



October 2007 Newsletter



PABC has been busy organizing our Fall Harvest Fair! Tell your friends and family to join you on Saturday, October 13 from 1-4! There will be many activities for all age groups...apple bobbing, hay rides, pumpkin decorating (bring your own pumpkin), caramel apple making, face painting and scavenger hunts! The funds generated will be used to fund future events that will be organized by PABC. Remember to bring in non-perishable food items as we will be donating these items to the Mukwonago Food Pantry. If you have questions, please email Iman at ikhan@wi.rr.com.

ORIGINAL WORKS FUNDRAISER: The items that can be created from your child's artwork are precious! The proceeds from these sales will contribute to art supplies we use in the classrooms. Our deadline for completing any artwork is Wednesday, October 10. Your child will complete one artwork in class and it will come home in a parent packet on Friday, October 12 for you to view. At this time you can fill out an order for items that can be created from this artwork. Our students, friends and other family members are welcome to create additional artwork...but it will have to be done within the same time frame for submitting the classroom artwork. Please see Sherry in the office if you need additional order forms or directions. The artwork has to be a specific size designated by the company. Any artwork not created in school is due in the office on Wednesday, October 10. The parent packet will come home with your child on Friday, October 12. This packet with artwork and order form is due back to school with a check made out to Nature's Classroom by Monday, October 15. (every piece of artwork needs a separate order form)



Issue 1: The Foundations of the Montessori Educational System

Congratulations on having chosen Montessori education for your child! There are many exciting aspects in the Montessori educational curriculum. Our job as educators is to observe your child in order to meet his or her needs. The result of providing the necessary food for his or her inquisitive mind will forge a life-long love of learning and result in a person who is self-actualized. The objective of these newsletter inserts is to educate you, the parents, so that you can help facilitate this process for your child.

Maria Montessori was born in Chiaravalle, Italy. Her parents moved to Rome so that she could have the educational advantages of a large city. She was encouraged to become a teacher, the only acceptable profession for women at the time. She instead studied engineering, then biology, eventually deciding to study medicine. In 1896 she earned the degree of Doctor of Medicine, the first woman in Italy to do so. While interning in the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Rome, she developed and employed many of her ideas that she felt should be used to teach. Her methods resulted in having the defective children successfully pass an examination given at the public school for normal children.

Montessori studied philosophy, psychology, and anthropology as well as closely studying the works of Itard and Seguin. In 1906 she was asked to organize the infant schools being built in a slum clearance and re-housing project. The children of the San Lorenzo area were her first “normal” pupils—poor children of illiterate parents who had no where to go while their parents worked.

She was so impressed with the results after the first year that she realized the things she had observed about the children were significant and previously unknown. The prepared environment, offering natural materials suitable for age and growth, encouraged free and focused use, drawing out a high degree of concentration. Focusing on an inner need for the material, Montessori found that there was no use for rewards or punishments. The children began to demonstrate a pride in themselves, their work, their environment and their community. Four and five year olds even spontaneously began to write and read, even though she had not intended to foster that skill.

News of her success spread like wildfire. She opened a second school in San Lorenzo and a third in Milan in an attempt to reproduce these developments and study them further. In 1908 she opened a fourth school in Rome for well-to-do children and found the results to be the same. While the poor responded immediately, the wealthy children needed to undergo a process of normalization. While this term may sound intimidating, it is summed up as the children’s cycle of repetition, concentration, and satisfaction, leading to a development of inner discipline, self-assurance, and preference for purposeful activity.

She made her first visit to the U.S. in 1912 and was welcomed on a grand scale, even attending a reception at the White House. Schools were started all over the country, in addition to those throughout the world. Interest eventually waned until Nancy Rambusch spearheaded resurgence, in 1957. Updated research and experience proved Montessori to be far wiser than she was initially credited.

