

March 8, 2021

Volume 9 Issue 7

DOLPHIN TALES



March Birthdays:

Dhiren K.	3/6
Thomas D.	3/9
Rajveer S.	3/9
Kaylie M.	3/12
Charlene S.	3/13
Julia H.	3/14
Dmitri L.	3/15
Levi H.	3/18
Aurora C.	3/19
Sienna B.	3/23
Sawyer W.	3/24
Jamesen H.	3/31

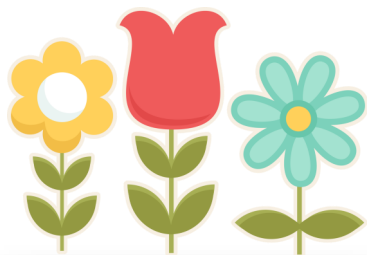


Important Dates:

Spring Break is coming up!
April 5-9



Toddler News from Ms. Ginny & Ms. Kayla



A look ahead at what your children will be learning in the Primary Program and good reasons to stay for the entire 3 year cycle!

“In most cases, Montessori kindergarten children have already been exposed to a great deal of learning. For example, their understanding of the decimal system, place value, mathematical operations, and similar information is usually very sound. With reinforcement as they grow older, it becomes internalized and a permanent part of who they are. When they leave Montessori before they have had the time to internalize these early learning concepts, they often evaporate, because they are neither reinforced nor commonly understood.

What would be the most important advantages of keeping my child in Montessori?

Montessori is an approach to working with children that is carefully based on what we've learned about children's cognitive, neurological, and emotional development from several decades of research. Although sometimes misunderstood, the Montessori approach has been acclaimed as the most developmentally appropriate model currently available by some of America's top experts on early childhood and elementary education.

One important difference between what Montessori offers and what is offered by many of today's traditional programs has to do with how it helps the young child learn how to learn. Over recent years, education research has increasingly shown that students in many schools don't really understand most of what they are being taught. As Howard Gardner, a leading educational psychologist and advocate of school reform, wrote: “Many schools have fallen into a pattern of giving kids exercises and drills that result getting answers on tests that looks like understanding. Montessori teaches how to apply knowledge to different settings; not just give back a correct answer for a test.”



Toddler News from Ms. Shannon & Ms. Rachel

Since many of my students are moving up to Primary, I thought this great article by Marcy Hogan from mariamontessori.com would be helpful in explaining the importance of the 3 year cycle of learning.

“The Montessori primary program is designed as a three-year cycle. Much of the material and exercises in the first year or two not only help the child achieve a direct, immediate goal (such as dressing and cleaning after themselves, or learning the sounds of each letter of the alphabet), but also serve an indirect purpose of laying the foundation for future work and learning. For example, the math material is a series of exercises that guides the child starting with the most concrete and basic introduction to numbers and quantity. Over the following three years the lessons build upon themselves, adding layers of abstractness and an increasing understanding of mathematical concepts, until the child is eventually able to add, subtract, multiply, and divide — with a deeply ingrained understanding of what those operations mean — using only pencil, paper, and his or her head.

There is also a social component. The mixed-age grouping is not accidental. Each child benefits from being exposed to those who are older, and younger, than they are. The younger children have role models to look up to from the very first day of class. They quickly learn how to behave and what is acceptable from watching the older children. They also see the older children working on the more advanced material, which piques their interest and curiosity. The older children, in turn, benefit from being mentors to the younger ones. One of the best ways to internalize knowledge is to explain it to others. The third year allows for a leadership position and self-esteem development.”



Primary News from Ms. Valerie & Ms. Christina

What's next after Third Year Primary?

Making the decision to continue in Montessori through the elementary years offers your child many of the same benefits of the Early-Childhood years, but they are exhibited in a different way. This is the time that children are exposed to “big ideas” and Elementary children are naturally drawn to the topics. Exploration of these topics is often dictated by the child's own interests, which in turn provides deeper engagement. Along the way, their peers become interested, and the child will naturally share what they have learned. Often children are encouraged to give formal presentations of their project providing opportunities for children to speak in front of a friendly group early on.

Elementary Montessori teachers take advantage of the older child's preference to work in small groups. Often the lessons are designed so that children have multiple opportunities to hear other people's ideas, perspectives, and thought processes. This provides children with the concept that there are multiple ways to think through an idea, and encourages creative thinking and problem solving.

Students in Elementary are still working at their own pace and may make work choices in conjunction with their peers. Collaboration and cooperation are encouraged and expected in the Elementary environment. Being exposed to multiple ways to complete a project allows children to develop social-emotional skills in tandem with learning the content. Children work on mastery of a skill and are encouraged to continue learning without the competitive structure of grades.

