

These are uncertain times and we are all having to make adjustments in response to our new realities. We have heard from some of you about the challenges faced by your families. As individuals, as a nation and as a global community there are tough choices to be made. Many of you have asked about the impact of the economic changes on Khalsa Montessori School and we appreciate your concern. Here is an update that I hope will answer some of your questions:

Infant--Toddler--Primary Programs

It is re-enrollment time for the early childhood programs. We look forward to partnering with you in the new school year as we work together for the children. The early childhood programs are funded entirely by tuition payments paid by parents. We usually raise our rates by a small percentage each year to cover staff raises and increases in our costs. We have decided to support parents by keeping the 2008-2009 rates for the coming year. We will not be raising rates. It is a small step to take, recognizing your needs. We are excited that two of our assistants will be taking Montessori teacher training during the summer and look forward to the renewed infusion of enthusiasm and inspiration that teachers will bring back to the school after a summer of immersion in Maria Montessori's vision for children. We appreciate the generosity of the KCO who will be contributing funds toward teacher training.

Charter School, grades k-8, Camden and River campuses

The charter school is funded entirely by the per-child dollars we get from the State of Arizona. All public schools receive this per-child funding. In Arizona the amount for charter schools is less than that for districts. Did you know that Arizona continues to be 49th out of 50 states in per-child funding for districts? That puts Arizona charter schools at the bottom nationally. In addition to the per-child dollars, Arizona school districts receive additional funding for buildings, maintenance, technology, etc. Charter schools must pay for everything, including buildings, from the per-child funds. We work hard to provide a world-class Montessori education on a budget that is based on one half to one third the amount received per child by private Montessori schools or public Montessori schools in other states. This was the reality before the current economic crisis.

As you know, Arizona is facing a severe deficit. All public schools have been asked to cut their budgets for the current year and "give back" monies that they have already budgeted or received. Fortunately for us this is in the thousands rather than the millions which is what big districts have suffered. We have not been informed about the impact on next year's funding. School funding is a typically partisan issue in the legislature and we encourage you to let your voice be heard. The Arizona Charter School Association is a good resource for information and you can find them on line.

How you can help

Your presence is the best way you can help Khalsa Montessori School. All of our programs are funded by parent-paid or state-paid tuition funds. When our classrooms are full, our budget gets met. If you know families with children who would like to be a part of the Khalsa School community, please talk to Lee, Linda or Siri Atma for enrollment information. We are excited about the continued growth and development at every level and are especially delighted with the middle school and upper elementary teams who continue to extend the possibilities for academic excellence, hand-on learning activities, critical thinking and collaborative projects.

We intend to keep moving forward and will navigate our way through these economic challenges. The school has been built with determination, fearlessness, and a sincere desire to serve children and their families. We have never experienced easy economic times. We appreciate and value your continued trust and support. I value the Khalsa Montessori Community. In the worst of times we have worked together to support the children and in the best of times we have celebrated together, and so we will continue.