

# Damariscotta Montessori School

## Newsletter

### **Miss Casey's Primary Class**

We have been exploring the new signs of spring around the play ground. Some of the signs we have seen include robins, other singing birds, green grass, buds on the peach trees, and of course sap running into our buckets from the maple trees! We have been noticing and talking about the exciting developments of springtime in Maine including huge snowstorms and warm weather on the way.

Next week we will be planting vegetable seeds for our garden. The children have already made the markers for the seedlings. They will include lettuce, carrots, peppers, watermelon, squash, and a few herbs as well.

Stuart and his family have returned from South Africa. They were kind enough to bring us some souvenirs. I hope to be able to develop these into a unit on South Africa. The animals of the country alone are intriguing. Recently we have been looking at the flag and talking about the meaning of each color.

### **Miss Sarah's Primary Class**

Last week we have continued our space studies with the topic of constellations. We have discussed at circle what constitutes a constellation, and the names of various constellations. A favorite work has been making illuminated constellations on a Lite Brite using a pre-made template. So far we have created Orion and Ursa Major. Constellation image overlay cards have also been fun, especially for the older kids, to show the connection between the constellation and the pictures people imagined were made by the constellations. It has been great for me to see how enthusiastic about space the children are. In a lesson about the

"The most urgent task facing educators is to come to know this unknown child and to free it from all entanglements."  
Dr. Maria Montessori

One of the favorite springtime songs we have been signing frequently at circle is Robin in the Rain and goes like this:

*Robin in the rain, What a saucy fellow  
Robin in the rain, mind your socks of yellow  
Running in the garden on your nimble feet  
Digging for your dinner with your long, strong  
beak  
Robin in the rain, you don't mind the weather,  
showers always make you gay,  
But the worms were wishing you would stay at  
home  
Robin on a rainy day*

continents, one child burst out, "We're going to outer space!", while another wore his space shirt to school, and yet another's drawings are filled with rockets and constellations as of late. It seems space is filling their work as well as their play!

Keep an eye out for the "Star Bag" which will begin going home overnight with families in rotation next week. This is a fun way for the children to connect what they are learning at home by exploring the night sky with members of the family.

### **Lower Elementary Class**

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## **Upper Elementary Class**

This Week: Wow, the play is over, and we're back into our normal routine. The children really did a wonderful job with the play! Thank you to all the parents who helped with our production. We couldn't have done it without you!

Since the last newsletter, our history journey has brought us to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. We delved into the beginning of a great change in the way Americans lived. Two interesting points about this major shift: First, our landscape began to change as more and more Americans moved to the city for employment. This was the beginning of the end of a way of life centered on agriculture. Second, many people do not realize, that in the late 1700's and early 1800's, that slavery was actually dying down. The South was having a difficult time, economically, and many slaves were freed because they were too expensive to keep. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin actually prophesied that slavery would just disappear. Well, that may have been the outlook, but one invention changed all that. Eli Whitney's cotton gin allowed for increased production of cotton by 5 times. Before this, cleaning cotton was an expensive and time consuming task. The cotton that grew inland was full of seeds. Prior to the cotton gin inland farmers were unable to compete with the cotton of the coast that had few seeds and was easy to clean and separate. Soon after the invention of the cotton gin, inland Southern farms and plantations were able to supply huge amounts of cotton for a fraction of

the cost. As well, the northern cities began building textile factories, and the demand for cotton exploded, as did the demand for slaves. While people from northern cities cried out against slavery, many of them profited from the institution that provided cheap cotton.

The research papers are coming along nicely. The children are working diligently to complete their work. This has been a long road, but the children have done very well. Most of the children are now working on their second and third drafts. While this is always been a long process, the lessons that come from this process are vital skills to learn: note taking, paragraph structure, outlining, completing a multi-step process by breaking it down into small steps, editing, grammar, etc. It is really a culmination of many of the skills that the children have been taught.

We are now beginning our Solar Energy unit in science. Last week we discussed the characteristics of the sun, solar energy and its importance to life on earth. The children did research on solar energy and defined terms related to it.

Next Week: Our plans for next week include investigating the effects of the sun, the age of Reform in the United States. Math lessons will include square root for the older children, multiplying and dividing fractions for the younger group. Geometry will include finding the area of a sphere for the older children and the study of area for the younger group.

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## **Parent/Toddler Program**

We are settling comfortably into our second eight-week session of the Parent/Toddler Program. The first week was busy as the new children were getting to know the "Prepared Environment", and some of its "ground rules". We are learning How to Carry a Tray, and How to Roll a Rug. We use our rugs to define our work space.

**New and enjoyed "works" or "jobs":**

We have seen several presentations at morning circle including the Pouring Pom-Poms Work from the Practical Life Area, and The Pink Tower from the Sensorial Area. Popular works in the classroom included The Rice Exploration Work and many of the Practical Life Works: "In/Out" Works, The Lock Box and Hammering Balls Work. We are all working on putting our material back on the shelf when we are finished with it. (Thank-you parents for helping to model this important step!)

