



Damariscotta Montessori School

Newsletter



Miss Casey's Primary Class

Miss Sarah's Primary Class

This week has been a busy one, as, I suppose, they all are. Energy has been high, although often able to be directed toward meaningful work in the classroom. The youngest children continue to enjoy sandpaper letter lessons, and some of them are moving into word building in surprising leaps. Kindergarten students are now reading almost daily, and will be bringing home a book to read with the family at the end of each week. On that note, immense thanks to Amy Hinkley for her work reading with the children on Monday morning. It was a wonderful opportunity for the readers to read to her, and for the non-readers to enjoy a story. I look forward to future visits from Amy, as, I'm sure, the children also do. This week we also enjoyed two other special visits to the classroom.

"Work is necessary; it can be nothing less than a passion; a person is happy in accomplishment."

Dr. Maria Montessori

On Thursday morning, we welcomed John and his mom, Vicki in the late morning for his 4th birthday celebration. Thank you, John and Vicki for celebrating with us. Thursday afternoon, per usual, we welcomed Kaity Newell for music circle. This circle was very exciting, even for us adults, as Kaity brought along a variety of string instruments to play for us. The children each had the opportunity to play and feel the vibrations from a cello, as well as to play a child-sized violin. Thank you, Kaity, for the hands-on, inspirational music experience this week!

Look for winter studies including hibernation, snowflakes and more to begin soon! It looks like real winter may be on the way, after all!

Lower Elementary Class

This week saw many children moving forward in math and reading., and was a good example of how Montessori connects across the different learning areas. . After studying the triangles and identifying and sorting them according to their attributes, the children were introduced to the Detective Triangle Game. In this game there are many triangles that vary by color, size, length of sides, and types of angles. For each triangle there is a corresponding label, e.g. medium yellow isosceles acute triangle. The work is for the child to match each label to the appropriate triangle. As you can see, this job requires quite sophisticated vocabulary, reading skills, knowledge of geometry, logic, planning and classification. So do not be surprised if your child comes home saying, " Oh, that's a right angle scalene triangle"!

Another job that the children are really working on is creative writing. The range of writing skills goes from pictures with beginning sentences, to books with chapters. In the writing process children are at first encouraged to write their stories spontaneously. As the child's writing becomes more fluent, they are asked to start editing their writing for spelling, grammar, and content. We are looking forward to the children choosing a piece of writing from their portfolio to publish, making their own books and illustrating them.

In Zoology next week we will be studying the Platyhelminth brown planaria, a very simple life-form. In Biology we continue our study of trees, in Geography, the flags of the world, and in History, the Clock of Eras. And we are all hoping that it will snow.

Upper Elementary Class

This was a busy week in the upper elementary classroom. As you probably know, the children are now in the midst of building rain collectors for our acid rain unit. They spent the first part of the week designing them and the second half building them. They are almost complete and ready for use in collecting and measuring rain fall and the pH. We also completed our study of the Revolutionary war this week. The children used the timeline to make their own timeline, most of them in book form. Of course, we're also reading Johnny Tremain which takes place during the beginnings of the war, which has been great fodder for discussion about the times and political climate of pre-independence America.

Our Geometry groups are also on the move. The oldest children have been working more on volume this week, measuring the volume of the "red rods" in the primary classroom. All of the material in the primary classroom's sensorial area is designed with precise incremental measurements of 1 cubic centimeter. For the

primary aged children this gives a perfectly graduated material for them to experience discrimination with their senses. For the elementary aged children, the materials allow for a concrete discovery of the concept of volume. Our middle group this week began the concrete exploration of equivalence and surface area. They wrote proofs for the equivalence of a triangle and a rectangle and explored the ratio of height and base between the two figures. The youngest group studied the parts of quadrilaterals and their definitions.

Next Week:

In history we will be studying the lives of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. In science we will begin to place our rain collectors for the collection of local precipitation for the study of rainfall and acidity. Our geometry groups will continue with volume, equivalence and the study of quadrilaterals. The math groups will be investigating trinomials and divisibility.

From Chip's Desk

This week started our first week of the Montessori Parent/Toddler program. Amy Ricker, Isaiah's mom, is teaching the class. Amy is a certified Early Childhood Montessori teacher and is really excited to be starting the program. The program is taking place off-site at the Newcastle Square building on the second floor (above the old Lathrop's restaurant). The Parent/Toddler program gives parents with toddlers an introduction to Montessori philosophy, allows young children to experience the environment and helps to educate parents on how to set up their homes in a Montessori fashion, thus enabling the children to develop independence.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Parent Education workshop this month. We will be discussing a very special Montessori material,

called the Constructive Triangles. This is a terrific example of a material that is used all the way from the primary to the upper elementary classrooms, moving from the very concrete to the abstract. We've done this presentation before and it is always a popular one.

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.

Positive Discipline Corner **Alternatives to Nagging**

For the next few weeks I'll talk about some alternatives to nagging. Do any of these comments sound familiar to you?

"How many times have I told you to _____?"

"If I have to ask you one more time..."

"Please, please _____."

"If you'll do some, I'll do some."

Nagging can take the form of authoritarian statements or passive statements, each attempting to gain control, but in different ways. If that sounds familiar, try using one word observation statements, and then being quiet (the hardest part). Here are a few examples:

For a child who is supposed to be cleaning up his dinner dishes: *"John, dishes."*

For a child who is supposed to be getting dressed: *"Clothes."*

I use this method in the classroom a lot. Kind and firm are the watchwords, and you'll be surprised how much more effective and constructive it is.

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.
- Doug Rushton for publishing the newsletter.
- Katie LeBel for publishing the recent press releases.
- The Greenleaf's for the use of your conference room!

Announcements and Dates to Remember

- Monday, January 15 – Martin Luther King's Birthday (No School)
- Tuesday, January 16 – Classroom and Community Meeting
- Tuesday, January 23 – Parent Education Workshop at 6:00 p.m. – Childcare is provided.
- Thursday, January 25 – Upper Elementary Field Trip to see "Freedom Train" at the Merrill Auditorium.
- February, 1 – Elementary Re-enrollment begins.

