



Devin, from our Elementary program, concentrating on his creative writing.

“The first essential for the child's development is concentration. The child who concentrates is immensely happy. -Maria Montessori

Upcoming Events:

Early Dismissal 12:30 pm
Wednesday, November 21

No School November 22 & 23
Thanksgiving observed

Journey Through the Curriculum:
Tuesday, November 27
6:00 - 8:00 pm, 27 PLC

Winter Vacation
December 19 - January 1
Classes resume January 2

Sneak Peak:

Take the Edge off
Wed-Fri, December 19 - 21

Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 5, 6:15pm

First Friday
December 7, 9:00 am at 7 PLC

Grandfriends' Day
Friday, December 7

Winter Celebration
Saturday, December 8
10:30 - 12:30

Bi-Weekly Matters

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Amherst Montessori School
Friday, November 16, 2007

Board of Directors

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CH2 Parent

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CH2 Parent

Amy Beth
CH2 Parent

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Over the past couple of weeks our teaching staff have conducted parent conferences. Teachers have reported success and have enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your child's development. This year we have asked families to complete a short questionnaire to give us some feedback regarding our assessment/conference process. Your input will help us to better serve you in the future and help to refine the difficult method of relaying pertinent information to families about their children. So if you have not already filled one out we encourage you to do so. Forms are still available from classroom teachers as well as in the main office if you didn't get one or need another.

This topic of communication comes up regularly in our field of work. We are in the "people business" and therefore must always aspire to ensure quality communication and continuously refine our practices. As teachers we model appropriate communication with children and coach them as they encounter challenges with their peers. We impart systems in our classrooms to deliver messages about use of materials and we employ yet other systems for sharing information with our colleagues. The most challenging of all though is the communication process we undertake with families. With our students and our colleagues we at least see each other for long periods or multiple times throughout

the day. With our families, we must juggle, and sort, and share information in a hurried fashion. It is always a challenge to do this and ensure "quality" but we strive to nevertheless. Each of us has our preferred means by which we like to get information and equally have our habits of delivery. So it is with this in mind that we wish to reflect on our current practices and aim to enhance the services we provide.

Please be aware that I am available to talk with you when you have questions or concerns and may be able to assist you in arranging for you to meet with the teacher when it may otherwise have seemed difficult to work out. Most people work under the assumption that no news is good news but we all know that that is often not the case, as each party waits for the other to initiate communication, vital information is left unexpressed. When it seems that we are busy we most likely are but we are not too busy to answer your questions.

REMINDERS

SAVE THE DATE

Grand-friend's day is an opportunity for your child/ren to share their Montessori classroom and community with someone special in their lives.

Please contact or stop by the office if you have not already provided addresses so that we may send invitations in a timely manner.

2nd Annual Grand-friend's Day
December 7th

Appointments to be scheduled: Toddler classroom only.

Children's House 1, Children's House 2,
and Elementary: open house style 9:30 - 10:30

JOURNEY THROUGH THE CURRICULUM

This is an opportunity for adults to experience the Montessori classrooms. In each classroom there will be five minutes of silence. Adults will then have a chance to explore some of the unique Montessori materials that the teachers have put out on tables and rugs. A great question to keep in mind during the evening is "how does this help the child?"

There will be a discussion about how the adults responded to the classroom environment and the manipulatives. This is a fantastic time to become more acquainted with the curriculum and how the child develops and challenges him/herself throughout their years at AMS.

HEAD OF SCHOOL EVALUATION

In accordance with the school's By-laws, the Board of Directors annually evaluates the performance of the Head of School. A survey of parents and guardians is an important part of the evaluation process. The Board would be grateful for your input. **Please be sure to fill out the Head of School evaluation form by November 28th.** Please return it by mail or feel free to drop off a sealed envelope to any staff member; there is a confidential collection site in the main office.

Thank you very much for giving your time to this evaluation.

ANNUAL FUND

100%

That is our goal. One hundred percent participation from families, board members and staff. So far the response to our annual fund drive has been positive and reflects a commitment and belief in the value of a Montessori education. More importantly, our AMS community is coming together and supporting our school and our children. All independent schools seek to close the gap between the tuition and the growing cost of daily operation and we are not unique in this way however, we **can** uniquely boast 100% participation! Look for the pink tower boards at both campuses to see our annual fund grow.

Thank you for your commitment to AMS,

CLASSROOM NEWS: TODDLER

Felice, Michelle, Alissa and Rachel

It was so enjoyable meeting with you all for conferences. It is always a pleasure to talk about your children and their individual qualities.

Spotches, Lines, Blobs, Swirls! Our easel, the magical canvas of design.....The red period, followed by the blue period has now moved into our purple period! Watch for more vibrant colors as your children delight in wielding the paintbrush as a daily activity. Seriously, painting continues to be a wonderful outlet for creative expression and sensory exploration. The children have been delighting in their creations.

Sweet and juicy clementines were peeled and eaten by the children this week. They love to peel the rind off, and then break the sections apart. YUM!

Speaking of food, this week we tasted and compared red and yellow bell peppers. They were, smooth, crunchy, juicy, sweet and wet. The yellow ones were milder and all of the skins were a bit tough. The children reminded one another that although we eat the skin of peppers, we do not eat the stems or seeds.

Just a reminder about rainy days. We do enjoy going outside in wet weather when there is a mist or light rain. Please send in a raincoat and boots that can be left at school or sent home on rainy days. Rain paints are a huge plus as well.

Thanks!

CLASSROOM NEWS: CHILDREN'S HOUSE I

Laura, Deb, Christine, Liz and Amy

What we've been doing

The kids are exercising their verbal abilities in many ways these days. Many of them have been dictating stories in class, and they are learning about how stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. Stories have interesting parts, and surprises, and some even have a table of contents! We've also begun to read a story all together each morning- Big Tree, by Mary and Conrad Buff. It is the story of a giant Sequoia and it's lifecycle over many centuries.

