## **School Talk**

## **May 24, 2019**

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**THE FINAL PEACE WALK**

Montessori’s last **PEACE WALK** with Drew Model school will take place on **Friday, June 21 at 9:30AM**. Wear **YELLOW** and meet at the archway. This is the last year the Montessori program will be making this walk through Nauck – a tradition that has gone on for many years. We are hoping that we will have a sea of yellow walk through Nauck on the last day of school to commemorate the end of our time at Drew Model School.

**ARE YOU ON PARENTVUE YET?**

In preparation for the transition from the First Day Packet to the new Annual Online Verification Process (AOVP), Arlington Public Schools (APS) is requesting all parents and guardians have an active ParentVUE account **by June 1, 2019**. By now, all parents and guardians with an inactive ParentVUE account should have received a ParentVUE Activation Key Letter from their child’s school with information on how to activate their account. APS is requesting all parents and guardians activate their ParentVUE accounts at this time to make the transition to the online process as smooth as possible and to allow staff to focus on assisting families with updating their information in the fall.

This new process will utilize ParentVUE, the online tool that most of our families are already familiar with and use regularly to track the latest information regarding their student. As a part of AOVP, families will now be able to update vital information for each of their students through their ParentVUE account at the start of school, even if their children attend different schools.

The printed forms that were included in the First Day Packet students used to receive on the first day of school will be replaced by this new process. AOVP will help APS streamline the way families verify their student’s information, ensure the accuracy of student information, decrease the amount of time families spend completing the paper forms, and will help the environment by eliminating wasted paper.

Additional information and resources are available on the [Annual Online Verification Process](http://track.spe.schoolmessenger.com/f/a/onhsNLWXtiRdEl0ZZeS1sg~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRevaWUP0RPaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYXBzdmEudXMvcmVnaXN0ZXJpbmcteW91ci1jaGlsZC9hbm51YWwtb25saW5lLXZlcmlmaWNhdGlvbi1wcm9jZXNzL1cHc2Nob29sbUIKAAAUctxc74PVt1ITS2hheW5lczc0QGdtYWlsLmNvbVgEAAAAAQ~~) webpage.

**PLEASE HELP OUR TEACHERS**

Please sign up to help! All Montessori classes need to be packed up for storage by June 17th so that the refresh construction on Drew can begin as soon as school lets out. This means teachers, who normally are allowed a week past the end of school to pack, are in a time crunch!

**MORE teachers have been added to the sign up! So please check for your teacher.**

<https://tinyurl.com/BigPackUp>

This sign up lists the packing times teachers would like some help. Not all teachers are listed but check often as they may get added. While some teachers want help with actual packing, several have stated that what they’d really like are parents to come in and keep students occupied with pre-planned activities while they pack, so be aware that this is what you may be asked to do.

There is a packing day on Saturday, June 8th, when the PTA will be providing childcare. See details in the sign up.

**HENRY TOUR & TRANSPORTATION MEETING**

On **Wednesday, May 29th**, we will be holding a 2nd tour of Patrick Henry, at then go right into a meeting with Kristin Haldeman, Director of Multimodal Transportation for APS, as she shows us the plans for the hub locations in store for the bus riders in the Montessori program. We will convene in the Patrick Henry library at **6**, where we will hold a brief PTA meeting *(and the elections for next year’s EC).* The tour will start around **6:15-6:20** and then Ms. Haldeman will begin her presentation at 7PM.

**All Montessori families who are currently on a bus and will not be within the 1.5 mile walk zone for Patrick Henry should come.** If you know families whose children were just accepted into the lottery, encourage them to come, as this is the only time they will get to tour Patrick Henry as they, too, will have to begin packing and get prepared for summer construction. Parents in Gunston Montessori whose children ride a bus should also consider attending as their cross-county Montessori students will also have bus hubs in their future.

**PROGRAM NEWS**

-**5th Grade Promotion** will be **Tuesday, June 18** at Wakefield High School. Doors open at 5:45PM, ceremony starts at 6PM. A call for help from 4th grade parents will be sent out in early June. 4th grade parents who help will receive priority seating at their child’s own 5th grade promotion. Volunteers from last year will be notified of their preferential seating about 2 weeks prior to the event.