Greetings from Mary Sue and Erin ~

We must open with a sincere **thank you** to each of our parents. It is a tremendous joy and privilege to be working with your children. Many of you have asked what makes a Montessori classroom unique. The Montessori classroom is a singular environment, one which offers the child an opportunity to work at his/her own pace with both freedom and discipline. Below is what we strive to create each day:

". . . the Montessori classroom is a living place, full of children in search of themselves and their world. There is a feeling of total involvement as children explore and discover, sometimes with materials on rugs on the floor or on tables; sometimes together. There is much movement, self-initiating socializing, and casual interchange between children and between child and teacher. The teacher is hard to find . . . she is likely to be on a rug on the floor, or at a child-sized table, giving full attention to one individual child at a time. Careful observation of her will show she is constantly on the move in a quiet way, as she goes from child to child and seeks to be alert to the needs and actions of all . . ."

**-- from *Montessori, A Modern Approach*,
by Paula Polk Lillard**



As we begin the year we work on all the gentle, yet very real, **rules of respect** in our classroom. We call these, **grace and courtesy exercises**. For example, tucking chairs under the table when finished, walking in the classroom, walking around a friends rug,



rolling and putting rugs away nicely, putting work away, keeping respectful inside voices (we stress using more breath than voice), remembering to say please and thank you, waiting turns, using kind words with friends and teachers, entering the classroom respectfully, etc. These guidelines set the tone for our community and offer those "lessons for life" that bring both internal and social success. Please continue these expectations at home. It never ceases to amaze me how children at this age absorb through observation and experiences.

We continue to offer every opportunity for your child to be independent. There is no greater privilege than observing a child's face when they know they have done something on their own. This strong sense of self rarely needs external reward, the "reward" is in knowing, "I did it!" Please support this need of your child's by allowing them to take off their shoes and put on their inside shoes or slippers at both school and home. Offering as many opportunities for independence builds self esteem and life long confidence. Children are amazingly capable.

We use every opportunity, which there are many, to identify the sounds and the numbers. The children are working hard to organize all the information they are absorbing. Please continue to support this need by playing counting or alphabet games with them. For example, "I spy with my little eye, something that starts with the sound 'j'". Rhyming games are also helpful and fun. Counting, counting and more counting! Everything from books to popcorn, it is so important for the children to make connections between the concrete/quantity and the symbol.



We have started our yearlong study of animals with discussion and activities about living and non-living. We will be moving on to the different kinds of living things- plants and animals throughout the year. The children will be introduced to the many different kinds of environments on our earth – the forest, the pond, the mountains, the grassland, the deserts, the oceans, and the arctic. Our amazing environment at NCM offers many outdoor experiences to enrich these studies. The second half of the year we will be learning about the 5 major classifications of

vertebrate animals. We are beginning our yearlong approach to history by concentrating on calendar work and soon, we will work with clocks.

Birthdays:

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please check with Mary Sue one week in advance to schedule. Again, it is a simple, yet dear, celebration of your child's life. The celebration will last no longer than 20 minutes, maybe less. We ask you to:

- Arrive at 8:35 a.m. (the celebration will start at 8:40 a.m.)
- Bring a nut-free, healthy, low sugar snack to share (please, no juice, we will provide water)
- Bring your child's favorite book from home
- Bring a few pictures that offer a glance at each year since birth

Classroom needs:

- Parent willing to work in the classroom with sandpaper letters one time weekly (Mary Sue will train)
- International photos from magazines or on-line
- Bird seed
- Large pine cones
- Pumpkins for carving out seeds * **though we will NOT be celebrating Halloween, we fully celebrate the autumn season!**

A few of the songs we are enjoying this month:

Thanks You Song

Thank you for the food we eat.
Thank you for the friends we meet.
Help us all to not forget,
quietness, kindness, and respect.
Thank you, thank you this we say,
thank you for this lovely day.

Community Song

Look around and your will see,
a family, community,
we are friends, we are one.
Join your hands and you will see,
a family, community,
we are brothers, we are one.
Join your hands and you will see,
a family, community,
we are sisters, we are one.

Octi, the Octopus

(this is done holding up 8 fingers and then losing one with each verse)

Have you heard of Octi the octopus?
He went down and he lost a leg
So we couldn't call him an octopus,
So we called him a sevenopus.

(this goes on through one...)

Have you heard about Oneie the oneopus?
He went down and he lost a leg.
So we couldn't call him a oneopus
so we called him a great big blob!

