

Damariscotta Montessori School

Newsletter

Miss Casey's Primary Class

"The human hand allows the mind to reveal itself."

Dr. Maria Montessori

Miss Sarah's Primary Class

This week has been a busy one as we anticipate the arrival of the winter holidays.

The kids have been an energetic, cheerful group. We've greatly enjoyed singing "5 Little Snowmen." The lyrics are as follows:

Five little snowmen sitting on the ground (pat ground in front of you)

First one said, "Oh my, aren't we round!?" (make belly with hands in front of body)

Second one said, "There are snowflakes in the air!" (hands start above head, trail downward, fingers wiggle)

Third one said, "We don't care!" (shrug, shake head, etc)

Fourth one said, "Let's run and run and run!" (rapidly move arms back and forth as though jogging)

Fifth one said, "I'm ready for some fun!" (big smile, arms wide and joyful)

Then, whooooooooo went the wind (wave hands as though blowing)

And out came the sun (start a circle between hands above head and spread apart and downward signifying rising sun)

And five little snowmen knew their fun was done (as you sing this line sink down to the floor as though melting!)

Also, in light of our recent look at winter celebrations, today (Friday) we read the book "Latkes and Applesauce" and made applesauce and latkes. The children peeled the apples for the sauce, grated nearly all of the potatoes for the latkes, and I grated the onions (although Amos did help with those a bit!) We added matzoh meal, eggs and oil, and mixed them all together. Then, into the refrigerator they went. While we were waiting for the applesauce to become ready, and our day got busy, we ran out of time to cook up the latkes! As a way for the children to still enjoy them, I have taken them home over the weekend, and will cook and refrigerate/freeze them and bring them in for us to eat on Monday!

Lower Elementary Class

The days are speeding by so fast! I am quite sure that all the children in Elementary have grown at least two inches since the beginning of school. The Lower Elementary is really settling into the work. This week we worked on our study of the A.D. - B.C. time line, and had some interesting discussions about the different calendars that the world's civilizations use. To have a better appreciation of the length of our calendar's 2006+ years, we laid out 2 of the thousand bead chains plus 6 beads. They went a long way! In Geography the students continue to work on the puzzle and pin maps. They start

with puzzle maps: the globe maps of oceans and continents, North America including Central America, provinces of Canada, the United States, and the other continents. When they have mastered these, they move on to the more detailed pin maps, exploring and learning the continents, countries, major cities, and physical geography. These materials are self-checking; when the student feels ready, s/he has the teacher check his or her knowledge before moving on.

Knitting is still a popular activity at school. On Friday Ms. Proffetti's lesson was on petroglyphs,

ancient rock drawings. The children made pendant rock drawings by scratching on clay 'rocks'. The results were very realistic. We

finished up the week with pictures of the children in their 'cave' full of cave paintings.

Upper Elementary Class

This week in the Upper Elementary we continued our study of acids as the children finished up their experiments with the pH scale and researched different substances and their pH. Our writing workshop these last two weeks has been focused on completing a first and second draft of a fiction piece, with a particular concentration on the use of dialogue. The children have really done well with this concept, as it is a real challenge to weave dialogue into a story in a way that helps tell the story. For editing purposes we have been focusing on fragments, run on sentences, and the use of quotation marks (to go with the dialogue).

The older children have been working on finding the area of a sector of a circle and investigating how the formula for doing so was derived. This is an essential part of Montessori philosophy – finding the why and how behind concepts. The younger children continued work on the Pythagorean Theorem.

Next Week:

In History next week we'll be focusing on the beginnings of the Revolutionary War (the Tea Act, Stamp Act, etc.). Our science investigations will lead us to research what acid rain is. The children will read the first 5 chapters of Johnny Tremain and we will edit our drafts in our writing workshop.

From Chip's Desk

As you are probably aware, we have begun our Annual Appeal. Each year we make a request for donations to the school to help us continue to provide scholarships, keep tuition to a reasonable level, maintain the building and grounds, and plan for future expansion. Our goal is simple: 100% participation. We are grateful for gifts of all sizes, and thank everyone in advance for their help with this effort.

In January, I will be conducting a two day workshop on Positive Discipline for Parents. The workshop will focus on some theory, but mostly it

is a time to examine practical and time tested tools to help parents help their children to develop inner discipline, cooperation and a healthy sense of self. The workshop will be held on Friday, January 5th and Saturday, January 6th from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served. The cost of the workshop will be \$50 for DMS families (normally a \$250 per participant workshop). Attendees will receive two Positive Discipline books.

Positive Discipline Corner

Rewards and Punishment

Workshops on Positive Discipline often start with participants brainstorming to produce a list of characteristics and life skills that they believe students need to be successful in life – that is, to be happy, contributing members of society. The lists from different workshops are always very similar to one another; they tend to include courage, confidence, self-discipline, responsibility, accountability, the ability to cooperate, problem-solving skills, respect for self and others, healthy self-esteem, motivation to

learn, empathy, relationship skills, communication skills, and a sense of humor.

The next questions posed to workshop participants are (1) Is the development of these abilities and inner strengths just as important as academics? And (2) How do we help students develop them? The answer to the first question is yes when adults are given an opportunity to think about it. (In fact, most feel the development of the characteristics and life skills are more important.) The answer to the second question is certainly not rewards and punishment.

Think about any program or method that involves rewards and punishment. Who is responsible? It's invariably an adult's job to catch students being "good" and give them rewards as well as to catch students being "bad" and mete out punishment. What happens when the adult is no longer around? Considerable research has demonstrated that children who experience an external locus of control don't develop the previously mentioned skills and

characteristics. In fact, a heavy-handed approach to teaching children how to behave is not only less effective but also more likely to be associated with disruptive and aggressive behavior patterns when the child is away from home.

Next Week – Suggestions and Planning Ahead to avoid the use of *punishments* and *rewards*.

Thank You

- Kim Inman for your help with the sign board.
- Bill Hinkley and Teresa Hewson for reading with the children in the elementary classroom.
- Carolina Rushton for teaching Spanish.
- Katie LeBel for publishing the recent press releases.
- Kim and Michael Tolley for your donation of the bowls and mugs for the kitchen!

Announcements and Dates to Remember

- Monday, December 25 – Monday, January 1 – Holiday Break (No School)
- Tuesday, January 2 – Parent's Association Meeting at 6:00 p.m. (Pizza at 5:30 p.m.)
- Friday, January 5 and Saturday, January 6 – Positive Discipline Workshop from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Cost is \$50 per family.



