



Orcas  
Montessori  
School

# November Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 3



## Selling Wreaths and Giving Thanks

Each of us chose the Orcas Montessori School for our child or children. We had reasons for doing so, and I imagine one of those reasons is that you want to give your child the very best early childhood education experience you can.

We are so fortunate to have a school with a staff who wants the same for our children, and who are willing to undertake the required work. But how do we, as parents, fit into the school community? Though we drop our children off at the door, our presence is incredibly needed.

Every year, our school undertakes a massive amount of fund raising to give our children the gift of a fantastic preschool education. To give thanks for this gift, we as parents need to pitch in and volunteer.

There are always plenty of volunteer opportunities, and right now, selling wreaths is a standout. The wreaths are a longstanding tradition at our school. The students from the first year of wreath selling are now of college age!

**Last year, we earned over \$6,000 selling wreaths for the holidays. Can we beat that number? Please help us try!**

Conversations about the holidays give plenty of opportunity for bringing up beautiful, long lasting evergreens with a festive red velvet bow. Sell wreaths, and help give thanks for our school. Visit [www.orcasmontessori.org/](http://www.orcasmontessori.org/) for a direct link to the wreath sale and great, detailed information provided by Alyson!

**Hello parents and friends.**

**Autumn has come to the playground and the children seem very excited about the idea of raking the leaves into piles, eating an apple or two and taking a spin round the trike track right after a brief rain.**

**Inside, we have seen a lot of story writing and preliminary mathematics, along with many new and captivating fine motor exercises. The class has been checking out the magnets, exploring the weather and finding out which nails work best in a stump of wood.**

**Our group time has been singing up a storm and taking on some new poems. It has also been a wonderful opportunity for the children to share the objects they have brought from home.**

**And, finally, we have all so enjoyed having your visits to our room, and are eager to “greet and seat” the rest of you.**

**Best,**

**Tom Rubottom**



## Test Your Orcas Montessori Knowledge

Orcas Montessori parent volunteers make a huge difference. Take this short quiz—some of the answers may surprise you and will give you some context around all those volunteer sign up sheets that you see.

- 1) What is the average hourly tuition rate at Orcas Montessori? A. \$10/hour    B. \$3/hr C. \$6/hr
- 2) How much did Orcas Montessori School have to raise last school year outside of tuition and ECEAP?  
A.    Nothing    B. \$50,000    C. \$20,000
- 3) How much money in scholarship assistance outside of ECEAP did Orcas Montessori provide last school year?  
A.    \$17,500    B. \$12,500    C. \$30,000
- 4) How many volunteer hours does Orcas Montessori ask each parent to contribute during the school year?  
A.    10 hrs    B. 60 hrs    C. 30 hrs
- 5) How many estimated volunteer hours does it actually take to keep Orcas Montessori on sound footing (hours include cleaning, gardening, bagging wreaths, making apple crisps, writing grants, auction coordination, etc.)  
A.    1,130 B. 2175    C. 500

Answers: 1- C; 2 - B; 3 - A; 4 - C; 5 - B



### Parents Make a Difference!

Without parent volunteers cleaning the school, helping at lunchtime, working in the yard, making building repairs, and participating in fundraisers like the Apple Crisp Sale, Wreath Sale, and the Annual Auction, Orcas Montessori School could not accomplish its mission which is to provide excellent early childhood education by a highly trained staff, to as many children as possible.

Our vision is to establish a sound and stable foundation for Orcas Montessori School, and give any Orcas Island child the opportunity to attend, regardless of their family's financial ability.

In fact, we recently pulled together a ballpark estimate of the number of volunteer hours that parents contributed in the 2010-2011 school year. It was a whopping 2,175 hours! 650 of those volunteer hours cover tasks like cleaning, gardening, making repairs - because volunteers handle these jobs, the school saves approximately \$16,000.

