Dear Members of the WVMS School Community,

I hope you enjoy this first edition of our quarterly newsletter, “Follow the Child.” We began the year with 103 students, reaching capacity at toddler and lower elementary levels. It was a pleasure to meet our returning students along with those new to the Montessori Experience the first day of the school year. I cannot thank you enough for entrusting us with your child’s education and your support in so many ways.

Over the summer the big news was the completion of our two new playgrounds by River Valley Recreation located in Wrightsville, Pa. The playgrounds were specially designed to enhance the physical skills set of our previous equipment – and they are a huge hit with our students. Many thanks to the Bergman Foundation for their financial support of the project, along with our Board of Trustees, who realized the need for this improvement and allotted the resources to see it to completion.

The Board of Directors have continued their feasibility study for building expansion and improvement, along with addressing short term needs and concerns. Speaking of the Board, new officers for the year are Christopher Kang, president; Sal Deluca, vice president; Wesley Woo, treasurer, and Eileen Sennett, secretary. Also serving on the Board are Eric Bleiler, Chris Keren, David Abdalla, Sander Gottlieb, Tim Maloney, Kimberly Pickreign, Ann Tihansky, and Brian Stanchak. Many thanks for the hours the Board spends helping plan the continued success of our school.

As we approach November, the school year (our 49th by the way) seems to be flying by. A successful Book Fair was completed, kicked off by a wonderful evening party for our students. Also held in October, the Fall Festival on the 25th was followed in the evening with a PA-sponsored Halloween Dance. Thanks to our PA Co-Chairs Karen Kile and Kristin Ferretti, along with all our parent volunteers, for planning a wonderful schedule of activities for our students. November brings a number of holiday celebrations, classroom visitations and our most special Grandparents Day.

We hope your child has had a great start to the 2019-2020 school year. Special activities and dates can be found on your school calendar and through emails sent via our Ren Web system. Please remember that we are here for you and any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Dennis Puhalla
Head of School
TODDLER PROGRAM (Ages 18 months - 3 years old)

This month, our toddlers have been busy discovering all of the beautiful and exciting changes that autumn brings. On our playground, we have been observing the different shapes and colors of the leaves, as well as the interesting seeds our oak and sweetgum trees produce. Indoor activities incorporating all things fall include scrubbing mini pumpkins in the water table, hammering golf tees into a large pumpkin, and examining the differences in our collection of gourds. Some fall-themed snacks included homemade applesauce, prepared by the children in Toddler B, wheat toast with apple butter, and apple slices with sunflower seed butter dip. Even our art activities reflect the beauty of the season, with pumpkin, leaf, and acorn themes.

At circle time, we have been singing a new song called "Leaves are Falling!"

(To the tune of "Jingle Bells")

Leaves are falling, leaves are falling
One fell on my nose
Leaves are falling, leaves are falling
One fell on my toes
Leaves are falling, leaves are falling
One fell on my head
Leaves are falling, leaves are falling
Yellow, orange and red!
“Autumn Winds begin to blow, Colored leaves fall fast and slow, Whirling, twirling, all around, Til at last they touch the ground.”

Autumn is really upon us! Although we are sad to see the warm weather go, the new season brings with it the beautiful fall leaves, the smells of baked goods, and the comfort of cozy sweaters. In the Primary classes, we are busy learning about the many changes that come with the autumn season. The shelves are full of a wide variety of matching, sorting, counting, nomenclature, art, and cooking activities! In particular, the children have been looking at and manipulating many works about trees, including examining leaves, wood, acorns, and nuts with a magnifying glass, matching photos of leaves, identifying the parts of a tree and leaves using puzzles and cards and discussing the functions of these parts during circle time.

The classes also baked some tasty apple treats and ate them for snack, including apple sauce, apple crisp, and apple muffins. We are looking forward to enjoying some pumpkin baked goods as well.

The harvest season is a nice beginning for teaching children about their environment. We begin by discussing our planet earth and the sun. This leads to lessons on land, water, air, and energy. We introduce the concept of biomes. We will be talking more about biomes and the plants and animals that inhabit each biome as we learn about one continent a month. In October, we began with North America. Photos and tokens of North American landscapes, famous places, animals and flags surround us.
We have also begun our artists’ study with the famous North American artist, Frida Kahlo. Frida Kahlo was a twentieth century, Mexican painter known for her many portraits, self-portraits, and works inspired by Mexican culture and nature. Look for Primary children’s Kahlo inspired paintings to be filling the WVMS hallways soon!

As we approach Thanksgiving, we aim to help the children build some cognitive strategies and habits that will stay with them throughout their lives. Much recent research indicates that the secret to happiness may be recognizing all there is to be thankful for. Gratitude fosters happiness and may help through times of stress and disappointment. Many of our seasonal songs and poems remind us of earth’s and life’s abundances.

On that note, I would like to convey a big thank you to Aditya Vohra’s grandmother for teaching the Primary C class all about Diwali. The children learned about India and the festival of lights and were thrilled to take home real clay lanterns, gifts of sweets, and eat a special snack!
Lower Elementary was recently a recipient of a Pets in the Classroom grant from our local Petco. Our class was excited to welcome two pet hermit crabs, Appleson and Mr. Crabs. Having live pets in the classroom enhances the biology curriculum, giving our students first hand knowledge. Students learn practical life in caring for them as well as empathy. Students will enthusiastically tell you that our hermit crabs are invertebrates with an exoskeleton. They have learned about the environment required for Appleson and Mr. Crabs to lead a healthy life.