-**Family Fun Day, Saturday June 1** from **1PM – 4PM**. The Drew Model PTA is hosting a Family Fun Day for all Drew students, current and soon-to-start! There will be moon bounces, face painting and more!

**PTA NEWS**

**Saturday Pack Up**

On Saturday, June 8th, several teachers will be coming in to do some packing. If you are free, do come on out! To make it easier for parents to help, the PTA will provide childcare from 10AM to 12PM.  
  
Please use this link to sign up to help your teacher.   
[https://tinyurl.com/BigPackUp](https://tinyurl.com/BigPackUp?fbclid=IwAR2pMhPPBssO7VDEV3E5DmhZkvGLqGcll-dDB5isu3E_Wyn3XqyB3TuDVGo)  
  
If you sign up to help that day and you need childcare, please leave us the number of children and their ages in the "comment" slot. *\*Children must be at least 3 years old and potty trained.*

**UPCOMING DATES**

* May 27: NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day observed
* May 29: 5th Grade Math SOL
* May 29: School Board Work Session on the 1-to-1 Technology Study
* May 30: Honored Citizen Award Ceremony, 7PM in the School Board Room, Syphax *(postponed due to power outages on 5/23)*
* May 31: 4th Grade Math SOL

**LINKS**

* Arlington Montessori Program on APS: <https://drew.apsva.us/the-montessori-program/>
* Montessori Public School of Arlington on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MPSArlington>
* 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/>.
* Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC): <http://www.arlingtonmontessori.org/>

**A MONTESSORI MOMENT**

**Montessori Vocabulary 101**

**Help from the Periphery**: The periphery is that part of the child that comes into contact with external reality. The child takes in impressions through the senses and through movement. Help from the periphery means presenting objects and activities in such a way so as to evoke purposeful movement on the part of the child. 'We never give to the eye more than we give to the hand.' (Standing, 1957, p. 237)

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**Montessorians don’t give children lavish praise.** The child’s work is highly valued in Montessori education, and praise that is given is typically specific praise emphasizing effort. “You really worked hard at that.” “You did that activity four times in a row!” and Montessorians try to give [encouragement rather than praise](http://montessoritraining.blogspot.com/2008/03/montessori-philosophy-praise-vs.html) or [descriptive rather than evaluative praise](http://montessoritraining.blogspot.com/2007/06/montessori-classroom-descriptive-vs.html). Instead of saying, “You’re a good boy,” a Montessorian might say, “It really helped when you put away all the dishes.” The approach is to help instill a sense of desire to achieve without the pressure of needing to seek approval. This week’s article touches on the difference between praise and validation and why one should be practiced more than the other.

**Presence, Not Praise: How To Cultivate a Healthy Relationship with Achievement**

*Why instilling admiration for hard work rather than raw talent is the key to fostering a well-adjusted mind.*

By Maria Popova

Despite [ample](https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/05/23/uncommon-genius-stephen-jay-gould-connections-creativity/) [evidence](https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/05/22/manage-your-day-to-day-99u/) and [countless](https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/07/24/tchaikovsky-on-work-ethic-vs-inspiration/) [testaments](https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/12/27/chuck-close-on-creativity/) to the opposite, there persists a toxic cultural mythology that creative and intellectual excellence comes from a passive gift bestowed upon the fortunate few by the gods of genius, rather than being the product of the active application and consistent cultivation of skill. So what might the root of that stubborn fallacy be? Childhood and upbringing, it turns out, might have a lot to do.

