice that it was not set up like a normal classroom. The kids are not cross-legged on the carpet, facing a teacher. They were not told to stay quiet, nor were they repeating lines from a storybook. Twenty-one children, ages 3 through 6, were sitting at tables or on the floor, independently working on projects.

One little girl, an African American child in a Minions T-shirt, stood back from a structure of blocks that she had carefully placed together, with one end made of a few blocks laid horizontally while blocks at the other end were stacked precariously high. “Which one is bigger?” she asked. A white boy in dinosaur slippers came over, pointed to the larger side, and exclaimed, “This one!” The girl nodded confidently.

The room felt calm and purposeful, even as it hummed with the sounds of children.

Creating this kind of environment requires teachers who have years of training and knowledge of how to foster children’s trajectories of learning across multiple subjects and how to make the most of minute-by-minute interactions to guide their explorations. Most American children in mid-to-low-income families do not have access to programs at this level of quality; they are either too expensive (upwards of $10,000 to even $20,000 a year) or don’t exist in their neighborhoods. Some families can try to enroll their kids in Head Start or public pre-K—43 states fund pre-K so far, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research—but those programs receive only enough funding to cover a fraction of eligible children. States, cities, and higher-ed institutions typically don’t provide the scholarships, higher salaries, professional development for current teachers, and reforms to teacher preparation programs needed to build a sustainable workforce.

Yet the work is undoubtedly worth doing. Research shows that children in quality pre-K programs [can gain skills](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement_final.pdf) across literacy, math, and social-emotional development, narrowing gaps that emerge in households with limited access to financial resources and educational opportunities. Some studies show gains [lasting well into adulthood](https://evidencebasedprograms.org/programs/perry-preschool-project/). Making a difference will require not only more funding from governments and private donors like Bezos. It will also require a commitment to investing in the ingredients that help children thrive academically and socially and develop positive habits of mind. Many studies of pre-K programs [have shown](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/untangling-evidence-preschool-effectiveness-report), for example, that good results are associated with giving teachers quality professional learning opportunities, paying them a wage on par with elementary school teachers, supporting the use of effective curricula and other instructional materials, and engaging in partnerships with families.

For Montessori in particular, relatively [new](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01783/full#h1) [studies](http://www.montessori-science.org/Science_Evaluating_Montessori_Education_Lillard.pdf) show public programs making a difference for young kids. And public Montessori schools are growing in number. Of the 523 public programs in the United States, more than half have opened in the past 15 years, according to Jacqueline Cossentino, director of research for the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.

The Breakthrough Montessori School in Washington, D.C., is one of those new public schools. Its students come from all over and are of many different races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds. Some have likely come from households coping with depression, loss, frequent moves from place to place, or even violence. Those hardships can show up in myriad ways. The same morning that the girl in the Minions T-shirt was building her block tower, outside in the hallway a little boy was screaming, thrashing, and throwing himself around on the floor. A young woman—probably an assistant teacher—was with him, struggling to put her arms around him long enough to calm him down. Helping children through outbursts can be among the most difficult parts of a teacher’s role. New professional development programs on “trauma-informed practice” are opening up around the country to help teachers gain those skills.

Part of Bezos’ challenge will be figuring out how his preschool network can include this complicated set of components that make up a quality program. “There are a number of examples of Montessori being well done,” Angeline Lillard, a psychology professor at the University of Virginia and the author of many studies on Montessori schools, said to me. “I would start with going to them and talking to the people there.” Maybe that learning should include sitting on a little wooden chair at the Breakthrough Montessori School, watching a bright-eyed child building with blocks and talking about what she plans to do next.

*Original article (published March 7, 2019): https://www.newamerica.org/weekly/edition-239/bezos-montessori-education/*