

## Upcoming Events:

**Holiday Break:** Our last day of school prior to holiday break is **Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**. School resumes on Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Our next **Family Learning Discoveries Night** is scheduled for **Monday, January 13, 2014**

If you would like a free meal, join us at 5:30 p.m. for a light supper. If you want to forgo the supper, join us at 6:00 p.m. for another *Parent Academy* and *Student and Family learning activities*.

- ✓ 5:30 to 6:00 p.m. - *Parents and Students* join staff for a light supper (**FREE**). Please be in serving line before 5:50 p.m.
- ✓ 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. *Parents and students* will break up for separate activities  
**PARENTS** - *Parent Academy*: Mathematics Made Simple, with Tom Clark in Room 221  
**STUDENTS** - *Family-Friendly math activities* with NDMA staff
- ✓ 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. - *Parents and students* will reunite for combined activity: *Family Math Games* with Tom Clark, Mrs. Hermodson-Olsen in the Multipurpose Room

The **Family Learning Discoveries Nights** for the remainder of the year are scheduled for the following dates:  
Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>  
Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>  
Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>

We look forward to providing valuable insight and meaningful resources at each event.

### **NDMA Board of Directors Meeting:**

Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in room 221 (Music Room).

### **NDMA PTO Meeting:**

Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the NDMA Library.

### **No School:**

Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, and Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Two-Hour Late Start:**

School will begin 2 hours late Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> for staff development.

# Family Newsletter

*Enriching Community through Montessori Excellence*

## New Discoveries Montessori Academy

December 20, 2013

*from the desk of Dave Conrad*



### Music through the Subjects!

Under the creative leadership of Mrs. Lauer, New Discoveries Montessori Academy students have been experiencing cross-curricular activities during their music lessons. The following activities are examples of the cross-curricular emphasis:

- Combining music and math by making note pyramids
- Combining music and science by filling glasses with water to create lower and higher pitches,
- Combining music and the visual arts by viewing classic paintings created by famous artists while listening to classical music.

### Minnesota Youth Reading Awards

Minnesota Youth Reading Awards (MYRA) is a *Minnesota Youth Book Award* reading program which sponsors the **Maud Hart Lovelace** Award that our Elementary 2 students are participating in this year for the first time. This award program has been around for over 30 years. Maud Hart Lovelace was a famous Minnesota author born in Mankato at the turn of the century. MYRA honors her creativity and enduring legacy with MHL Award. Our E2 students will be reading from a list of nominated chapter books and voting for their favorites at the end of March. April 25<sup>th</sup> (Maud Hart Lovelace's birthday) the winning books will be announced and next year's nominated chapter books would be announced as well. NDMA staff helped raise the money to purchase duplicate copies of the books through donations for the privilege to wear jeans the week of November 11<sup>th</sup>.

MYRA is also offering for the first time this year the "Star of the North Award" reading program in which our Children's House and Elementary 1 students may participate. They would be read aloud the picture books during their library time (beginning January 2<sup>nd</sup>) and then offered the opportunity to cast votes for their favorite titles the end of March.

New Discoveries Instructional Staff to Make Site Visits to Public Montessori Schools to Research and Observe Best-Practices . . .

Beginning in January, teams of instructional staff and leadership will be visiting several public Montessori schools that have experience blending authentic Montessori with academic standards and state assessment mandates. We are excited to learn from our colleagues at other sites, and perhaps to affirm much of the work we are already doing at NDMA.



NDMA graduates, Josiah Cosby and Sarah Puder admire the mural at the end of NDMA's main hallway shortly after it was installed in 2009.

### New Discoveries Staff Welcome Education Commissioner

Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner, Brenda Cassellius, visited NDMA Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Cassellius was here to celebrate with us our progress regarding the school improvement process we've been involved in for the past 1 ½ years. It was a joy to give her a tour of the school, and to be with her as she visited several classrooms.

According to Commissioner Cassellius, "This is a great example of a school working closely with our Regional Centers of Excellence to make significant improvements for all students. The community should be proud of the hard work going on here by teachers, paraprofessionals and all staff."



Commissioner Cassellius - front row, center with black scarf - with teachers and members of the NDMA's leadership team.



### 3-year MMR Data

	Proficiency	Growth	Gap	Rating
2013	0.99	20.73	23.71	60.58%
2012	0.67	5.27	17.77	31.61%
2011	0.49	0.08	0.08	0.86%

Each month I will include a look at pertinent data for your consideration. The chart above illustrates

the progress NDMA has made regarding the Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR) since it was first established in 2011. The three categories that we are accountable for are individual student proficiency, individual student growth, and reduction in the achievement gap between our free and reduced population (FRP) and the non-free and reduced population. NDMA's percentages have improved in all areas, with the overall rating improving from 0.86% in 2011 to 60.58% in 2013. We are looking forward to continued growth, noting that we have the most work to do in the area of increasing the number of students who are proficient in the MCA III assessments this coming Spring.

### Montessori Moment -

Each month I plan to include a *Montessori Moment* to provide basic insight into what Montessori is.

The following excerpt is from **Montessori - A Modern Approach**, by Paula Polk Lillard

Through the freedom the child is given in a Montessori environment, the child has a unique opportunity to reflect upon his own actions, to determine their consequences both for himself and for others, to test himself against the limits of reality, to learn what gives him a sense of fulfillment and what leaves him feeling empty and dissatisfied, and to discover both his capabilities and his shortcomings. The opportunity to develop self-knowledge is one of the most important results of freedom in a Montessori classroom.

A second key element in the Montessori environment is its structure and order. The underlying structure and order of the universe must be reflected in the classroom if the child is to internalize it, and thus build his own mental order and intelligence. Through this internalized order, the child learns to trust his environment and his power to interact with it in a positive way. It insures for the child the possibility of purposeful activity. He knows where to go to find the materials of his choice. To assist him in his choice, the materials are grouped according to the interest they appeal to, and arranged in sequence as to their difficulty or the degree of complication. Order means that the child is assured the possibility of a completed cycle of activity using the materials.

Please note that we have several copies of Lillard's book available for you to check out from our resource library.