Add that to the \$50,000 that parents helped raise last year and you can get a clearer picture as to why your involvement is so vital financially.

Thank you so much for all you do!



## Volunteers of the Month: Matt and Sabrina Carpenter

Orcas Montessori School is pleased to recognize Sabrina and Matt Carpenter as volunteers of the month!

Although they are newcomers to the school, Sabrina and Matt have already made a huge impact through their efforts. In addition to volunteering to clean the school weekly, the Carpenters, together with Erin O'Dell (another volunteer we are very grateful for) helped organize and host two days of apple-crisp making in their professional kitchen at the Deer Harbor Inn.



Additionally, each year on Christmas Day, the Deer Harbor Inn hosts a Christmas dinner and donates all the proceeds to a local nonprofit. Thanks to Matt and Sabrina, this year, they are donating the proceeds to Orcas Montessori School. Be sure to watch for sign up sheets to help out that day.

Meanwhile, if you're in town and hungry for breakfast or lunch, stop by their newly opened restaurant, Island Skillet for some great food!

## Fall Bulb Sale Earns \$272

Thank you to everyone who participated in the fall bulb sale - your efforts helped earn the school \$272.



## Apples!

Amazing as it seems, we still have some apples in the trees! After making 210 apple crisps and putting away lots in freezer for coming months (thank you to our volunteers!), we still have apples.

We would like to share our bounty. Consider helping by picking some to take home before they are all on the ground and make some applesauce for yourself and share some with us. We can freeze it in gallon ziplock bags for easy storage and thawing.

## CHANGES!

We are happy to provide your child with clean dry clothing if their clothing becomes wet or soiled and they have no change in their cubby. We have only a limited supply of clothing. If it goes home with your child, please return it promptly- washed and ready for another child.

It is a sad occurrence if a child with no spare clothes in their cubby needs to change and we have nothing to loan them. We are especially in need of various sized of pants. Please consider donating a pair that your child has outgrown. Sweatpants are great because they fit all body types.

## Here Come the Wreaths!

The Orcas Montessori's 17th Annual Holiday Wreath Sale is now underway. Our 900 piece mailing has been sent out to our past wreath customers, flyers are going up around the island, and the website is set to take orders. Our wreaths arrive this week!

Our goal is to raise \$6000. To achieve this goal, we will need everyone's help. We are hoping that each family will commit to sell a minimum of 6 wreaths. There are plenty of tasks that need volunteers, and there is a sign up sheet posted on the school door. Thank you to those parents who have already stepped forward to help.

24" and 35" holiday wreaths are available for \$25 and \$35 respectively. Our wreath prices have remained the same for over 6 years! US Shipping is also available for the 24" wreath for an additional fee. We are now taking orders through our website:  
[www.orcasmontessori.org](http://www.orcasmontessori.org).

Whichever school family sells the most wreaths, gets a \$50 gift certificate to Cherry T's! Sales that you make through phone calls, and time spent in front of Island Market or Ray's – they all count! Keep track of how many you sell, and we'll ask for your numbers at the end of the sale.

## Volunteer Tasks:

Thanks to those who have already helped out with stuffing envelopes and volunteering for other tasks. The wreaths are coming on November 15, and we'll need everybody's help to make our goal! Please take a look at the various wreath sale tasks presently at hand. Sign up in the foyer, or contact Alyson Stephens: [AlysonClarkStephens@gmail.com](mailto:AlysonClarkStephens@gmail.com), or 376-5868.

1. Bagging bows (at home task) – we need two people to put bows into bags, November 16/17.
2. We need volunteers to place reminder phone calls to businesses, Nov 15 – 19.
3. November 19 we'll be busy selling wreaths and crisps in front of Island Market, and we'll have a wreath bagging party at the storage unit as well (Larson Storage #66 – A).
4. Seeking 4 volunteers to sell wreaths on a Saturday in front of Ray's Pharmacy: November 26 from 11 to 1pm, or 1 to 3pm, or December 3rd from 11 to 1pm, or 1 to 3pm
5. Seeking somebody with a steady hand to paint a canvas banner. You will be provided with banner, paint, design, and projector to project design onto banner for painting.
6. We'll need everybody's help with MAKING WREATH DELIVERIES! :) If everybody delivers a few wreaths each day after drop off, we can get it done.