(they love that part)



Greetings from the Full Day Classroom

The month of September has been very exciting in Miss Wilma and Miss Erin's Full Day Classroom. We have been busy creating Fish Kites, Bean Mosaics and other art projects. On Tuesday afternoons Miss Wilma teaches Spanish. Our September focus has been on colors. We have been singing Spanish color songs and playing Spanish games. We encourage practicing and singing the 'Colors Song' at home. We have been taking advantage of the beautiful weather by going on hikes and playing games with Miss Erin to the Enchanted Forest and through the prairie. Last week we even went on a Troll Hunt to Lake Beulah.

Colors Song

(to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

Red is *rojo*; green is *verde*;
Purple, *morado*; brown, *café*;
Yellow, *amarillo*; blue, *azul*;
Pink, *rosado*; orange, *anaranjado*;
White is *blanco*; black is *negro*;

Troll Hunt

(repeat after me)

Going on a troll hunt,
Gonna find a big one,
With wee bitty eyes
And big bushy hair,

Look! A tree! (insert other objects for more verses)

Can't go over it,
Can't go under it,
Can't go through it,
Guess I'll go around it!

Salutations From Ms. Dana and Ms. Wilma's Children's House Classroom

"An individual is disciplined when he is the master of himself."

Maria Montessori

The children have made a positive and smooth transition into the Montessori environment. Currently we are getting reacquainted with classroom procedures and expectations. We are developing inner discipline of the child by engaging them with the classroom environment. This connection creates settled, happy, confident students. Within the few weeks we have been together, the children are becoming aware of the "family like" feeling in the classroom environment. Our weekly schedule provides students with a variety of enriching learning experiences.



Every morning we participate in the Montessori work cycle. The Montessori Primary classroom is designed in a specific manner that allows children to work independently and at their own developmental pace. During the morning, the children work on Montessori lessons either individually or with a friend. A brief overview of the lessons is as follows:

- *Practical Life:* Activities such as spooning, pouring, sweeping and buttoning, to promote small motor control, care of the environment and care of the self.
- *Sensorial:* Activities dealing with shape, size, color, weight, sound, etc, which promote further development of the senses.
- *Language:* There are two language areas: comprehension, which includes activities such as matching, classifying, and sequencing; and phonics and reading activities ranging from simple sound games to whatever reading level the child attains.
- *Math:* Activities range from one-to-one correspondence and object-to-numeral matches to whatever level the child attains. The emphasis is on using manipulatives to give the child a concrete foundation for the abstract math work he/she will do in later years.
- *Geography:* Activities include puzzle maps, materials that have an international aspect such as matching shoes from other countries or spooning rice with a Chinese soup spoon, books about the cultures, and international snacks. These form an introduction to physical and cultural geography.
- *Art:* Activities to show the care and use of art materials, to encourage creativity, and just to have fun!
- *Science:* Activities include nature related lessons such as living and non-living parts of a tree, flower, leaf and weather.

As a class, we are working together to walk in a line to develop the skills to control the whole body. Every day the children assist each other in preparations for snack and lunch by arranging and setting tables.

Each Monday we take a walk to the farm to learn to interact with animals. At this time the children receive individual lessons on brushing the goats.

Each Friday our class has show-and-tell. Children place their items in the show-and-tell basket when they are greeted in the morning. Show-and-tell allows the child to bring their own unique items to share to the class and is a golden opportunity to enhance their confidence in public speaking.

I am honored to have the opportunity to work with such energetic and insightful students. I am looking forward to a successful and wonderful academic year. Please feel free to give me a call at any time...363-6820 Ext. 5001



Things that parents can do at home

- Make sure your child gets sufficient sleep.
- Teach grace and courtesy in the home. Model it. Use courtesy with your child and help your child to demonstrate it.
- See that your child gets to school on time.
- Allow sufficient time for your child to dress himself/herself. Analyze your child's wardrobe and build a wardrobe aimed at freedom of movement, independence, and freedom from distraction.
- Allow your child to collaborate with food preparation and encourage your Extended Day child to take at least some responsibility for preparing his or her own lunch
- Assign regular household tasks that need to be done to maintain the household to your child as age appropriate. (Perhaps setting silverware and napkins on the table, sorting, put dirty clothes in laundry basket, return toys to place, recycling, dusting, watering plants, etc.)
- Before taking your child to the store, restaurant, doctor's office, etc. prepare him/her for what is going to happen and what will be expected of him/her.
- Teach your child his/her address, phone number, and parents' names.

