



# Growing Together

by Friedje van Gils, Head of School

Isn't it kind of great to have 2 "new" years every year? In addition to New Year in January, we educators, parents, and kids get a fresh start every August —and we make full use of it! Escuela's fresh start entails everything from new paint to renovated bathrooms, from great ideas to new plans and goals for our students. And, best of all, we re-new as well as make brand new friendships.

While new is great, some of our "old" —that is, stable, well-established—features and partnerships give us strong roots. For example, Ms. Lisa and Ms. Elizabeth start their 12th year together in the Yellow Room, Ms. Cristina and Ms. Molly are together again in Jr. El West, and Ms. Elizabeth Marcilla begins her 15th year at Escuela!

Indeed, as we ate, danced and celebrated this new school year together at the Family Dance, those first tears of separation were forgotten. Our youngest students will take some time to connect to their new environment and make new friends, but we also know that the growth coming from putting down strong new roots will be invaluable to our children's future.

Thanks for being part of the Escuela family. I look forward to our work together this year as we continue to develop our awesome school and art center, forging a strong community for a healthy, sustainable future.

## What's Inside?

- Montessori Methods— and the Future of Education
- Toddler Discoveries
- Creativity Workshops
- School Survey Results
- Harwood History— Girls School Reunion

There's a  
method  
to our  
gladness.



## Calendar

### September

- 5 Labor Day, School Closed
- 8-9 Elementary Camping Trip
- 13 Innisbrook Giftwrap Sale Begins
- 14 School Picture Day (Toddlers Group Photo Only)
- 15-16 Parent/Teacher Conferences, School Closed, Childcare Available
- 20 Workshop: 4 Planes of Development, 6-7:30 p.m.
- 24 Carnuel Parade & Fiesta
- 28 ECO Meeting, 6-7:30 p.m.

### October

- 4 Innisbrook Giftwrap Sale Ends
- 4 Workshop: Intrinsic Motivation, 6-7:30 p.m.
- 7 First Fridays Coffee with Head of School Friedje vanGils, 8:30-9:30
- 10 Fall Break, School Closed
- 22 Parent/Faculty Work Day, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
- 28 AutumnFest, 4-6:30 p.m.

### November

- 4 First Fridays Coffee 8:30-9:30
- 5 Open House, 10 a.m.-Noon
- 7 Faculty In-Service, School Closed
- 16 Workshop: Meet Escuela Alumni & Parents, 7-8 p.m.
- 22 Thanks-For-Giving Luncheon, School Closes at Noon, No Childcare
- 23-25 Thanksgiving Recess, School Closed

### December

- 2 First Fridays Coffee 8:30-9:30
- 9 Winter Program 6 p.m.
- 13-14 HCH Store
- 16 Last Day before break.
- 19 - Jan. 2 Winter Break. School Closed

# Tried and True Provides The New



by Friedje van Gils, Head of School

“Change” may be the most frequently referenced word in the worlds of business and education...and in politics. Everyone wants it, fears it, wonders how to do it; people write books about it, promote it, love it, hate it. It is difficult to find an article about education that does not reference change as a *need*. It drives the charter school movement, independent schools banner it, politicians bandy the word about but don’t do anything meaningful about it.

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves and then we shall save our country.” That was Abraham Lincoln, in 1862.

“Disenthral” —we’ll come back to that. Seems not that much is new since 1862!

The world is changing (Google iPad, computer, byte, internet, text-speak, LOL) and the fear (and the reality) is that our schools are not preparing children to meet the challenges of their future. The future has always been new and different, culture has always been shifting; these are eternal processes. Evolution. Is there anyone who thinks current traditional models of education are still relevant?

To address problems posed by studies, failing grades and unhappy students, educational systems seem to make superficial, experimental changes: a new math curriculum, longer days, year-round school, larger or smaller class sizes, new standards, new tests, etc. Is anyone considering the population using or experiencing or suffering from the experimental changes? Do we remember whom it’s all about?

Such changes or “reforms” seem to be attempts to improve a broken model. Because at the heart of it, “we” as a human group, a culture, are “enthralled” (we take for granted as the natural order, as the way things should be) by ideas that were formed in response to circumstances of the last century. Abe Lincoln was right: we need to be “disenthralled”; we need to be moved to innovate.

Wait a minute! What am I saying?? Escuela del Sol is a Montessori school! Dr. Maria Montessori began her work 100 YEARS ago—and here I am talking about Change, Innovation, “Dogmas of the...past”! LOL! What does all this have to do with a 100-year old design? Everything.

