



Damariscotta Montessori School

Newsletter

Miss Casey's Primary Class

Miss Sarah's Primary Class

This week we have begun our gradual, wondrous journey of learning about the universe. We began early in the week, exercising our skills of nature observation in the schoolyard. Nature Scopes, made by the children, served to help focus on one particular thing at a time while exploring. You may have seen these in your child's cubby. While they were to stay at school in the first few days, they are now free to take home. At circle and story time we have been discussing what we already know about space. The children came up with surprisingly specific and advanced ideas, such as "the ringed planet", "satellites", and "the birth of the universe." In the latter half of the week, we began discussing stars and constellations, in general terms. Using a globe and two clay children, I demonstrated to the children that a child laying on the ground in

Lower Elementary Class

The last three weeks have gone quickly by, with snow days and sick days and too-cold-to-go-out days. Now the ducks are quacking and the birds singing, reassuring us that spring is on the way. In Science we have been studying earth worms. We have a small worm habitat viewer, and two worms seem to have survived the transition, and are busily tunneling. Next week we will be combining our study of worms and soil, and how composting works in the garden.

In history we have been studying fossils and the way they give us information on the early

Upper Elementary Class

Well, hopefully this will be the end of the bitter cold! We were all suffering from a little cabin fever by the time Friday came along, and the kids (and teachers) were grateful to get outside for some balmy 26 degree weather.

"What is the greatest sign of success for a teacher transformed? It is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

Dr. Maria Montessori

North America is looking "out" at the stars, just as a child in South America is looking "out" at them, for the stars are all around our Earth.

Next week we will begin to delve more deeply into learning about stars.

If any families have, or know of a source of a large appliance box, our class would love to have one to house our single-user indoor planetarium. Also, any other suggestions on how to set that up in one corner of the room would be more than welcome. As always, family and friends are encouraged to share their knowledge, skills, interests and materials on this exciting topic with the class!

forms of life on earth. The younger students are studying the Cambrian environment, animals and plants. For the elders we are exploring the origins of humans in our study of the timeline of man. We will be looking at how humans developed the use of tools to provide food, clothing, fire, shelter, adornment, and art during paleolithic times.

In art we have begun to make the scenery and props for our play. The children continue to practice their lines.

In science this week we wrapped up our study of acid rain. The children all did independent research this week on the effects of acid rain. The 3rd year students set out to find a given number of facts on the effects, thus working on

their ability to glean information from sources and categorize it. The upper elementary students each wrote 5 paragraphs outlining a given effect of acid rain.

The math groups are really heating up now! The older group is now working on squaring binomials and trinomials. An observer recently pointed out how much sense it made for the children to start off using real numbers for these equations rather than variables (a, b, x, etc.). This is a direct preparation for algebra, and allows the children to understand the what and why behind the equations. The younger group this week worked on fractions with different denominators. This concept is presented later in the Montessori upper elementary because

(usually late fourth or fifth year) because we spend more time working on the underlying concepts of divisibility, factors and multiples, and the concept of fractions. Thus, when the children reach the concept of adding fractions with different denominators, the understanding is truly there and the children pick it up quite quickly. This method also allows for deeper understanding of the concept of decimals.

Next Week

Next week (March 12-16) we will be studying the War of 1812 in history, beginning to translate notes into paragraphs for the research paper, and starting to step up play practice. Don't forget: this week Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on Tuesday

From Chip's Desk

The Spring Service Auction will soon be upon us. It will be held on the first Saturday of May at the Anchor Inn. This will be a fun adult night out, with food and beverages being provided. This is our second of two major fundraisers of the year. As is our philosophy in raising funds for the school, every gift of a service or tangible item is deeply appreciated and accepted with deep gratitude. This auction provides everyone the opportunity to participate in a fun and creative way. Notices will be going out soon giving more information.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Maplefest! This community pot-luck will be held

at the school. There will be live music, activities for the children, yummy food, and maple syrup boiling down with sap from our own trees.

Volunteers are needed for the annual Open House. Parents who would be willing to talk to prospective parents are needed for the day of the Open House. Clean up volunteers are needed for the evening before, and snack volunteers are needed to make baked goods or other refreshments for our guests. Please contact Kim if you are able to help. Thank you!

Positive Discipline Corner

I need a hug

I was watching some videos by Bob Bradbury the other day. They are very informative and inspiring. (See information below on how to obtain Bob's videos.) Bob tells a story about a father who tried the "I need a hug" suggestion. His small son was having a temper tantrum. The father got down on one knee and shouted, "I need a hug." His son asked through his sobs, "What?" The father shouted again, "I need a hug." His son asked incredulously, "Now?!?" The father said, "Yes, now." The son said, "Okay," and begrudgingly and stiffly gave his father a hug. Soon the stiffness disappeared and they

melted into each others arms. After a few moments the father said, "Thanks, I needed that." His son said, with a small tremor on his lips, "So did I."

Sometimes hugs don't work because the child is too upset to give or receive a hug. Adults can still try. If the child is unwilling, the adult can say, "We need some cooling off time, and I sure would like a hug whenever you are ready." Some people ask, "After the hug, then what? What about the misbehavior?" Hugs can create an atmosphere where children are willing and able to learn. This may be the time to take time for training, ask what, why and how questions, give

a limited choice, use distraction, engage in joint problem-solving -- or to do nothing and see what happens next. Most of the time adults can help children stop misbehaving when they stop dealing with the "misbehavior" and deal with the underlying cause. Children DO better when they FEEL better. Encouragement is the key.

An excellent way to encourage children is to help them feel useful by making a contribution. What a wonderful way to let them contribute -- by making you feel better when they give you a hug.

Of course the fringe benefit is that they also feel better. Remember, a misbehaving child is a discouraged child. Perhaps encouragement is enough to change the behavior. Too many people think children must pay for what they have done in the form of blame, shame, or pain (other words for punishment). Try a hug instead.

By Jane Nelson

<http://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/hug.html>

Thank You

- Kim Inman for your help with the sign board.
- Sarah Gorden for organizing the book orders.
- Lee Parsons for carting the returnables, and for your help with the Maplefest.
- Doug Rushton for publishing the newsletter.
- Anne Geisler, Yvonne McLean, Janesa Herndon, Shannon Hunter, Carolina Rushton and Casey Beaudoin for all your wonderful work with the Spring Auction.

Announcements and Dates to Remember

- Tuesday, March 20 – Classroom Meetings at 3:45 p.m.
 - Tuesday, March 20 – Community Meeting at 4:45 p.m.
 - Wednesday, March 21 – First official day of Mud Season!
 - Friday, March 23 – School cleanup (indoor preparation for Open House) at 5 p.m. ****Volunteers Needed****
 - Saturday, March 24 – Open House from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. ****Volunteers Needed****
 - Friday, March 30 – Re-enrollment ends for Primary Classrooms. Open enrollment begins.
-
-