The ability to continue to learn at one's own pace, to explore one's unique interests, and the emphasis on whole-child development (academic, physical, social, and emotional) characterizes the joyful Elementary years in Montessori.

What sets Montessori apart in the Elementary years—ages 6 – 12—is the individually paced curriculum that challenges children academically and safeguards their well-being and sense of self. Engaging as contributing members of a respectful community, they learn to question, think critically, and take responsibility for their own learning—skills that will support them in later education and in life.

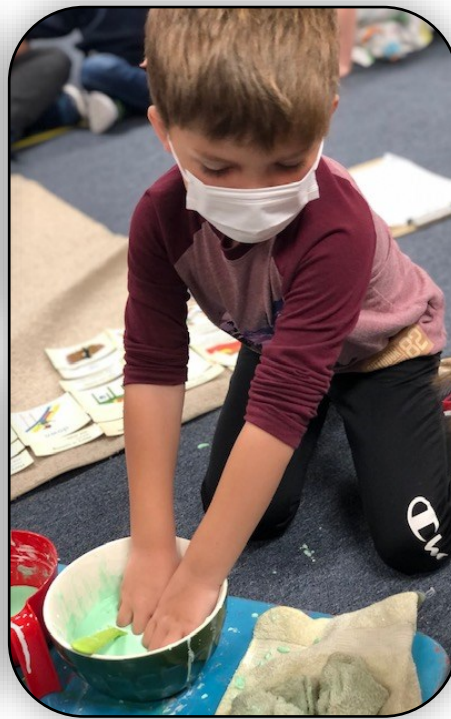
As at all Montessori levels, the Elementary program is based on the belief that children learn best through movement and work with their hands, and provides cognitive, social, and emotional support to help them reach their full potential



Primary News from Ms. Angie & Ms. Carolina, & Ms. Nikki

Montessori is focused on teaching for understanding. In a primary Montessori classroom. Three- and four-year-olds receive the benefit of two years of sensorial preparation for academic skills by working with the concrete Montessori learning materials. This concrete, sensorial experience gradually allows the child to form a mental picture of concepts, such as: *How big is a thousand? How many hundred make up a thousand, and what is really going on when we borrow or carry numbers in mathematical operations?* The value of the sensorial experiences the younger children have had in Montessori has often been underestimated by both parents and educators. Research is very clear that young children learn by observing and manipulating their environment, not through textbooks and workbook exercises. The Montessori materials give the child concrete sensorial impressions of abstract concepts, such as long division that become the foundation for a lifetime of understanding. But won't my child spend her kindergarten year taking care of younger children instead of doing her own work? No, not at all! When older children work with younger students, they tend to learn more from the experience than their "students". Experiences that facilitate development of a child's independence are often very limited in traditional schools. Five- and six year-olds are normally the leaders and role models in the primary Montessori classroom. They help to set the tone and serve as an example of appropriate behavior for the class. They often help younger children with their work, actually teaching lessons or correcting errors. Most five- and six year-olds have been waiting for the longest time to be one of the "leaders." The experience of playing the leadership role does wonders to reinforce the child's sense of autonomy and self-confidence. Five- and six year-olds are beginning to reflect upon the world. They pay close attention, notice more details, ask more questions, and begin to explain the world in their own terms. The kindergarten is a time when the child begins to integrate everything she/he learned in the first few years. By the end of age five, Montessori students will commonly develop academic skills that may be quite advanced; however, academic progress is not our ultimate goal. Our real hope is that these children will feel good about themselves and enjoy learning. Mastering basic skills is a side goal. The key concept is readiness. In Montessori, if a child is not developmentally ready to advance to a new skill or level of understanding, he or she is neither left behind nor made to feel like a failure. Our goal is not ensuring that children develop at a predetermined rate, but to ensure that whatever they do, they do well and feel good about themselves as learners.

When the time comes to decide, we hope you will choose to give your child the gift of Montessori for the kindergarten year and beyond into our Elementary and Adolescent programs.



Elementary News from Ms. Maggie and Ms. Stefanie



The Montessori Elementary curriculum contains the following areas of learning:

Practical Life: Within the Elementary program, the Practical Life curriculum expands from the foundation laid in Early Childhood. Practical Life at the Elementary level shifts from a focus on self-care and fine motor skills, to skills that help children connect with their interests in the outside world, organize their time, and take part in their community. While self-care and appropriate social interactions continue to be supported, lessons that teach responsibility are the focus. Use of tools, such as work plans, to support organization and time management skills, are incorporated into the daily routine. Teachers and students often work together to post reminders about assignments, projects, and ideas. Using these, children make independent work choices, prioritize activities, and meet deadlines.