Montessori developed her educational approach based on what she knew about the developmental needs of young children and their natural learning tendencies. It so happens that what she knew has been borne out by modern science and understanding of human development and neurology. She started a revolution that is the heart and soul of modern texts, speeches and studies about education, brain development and learning. Whether Montessori is formally referenced or not, there she is—in, for example, the “Essential Capacities for the 21st Century” defined by the National Association of Independent Schools:

*(continues)*

*we need to be moved to innovate.*

- Analytical and Creative Thinking and Problem Solving
- Complex Communication—Oral and Written
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Digital and Quantitative Literacy
- Global Perspective
- Adaptability, Initiative, and Risk Taking
- Integrity and Ethical Decision Making

And here is Montessori in Howard Gardner’s (you’ve heard of Multiple Intelligences) “Five Minds for the Future”:

- The Disciplinary Mind
- The Synthesizing Mind
- The Creating Mind
- The Respectful Mind
- The Ethical Mind

Here we are (yes, Escuela and Montessori), though not formally referenced, when Sir Ken Robinson, in his “Bring on the Revolution” TED talk, said:

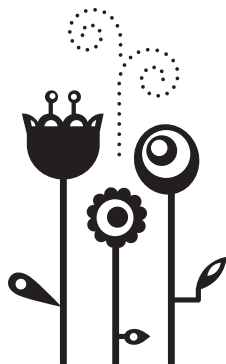
We have to go from what is essentially an industrial model of education, a manufacturing model, which is based on linearity and conformity and batching people. We have to move to a model that is based more on principles of agriculture. We have to recognize that human flourishing is not a mechanical process; it’s an organic process. And you cannot predict the outcome of human development; all you can do, like a farmer, is create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish.

And just because I love the way Sir Ken ended his talk, I want to share it with you. Sir Ken quotes from a W. B. Yeats poem,

*Had I the heavens’ embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

then says:

And every day, everywhere, our children spread their dreams beneath our feet.  
And we should tread softly.



## Creativity Workshops

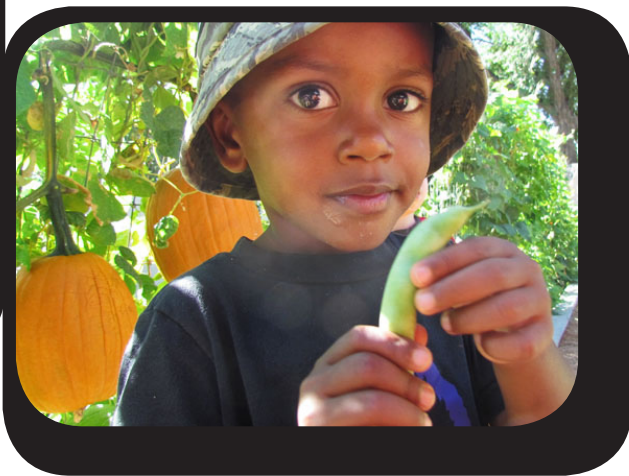
Escuela del Sol and its Harwood Art Center are proud to announce a new program to provide a series of out-of-school time opportunities to experience the arts in a variety of classes and workshops. Ms. Vashti Moss, Escuela’s Director of Youth Arts, has assembled a fine group of teaching artists to start this semester. Art & Sol classes are geared to students ages 6–12, with one exception: the “Movers and Shakers” with Monica Chavez is for newborns (with parent) to age 3.



Classes offered this semester include: Hip Hop, Theater, Media Arts, Chess Club, Forces of Nature, Weaving, Making Puppets, Printmaking for Kids and, for all those computer artists among us, Escuela parent Travis Driscoll will offer a class working with digital media.

We still have spaces available in many of our classes! If you’d like more information about the program, please check the website or email Vashti Moss at [Vashti@eDelSol.org](mailto:Vashti@eDelSol.org).

Below: Hyde working in the classroom; bottom left: Diego lifting a pumpkin; bottom right: Bereket picking peas.



# Survey Results

Thank you to the 73 individuals who participated in our spring survey. It shows us our areas of strength and areas of improvement and, most importantly, it gives us feedback from you about the school's programs.

