

W.V. Montessori School

FOLLOW the CHILD

Volume: 3—Issue 1

A Seasonal Publication of W.V.M.S.

Fall 2017

Thank you for your trust & support!

Dear Members of the WVMS Community,
Welcome to this year's first edition of our quarterly newsletter, "Follow the Child." We started the year with a near capacity of 130 students with toddler and our two elementary levels full. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education along with your constant support.

Over the summer, quite a bit of minor repairs were accomplished. New exterior doors were added to the Toddler B entrance and also the handicapped access ramp area. Three years ago, the Board of Directors undertook a facilities audit to help create a long-range plan for building maintenance and repair over a five-year period. I am pleased to report that all priority areas in that plan have been completed. Speaking of the Board, new officers for this year are Wesley Woo, president; Sal Deluca, vice president; Eric Bleiler, treasurer, and Valeria Sartor, secretary. Rounding out the Board are members Monica Hoang, Adrienne Asbury, Christopher Kang, Jim Murphy, Justin Nordstrom, Anne Papalia and Eileen Sennett. Many thanks for the hours they spend helping insure the success of our school.



The first quarter of the year has gone by in what seems a blink of the eye, as students settled in to their daily routine and for some, made a change to a new level. Teachers have participated in two in-services – one presented by Christina Fecio, noted facilitator, who conducted a number of team building activities, and the second by Dr. Jacobs from LIU 18, which discussed diagnosing student reading difficulties. Both opportunities provided valuable tools for our staff to use in the classroom.

Special Activities during our first quarter of the year have included a presentation to the Primary Level by Volunteers in Medicine; a Lower Elementary trip to the Kingston Fire Department and Safety House; an Upper Elementary trip to the Miller Farm and nature preserve; our school fall festival and PA nighttime Halloween Dance. We are looking forward to Grandparents Day and our Holiday Concert.

Dennis Puhalla
Head of School

Highlights inside this issue:

TODDLER PROGRAM (Ages 18 months - 3 years old)



The toddler classes have been busy experiencing all things fall. For our October cooking project, we baked apple crisp. The toddlers poured and mixed all of the ingredients, and enjoyed tasting the finished product after it was baked.

Our toddler playground is bursting with lots of colorful leaves to gather and toss, as well as acorns and spiky seed pods from the sweet gum tree. The toddlers love working together, gathering their autumn treasures in small plastic buckets.

Fall activities in the toddler rooms include hammering golf tees into a large pumpkin, washing small pumpkins in the water table, and scooping and pouring black bowtie pasta "bats" and orange rice in a sensory table. Our art areas are filled with construction paper pumpkins to color, paint, and glue, orange "pumpkin spice" scented play dough, leaf-shaped paper punch, and fall-themed stamps at the easel. The toddlers have also been enjoying transfer activities with a Halloween theme.



PRIMARY PROGRAM (Ages 3 – 6 years old)



Apples and pumpkins and gourds, oh my! The autumn season offers so much to excite our senses, from the visual display of the beautiful fall foliage to the smell of baked apples, the sound of crisp leaves beneath our feet and the cool autumn breeze against our faces. The primary classes have been exploring their senses this autumn with activities such as nature walks in the community to observe the splendor of the season, apple tasting and sampling of baked apple goods, leaf rubbing, gourd washing, pumpkin carving and roasting pumpkin seeds. In science, we have also been studying the life cycles of plants, apples,

pumpkins and trees and the "parts of" trees, leaves, apples, skeletons and spiders, - eek!

Our Parents Association's annual fall festival provided a wonderland of autumn themed activities that were enjoyed by all, followed by the fun-filled Monster Mash Costume bash! What good times!

The primary classes have been studying North America and the countries, people, animals, and biomes found there. Primary A had the unique opportunity to ‘travel’ to Hawaii while studying North America. Several Primary A family members have been fortunate enough to vacation in Hawaii and were kind enough to share their travel experiences with us. Kaden McCabe’s mom, Jennifer, has an uncle with a farm in Hawaii and she has travelled there twice! She gave us leis and allowed us to borrow a photo album of her Hawaiian adventures to peruse throughout our Hawaiian studies. Dr. and Mrs. Murphy, (parents of Cara, Emma, and James), were guest speakers on the subject and donated a beautiful collection of photos; and Mr. and Mrs. Wright, grandparents of Myra Sennett, donated shell beads and many photographs and maps from their trip to Hawaii just a few weeks ago. Students learned about the volcanoes and tropical rain forests of Hawaii, fruits and vegetables grown there, Kona coffee, lei making, hula dancing and luau traditions. They even planned and celebrated a luau of their own!



