

MONTESSORI ACADEMY

March 2010 Newsletter

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

Mark Your Calendar:

Friday, March 5th = Reenrollment forms due.

Meet N Eat/Three Cups of Tea book discussion = 5:30-8:00pm.

Sunday, March 7th = **All School Open House 1-3:00 pm.** 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 perspective parent with you.**

March 15th-19th = Parent Teacher Conferences for grades 1-8th.

March 21st = **Public Open House = 2-4:00pm.** Guest Speaker and interactive Rapture Presentation – details will be forthcoming.

March 26th = Upper Elementary/Junior High field trip to Museum of Science and Industry/Oriental Institute.

March 29th-April 1st = Spring Vacation (open for Full Day ages 3-6 only).

April 2nd = Good Friday – no school for the entire campus.

The Three to Six Program: Ms. Joey, Ms. Jessica, Ms. Crystal, Ms. Alison
The teachers of the 3-6 year old children recently wrapped up their Parent/Teacher Conferences. In those meeting many families asked for suggestions to support the learning experience in the home. Ms. Joey and Ms. Crystal brainstormed and came up with the following suggests that are fun and family friendly.

Suggestions for Home:

1. Play “I spy” in the year, at the park, looking at nature or in the car.
2. Words are everywhere
make reading a daily experience. When you go shopping, you can point out signs like “only ten customers in this lane”, “today’s special offer on spaghetti”, “please wait here”, “Sorry, we are closed”. Children will quickly recognize these signs and will be proud to be able to read all by themselves. Read the ads on the cereal boxes, directions or recipes on food.
3. Make reading a book a special experience
Choose a special moment during the day to read a book with your child; sit close, so he/she can feel your warmth. By reading in bed for instance you can create a loving atmosphere. The child will associate reading with something pleasant. Shut off all background noises (TV, radio, air conditioner, etc.) during that time.
4. Encourage your child to “read” books using the picture to tell the story
5. Talk with your child as much as possible, involve him/her in conversation, teach them new words, tell and read stories to them.

6. Encourage your child to draw pictures and tell you about them. Then write underneath whatever is appropriate. He may even read it back to you.
7. Have a shallow tray filled with cornmeal that your child can trace sounds or numerals in using the handout that was given with your conference report.

All these activities are intended to be done in a fun care free way and not used as a “homework” experience for your child. Have fun and laugh.

We are also looking for Parent Volunteers to sit with our reading students during the morning or afternoon work times. If you are available please let Ms. Joey or Ms. Crystal know.

“By reading I mean the interpretation of an idea by means of graphics or symbols...A child does not read until he receives ideas from the written word” (Montessori, 1983, page 229).

Lower Elementary: Ms. Liz, Ms. Cas & Ms. Emily

The children of the Lower Elementary are going down under! We are studying the magical continent of Australia. From the Kangaroo to the Great Barrier Reef, the children are fascinated with the flora and fauna of the continent. We will be discussing features of the southern hemisphere, and identifying points of interest on the map as well as discussing climate and landforms. The children are fascinated to learn that Australia is the exact opposite of us, for example, when we have summer, they have winter. The children are learning that Australia is the driest continent, and is constantly dealing with a drought. The people and the animals have to adapt to that in ingenious ways! Australia is also one of the oldest continents in the world, and has the biggest rock in the world, Ayers Rock. We are also studying the native aborigine and the influence on the land. The children will be creating an original piece of art, based on aboriginal concepts. We love Australia!

Upper Elementary: Ms. Bre and Ms. Brigitte

There is a breeze in the air and Science Fair is near. Fourth grade has been learning about wind direction, measurement and design for the construction of their individual wind socks. Fifth and sixth grade students have been working on their weather projects using alternative energy or explaining how global warming affects the weather and the environment. These students have been designing everything under the sun from a weather balloon to a solar powered car. Through this process, students are learning about the scientific method, problem solving strategies, project design and how to present their projects. Please take time with your children to work on arts and crafts at home so they have the skills they need to be successful in their projects. Continuing to help your children develop skills with art and craft projects will increase their proficiency in future science projects.

The Junior High Program: Ms. Julie

Students have been studying the adult version of the novel Three Cups of Tea this month. They are required to read, analyze, and write about details of each chapter. They also found similarities from this compelling story with occurrences in their own lives. Each day they are demonstrating their understanding and empathy with the characters in the novel through their own writing. In conjunction with our novel study, we are collecting money for *Pennies for Peace*. Our pennies will help to construct schools for girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

This month, each student has written a report on “A Survey of the Animal Kingdom.” Their finished documents averaged 20 pages and required each student to use the internet to find animals in each phylum, print or draw a picture of each animal, and include the scientific classification of kingdom, phylum, class, order, etc. The students realized how complex and vast the animal kingdom is through their research of this project. These reports will be available in the Junior High classroom during the upcoming Science Fair, March 7th.

Congratulations to Jacob Martin on reaching 9th place at the local level of the Scripts National Spelling Bee. This has been a good experience for him. He now looks forward to next year’s competition.

French: Ms. Michelle

There are now 4 different sections of French offered after school: 3-6, Elementary A, Elementary B, and Advanced. The 3-6 class has focused on basic greetings, how to say and spell their names in French, and many simple vocabulary words. We also started learning a few of the letter combinations’ sounds, and are currently working on learning body parts. Elementary A started by working on pronunciation skills and vocabulary exercises, as well as some listening comprehension. We are now working intensely on grammar concepts, such as adjective agreement and placement in sentences. Elementary B started with Elementary A at the beginning of the year, but was sentences and basic question formation. The advanced group is working on more complex grammar concepts, such as combining definite articles with prepositions, and decoding vocabulary based on root words already in their vocabulary base. Overall, it has been a very successful year so far with lots of fun, too!