Clothing

Please dress your children comfortably in clothes they can play and paint in. Although we provide and encourage the use of aprons, our art area is an active, enjoyable area of the classroom. Also, your children should be able to get their own clothes on and off. Belts and overalls are difficult for children to do independently. All children must have one or two changes of clothing. *Underpants and socks are very important to include. Replace soiled clothing immediately.* Please remember to update your children's extra



clothing with proper seasonal attire. Please label everything- socks, underpants, shoes, boots, hats, mittens, scarves.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays can be acknowledged with a very short birthday celebration at the beginning of the work morning. Please contact Dana to schedule the date and time for the special 20-minute ceremony. Parents are welcome to attend. We will make birthdays a special time for your child. Birthday treats are optional. If you

do bring a treat, we ask that you adhere to the Nature's Classroom food policies by bring items that are nut free, low sugar and low salt. You can also bring in your child's favorite book and photographs of your child during each stage of their development.

Salutations From Ms. Dana and Ms. Deepa's Children's House Extended Day Program

The children are excited to be a part of the Extended Day classroom. Ms. Deepa and I are diligently working to engage the student in a consistent and productive work cycle. Our extended day group has a rigorous and enriching afternoon curriculum. The afternoon begins by reading the children's classic Charlotte's Web by E. B. White. The book has friendship, love and caring. It is funny, serious, and sad. It is our first "class" chapter book. After reading we discuss what was read and what is anticipated to happen next.



Every Monday afternoon we have an outdoor education lesson. This month, with the help from Ms. Erin, our extended day class got the opportunity to explore the important role that seeds play in our ecosystem. We read several books on seed dispersal and plant federalization such as A Dandelion's Life by John Himmelman, From Seed to Pumpkin by Wendy Pfeffer and James Hale and The Nature and Science of Seeds, by Jane Burton and Kim Taylor. We explored the various ways plants disperse their seeds by wind, water, animals or by spontaneous explosion. Additionally the students talked about how seeds are in the foods we eat. We took close look at the seeds of an apple, cucumber, green pepper, nectarine, avocado, pumpkin, gourd and kiwi. Students were immediately surprised by how many seeds they found inside these common fruits.

In October our outdoor curriculum will be focusing on the natural ecosystems found at Natures Classroom. Our objective is to understand the concept of an ecosystem. We will be going on several long hikes to explore a wetland, kettle moraine, pine forest, deciduous forest and the prairie. Over the next two months we will be also learning about pond ecology, animals and plants living in and near ponds, lakes and streams with the objective to be able to draw connections between the ecosystems.

Tuesday and Wednesday the extended day continues individual work that may have been started in the morning or engage in group activities - particularly in nature studies, advanced geography work, and art appreciation.

On Thursdays the students attend specials such as Spanish or Geography while Fridays are reserved for a walk to the farm to enjoy the company of the goats and chickens.

The Extended Day classroom is a beautiful environment for the “whole child” to grow and develop. I am very excited to observe, guide and mentor these tremendous students!

**“...When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength...
A child, who more than anyone else is a spontaneous observer of nature,
certainly needs to have at his disposal material upon which he can work.”
Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child**

Classroom Wish List

- Cotton Balls
- Prismacolor Colored Pencil Set (pencils exclusively used for metal insets that produce a high quality product)
- Gerbil food

Desde la clase de espanol

I am so excited for another full fun year to share my culture and language with your child.

Elementary

In our elementary class we are working on short conversational Spanish vocabulary. They are all very interested in conversational Spanish and are constantly asking to learn new words. The children also have a nick name in Spanish that we use in class.