The primary classes will wrap up their North American studies with lessons about Mexico and the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations there, in conjunction with Spanish instructor Angela Pignataro, who has special activities planned for the entire school. Our next continent of study will be Europe. As we head into November and the season of gratitude, we will begin to discuss the first Thanksgiving, the European Pilgrims and Native Americans and prepare for the kindergarten play and Grandparents Day. These are two very important events for the primary classrooms, particularly the kindergarten students who plan and present an annual performance of The First Thanksgiving.





Every year the primary classes choose a variety of art masters to learn about. Our first master artist of study this year was Vincent Van Gogh. The children learned about the life and times of this great artist and created their own masterpieces inspired by his famous “Sunflowers.” You can view them in our hallway ‘galleries’ or in the Primary B classroom. They are truly stunning! Our next artist of study will be American artist, Georgia O’Keeffe. Art in the primary Montessori environment goes beyond the typical craft making of the average preschool classroom. We love crafts! But exposure to the arts through painting, mixed media, music, movement and dance, drama and role-play in the primary classroom is designed to inspire and encourage children to discover the world around them through creative exploration.

In “The Absorbent Mind,” Maria Montessori said, "If we try to think back to the dim and distant past... what is it that helps us reconstruct those times, and to picture the lives of those who lived in them? It is their art... It is thanks to the hand, the companion of the mind, that civilization has arisen." We learn history through art. We learn how to express ourselves and communicate our feelings through art. Through art children develop fine motor skills. The Montessori primary classroom provides a plethora of materials and open-ended art activities that allow the child to explore and create freely without regard to the end product. It is the process that continues to inspire and encourage the child, rather than the product. Adults are often extremely product oriented, but children are wired differently. Children revel in the process and exploration of things, and usually give little regard to the finished product. Perhaps that is why children so frequently and freely present adults with their artwork. They most likely are not attached to it at all, nor do they need to possess or collect their art projects. So they present their gems and masterpieces to their parents, grandparents and teachers to collect and display and marvel over. And we gladly do just that!

Art, along with all other areas of the Montessori classroom, gives children the foundation for future growth in many domains. You can find art peppered throughout the Montessori classroom. In the geography area, for example, we often use art in our continent studies. We may sculpt the earth or shape the continents with dough or molding clay. We may color or paint the flags, animals and maps of different countries, or paint a watercolor of the world, the continents or land and water forms. When we study a particular art master we learn about where he/she is from and look for the country of origin on our maps and globes (We may even choose an artist to study based on the continent we are studying).

In language, we introduce handwriting through tracing and shading activities with metal insets and colored pencils. Children trace and shade a series of shapes, and create beautiful books in order to prepare the hand for printing. In the math area children color the bead stair and use stamping and art activities for counting. In the sensorial area the color boxes provide a palette for learning primary, secondary and tertiary colors. Children become design artists and architects when creating and building patterns and structures with cylinders, prisms and cubes. Overall, art has a very important and integral role in every area of the primary Montessori learning environment.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM (Ages 6 - 12 years old)

Lower Elementary students have enjoyed their studies related to fall. We began the study by taking a fall leaf walk. During our walk, students noticed the different leaves while collecting them for the classroom. The leaves were used to create leaf rubbings and students wrote a description or poem about their work. In the classroom, Miss Kelsey created a leaf identification work that allows our students to learn about and identify local trees by their leaves. In addition, students learned about the parts of the leaf, their different shapes and why they change color and fall off deciduous trees to prepare for winter.



One of our students inspired us to learn about the life cycle of the butterfly when she found caterpillars in her yard at home and brought them in for Lower El to observe. Cordelia Carpenter said that she noticed how large the caterpillars were and wanted to see if they would turn into butterflies. Sure enough, while in our classroom, all three caterpillars formed chrysalis and two turned into butterflies! Students were able to observe firsthand one of the wonders of nature as the caterpillars evolved into beautiful monarch butterflies. The butterflies were released and the chrysalis that did not develop was dissected by Olivia Deluca. Olivia shared with the class that upon dissecting the chrysalis, she identified a mold/fungus that probably led to the demise.

Speaking of fungus, Lower Elementary students have enjoyed learning that there is "fungus among us." Third year students cultivated a grow-at-home mushroom kit and in 26 days we had a huge harvest of mushrooms! All of Lower El reaped the benefits by creating make your own pizzas with mushroom toppings for snack. Students learned the parts of the mushroom, identified types of mushrooms and the life cycle of a mushroom.