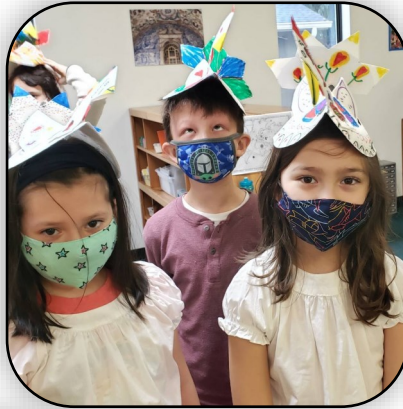
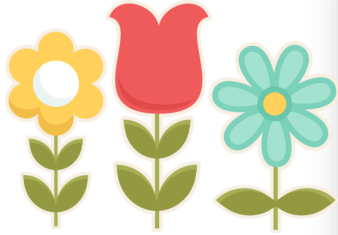
Math: The ideas of number concepts, place value, numerals, and related quantities are reinforced and expanded upon within the Elementary program. Newfound purposes for familiar math materials provide children with the means to consider number concepts, mathematical operations, and more complex functions, helping to expand advanced mathematical knowledge and understanding.

Language: Reading and writing are integral to all subjects in Montessori Elementary, as children express their interests and satisfy their curiosity. Students master conventions with thorough studies of grammar, spelling, and mechanics. They produce final copies with careful penmanship and keyboarding. They read, analyze, think critically, and compare and contrast literature to support personal opinion and perspective. Using these reading and writing skills, they present ideas through formal and informal presentations.

Cultural studies: Cultural studies are interdisciplinary and integrate zoology, botany, geography, geology, physical and life sciences, and anthropology. Through these lessons, children explore the interconnectedness of all living things. Additionally, in-depth studies of history, physical and political world geography, civics, economics, peace and justice, the arts, world language, and physical education are introduced.

Science and Social Studies: Interdisciplinary and integrated studies of geology, geography, physical and life sciences, anthropology, and history are built around "Great Lessons," a series of dramatic stories that explore the origins of the universe, our planet, and the continuous development of human advancement. The laws of physics and chemistry reveal the interdependency of all living things. Beginning with a study of civilization, students explore the contributions of history and what it means to be a responsible citizen and to seek ways to make the world a better, more peaceful place.

Elementary News from Ms. Dolores & Ms. Robin



Multi-age Learning

Groupings of children ages 6 – 9 and 9 –12 (or 6 –12) provide a heterogeneous mix in which children can collaborate and socialize. These inter-age relationships strengthen the entire community.

Older children are seen as role models within the community. They support the growth and development of younger children through socialization, assisting with new work, or teaching skills they have mastered themselves. They can also work with younger students in areas of the curriculum in which they themselves may need more practice, without stigma.



Younger children follow the example set by the older students, and have peers to work with in areas of the curriculum in which they may be more advanced. This multi-age community provides opportunities for all individuals to learn from each other, at times leading, sharing, or serving as role models. It also develops an appreciation of differences.

Within this supportive, inclusive community, children work through the curriculum at their own pace, accelerating during some tasks or taking additional.

For returning Montessori students, the Montessori Elementary program expands upon the learning fostered in an Early Childhood program. For students new to Montessori, it orients them to the joys of responsible participation.

Teachers guide children through a rigorous curriculum individually tailored to their own interests, needs, and abilities. Teachers monitor progress against established benchmarks and expectations for student learning, including: academic preparedness, independence, confidence, autonomy, intrinsic motivation, social responsibility, and global citizenship.



Elementary News from Ms. Rebecca & Ms. Kaitlin, & Ms. Rachel

Give Your Child the Gift of Boredom

As we near Spring Break and Summer vacation, it can be easy for parents to wonder, "How will I fill all these hours with something fun for my child to do?" If you look at your wide-open calendar with a bit of panic, take a moment to step back, breathe, and consider planning nothing. That's right: *nothing*. I don't mean you can't plan a vacation or fun experience. And I certainly am not speaking against the importance of having an enriching environment in your home, to support learning and development. ie. Activities for winter and Activities for Summer. However, it is also valuable to make intentional time in the schedule to do nothing. This will give your children the needed space for unwinding, relaxing, and maybe even experiencing "the gift of boredom."