Please talk with Alyson about which area of the island you would prefer to cover.

## Come and Visit!!!

Observing the classroom in action is a most enjoyable way to spend a half hour in the morning or afternoon. Visitors walk away from their experience with admiration and respect for the work the children do each day. Their amazing development is shaped through their independent work and social interactions daily in the classroom. You may be surprised to see some of the skills your child is working on or has mastered.

To let you in on this rewarding experience, we have posted an additional sign up sheet on the door so you can schedule a visit through the last week of November if you have not already done so.

Beginning in December we will begin our parent/teacher conferences. We will schedule these after school, on Friday afternoons and perhaps on one Saturday for those who cannot come any other time. These will conclude at the end of January. Please look for a separate sign up sheet for these conferences.



## Think AMAZON for Christmas

Can't find it locally?

Save yourself the expense of an off-island trip and help support Orcas Montessori School simply by doing your Christmas shopping at [www.orcasmontessori.org/amazon](http://www.orcasmontessori.org/amazon).

You'll find a wide selection of merchandise and 6% of the proceeds will go to Orcas Montessori if you purchase items within 24 hours of adding the merchandise to your cart. But you have to use the link – be sure to add a shortcut to your desktop or your favorites bar. And make it a habit.

In the first nine months of the program, we made \$458! The more people who shop our link, the more money we earn for the school.



### Seeking Orcas Montessori Ambassadors

One of the key ingredients of a healthy school is full enrollment. For one thing, it benefits the children. A diverse and dynamic classroom creates many learning opportunities for the children. The younger children learn from the class leaders modeling

social interactions and they are inspired by the advanced work of their older classmates. The older children blossom with the opportunity to be mentors, reinforcing their newly acquired knowledge through helping their younger peers.

We work hard to maintain a high quality program and environment, while running the school as efficiently and frugally as possible. Yet even still, we need to do a substantial amount of fundraising to bridge the gap between tuition and the actual cost to run the school. Full enrollment reduces the amount of fundraising we have to do.

One of the best ways to increase enrollment is for you to be active ambassadors in the community. Please talk to your friends about the school – tell them what you like about the program and some of the benefits you've seen from your child's experience here. Please encourage all parents of young children to come and observe our program in action. At this time we have two openings in the morning and several in the afternoon.

In addition, we want to learn from your feedback, Please help us by filling out the Enrollment Survey you received by email or at the Parent Night, or get a copy from Teresa. Congratulations to Cristiana Egger who won the drawing for an official, limited-edition Orcas Montessori School mug after completing her survey prior to the official deadline!

### Organic Apple Crisps for Sale! (And a prize too!)

Who will help pick apples? You did! Who will help make crisps? You did! Who will help sell the whopping 200 all organic Apple Crisps to benefit our children's school? We all will!

If you haven't looked at the chalkboard in the school foyer recently, it is time to take a peek. There, you will see a count-down of the number of apple crisps sold to date. The crisps are \$16 each, and all proceeds go directly to Orcas Montessori School to help with our scholarship assistance program.

Last year we earned nearly \$2,000 with crisp sales, and we are poised to exceed that amount this year! But... we need your help! We need each family to help sell crisps! They are frozen and ready to bake, perfect for holiday parties, potlucks, or relaxing at home (perhaps with a scoop of vanilla ice cream).

Apple Crisps are available at the school. You may pick them up there, store in your freezer, and sell! The family who sells the most crisps will earn a Surprise Gift Certificate to a local Restaurant!!

**Thank you for your help!**