Lower Elementary students also enjoyed taking part in spooky studies. They began with "Monster Math," in which fact families are learned in mathematics. Students learned that the answer to an equation does not have to be dependent on the order of the numbers in addition and multiplication and that in subtraction and division the larger number begins the equation. A study of symmetry included butterflies, bats and spiders. Students learned the parts of each animal and constructed their own symmetrical bat and spider. One of the most exciting lessons for our fall studies was to learn the life cycle of the pumpkin and then harvest and carve pumpkins from the WVMS

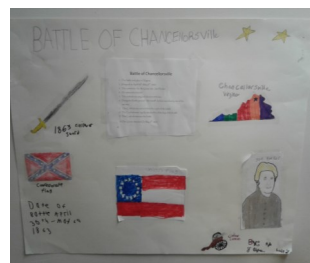
garden. Students were fascinated to scoop the goop and vote on how to carve the Jack-O-Lantern. Students enjoyed an afternoon snack of freshly roasted pumpkin seeds. Students learned that the Jack-O-Lantern began in Europe and were first made from turnips to scare away the spirit of "Stingy Jack." When settlers came to America, pumpkins were found and used for this traditional fall decoration. Lower El's Jack-O-Lantern's were proudly displayed for the Annual Fall Festival.



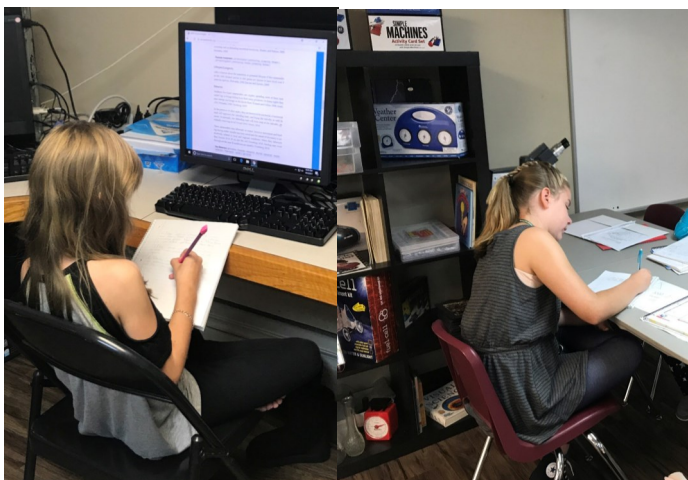
The Upper El students have been hard at work studying the Civil War in history for the first half of this year. They have done research and a partner poster project on the important battles of the Civil War. Each student, along with his or her partner, researched and created a poster on a battle during the Civil War. Some of the battles that the students researched and studied were Fort Sumter, Battle of Bull Run I and II, Shiloh, Stones River, Antietam, and Chickamauga, just to name a few. Each group presented their research and posters to their peers during a history lesson where they became the teachers.



The Upper El students are also studying many of the important historical figures during the Civil War. The students are creating a PowerPoint outlining the important contributions their historical figure brought to the Civil War and the sacrifices they made to our country. Some of the figures being researched are Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E.



Lee, Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, Harriet Tubman, Jeb Stuart, Andrew Johnson and many more.



To culminate their study on the Civil War, the Upper El students will each be creating a scrapbook on the life and impact that President Abraham Lincoln had on our country.

In Upper El this year, fourth and fifth year students are learning about the “Kingdom of Animals” which covers all the functions and their scientific names from the most basic, “Porifera” through the most complex, “Mammalia.” Currently, they are

learning about the function of “Nutrition.” The students discovered that some animals have a complete system where as some animals have an incomplete system. They were shocked to discover that some animals have only one opening for taking food in and getting rid of its waste. They also learned about the physical and chemical work each animal does during the nutrition process.

In addition to the fourth and fifth year biology lessons, the students have also been researching various mammals, amphibians and reptiles found at the Lehman Sanctuary in Dallas. They spent a morning at the sanctuary exploring the habitats with local expert and naturalist, Rick Koval. The students were able to find and identify many types of salamanders including the red-backed, four-toed, northern two-lined, mountain dusky, northern dusky, northern



spring and a large spotted salamander. They also came across several northern spring peeper frogs and northern leopard frogs. During the outing, the students collected some water samples to test back in the Upper El classroom. The students had so much fun finding and identifying different species of animals.