This week will bring a new Water Exploration Exercise, from the Practical Life Area. This work helps the child with fine motor skills through the use of the sponge, wisk, cups, baster and other water tools.

**A new favorite song of ours is:**

2 (or more) Green and Speckled Frogs

*2 Green and Speckled Frogs (hold up 2 fingers)*

*Sitting on a hollow log (hold up your other arm under your fingers)*

*Eating the most delicious bugs (yum, yum) (pretend your eating)*

*One jumped into the pool (point down to the floor)*

*Where it was nice and cool*

*Now there's just 1 green speckled frog (ribbit, ribbit) (hold up 1 finger)*

*(Repeat until all frogs are in the pool)*

**Aspect of Montessori Education: The "Prepared Environment"**

The "Prepared Environment" influences development and learning of the child, as well as encourages independence, order, cooperation and coordination. It is filled with beautiful, real, carefully chosen objects and natural materials, each with it's own specific place and purpose. It consists of low shelving so the materials are easily accessible to the children. The materials are rotated in and out of this environment, as determined by the director, directress or parent.

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***From Chip's Desk***

The Open House went very well. Thank you to everyone who helped us get it together!

Don't forget to put the Maple Fest on your calendar! Well, it's unbelievable that we had two snow days in the first week of April (well not that unbelievable). I tried to get in as many phone calls on Friday morning as possible to notify

everyone of the cancellation. However, I was not able to get to everyone. As you probably know, the power was out in Nobleboro, and we didn't know for sure that we had to close until we were physically at the school. So, to all those folks who came to school and found the school closed, I am sorry for any inconvenience that you experienced.

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***Positive Discipline Corner***

***Why does my child do this?***

Melanie R. Miller, M.Ed.

Parent Educator

Certified School Counselor

Do you ever find yourself completely baffled and perhaps a bit frustrated by your child's behavior? Do you ever wonder why do kids do the things they do?

Children are social beings. They are constantly trying to figure out how they can belong and find significance in a group. A child might become the "responsible" one in the family. By getting good grades, helping at home and taking on leadership roles at school, they find belonging and significance in their family and with their

peers. Another child may be the "class clown" at school. Keeping others laughing and smiling may give him a unique and special place in his or her class.

So why does a child misbehave? You might think that misbehavior alienates the child from their family, classroom or friends; but, not necessarily. Children are always sizing up social situations and figuring out where they belong and how they can feel significant or important. You may have a child who just can't seem to do anything right... can't tie her shoes, can't get her homework organized, can't seem to ever find her jacket... Can you hear the whining that goes with it??? And as the parent, you get tired of the whining, so you step in and tie her shoes,

organize her home work and always seem to know where her coat is! Think about what the child just gained... Mom or dad staying busy, attending to her needs. She is getting a little special attention and keeping you busy with her needs...she is now significant! She isn't consciously aware that she is keeping you busy, but she sure loves the extra time and attention from you!.. even if that attention is sometimes negative.

I often have to remind myself that a misbehaving child is a discouraged child. The child who can't seem to do anything and is keeping me busy, may just need a little encouragement. Encouragement can look like...

\*Asking the child, "What do you need to do to get your homework organized? Such a question empowers the child and puts the responsibility back into their hands.

\*Giving a hug and saying "I have faith in you that you can tie your own shoes!"

\*\*"I've noticed that you often misplace your coat, can we work together on a solution so that when it's time to go, you can quickly find your coat?"

Next time you're feeling discouraged with your child's behavior, try a little encouragement. Encouragement can dig a child out of discouragement and misbehavior....It will probably help you feel a bit better too!

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### ***Thank You***

- To everyone who helped with the Open House: Kim Tolley, Casey Beaudoin, Sarah Gorden, Dorothy Sewall, Sondra DeLorenzo, Carolina Rushton, Kim Inman, Doug Rushton, Bill Hinkley, Susie Wharam, Stephanie Nelson, Janasa Herndon, and Jennifer Wais.
- Bill Hinkley and Teresa Hewson for reading with the children in the elementary classroom.
- Lee Parsons for your help with the bottle returns, tapping the trees and fixing our bathroom door!
- Kim Inman for your help with the sign board.
- Kim and Mark Andrews for providing pizza for the children during the play.
- Carolina Rushton for teaching Spanish.
- Doug Rushton for publishing the newsletter.
- Lee Parsons for your help with the bottle returns.
- To everyone who helped with the play: Jill Baum, Liz Profetty, Tom and Marge Greenleaf, Kim Andrews, Stephanie Nelson, Kim Inman, Lee Parsons Mary Dee Grant.
- Teresa Hewson for substituting in the Primary classroom.
- Tom Greenleaf for building the set stands!
- Lee Parsons for tapping the trees and collecting the sap!

### ***Announcements and Dates to Remember***

- Thursday, April 12 – Grandparent's Day for Elementary Children @ 9:30 a.m.
- Friday, April 13 – Grandparent's Day for Primary Children @ 9:30 a.m.
- Saturday, April 14 – Maple Fest, from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
- April 16-20 – Spring Vacation – School Closed
- Tuesday, April 24 – Open Board Meeting @ 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, April 28 – Spring Cleanup 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