Extended day

We are working on Spanish greetings and numbers. The children are also learning how to recognize numbers and write them in Spanish. They also have a nick name in Spanish and every time we have Spanish class I ask them what their name is in Spanish.

Fun Days / Birthdays

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a fun game day on our last Thursday of each month. Each month we will play educational games. We also sing "Feliz Cumpleanos" to students with birthdays that month.

Cooking and Crafts

Based on a Spanish -speaking country at the conclusion of a chapter, students will have the opportunity to sample food from that country. Students will also be making crafts to celebrate various holidays (Day of the Dead, Christmas, and Cinco de Mayo)

Elementary Newsletter



What an incredible September it has been in the elementary Montessori community! We have spent time reacquainting ourselves and welcoming the new members: Chloe and Aidan Anderson, Tim and Sarah Pritzl, Nikolas Denzien, and Kelly Gallagher. Students continue to challenge themselves and build community with low rope activities. This opportunity provides skills to build unity, cooperation, flexibility, and leadership.

Within the classroom, we continue with the Great Lessons. The Great Lessons meet the fundamental needs of the child in the 2nd plane of development. This child is characterized by their capacity for imagination and abstraction. The backbone of elementary curriculum focuses on the “big picture” first. This series of lessons presents the child with the whole universe and the intimate relationship that exists among all forms of life. This study sparks the child’s interest and engages his imagination. The child should be inspired by the amazing sequence of events that has occurred before the child’s appearance on earth. He or she should marvel at and be humbled by his or her relative insignificant time he or she has been privileged to share this earth. As such, we start with ideas of creation and focus on all the wonderful gifts we have that the people before us labored for and discovered. Cosmic education and the great lessons help the child understand the laws and order underlying his or her potential and calls the child to accept personal responsibility for society. The students ask, “What is my cosmic task?” Everything that has come before has had a purpose, and has offered something new and special. Eventually, the children will go in search of their own purpose here on earth. They consider the interconnectedness and interdependence with all creation.

We have started a routine for the work cycle. Students are learning how to make choices and be independent. It is wonderful to see the older students mentor to the younger students. It is amazing to see the growth in leadership that students have gained over their time here at NCM.

Our first eco-lab was so interesting. Our theme for study included pollination and bees. The children reviewed the parts of the flower, the flowers job to





become the fruit, and the amazing life of the bee. We played games, including the “waggle dance” to demonstrate to our hive-mates where to find the best pollen and nectar.

Lower elementary have started a review of grammar. 1st year students have been introduced to nouns, made noun necklaces, and are making noun collages. Ask them about our noun train. Daily Oral Language has started this week. This is a new skill for 1st years. We are working on math facts and completing time tests. These will come home several times a week. Students are working on familiar math works. In October, we will start branching into new concepts. Students are working on time and have loved working with our new clock. We are starting to dive into research on solar system topics.

Upper Elementary Students start each morning with Daily Oral Language (D.O.L.), in which an incorrect sentence is given and the student makes the changes and rewrites the sentence correctly. They also do a math word problem daily, complete a spelling group, and work on hand writing. In lessons, the Upper Elementary students have been reviewing grammar in the language area and have started exploring multiples in math. We have considered the amazing gift from the ancient Babylonians, from 4,000 years ago, of the protractor for measurement of angles, and we’ve had lots of fun measuring various angles. More exciting lessons to come!



IMPORTANT NOTES TO REMEMBER...

- **Please check the green folder on Fridays and their hanging file at the end of each day. Important messages are filed in order for us to keep a productive form of communication.**
- **Students that arrive BEFORE 8:20 need to check into the before school program in Miss Mary Sue’s room. We appreciate your cooperation in this area and are also grateful for the timely independent arrival of students in the morning.**
- **Please note that we will next attend the Library on October 3rd and then will visit it every 3rd week thereon after, rather than every other, as was previously planned. Car-seats must be dropped off on Library days or your child will not be able to attend.**

We would like to meet with lower elementary parents on Tuesday, October 2nd from 3:15-4:00. We will be discussing specific routines, elementary curriculum, and expectations. We will also outline our morning meeting process that students will start leading. Someone will be available to watch students and their Children’s House siblings during this time. Hope to see you there!!