Kim John Payne, author of *Simplicity Parenting*, works with thousands of parents every year toward simplifying their children's lives with regard to "environment, rhythm, schedules, and filtering out the adult world" (p. 19). He believes "Boredom is often the precursor to creativity... Instead of always being scheduled or entertained, children get creative. They begin building a world of their own making" (p. 141). He believes so strongly in the power of boredom that he has a habit of prescribing it 3 times a day to parents of young children as a necessary and valuable part of any child's day.

If your child approaches the time with loathing or resistance, Payne suggests you can simply say, "Something to do is right around the corner." Imagine what your child might do or create or imagine, given the opportunity to have a wide-open mental canvas with nothing dictating what they should do. I've seen this beauty firsthand with my 2-year-old and 4-year-old. Given the pressure of wanting dinner ready in thirty minutes, I said to my 4-year-old, "I am making dinner right now. Find something to do without mama". There was absolute resistance at first. After what felt like 20 minutes (but probably was 3 minutes) of plea vs. broken record response (where I repeated my simple phrase), I realized I wasn't repeating myself anymore. My son and daughter had given up the battle, and wandered over to the cardboard box by the garage door that was waiting to be put out in the recycling. They began crawling in and out, choosing who's turn it was to be the driver, and coming over to me only occasionally, to ask for a material for their creative play. "Do we have buttons for the front of our car, Mommy?" (To which I would hand them a colored pencil or crayon for drawing). The creativity was abounding, and it was beautiful to watch.

In summary, the emphasis here is to avoid over-scheduling by allowing for some blocks of unscheduled time. This gives space for the magic of imagination, creativity, and peaceful joy to unfold - whether it's fort-building (inside or out), family hikes, cooking, art and read-ins. Another key to this, in Montessori, is observation. You can read more in our article on *Following the Child*. We can watch for what tickles the fancy and make sure there is something to do, while also observing what feels stressful for each child, making sure we make space for both in our family life.



News from Adolescent and Secondary

This month some of the Adolescent students have written about their different classes and what they are learning in each of them. Please enjoy these snippets from several of our students. They have also been participating in photography class, and wanted to share some of their recent work! The photos on the left were taken by Price. P and the photos on the right were taken by Sophie S. On the front page of the newsletter the photo of the goat was taken by Sophie S. and the photo of the bubble was taken by Price P.

-Felipe S. on Spanish Class:

“Hola, como esta” means “Hello, how are you”. In Spanish class, we are learning an abundance of things like table items, possessive adjectives, family members and more. An example sentence for table items is: “puedo tener un cuchillo por favor.” which means “could I have a knife please”. We know that learning a foreign language takes dedication and immersion into the topic.

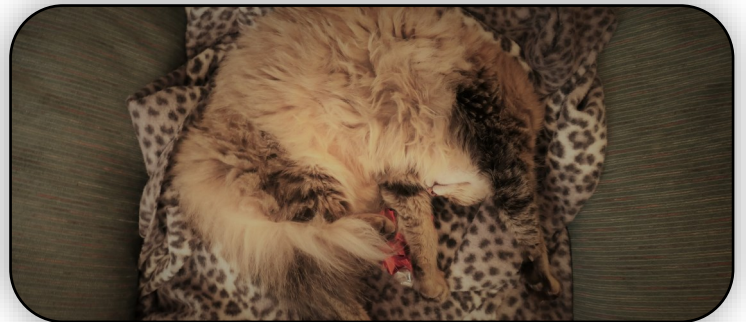
Katie H. on Literature Class:

Our main theme this year involves the American Dream, its meaning from the past to today and what it means to each of us. We analyzed Amanda Gorman’s inaugural poem, “The Hill We Climb”, and learned about her background. Our unit themes include fighting injustice, pursuing dreams, and finding our home.

Lee D. on Math Class:

Ms. Shemi is our teacher for math. In math we have completed chapter 8 and now we have started chapter 9. In chapter 8, we started doing algebra with graphs and y-intercept. We are almost finished with the pre-algebra book. Now here is a math question to see if you are smarter than a 7th grader!

$$10x + 2y = 4 \quad -5y = 40x - 20$$



Announcements



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We invite you to connect with us on social media! We post regularly on Facebook and Instagram, and Twitter. Please follow us to stay updated on school events and to view a ton of great photos of our students at work. We look forward to connecting and communicating with you. We hope you like and comment on our posts and feel free to ask any questions or share our content with family and friends.

SCHOOL MESSENGER: To opt in to receive text messages from school messenger please text the letter **y** or **yes** to **67587**. We use school messenger to update parents on weather, delayed openings or school closures, etc.

Warm Wishes,

Melanie Haigwood

Director of Schools