The survey included questions in five areas:

## General/Academic:

- 95% of respondents feel welcome at the school and 87% in the classroom
- 96% think Escuela offers strong academic programs
- 97% believe their child is improving in all areas of development

## Communication:

- 87% are satisfied with the communication with their child's teacher
- 75% are given unsolicited feedback on their child outside of conferences.
- 94% feel that teachers listen to their concerns and ideas
- 84% are satisfied with the communication between parents and administration.
- 91% feel they receive information from the school in a timely manner, but only 30% understand how funds are managed for the school. *To rectify that low percentage, we will be publishing an annual report this year.*

## Parent Resources/Workshops:

- 61% of those surveyed had attended a parent workshop; 81% found them enjoyable. Some of the suggestions for improvement were to hold them on the weekend and to offer childcare.

## ECO:

- 72% are aware that Escuela had a parent/teacher association
- 19% had attended a meeting this year
- 46% are aware of what ECO does. *To improve, ECO will soon have a presence on Escuela's Facebook page and hold more regular meetings, as suggested in the survey.*

## Comments/Questions:

While only one person wanted to be contacted about their concerns, there were suggestions ranging from more gardening for the Primary students and greater communication between parents/teachers, to don't change a thing—we're very happy. We will do our best to address concerns and consider ideas. Thanks again for your input!

# Harwood School for Girls Reunion

by Elizabeth Marcilla, Assistant Head of School

Every two years since 2001, the alumni of the Harwood Girls School have hosted a reunion in Albuquerque. This year, the Harwood Art Center and Escuela del Sol were a part of the reunion festivities.

The girls school has a long history in Albuquerque. Reverend Thomas Harwood and his wife, Emily, came to New Mexico in the 1880s as missionaries of the Methodist Church. They founded the original Harwood Girls School in a small home in downtown Albuquerque.

Then in 1925, the lot on the corner of 7th Street and Mountain Road was purchased by the Women's Home Missionary Society, and the buildings that now house Escuela del Sol and The Harwood Art Center were built.

Although the school has been closed for thirty-five years, the former students remain committed to its legacy and history. It was an honor to meet with these women and hear so many stories and memories. One former student, Monna Walters, really sums up what The Harwood Girls School meant to so many women when she said to me:

*The staff of our school was very strict and things seemed very regimented at the time, but the result was generations of strong, effective women who had succeeded in many walks of life. It is sad that girls today don't get that kind of discipline (strict but always with the greatest love) today...*

*We students were not angels by any means, but we learned to control ourselves and we could be confident in public. Most of us came from lower income families (there were a few with money), but we all learned how to carry ourselves in society.*

We look forward to being a part of the next Harwood Girls School reunion!

*Students and faculty in the 1950s*



Escuela at Sixth

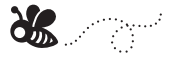
## Escuela's Community Outreach Evolves

by Friedje vanGils, Head of School

Recently, a focus group that included Escuela parents addressed the evolution of Escuela's community outreach program, The Harwood Art Center. We worked on integrating the school and Harwood's resources into the curriculum while addressing the growing needs of our community. Out of this was born Art & Sol, a vibrant out-of-school program offering new learning opportunities for our students and housed in Escuela's Sixth Street Studio. Many thanks to parent Donna Romano for the name and awesome logo! Stay tuned for more information—and for a grand opening event. In the meantime, you are encouraged to arrange a tour or visit during an after-school class. Call or email me or our Director of Youth Arts, Ms. Vashti Moss (Friedje@eDelSol.org or Vashti@eDelSol.org).



Thank you!



Thank you to everyone who donated to Escuela del Sol at the lovely party hosted by Nestor and Angela Romero:

Christina Bachicha and Pat Sterba  
Deborah and James Chavez  
Vicki and Sam Dazzo  
Erin Engelbrecht and Robert Richard  
Rod and Maria Geer  
Tania Goldfeder and Jonathan Wolfe  
Shani and Leo Gonzalez  
Leland and Candace Gould  
Keith and Jeannie Harris  
Greg and Shana Levenson  
Joseph and Elizabeth Marcilla  
Lisa Maynes and Tim Pinton  
Linh and Kristina Nguyen  
Rak's Building Supply  
Larry and Dorothy Rainosek  
Shannon Rainosek and Patrick Hurley  
Meg and Dan Rey-Bear  
Susan Richardson and Gary Gruber  
Nestor and Angela Romero  
Jay and Maisa Shoebaum  
Joe and Angie Thompson  
Jimmy and Anna Trujillo  
Doug Turner and Mala Htun  
Byron and Cindy Wall  
Catherine and James Werner



*Above: Elizabeth and Angelina are part of this year's Sr. El. Community—already working hard!*



*Right: Maggie and Levi share a story*



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