

The Montessori Schoolhouse

Celebrating our 37th School Year

Newsletter: October-November, 2010

www.themontessorischoolhouse.com

Dear Families—

It's been lovely seeing you all in recent **conferences**. We have especially enjoyed giving out so much good news as our students continue to excel in the classrooms. Let's see what everyone has been doing:

Lower Elementary

We have been exploring some fine points and people of **U.S. History**, including **Christopher Columbus**, the **Pioneers** and **Native Americans**. To really "feel like a Pioneer," we **churned butter** one day, as if the jar of cream had bounced along all day on the back of our covered wagon. Everyone loved the delicious, fresh taste later, served on crackers.

Now we are off to meet some **Native American tribes** and explore their legends and ways of life.

In **Language Arts** we have been using lots of **adjectives** in our work and writing; we are also remembering to finish our sentences with **?, ., or !**

Math is always exciting and we have been studying: the entities called **point, line, plane** and **solid**. We will soon be enjoying the processes and applications of **fractions**.

Right after the holidays, look for Lower Elementary to start a rich unit on **human anatomy** and **cellular biology**.

In the meantime, **Fall projects** on **Paleontology** and **U.S. History** will be fun and are due on **Monday, December _____**.

Upper Elementary

As the winter holidays approach, the Upper Elementary classroom is abuzz with our new units on **Explorers** and **Simple Machines**.

Our students are discovering how the **original inhabitants** came to the **Americas** and those moments in time when the **Old World** met the **New**. Lessons have included the **European Age of Exploration**, a timeline of **Famous Explorers** and will be followed by a closer look at explorers like **Marco Polo, Captain Cook** and the famed **American Corps of Discovery** led by **Lewis and Clark**.

Flip, slide, rotate! **Fractions galore!** **Decimals** and **division** coming right up! **Multiple math** lessons continue on Wednesdays and the students are honing their **writing skills** with writing exercises most Thursday mornings. We suspect we have many budding novelists in our midst. (Ask your student about the **Great Montessori Pie Fight** – don't worry, it's only fiction!)

And last, but not least, don't be surprised if your child begins to take a bicycle or can opener apart some evening in their "hands on" research into **Simple Machines – pulleys, wedges, inclined planes and more** – watch out **Myth Busters** – our budding scientists are on the prowl.~~~~~

The Afterschool Program

Sara and **Alicia** have been offering creative and engaging Afterschool activities based on the **elements of art**: line, texture, space, form, color, value and shape. Every month they introduce a new element; September explored the use of **line** with jobs such as **embroidery, cross-hatching** and **comic books**. October's theme was **color**, incorporating **water color** and **collage**. Most recently in November they have developed a wonderful unit on **form**, including **sculpting, clay** and **architecture** using a vast assortment of **wood** shapes.

In addition to the monthly themes, they have a **Cooking Day** once a month

and **Theatre Day** twice a month—more ways to explore the multiple aspects of art. As always, they include the old stand-bys such as **jewelry-making, mask-making** and free choice.

Sara and Alicia are delightful to watch working with the children and are themselves delighted by the “limitless imaginations and creativity” they observe each day in the children attending the Afterschool Program.

Tax Credit Programs

Chess, violin, piano, minstrel, yoga creative movement, cooperative sports and physical fitness all depend on your **Tax Credit contributions.**

Each dollar you contribute to support these wonderful, enriching programs counts as a **direct state tax credit to you**—up to \$200 per single tax payer and up to \$400 per married couple. The same contribution **also qualifies as an expense deduction** for federal income tax filing. You actually save tax money by supporting our programs!

If you haven't contributed yet, please do so by December 31st. Any check we receive dated 12/31/2010 or earlier counts for this year's taxes. **Please help us continue these fantastic programs.**

We thank you & the children thank you!!!

THANK YOU NOTES:

Thank you to **Craig Ivanyi** and **Tom Watts** for their exciting and engaging presentations in the Lower Elementary classroom this fall.

Craig, who is the Director of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, presented a subject near and dear to the children's hearts—**fossils!** It was made even more immediate since the fossils represented **prehistoric life found in Arizona.** The children were able to see and touch models of **mastodon and woolly mammoth teeth.** They loved every second of his time with them.

Tom is a research scientist at the University of Arizona and manages a lab in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. He

involved the whole class in the process of **turning wheat into flour and flax into linen!** Using plant samples from his backyard, he and the children ground wheat seeds into flour and stripped strands of flax leaves into linen thread. His enthusiasm was contagious and every child had a hand in the work.

Many thanks to Craig and Tom!

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Thank you to **Valerie Greenhill** for the wonderful Fall garden. We have broccoli, arugula, sweet basil, cucumbers, bell peppers, rosemary and sweet basil, and even a strawberry plant all growing right before our eyes. Salad, anyone?

Continued thanks to **Sarah Van Pelt** for her invaluable help with Tuesday and Thursday pick-up. We can't tell her how much we appreciate her cheerful mastery of life in the fast lane. Or medium slow lane. Thank you, Sarah.

Thanks also to all of you for the healthy and sumptuous **snacks** you have been bringing. Lots of cut up fruit—melon, pineapple, grapes, bananas—crackers, cheese and other delectables.

CHESS MOVES:

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.

Flu & 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.

PARENTING TIP: Remember, the single most powerful force shaping your child's behavior is *your* behavior. Modeling is everything. Self-awareness is a great tool in quality parenting.

*Have a great
Thanksgiving
Everyone and see you
all on Monday,
November 29!!*

Regine and staff