

W.V. Montessori School

FOLLOW THE CHILD

Volume: 8—Issue 1

Fall 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Members of the WVMS Community,

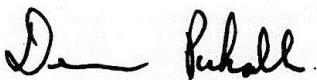
It is hard to believe that we are almost one third of the way through the 2022-2023 school term and are approaching the Holiday Season! So far it has been a wonderful school year with all classes full and the return of many of the activities we missed over the previous two years. It was heart warming to see our students' faces as the Fall Festival and Trunk-or-Treat were held, providing the opportunity for them to create a special memory with their classmates. Thanks so much to our PA who have planned a very active school year for our students.

Our Board of Trustees have been diligently working to provide the best possible facilities for our students. In that light, at the last Board meeting, they voted to investigate the possibility of constructing a new two-story building where the present media center is located. This would add much needed classroom and storage space for our facility. Also, we will be working for reaccreditation by the American Montessori Society and the Middle States Association, an 18-month process which will require your input.

Lastly, you should have received an Annual Campaign letter in your mail. The Campaign, suspended during the pandemic, helps provide for the continued improvement of our facility through your donations. Thanks in advance for your support.

Our entire staff and I would like to acknowledge your help during these first three months of school and look forward to the rest of the school year.

Have a great holiday season,



Dennis J. Puhalla

Head of School



TODDLER (18 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS OLD)



by Jonelle Kime, Toddler B

When touring new parents in the Toddler Classroom, I often mention that many of our works focus on fine motor development. So what is fine motor development? Why is it so important? And how do we work on it in the toddler class?

Without fine motor skills, we would not be able to do many of the things we so easily do every day like opening doors, making ourselves lunch, and brushing our teeth.

Fine motor development is the coordination of the small muscles in the hand, wrists, and fingers. Often the eyes are used to help these muscles complete activities. Hence eye hand coordination, but that is another news piece!

Fine motor development starts early, even just from birth when babies are seen grabbing at fingers, rattles, and bottles. Coordinating these muscles to all work together to complete simple tasks turns this simple reflex that we are all born with into something that will eventually guide a pencil on a paper. By the time children are in the toddler environment, they are at the perfect time to start developing this skill and almost everything you see in our classroom works on developing many areas of fine motor development.

At anytime of the school year you can find fine motor works on our classroom shelves. Something as simple as using a measuring spoon in our rice table to carefully pour the sensory goods

into a cup is fine motor development. Then there are more complex activities such as cutting strips of paper with scissors and gluing them onto a new paper.

One fine motor skill we work on is releasing and more specifically releasing into a certain spot. Developing the skill to have an object and release it into a particular place at a particular time is harder than you would think! This can be seen in works such as spooning. Getting an object onto the spoon is a fine motor skill in and of itself, but being able to turn the spoon and release the object into a specific part of an ice cube tray like in the photo above is the releasing skill. Works like this can also be seen throughout the year with various objects, spoons, and containers for releasing into.

Finally, the last part of fine motor development is the turning of the wrist. This skill eventually turns into being able to turn door-knobs, screwdrivers and being able to open containers with lids. We always have various lids and containers on our shelves to work this skill so independence can be gained when it comes to lunch time.

Fine motor development is one of the biggest reasons why starting children in the toddler Montessori classroom is so important and the reason why we keep so many activities out to encourage children to keep developing these skills everyday. Children then take these skills to the primary classrooms where they continue to develop these skills with works in the practical life area, the knobbed cylinders, the golden beads and bead stairs, the metal insets, the pink tower and rolling and unrolling rugs.



PRIMARY (3-6 YEARS OLD)

by Julia Pickarski, Primary C

Primary C began the year learning about the universe. The children enjoyed the “Space Unit” and “blasting off” to a different planet each day. We read about characteristics of each planet and looked at images of the Roman gods and goddesses for which they were named. We sang some songs to assist us in remembering the order and names of the planets. The phases of the moon were introduced and we tracked the moon cycle for a month, discussing the waxing and waning crescent and gibbous shapes of the moon.