To help with their care, students need to make sure that they have freshwater and saltwater, enough substrate and sand to be able to burrow and molt and have fresh fruits, vegetables and protein source along with their regular food. This month's Community Meeting allowed students to suggest and vote upon their names. Observation research is a popular work that allows our students to conduct observation, take notes and document our pets’ environment, activity, changes and behaviors. Currently, Lower Elementary has Gracie and Ocean our reptiles (turtles) and a complete ecosystem fish tank that includes various adult and baby fish along with snails and baby snails. Students in Lower Elementary study animal classification, evolution, fundamental needs and life cycles.
In Biology, the fourth and fifth year students are studying the kingdom of animals, animalia. The phylum and class names with an example are as follows: Porifera, sponges; Cnidaria, jellyfish; Annelida, earthworm; Arthropoda, crab; Molluska, snail; Echinodermata, sea star; Cephalochordata, amphioxus; Agnatha, lamprey; Pisces, fish; Amphibia, frog; Reptilia, turtle; Aves, birds, and Mammalia, dog. They started off by learning about the different vital functions of animals which include the vegetative work; nutrition, respiration, circulation and relative work; sensitivity, support and movement, and reproduction. Their first hands-on impressionistic lesson on nutrition involved an organism “a sock” eating pretzels, a potato masher, grinder, cutter, and other tools to help make the connection on how various animals take in food, ingest, and get rid of their waste, egest. They also learned that some animals don’t have a complete system which means the waste product after absorption also comes out the same opening as it entered, such as its mouth. They recently created their own hand bound book which illustrates and describes the function process of nutrition in all animals.

The sixth year students are studying human biology and now understand that those same vital functions they learned in the past are now called systems of the body. They created a “Great River” poster which identifies each system and explains the various roles each department is responsible for. For example, the kidneys are part of the department of purification which filters your blood by removing wastes and extra water to make urine. These posters can be found along our stairway in the Upper Elementary classroom.

The Upper El students are working on expository writing this trimester. The students have received lessons on types of expository writing and have also written several pieces focusing on both research papers and also five paragraph essay writing. The Upper El students begin their writing process using graphic organizers. They use these graphic organizers to collect their ideas and begin to write their rough draft. One of the very first lessons the UE students received this year was on editing marks. After their rough drafts are “edited,” they use the corrections/suggestions to complete their final drafts. Each student is then required to type their finished piece. This ensures that they are experiencing the writing process from start to finish, along with strengthening their computer/word processing skills. Students are also pulled for “mini” writing lessons focusing on such topics as using quotations, proper punctuation and word choice. Several of the students writing pieces are on display in the computer area of the Upper El classroom.
Weather Related Delays & Closings at Montessori

Since winter weather is approaching, we thought it would be best to give you information on weather related delays and closings. If school must delay or close due to inclement weather, we will inform you in a number of ways:

1. An email will be sent out to all families.

2. A text will be sent out to all families.

3. The delay or closing information will be posted on the home page of our website. www.wvms.org

4. A post will be made on our facebook page.

5. Also look on TV stations (WNEP, WBRE, WYOU) for “Wyoming Valley Montessori School.” Do not go by your local school district, please look for our school name.

Please note, we do have a 1 ½ hour delay at our school. Morning childcare will start at 9:00 a.m. on these days.

Whenever weather conditions necessitate a delayed start, all parents should use discretion as to whether or not to send their children to school, especially parents of our youngest students attending morning sessions only.

Benefits of Montessori Education

Montessori education offers our children opportunities to develop their potential as they step out into the world as engaged, competent, responsible, and respectful citizens with an understanding and appreciation that learning is for life.

Montessori students enjoy freedom within limits. Working within parameters set by their teachers, students are active participants in deciding what their focus of learning will be. Montessorians understand that internal satisfaction drives the child’s curiosity and interest and results in joyous learning that is sustainable over a lifetime.

Students are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge. Teachers provide environments where students have the freedom and the tools to pursue answers to their own questions. This fosters learners who value asking questions as much as answering them, and revel in the excitement of learning something new.
**IMPORTANT DATES at WVMS**

**Grandparents and Special Friends Day** will be held on Wednesday, November 27th at 9:30 a.m. Grandparents are an integral part of the WVMS community! That is why we honor them every year with their own very special day.

Our Grandparents Day can involve biological grandparents or grand friends. This is an opportunity for our students to show appreciation and love for their grandparents or other significant older people in their lives by sharing them with their classmates and teachers. Invitations were mailed out mid-October.

**Thanksgiving Break**

Wednesday, November 27th is an early dismissal day with no afternoon childcare. 11:30 a.m. for toddler and primary students. 11:45 a.m. for elementary students.

WVMS will be closed Thursday, November 28th through Monday, December 2nd. Classes will resume Tuesday, December 3rd.

**Holiday Chorus Concerts for Primary and Elementary Students**

Please save the date of Thursday, December 12, 2019. Our students have been working with Mr. Baranoski, our Music teacher, to prepare for this special event.

10:00 a.m. for Primary Students (3-4-5 year olds)

6:00 p.m. for Elementary Students

*Students should dress in their holiday best for the event.*

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**Wyoming Valley Montessori School's 50th Anniversary Gala and Auction**

Saturday, April 4, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Please join us for dinner, dancing, and an auction at The Mary Stegmaier Mansion.

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**Wyoming Valley Montessori School | 851 West Market Street | Kingston, PA 18704 | 570-288-3708 | www.wvms.org**