

From The Director's Desk

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Casino Night--The evening of March 20th was a time of fun and games here at Deer Path. Our Casino Night was a social success that raised \$3,568 for the school. Thanks to the chair people, Rachel and Scott Savokinas and Dennis Murphy, the evening ran very smoothly. The 100 attendees were treated to casino type games supplied by The Entertainment Company, delicious food from the Market Place and comfortable seating supplied by Starr's Party and Tent Rentals. We appreciate the generous discounts on the food and rental equipment. Jessica & Steve Graff, Philip Pascarella, Divya Singh, Caroline Gibbons, Scott Savokinas, Claudette Crow and Dennis Murphy are all to be commended for procuring such wonderful prizes for the event--not an easy task for a small school in Hackettstown, NJ. It takes many hands to make an event like this one successful and so I extend my appreciation to the following families: Crow, Chomow, Graff, McBride, Pascarella, Pucci, Singh, Gibbons, Reilly, Byank, Maietta, Korec, Tessier, Meda, Fiedler, Zhou, Ramesh, Kurukulasuriya, Matthews, Sanders and Babajian. A special thanks to Lorien Babajian who put the ad book together. The sale of advertisements brought in an additional \$1,555.00

Supportive Grandmother--Jeanne Nevin has been a loyal supporter of Deer Path ever since her grandson, Daniel Murphy first attended Deer Path in 2004. Her support has continued over the years as Jack and then Ellie joined our program. Jeanne was a Montessori teacher and director who has always expressed her appreciation for the work we do here at Deer Path. Most recently she generously donated to the school beautiful Montessori materials that she had stored in her garage. The teachers were very excited to receive these materials in such excellent condition. She also added to the fun of our Casino Night by donating a week's vacation at her time share in Las Vegas. I have always appreciated Jeanne's words of encouragement and look forward to her continued involvement with Deer Path (the youngest Murphy, Lizzie, will be joining our Stepping Stones program next year).

Children's Silent Art Auction--The bids were in and five lucky families were the recipients of the beautiful handmade art objects that the children created. Jackie Alfieri and her committee did a wonderful job working with the children to produce these works of art and then organize an auction which raised \$1386 for the school. My husband, Charles, was thrilled to win the bid for the beautiful quilt created by our grandson Anthony's class. He was anxious to purchase it for Ms. Cora who had expressed an interest in it to him. Cora was surprised and thrilled when we gave it to her. A very special thank you to Kari Porter for all her stitchery and donation of materials. The following families gave their time and used their talent for this event: Scott, Granberg, Chandler, Maietta, Porter, Korec, Lemke, Matteis and Malave. Thanks to everyone!

Kindergarten News--A major emphasis is put on the emotional and social development of each child who attends Deer Path. If a child feels good about himself and is able to effectively communicate with others and interact successfully, then a typically developing child's cognitive growth will follow. As part of our

curriculum, we teach the children about peaceful resolutions to problems that arise. Recently, at conference time, the multi-age teachers were made aware of a problem that had arisen in the Kindergarten class. It seems that a club had been formed among the Kindergartners that was quite exclusive. Several parents told the teachers that their child had gone home complaining about not being included. Mrs. Senadira decided to call a class meeting during the Kindergarten part of the day to try to resolve this problem. She introduced her concern and started by asking what it meant to be excluded from a group and asked how it made a person feel. From that point on the discussion was quite lively--Mrs. Senadira reminding the children to be good listeners and to give each child a turn to talk. The discussion ended with all of the children agreeing that in school they were all part of one group and should work together to have a peaceful classroom. I think the Kindergartners have learned an important lesson that will serve them well as they leave us in June.

Grandparent's Day--On March 19th we once again opened our doors to our grandparents. Fifty-seven very punctual grandmas and grandpas attended. They were treated to sweets and entertained by the children. The best part of the day was when we opened the doors to our classrooms and the children were able to share their work with their favorite family members. Pop Pop Pascarella was very impressed with grandson Anthony's work with the math materials. Of course MiMi is treated to his accomplishments everyday--one of the benefits of being the head of your grandson's school. It was a pleasure for me to renew acquaintances with returning grandparents and to have the opportunity to meet new ones. You are a very enthusiastic group that I am proud to be a part of. Thank you for coming!

Book Recommendation--Every year when I return from the national convention of the American Montessori Society, I am refreshed, renewed, enlightened and inspired. This year's convention in Boston was no exception--in fact it was the best one yet. I guess it's because Boston is a "college town" with access to many prestigious educators and professionals in related fields that the presenters were an impressive bunch. AMS is doing a great deal to inform professionals in mainstream education as to the benefits of the Montessori philosophy and methodology. Kristina and I heard many times during the course of the weekend presenters saying that they took time to learn about Montessori because they were doing a workshop at this convention. They all agreed that this method that we love is right in line with today's knowledge of the brain and modern practices in education. My book recommendation comes from a workshop I attended given by **Diane Levin, PhD**. Dr. Levin is a professor and a researcher. She has been studying the effects of media and marketing on today's children. Her book is entitled: **So Sexy So Soon**. In it she shares stories that have been related to her by families across the USA. I must admit some of what I read was quite disturbing. However, the book does offer practical suggestions on ways to handle problems that arise from our children being exposed to images and subject matter at too early an age. I think that this book is so valuable to today's parents that I immediately gave my copy to my son who has a tween and a teen. Even though your children are very young, it is important to lay the groundwork at this stage to develop a trusting and open relationship with them that will encourage them to come to you with questions and concerns now and as they grow older. Dr. Levin is also the co-founder of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood. Check out the website: commercialfreechildhood.org to find out more about this important work.