We are also singing new songs and learning a poem, something we'll do every month. The poem for November is "it sifts from leaden sieves" by Emily Dickinson- (an abridged version). We read about how Emily lived right here in Amherst, and how she loved words and writing. The poem is a riddle- ask your child what the secret answer is!

With so much talk of the change of season, the children have, of course, begun to talk about the many holidays that come along this time of year. We discussed Diwali (Nov. 9th), the Indian festival of lights, which led to a fine discussion of how

different families decorate their homes in different ways for all kinds of occasions. And we've talked about Thanksgiving, what it means to be grateful, and how this time of year is associated with harvest.

What you can do

The children have a full day, and they are best prepared to deal with their day when they have everything they need to sustain their energy. Please remember to send the things your child needs for their day-

A healthy lunch with a variety of foods

Clothing appropriate for the weather (hat, mittens, and coat)

Clean bedding (sheet, blanket, and any necessary soft, comforting lovely).

Some children are finding it quite helpful to have a backpack to carry their things at the end of the day. The backpack really eases frustration and helps your child feel independent and confident about carrying their own things. So much better than struggling with many bits of paper, extra clothing, and sharing items!

CLASSROOM NEWS: KINDERGARTEN

Matt and Laura

Welcome to Kindergarten

In Kindergarten the children have been introduced to script (cursive writing) and we are pleased to share that everyone is doing very well with learning the placement of what letters go above or below the writing line. We are doing weekly creative writing and have covered topics such as fairy tales and our favorite foods. We're about to start writing poems to recite at the winter celebration.

Books we are reading: *The Boy Who Talked To Animals*, and *Esio Trot* by Ronald Dahl and Cam Jansen Mysteries.

Recently, the math area has been a favorite of the Kindergartens. We are working on simple and complex addition with the golden bead materials as well as other bead chains and work. This helps them learn the process of slip counting, growth of accuracy and counting in sequence.

CLASSROOM NEWS: CHILDREN'S HOUSE 2

Matt, Sara, Rebecca, Dhyana and Alison

Can you believe it Thursday was the 50th day of school? We are halfway to the 100th day of school celebration. For those who don't know it the 100th day of school is a big party when the children bring in projects that contain 100 of something. It will be here before we know it so plant 100 ideas in your brainstorm clouds.

Some new works are coming out in the classroom and you may have noticed how smart your children are becoming. The object boxes 1, 2 and 3 are getting a lot of use. These boxes contain objects and cards naming the objects. Rhyming, reading, writing and discovering shared attributes of the objects are a few of the uses we have employed for these boxes. They are very versatile. You may also be seeing a lot of tracing paper coming home as we have put out name tracing, letter tracing, 100 board tracing and the script alphabet tracing. These along with sandpaper letter tracing are strengthening their fingers and the ability for the eye to control the hand. Other examples include 100 drops of water in a bottle or 100 cotton balls glued to a box.

We said farewell to Abby and the Siecienski family last week and they will be missed. Many children had planned to move with Abby, so if you hear them making plans to move to California it is surely to be closer to Abby.

That song you are hearing coming from the back seat that is sung to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Railroad" is about recycling, reducing and reusing:

We've Been Working on Recycling

We've been working on recycling all the trash we can.

We've been working on recycling it's a very simple plan.

Separate your glass and paper, separate your plastic and your tin.

Take the trash that you've recycled, to your recycling bin.

We've been working on reducing all the trash we can.

We've been working on reducing it's a very simple plan.

Don't go wasting any products, use just exactly what you need.

Don't buy things in extra wrapping, reduce and you'll succeed.

We've been working on reusing all the trash we can.

We've been working on reusing it's a very simple plan.

If it's a paper bag your using don't use it once use it twice.

Give old clothes and toys to someone, to reuse them would be nice.

Thank you as well for your participation in Parent/Teacher conferences. The love and support that you give your children and their classroom is appreciated. We are trying to fine tune the conference process so if you have a questionnaire to turn in we will gladly review your feedback. If you need a questionnaire they are available at pick up or drop-off.

During this season of thanks, we would like to thank Noah and his mom, Maxine, for prepping apples and making fresh applesauce with the children. We also thank Kylie and her mom, Lisa, for keeping us well fed with apples from their trees.

Thank you.

CLASSROOM NEWS: ELEMENTARY

Kara and Nicole

The elementary class had short, but productive two weeks. The younger children have begun working on a daily schedule practicing their math, writing, reading and cursive skills. They have also worked on homophones, homographs and honing their punctuation abilities. They continue to work on the small bead frame, venturing into multiplication. The older children continue to work diligently on their literary circle, bird research, measuring angles and are beginning to work on two-digit multiplication.

A few ambitious children made phone calls to plan field trips and help schedule our upcoming outings. One of our future field trips will incorporate our solar system and early human research. We would like to venture to the Springfield Science Museum on Friday, November 30. In order to view the planetarium show, Splendor of the Autumn Sky we need to remain at the museum until 3 p.m. We would like to request that the children be picked up at 3:45. Please let us know if that is a possibility.

Weather permitting we will be going to Groff Park to partake in a life size scale of the solar system next Wednesday, November 21. We look forward to spreading out the planets on the baseball field so the children glean an understanding of the relative distance between the planets.

Thank you for your attendance and thoughtful conversation during Parent Conferences. It was wonderful discussing your bright, busy children with you. Your support is always valued and it is a pleasure to have you in our community.

Have a wonderful holiday. We are thankful to be a part of the Amherst Montessori School.