In [The Examined Life: How We Lose and Find Ourselves](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0393079546/braipick-20), psychoanalyst and University College London professor Stephen Grosz builds on more than 50,000 hours of conversation from his quarter-century experience as a practicing psychoanalyst to explore the machinery of our inner life, with insights that are invariably profound and often provocative — for instance, a section titled “How praise can cause a loss of confidence,” in which Grosz writes:

“Nowadays, we lavish praise on our children. Praise, self-confidence and academic performance, it is commonly believed, rise and fall together. But current research suggests otherwise — over the past decade, a number of studies on self-esteem have come to the conclusion that praising a child as ‘clever’ may not help her at school. In fact, it might cause her to under-perform. Often a child will react to praise by quitting — why make a new drawing if you have already made ‘the best’? Or a child may simply repeat the same work — why draw something new, or in a new way, if the old way always gets applause?”

Grosz cites psychologists Carol Dweck and Claudia Mueller’s famous 1998 study, which divided 128 children ages 10 and 11 into two groups. All were asked to solve mathematical problems, but one group were praised for their intellect *(“You did really well, you’re so clever.”)* while the other for their effort *(“You did really well, you must have tried really hard.”)* The kids were then given more complex problems, which those previously praised for their hard work approached with dramatically greater resilience and willingness to try different approaches whenever they reached a dead end. By contrast, those who had been praised for their cleverness were much more anxious about failure, stuck with tasks they had already mastered, and dwindled in tenacity in the face of new problems. Grosz summarizes the now-legendary findings:

“Ultimately, the thrill created by being told ‘You’re so clever’ gave way to an increase in anxiety and a drop in self-esteem, motivation and performance. When asked by the researchers to write to children in another school, recounting their experience, some of the ‘clever’ children lied, inflating their scores. In short, all it took to knock these youngsters’ confidence, to make them so unhappy that they lied, was one sentence of praise.”

He goes on to admonish against today’s culture of excessive parental praise, which he argues does more for lifting the self-esteem of the parents than for cultivating a healthy one in their children:

“Admiring our children may temporarily lift our self-esteem by signaling to those around us what fantastic parents we are and what terrific kids we have — but it isn’t doing much for a child’s sense of self. In trying so hard to be different from our parents, we’re actually doing much the same thing — doling out empty praise the way an earlier generation doled out thoughtless criticism. If we do it to avoid thinking about our child and her world, and about what our child feels, then praise, just like criticism, is ultimately expressing our indifference.”

To explore what the healthier substitute for praise might be, he recounts observing an eighty-year-old remedial reading teacher named Charlotte Stiglitz, the mother of the Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, who told Grosz of her teaching methodology:

“I don’t praise a small child for doing what they ought to be able to do,’ she told me. ‘I praise them when they do something really difficult — like sharing a toy or showing patience. I also think it is important to say “thank you”. When I’m slow in getting a snack for a child, or slow to help them and they have been patient, I thank them. But I wouldn’t praise a child who is playing or reading.”

Rather than utilizing the familiar mechanisms of reward and punishment, Grosz observed, Charlotte’s method relied on keen attentiveness to “what a child did and how that child did it.” He recounts:

“I once watched Charlotte with a four-year-old boy, who was drawing. When he stopped and looked up at her — perhaps expecting praise — she smiled and said, ‘There is a lot of blue in your picture.’ He replied, ‘It’s the pond near my grandmother’s house — there is a bridge.’ He picked up a brown crayon, and said, ‘I’ll show you.’ Unhurried, she talked to the child, but more importantly she observed, she listened. She was present.”

Presence, he argues, helps build the child’s confidence by way of indicating he is worthy of the observer’s thoughts and attention — its absence, on the other hand, divorces in the child the journey from the destination by instilling a sense that the activity itself is worthless unless it’s a means to obtaining praise. Grosz reminds us how this plays out for all of us, and why it matters throughout life:

“Being present, whether with children, with friends, or even with oneself, is always hard work. But isn’t this attentiveness — the feeling that someone is trying to think about us — something we want more than praise?”

[The Examined Life](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0393079546/braipick-20) goes on to explore such enduring facets of the meaning of existence as our inextinguishable urge to change ourselves, the gift of ignorance, and the challenges of intimacy, deconstructing the wall in philosopher Simone Weil’s famous prison parable to reveal the many dimensions in which our desire “to understand and be understood” manifests.