

The Montessori Schoolhouse

35th Anniversary 1974-2009

Newsletter: December, 2009

www.themontessorischoolhouse.com

DEAR FAMILIES—

Our first semester has flown by once again. The children have already grown so much as students, friends and citizens that we beam with pride. Here are our classroom reports:

Lower Elementary

The Lower Elementary classroom has enjoyed a great semester, notable for its productivity, friendships and laughter.

We started our year with a few new faces and also children we knew well, but hardly recognized for how much they had grown over the summer. The group came together as a class quickly. Perhaps our introduction of the **Virtues Project** added to this peaceful transition. Peacefulness, compassion, assertiveness, courage, thankfulness and honesty are among the virtues we discovered in each other this semester.

In Science we have worked our way from **living** to **nonliving** things through **vertebrates** and **invertebrates**, the *five families of vertebrates, mammals, to Early Humans and fossils.*

The Geography curriculum included lessons about the U.S.A. and a beautiful new **timeline of American History** before turning to our cultural unit in **China**. Ask your child for a few facts about *Inventions from Ancient China* and you will be amazed at her/his grasp of the subject. **Math Mondays** have been a source of great enthusiasm this year. Our **language curriculum** had the students identifying *complete sentences* and *punctuating* them as well as naming the *parts of speech*. Of course, we have also shared and discussed many great books and stories with your children.

Finally, we've almost completed **project presentations** and they have gone marvelously well! We hope all the children

have enjoyed this semester as much as we teachers have.

Coming Up: Astronomy and Space as our Science unit—along with the **Animals and Cultures of Africa.**

KC, Mandy & Regine send you Love and Season's Greetings.

Upper Elementary

Olive's **Science Activities** have been far-reaching and masterful: An Introduction to the **Microscope and Microbiology**: observing and drawing *bone, muscle and blood cells*, naming the different *parts of the cell*; *experimenting* with bone and recording results using **The Scientific Method**; naming the **major organs** and exploring their functions; naming and recording the **Movement System** of the body, i.e., major bones and muscles. And Olive reports: My Math group has completely mastered **manipulating fractions** through all of the operations! Yay!

Kate created an age-appropriate timeline of **Mexican history**, introduced the flag of Mexico with its colorful symbolism, presented an intriguing job outlining the contributions of the **Mayans** to Mexican life and drew parallels between the lives of American and Mexican historical figures in a job called "**Famous Mexicans.**" Olive is presenting a cooking project in which the students will mix and use their own **corn masa** to make tortillas. We will eat them hot off the grill with salt and butter. YUM!

Dana's **Spanish group** has been discovering "*Where things are?*" **Donde esta?** And exploring quantities—**Quantos Hay?** In **art**, the students have been delving into the colorful crafts of Mexico, with **Papel picado, Huichol yarn art, Mayan worry dolls, Oaxacan carved radishes** and the work of **Frida Kahlo.**

Kate, Olive and Dana wish you all a happy & peaceful holiday season.

6th Avenue

The 3-6ers are wrapping up their **North America** unit with **maple syrup on waffles** as a “taste” of **Canada**; apples diced by the children to fill their **apple pies**, for a taste of the **United States**; and then they will be on their way to **Mexico** for a warm drink of **chocolate con canela**.

In January we will begin our **Tour of Europe** by exploring a selection of countries with our customary **culture baskets, music, food and art**, including **famous artists**.

The Kindergarten/Pre-1st students are working excitedly on a challenging array of subjects for their **contracts**. Their contracts perform the multiple functions of outlining work to be done, providing a record of completed work and giving each student a sense of internal satisfaction as jobs are completed and checked off.

The **Afternoon Program** has been busily at work on **art projects** including **stamping apples** on a basket outline and **popcorn sheep**. They are beginning a series on **birds and nests**, beginning with the **Cardinal**, to decorate **the tree wall**. On **cooking days** the children have prepared **veggie wraps, strawberry shortcake, pumpkin-shaped cheese sandwiches** and their all-time favorite, **spaghetti**.

After School Program, Ft. Lowell

Fort Lowell's Afterschool teachers have been orchestrating a lovely program including **jewelry-making, knitting hats** and **sewing pillows**. The children have also had fun with special **seasonal crafts** such as **glue ghosts** for Halloween, **paper turkeys** for Thanksgiving and **pine cone decorating** for the winter holidays. Sara and Irene look forward to seeing all of you in January and wish you a happy, healthy and restful New Year.

~CALENDAR~

Last day of school: Friday, Dec. 18, 2009

Winter Break: Monday, December 21st through Friday, January 1, 2010!

Return to school: Monday, January 4, 2010.

Tax Credit Programs

CHESS, VIOLIN, PIANO, MINSTREL, YOGA, THEATER ARTS, CREATIVE MOVEMENT, COOPERATIVE SPORTS & PHYSICAL FITNESS **all depend on your TAX CREDIT contributions.** These wonderful enrichment programs **COST YOU ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!**

Every dollar you provide for our students to enjoy these extra-curricular activities is a direct state tax credit to you—up to \$200 per single tax payer and up to \$400 per married couple. You get to pay your state income taxes and support these activities at the same time.

If you haven't contributed yet, please do so by December 31st. Any check we receive dated 12/31/2009 or earlier counts for this year's taxes. Please help us continue these fantastic programs.

We thank you & the children thank you!!!

Philosophy & Parenting

Occasionally, in spite of all our efforts, education and caring atmosphere, individual children will say or do “mean” or insensitive things to other children.

We would like to recommend a terrific book which addresses this subject so intelligently and demonstrates so clearly how you can empower your own child in the face of difficult social moments. The book is titled, **Simon's Hook** by Karen G. Burnett.

We will never be able to control all of the actions, words and bad feelings of others. But we can control ourselves and our responses and thus take charge of our own days and experiences.

Simon's Hook can show you how to help your child avoid the path of blame and self-pity and choose empowerment instead.

***HAPPY HOLIDAYS, EVERYONE
& HAPPY NEW YEAR!!***

Regine and staff