After being introduced to all the planets, we have focused our attention on learning more about our planet Earth. We began by thinking about how the earth is made up of land, water, and air. The children sorted animal and transportation cards and objects. The children are now learning the names of the different water and land forms and filling landform trays with blue water to see the landforms appear before their own eyes. The forms being introduced to the children are: lake, island,



cape, bay, isthmus, strait, gulf, peninsula, archipelago, and a system of lakes. The study of the earth also extends to learning about the different biomes and the plants and animals that live in each biome. Most recently, we have been focusing on the temperate forest biome. This coincides well with the changing of the seasons here in Northeast Pennsylvania and a unit about trees and leaves. We have also been learning about the different parts of plants and their functions, and the edible parts that we eat—our fruits and vegetables. Learning about the food chain in the temperate forest provided a great opportunity to role play this energy cycle with the children on one beautiful, sunny morning. The children made masks of flowers, grasshoppers, frogs, snakes, and eagles. The chorus of the “play” was “all energy comes from the sun!”





The children had a lot of fun tasting several different varieties of apples. We also made apple crisp and applesauce as a group. The children took turns cranking the handle of the apple peeler and then chopping the apples into small pieces. The children learned to use an apple slicer, by placing half an apple on a cutting board, holding the handles, lining the blades up over the core of the apple, and pressing down! The children practiced grace and courtesy by walking around the room and offering their friends a piece of apple. And thanks to the generous food donations of our classroom parents, the children have also had the opportunity to prepare and serve bananas, cucumbers, pickles, and pita bread and carrots with hummus.

As the weather grows colder and we move towards winter, we will be learning about animal adaptations and hibernation and also about animals that live in the polar regions of the world. We look forward to making more books, role playing more natural scenarios, and reading more about our earth and all the wonders it has to offer!





FALL TIME FUN WITH THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION

The WVMS Parents Association has had a busy fall! The PA organized multiple fun events for our students and families including: WVMS Day at Robas Family Farms, the Fall Festival and Trunk-or-Treat.

The PA also helped WVMS give back with several service projects including a clothing drive for a local family, a school grounds clean up, and coat drive.

Membership in the PA, which meets monthly in person at the school, is open to all WVMS families. If you cannot attend the meetings, the minutes are emailed monthly along with any upcoming volunteer or donation opportunities that are available.

If you have any feedback or questions for the Parents Association, you can contact Michelle Regg, Parents Association President, at michellemregg@gmail.com.





MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT: MATCHING GIFTS

WVMS is currently collecting donations for its Annual Fund. Every single generous donation will help our students, but did you know you could potentially double your donation for free?

Thousands of companies have matching gifts programs in place to double employee gifts to organizations close to their hearts, like Wyoming Valley Montessori School.

Before the year is up, be sure to find out your matching gifts eligibility!

Step 1: Contact your employer's HR head to see if they offer a matching gift program to increase your donation.

Step 2: Your HR head will point you in the right direction and let you know if you need to fill out any necessary forms and be aware of submission deadlines.

Step 3: Once you have submitted your matching gift request form, contact WVMS with any questions about your donation.

To donate, visit:

WVMSAnnualFund.givesmart.com

WVMS appreciates each donation and act of support you make!

LOWER ELEMENTARY

(6-9 YEARS OLD)

By Kara Taylor, Lower Elementary

Lower Elementary students have enjoyed the fall cultural studies. Our Leaf Study began with a nature walk to observe and collect a leaf for further investigation. Students created a leaf rubbing and wrote a descriptive paragraph about it. Leaf identification, the study of chlorophyll, symmetry, area and density were also introduced during these lessons.

Students were intrigued with the lesson of The Long Black Line. This impressionistic Montessori lesson tells the story of when our planet finally settled and life began to form. It goes through the earliest of life forms and ends with the coming of humans. This powerful lesson illustrates how humans had the most impact on our planet but have been on it for the least amount of time.