Sixth year students have taken this past knowledge of animals and are now applying it to their studies in “Human Biology.” What they learned as functions are now considered systems of the body. They have learned about many different types of cells. They have just created their own animal cell models which are on display in our classroom.



WHO WAS MARIA MONTESSORI ?

Maria Montessori was the first woman to practice medicine in Italy. A scholar of biology, psychiatry, anthropology, and medicine, she graduated from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Rome in 1896. As a physician, Dr. Montessori was in touch with young children and became profoundly interested in their development. Through careful and exhaustive scrutiny, she realized that children construct their own personalities as they interact with their environment. She also observed the manner in which they learned as they spontaneously chose and worked with the auto didactic materials she provided.



She studied children of all races and cultures in many countries around the world, soon seeing the universality of the laws of human development. She continued her observations throughout her life, widening and deepening her understanding until her death in 1952. Also a devoted humanitarian, she was three-times nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy efforts toward a more peaceful humanity.

Maria Montessori was a scientist, and as a good scientist, she was earth-bound and highly spiritual in her pursuit of truth. Through her studies of educational methods, she declared two principles as the foundation of Montessori pedagogy: the universal characteristics of the human child, and the child as a unique, unrepeatable, respectable, and admirable individual to be unconditionally accepted as one of life's most marvelous expressions.



There should be music in the child's environment, just as there does exist in the child's environment spoken speech. In the social environment the child should be considered and music should be provided.

— *Maria Montessori* —

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1896: Maria graduates to great public acclaim from the University of Rome School of Medicine. She is the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. Maria also studied anthropology, biology and psychiatry. As an early feminist she represents Italy at the 1896 Women's Conference in Berlin where, among other things, she is a strong advocate for equal pay.

1896-1907: Dr. Montessori's work brings her into close contact with children. During this period, the Italian Minister of Education appoints her as the Director of the Scuola Ortofrenica. This institution was dedicated to the care and education of youngsters that were considered "cognitively challenged". Through the development of her Montessori method, many of these 8-year-old students are able to pass standard testing with above-average scores.

1907: Dr. Montessori opens Casa dei Bambini or "Children's House," for children ages 3 to 6 years in one of the poorest neighborhoods in San Lorenzo, Italy.

1913: Dr. Montessori makes her first visit to the United States.; Montessori Educational Association is founded by Alexander Graham Bell and his wife, Mabel.

1915: Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco: Dr. Montessori receives international attention with her "glass house" schoolroom exhibit. During this visit, Dr. Montessori leads a teacher training course while in the states.

1922: Italian government asks Dr. Montessori to return to become a government inspector of schools.

1929: Dr. Montessori founds the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) in Amsterdam, Netherlands, with her son, Mario, to ensure preservation of her educational principles.

1939: Dr. Montessori and her son travel to India to give a series of teacher training courses. Both are detained in India during World War II.

1947: Dr. Montessori starts a training center in London and continues to spend time in India.

1949: Dr. Montessori is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

1950: Dr. Montessori is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

1951: Dr. Montessori is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

1952: Dr. Montessori died in the Netherlands assured that her legacy would be continued through the work of the Association Montessori Internationale.

"Within the child lies the fate of the future"

Dr. Maria Montessori



HOLIDAY CONCERT

Holiday Programs are on Friday, December 15th

Primary Program: 6:00 p.m.

Students should arrive between 5:30-5:45 p.m.

Elementary Program: 7:15 p.m.

Students should arrive between 6:45-7:00 p.m.

Childcare Information

Afternoon childcare closes at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15th.

Montessori Materials Spotlight

Sandpaper Letters

Written language is an extension of spoken language and in Montessori begins with the concept that words are made up of sounds. Many games are played so that the child realizes that 'cat' starts with the sound 'kuh' and ends with the sound 'tuh' and has a 'ahh' in the middle. When the child is familiar with the sounds, the letter symbols are introduced using the Sandpaper Letters – symbols cut out of sandpaper and pasted on board. The

teacher asks 'What sound can you hear at the beginning of 'cat'?' When the child replies 'kuh' the teacher says 'This is what 'kuh' looks like' and shows the child how to trace the shape of this letter with their dominant hand. By sounding out and tracing the letters the child learns in an auditory, tactile and visual way. Sandpaper Letters are a perfect example of how Dr. Montessori introduces concepts indirectly – vowels are on pink boards and consonants on blue board. When the child is familiar with 8-10 sandpaper letters the child is introduced to the Large Movable Alphabet and starts to sound out and write their own words. Thus the child can begin writing before they have developed skills of forming the letters with a pencil.

