

The Montessori Schoolhouse

Celebrating our 38th School Year

Newsletter: October-November, 2011

www.themontessorischoolhouse.com

Dear Families—

WELCOME to the 2011-2012 school year! In every classroom, including our Primary campus at 6th Avenue, our students have resumed work as if only a weekend had passed rather than an entire summer!

SCHOOL LABEL: EXCELLING!

On October 12 the Arizona Department of Education released the 2011 **Performance Labels** for all public schools. **The Montessori Schoolhouse** is once again an **Excelling** school, the highest of six labels conferred. Schools with enrollments below 125 students were not given letter grades. These “small schools” will be given letter grades beginning in 2012. **Our school’s preliminary letter grade was an “A.”**

Congratulations to our students, staff and to you, our supportive parents, for your commitment to your children and our school.

OPEN HOUSE

It was wonderful seeing all of you at our recent **Fall Open House**. Nearly every single family was represented (plus adjunct grandparents, aunts, uncles and older siblings!) and we all sincerely love grabbing a moment to say hello.

We will plan one of our Parent-Student Lunches as the holiday season approaches.

WELCOME BACK!

We are overjoyed to welcome back two amazing people and teachers: **Tiffany Ash-Cudney** and our own **Hannah Ebner**. Tiffany is back from teaching in California and Hannah is here to finish her Elementary Internship. Both join **Kate** and **Dana** in **Upper Elementary**. (Tiffany also helps at 6th Avenue in our Primary Classrooms.)

We are all thrilled to have these two talented teachers back with us.

LOWER ELEMENTARY

Bienvenidos, Willkommen, Bienvenu, Huan Yin, Welcome to all our new and returning families and students. Our students have settled back beautifully into the routine of school and have reconnected with their friends.

Some of our recent **presentations** on **Morning Circle** have included Olive’s **Millions Layout** job, designed to WOW with its sensorial largeness.

We have also presented the **Time Line of Life**, with its ever-popular **trilobites**, the **U.S. History Timeline**, spanning from **Native Americans** through **Lewis & Clarke** and ending with the **Pioneers** going West.

In Language, everyone is working hard on **reading skills, parts of speech** and **story analysis**. We have a wonderful set of story booklets and the children are skilled at determining the **settings, characters, plot** and **morals**, or **lessons**, within them.

As we conclude our **U.S.A. studies** with the **Native American basket**, we will soon be crossing the seas to visit **Australia**, the only country that is also a continent. See you there!

UPPER ELEMENTARY

In Upper Elementary we can now say “It’s all Greek to me!” as we travelled back through the centuries to **Ancient Greece**. Our students are now happily engaged in learning about the foundations of **Western Civilization** as we explore one of our most fascinating cultural units. **Gods** and **goddesses**, a **historic timeline**, the beginnings of **science** and **mathematics** as well as the origins of **drama** will be among the many presentations the children will be participating in over the weeks to come.

Along with reading **Aesop's Fables** and some of the **myths** of that era, we will also read through a young person's version of **Homer's The Iliad** and, hopefully, **The Odyssey** before the unit culminates in an end of unit **Greek Festival**.

In **Science**, the students have graduated from animal classification to an up-close and wiggly experience with the humble **earthworm** as they learn the **scientific method**, do close-up observations of our little friends and design a **potential experiment**.

On the **math** front, our students are working on many levels as they continue to cultivate their math brains with **multiplication facts** and multiplication of larger numbers along with **subtracting from zero, factors** and **prime numbers**.

Our students are also getting weekly practice in **creative writing** along with exploring what constitutes a well-written story (**Parts of a Story**) as well as a study of **verb tense, antonyms** and a continuous review of **punctuation** and use of **descriptive words**. On occasion we workshop one or two of the stories written by our wordsmiths, giving them the opportunity for constructive feedback and to showcase their efforts to their fellow students. All of our instructors are really amazed at how quickly most of the class has settled into the work cycle and are excited about learning, thus proving once again William Butler Yeats' comment that "Education is not filling a pail but the lighting of a fire."

The Afterschool Program

We're so pleased to have **Sara Ruhe** and **Alicia Stout** once again conducting their creative and engaging Afterschool program. This year's focus is on **Movements in Art**. So far, the children have discovered **Byzantine, Celtic, Gothic Art** and the **Impressionists** through **painting, gold leaf, collage, clay** and other media. Next month they'll move on to the **Arts & Crafts Movement**, which includes making **toys, stamps** and **woodwork**. As with last year, they have **cooking day** once a month and **theatre day** twice monthly, including **improvisation** and other theatre games.

CALENDAR – IMPORTANT DATES

Parent Conferences: Sign up inside for Lower and Upper Elementary dates:

Lower El: Oct. 24-Nov. 4
Upper El: Oct. 17-21; Nov. 4

Veteran's Day: Friday, Nov. 11th;
School Closed.

Thanksgiving Holiday:

Wed., Thurs. and Fri.,
November 23rd, 24th & 25th
School Closed.

Absences

Please call in **each and every absence**. This serves several purposes as we track different illnesses and also keep tabs on what presentations your child has missed.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP:

Please continue to pull up to the forward-most parking space in the drop-off/pick-up area even if the drive is empty. More parents are right around the corner and this keeps the traffic flowing during these two busy times.

A Day in the Life of Lower Elementary



The Elements of a Story

Regine and staff