

The Montessori Schoolhouse

Celebrating our 37th School Year

Newsletter: April-May, 2011

www.themontessorischoolhouse.com

Dear Families—

“Whan that Aprille
With hise shoures soote
The droghte of March
Hath perced to the roote . . . “

The opening quatrain of Chaucer’s medieval classic, the **Canterbury Tales**, is such a fitting prelude to this springtime edition of the Newsletter—do we not endure our own drought every March and this year were we not treated to a reprieve of April showers?

Springtime also means we are in the home stretch of our school year, with Stanford 10 and AIMS testing and the annual State Chess Tournament behind us and Summer Art Camp just around the corner. Now, on to the classrooms!

Lower Elementary

Lower Elementary just finished up its visit to and study of **The Middle Ages**. We have created imaginary beasts, read about **King Arthur** and celebrated with a medieval feast. The “**knights**,” “**ladies**,” “**serfs**” and “**jesters**” in attendance spent last Friday morning drinking from juice-filled goblets and munching on carrot cake, pie, bread and jams. We listened to **monks chanting ancient music** and even enjoyed the darkened atmosphere of an old English castle. Much fun was had by all!

The children have just handed in their **Spring Projects**, a most enticing assortment of original, illustrated stories and poetry collections. What amazing, creative voices we have this year!

Our science studies continue with **botany**, the study of plant life and **dissection of the flower**. The children make actual booklets of **stamens**, **pistils**, **leaves** and **corollas**.

And, finally, now that we have finished the testing we can enjoy our rich **Geometry** curriculum (which barely shows up on the test). The children will be exploring the **Blue Triangles** and creating multiple starburst designs with them. Come in and see the posters of these designs

Upper Elementary

Kate’s report: Our Upper Elementary students weathered four days of AIMS testing without breaking a sweat and we congratulate them for all their hard work. Unfazed by the grueling hours of testing, our students have returned—enthusiasm undiminished—to enjoy five more weeks of learning!

In **Math** we are working on the **Pythagorean Theorem** and **advanced word problems** which are pushing the 5th graders to new heights of reasoning and logic while the 3rd and 4th graders tackle **improper fractions** and **mixed numbers**.

Our beautiful unit on **the Ocean** is rolling on; we are immersed in reading an amazing adaptation of Melville’s classic, **Moby Dick**, with many accompanying **language lessons** on **vocabulary**, **character development**, **metaphors** and **similes**. We will be unpacking a **sea chest** next week and the children will write letters home from the deck of the **Pequod**.

In **Marine Science**, Olive has shown the children an **experiment on salt water** and the students are all growing **salt crystals** in jars. Lessons on **Tides** and **Tide Pools** are next, while in **Marine Biology** we have looked at **parts of a fish, parts of a whale** and most recently, **the Life Cycle of the Atlantic Blue Crab**.

In **Geography** our students have learned about **Ocean Land Forms** and are busy locating oceans and seas across the globe.

Class projects are due on May 9th, but prior to that, our older students will be visiting **The Dive Shop** on **May 6th** for a **Discover Scuba Experience** while the remainder will have the privilege of enjoying **Shaun Pipes** of the **Fin Foundation** give a presentation on **Sharks**.

We can hardly believe the year is drawing to a close—it has been a truly great time of accomplishment and learning.

Testing, TESTING

Stanford 10 and AIMS testing is complete for this year. We thank all of you for having your students here promptly on test mornings. Test results should be released at the end of June.

Let's Do Another Lunch!

Lower Elementary Luncheon

Wednesday, May 25th, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

We just love this lunch format—it's such a fun way to see you all. So, bring your sack lunches, come on in and visit with your child and us. We will also have a **Book Fair**, featuring the wonderful books of prose and poetry the Lower Elementary students have crafted for their spring projects.

As before, please park 1/2 block north on Mountain Avenue at the **Waters of**

Life Church or on the west and north sides of the parking area at **Carlos' Salon**, across the street.

STAFF CHANGES

We have some important staff changes to tell you about:

KC Conner will be leaving Lower Elementary after eight years to pursue new goals in graduate school. She will be sorely missed and we know she'll be successful anywhere she goes.

We are so lucky to have such a richly talented staff that the following shuffle should provide a near-seamless transition: **Olive Sheeran**, Montessori-trained, immensely talented, will move from her co-head teacher role in Upper Elementary into KC's vacancy and co-head teach Lower Elementary with **Regine** and **Mandy**.

And **Dana Duclo** (Ed. S. in Educational Psych. and a Certified School Psychologist) with many years of teaching and counseling children, has been teaching in Upper Elementary and will move into Olive's spot as co-head teacher with **Kate** in that classroom.

CHECKMATE!

Undaunted by an April snowstorm, our fearless chess competitors and their spectacularly supportive families trekked to Lakeside, Arizona, for this year's **State Championship Tournament**. It was well worth the trip and a lot of fun.

Our **K-1 Team** (Elijah, Mario, Kiran, Nico and Lluvia) took **6th Place**. **K-3** (Issack, Lukas, Elliot, Joram, Crisanto and Mateo) took the **3rd Place trophy**. And our **K-5** team (Nabahi, Conrad, Annachteira and Si:ban) took the **10th Place**. This was Issack's first tourney and he won 5 of 7 matches! Congratulations to all the kids and **Josh** and another great big thank you to all the families for their support.

MUCHAS GRACIAS

While sending out thank-you's, we want to recognize **Hubert Meitz** for his wonderful photography at all our chess events. Many of his photos will appear in our Elementary Program slide show which we'll be adding soon to our website.

Violin and Piano Recitals

Please join **Megan** and **Gene** this **Saturday, May 7**, to cheer on their **violin and piano students** at the **Annual Recital**. Please park on the west and north lot of Carlos' Salon across Mountain Ave. or further up Mountain Ave. at the *Waters of Life Church*.

SUMMER ART CAMP

We still have lots of space in our **Summer Art Camp** beginning June 27. We are only offering three weeks this year with a new 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. schedule. But **Summer, Mandy, Olive** and **Dana** will have some wonderful activities planned for us. **Elementary students: Sign up with a friend!**

Ben's Bells

In the past few months two different **Ben's Bells** were left at our school. The inscription card reads: "*Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.*" – Henry James. We could not agree more.

Mark Your Calendars!

Our **2011-2012 School Year** for all K-5 charter students begins on **Wednesday, August 17**. Preschoolers will be phased in at the 6th Avenue campus on Monday, the 15th, and Tuesday, the 16th. Please be sure to mark your calendars.



Lower Elementary's Medieval Circle



Upper Elementary & the American Revolution



Greetings From the State Chess Tournament

Well, this is it, everyone. I've had a wonderful year and I can't wait to see you all in August.

—Have A Great Summer!

Regine and staff