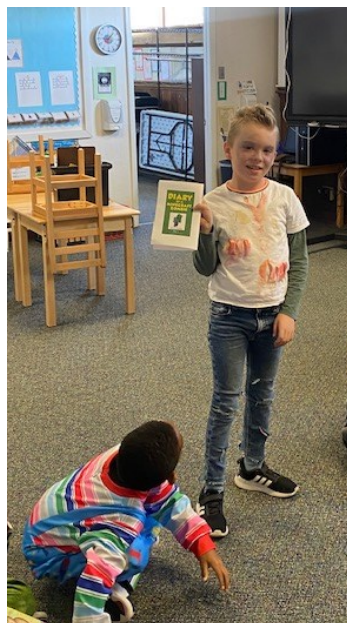
The Fundamental Needs raft lesson gave students the opportunity to put themselves in the place of early humans. Students worked in teams after "arriving at a de-



serted island" to establish the needs to survive. This impressionistic lesson is told through story telling like so many Montessori lessons. Students use imagination and creativity to brainstorm together.

The Timeline of Life that spans the length of one side of the Lower Elementary classroom captured students attention. This work gives students an illustration of what the earliest life forms may have looked like. Students love to create their own Timeline of Life.

Lower Elementary was fortunate to welcome Miss Keithley, a pre student teacher from King's College this fall. Miss Keithley taught a unit on sound. Through her lessons, students studied animal behavior, data graphs and estimation.



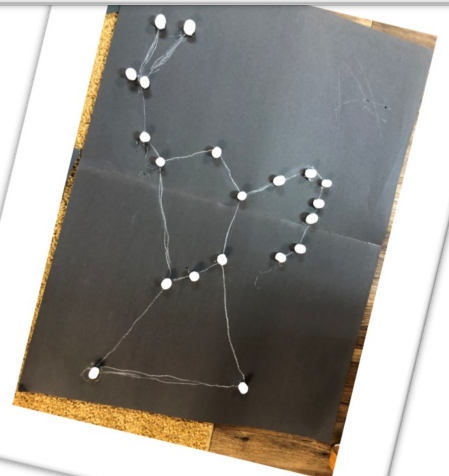
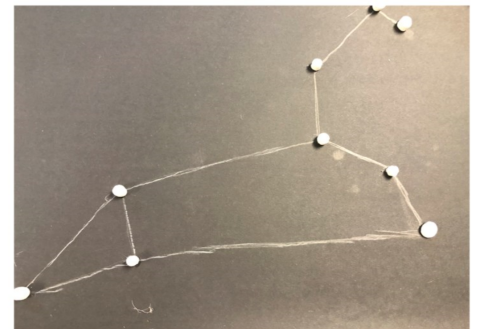
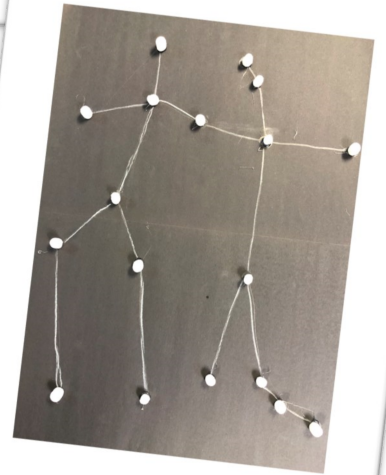
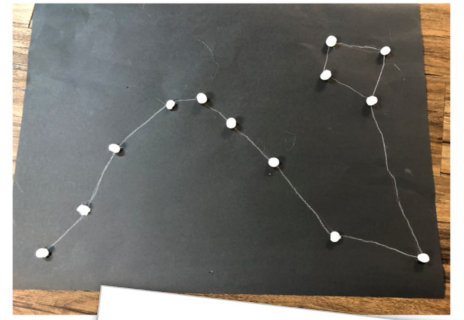
UPPER ELEMENTARY (9-12 YEARS OLD)



Upper Elementary is soaring into outer space for our in-depth astronomy study this year. Students will be studying various constellations and stars including classification and life cycle of stars, planets, moons, solar systems and other deep space objects. Our students have already begun learning about various constellation stories including cultural stories. One mythology story included “The Story of Berenice’s Hair.”

