

MONTESSORI ACADEMY

January - February 2010 Newsletter

Please enjoy the fourth of nine monthly newsletters keeping you informed about what's happening in our classrooms...

The teachers from every classroom wish to thank you parents for generously fulfilling our Holiday Wish Lists. All the materials have arrived or are on order. If you gave a book in your child's name, that name is written on a bookplate and then entered into the book. Any book also given as a birthday gift also receives a bookplate with your child's name. It is a beautiful way for us to remember your child.

Our annual Open House is coming up on Sunday, March 7th, from 1:00-3:00pm. All our children share their work with you on this day. Preschool through third grade are divided into two groups of one hour each. Upper Elementary and Junior High each have a Science Fair that is ongoing for the full afternoon. Remember to visit all rooms throughout our school.

Preschool/Kindergarten parents, please come to the elementary classrooms. Bring an interested prospective parent with you. This is a great way to introduce new parents to Montessori, and don't forget that we have a valuable referral program as well.

We wish you all a prosperous New Year.

The Three to Six Program:

We are very excited to be back at school. The children are settling into the routines of the day and enjoying the season. As we go on nature walks and explore our beautiful surroundings, the children have discovered and are identifying animal tracks. We are learning how nature survives during the long winter months, where snow flakes come from and how ice crystals are formed.

The five and six year olds have begun our unit on the United States. The children will be studying each region and its geographical areas. These include mountains, deserts, grasslands, prairies, as well as the bodies of water. They will also be learning about the plant and animal life in these regions and the different people that make up our United States of America. As they finish each region, the children will be creating their own maps. To help engage your child, ask simple questions about the regions they are working on and what they remember and have found interesting.

Our field trip to the Paramount Theatre to see the production of "Charlotte's Web" was a wonderful experience for the children and enjoyed by all.

"There is in the soul of a child an impenetrable secret that is gradually revealed as it develops."
-Maria Montessori

Lower Elementary:

Winter is a magical time in the Lower Elementary! Along with watching the snow fall out our windows and spotting winter birds at our feeder, we were able to take a walk in our wooded area after the first snowfall. In January, we had begun a unit on poetry. The children were then inspired by our walk to write some beautiful free-verse poems. Here are a few from our first through third grade:

Falling Snow

Falling snow slowly blows together in little bunches.
It is a soothing sight, as I watch,
sitting on a long thin log in the small woods.

The Red Squirrel

The red soft fox squirrel that I saw today was burying his nuts,
his bushy tail gracefully shimmering in the wind.
He left his tracks in the snow.

The Pond

As I walked on the path in the cool morning mist, I saw an ice pond.
I wonder where the fish had gone? And dreamed of ice skating.

The Sparrow

On a snowy walk, a sparrow was creeping out of the chilly shadows.
I hope he finds warmth.

A Tree

The big oak tree all covered in snow
The wind blows.
The snow falls as if a snow storm was coming.

The Snow

The snow dancing in the wind is blowing off the roof,
as if it were performing a ballet.

The Stream

I was walking in the woods when I happened to come across a stream.
It was so clear as it went over the smooth pebbles.

The Field

I was walking in the snowy field, grass so tall and so straight.
Foxes ran swiftly across the field making the grass sway.

Upper Elementary:

A chilly arctic blast has filled the Upper Elementary classroom with wonderful opportunities to explore different areas across our curriculum. In novel studies, the students are reading Mr. Poppers Penguins, a delightful book that has prompted them to consider what it would be like if they were given the opportunity to own a penguin. They have been able to convey these ideas through a creative writing assignment that has sparked the imagination of all. Many questions have arisen during group discussions and the writing process such as:

- ❖ Which species of penguins would I like the most?
- ❖ How would I provide a cold air environment?
- ❖ Shrimp is very expensive, how would I be able to finance a penguin's diet?
- ❖ What would my parents think of such an endeavor?

After completion of final copies, students are sketching penguins in the setting of their story.

Mr. Powell, our guest speaker on arctic weather, shared his expertise with the students by showing slides and discussing weather-related topics. The information provided by Mr. Powell has motivated our students to brave the cold conditions as they collect data from our weather station every morning. This has laid the foundation for the weather-related science projects the children will be working on this month. During the cold month of February, take the time to read with your children nightly.

The Junior High Program:

Junior High welcomes our newest student, Thomas Liu. Thomas joined us at the beginning of the semester. It has taken him no time at all to move from being the “new student” to feeling like he has been in our midst for the full year.

We are continuing with our Life Science studies. In the fall, we went to the Shedd Aquarium to see aquatic life and to dissect a squid. Now, we have begun dissection activities in our classroom. We learned dissection techniques with several plant dissections (bean and flowers), and we have completed our dissection of an earthworm. The students were surprised how complex this animal is. Our goals included the discovery of the worm’s five hearts and the digestive tract. The students will see, through dissection, that there are similarities in the internal structure of all animals, from simple animals to complex ones. We will be dissecting animals from several phyla, including clam, crayfish, sea star, fish and frog. Later, when we have studied mammals, we will dissect a pig. There is a marvelous growth in the student’s understanding of the complexity of life through this science study.