The constellation COMA BERENICES represents the beautiful hair of Queen Berenice of Egypt. She was so concerned for the safety of her husband Ptolemy III when he went off to war, that she vowed to cut off her glorious long hair as a sacrifice to Venus, should he be spared. When he eventually returned safely home, she kept her promise, and Zeus placed her beautiful hair in the heavens to shine among the stars.

Students have had the opportunity to research a different constellation, type up and present their findings to their peers, and create their own constellation map using marshmallows. These constellation projects are displayed on the ceiling in Upper El. Some of them include Aquarius: The Water Bearer, Cassiopeia: The Queen, Corona Borealis: The Northern Crown, Draco: The Dragon, Orion: The Great Hunter, and Pegasus: The Flying Horse to name a few. Later in the year, Upper Elementary students are planning to host a community wide astronomy event to educate others on our solar system by taking “A Journey Through Space.”





Wyoming Valley Montessori School

2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

September 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October 2022

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2022

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December 2022

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January 2023

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Please Note: Childcare begins September 6th

September 1 - Teacher In-Service
 September 2 - Teacher In-Service
 September 5 - School Closed: Labor Day
 September 6 - First Day of School for K-6 & Childcare Begins
 September 6 - 9 - Phase In for Toddler/Pre-K
 September 15 - Back to School Night

October 7 - Early Dismissal - Teacher In-Service
 October 10 - School Closed: Indigenous Peoples Day
 October 28 - Early Dismissal

November 11 - School Closed in honor of Veteran's Day
 November 17 - 18 - Early Dismissal: Parent/Teacher Conferences
 November 23 - Grandparent's Day & Early Dismissal
 November 24 - 28 - School Closed: Thanksgiving Break
 November 29 - Classes Resume

December 23 - Early Dismissal
 December 26 - January 1 - School Closed: Winter Break

January 2 - Classes Resume
 January 13 - Early Dismissal
 January 13 - Re-enrollment Schedule Changes Due
 January 16 - School Closed: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 January 31 - Financial Aid Applications Due

February 15 - Montessori "Parent Night"
 February 17 - School Closed
 February 20 - School Closed: President's Day
 February 21 - 24 - Montessori Week

March 9 - 10 - Early Dismissal: Parent/Teacher Conferences
 March 10 - Re-enrollment Contracts Due
 March 13 - Open Enrollment Begins
 March 13-17 - Terra Nova Testing: Grades 3,4,5,6

April 5 - Early Dismissal - Spring Break Begins
 April 6 - 11 - School Closed: Spring Break
 April 12 - Classes Resume

May 4 - Mother's Day Kindergarten Tea
 May 26 - Early Dismissal
 May 29 - School Closed: Memorial Day

TBD - Toddler, Kindergarten & Elementary Graduation
 June 7 - Early Dismissal
 June 8 - Early Dismissal: Last Day of School
 TBD - Summer Camp

February 2023

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March 2023

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April 2023

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May 2023

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June 2023

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July 2023

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Symbol Key

- Phase-In
- ★ Important
- School Closed
- ☒ Early Dismissal: Parent Conferences
- ☒ Early Dismissal: Childcare Closed
- ☐ Early Dismissal: Childcare Open
- * 1st Day of School
- △ All School Event
- ⊗ Closed/Make-Up Days



Visit Us Online:
www.wvms.org



Wyoming Valley
Montessori

851 West Market Street · Kingston, PA 18704
 Phone: 570-288-3708 Fax: 570-331-0279