

February, 2010



AMHERST MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Elementary Newsletter

The Power of Words

As children embark upon the second plane of development many changes ensue. Baby teeth are replaced with adult teeth, huge growth spurts bring on physical growing pains, and a new awareness of justice and fair-play give cause for social growing pains, as well.

One of the beauties of the Montessori Classroom is the emphasis on etiquette. Children receive lessons on polite ways to greet a new person, how to answer a phone, and how to tend to a friend who might be injured. From time to time in our circle we engage in role play in order to facilitate appropriate social behaviors in challenging situations. How do you respond if a friend is disturbing your concentration? What do you do if someone has bumped into you? We emphasize clear communication with our friends using gentle words that state how we feel so that problems can be constructively discussed, solved and peace can return to the commu-

nity. Discord brought on by a child feeling hurt, or unsafe, spreads through the room, and so it is to the benefit of us all to have the skills to resolve conflict with words, and have a positive outcome from an incident that had a negative beginning.

The children have enjoyed our endeavors to create a peaceful classroom community, and while role playing results in much giggling, and some silliness, the message is clear and is taken very seriously. Practicing these skills while not in the heat of the moment creates the ability to return to these skills when the need arises, and so we practice often.

Our ability to communicate is not a distinctly human trait, however our ability to communicate effectively with words and avoid violence while still making our feelings known is a unique quality of our species. Maria Montessori knew that any hope of a peaceful world must begin with the teaching of children. At school, while we learn to read, write, solve math problems and delve into the sciences we also learn most of our



Emma Shows her mom, Michelle, a chart of early alphabets, and how they compare to our own alphabet.

social skills. For this reason, it is a very important focus of the classroom, and I'm happy to report the children are all growing beautifully in their ability to talk, share, apologize, forgive, and problem solve.



Creative Drama

We all has such a wonderful time using our imaginations with Talia and Nile! We were able to meet King Midas and Narcissus, move about like animals, and create tableaux of scenes from the Ramayana. The children did a great job working together, and were not shy to share ideas, and act very silly during our two weeks with these incredibly talented thespians.

Learning dramatic skills requires a great deal of concentration, and patience, and the children thoroughly enjoyed every last

moment—from warm ups with mirror work to building bridges with our bodies. Thanks Talia and Nile for this fabulous introduction to dramatic arts!



Yelena, Emma and Tevah work with Nile to create a tableau depicting a scene from the Ramayana.



Walking in a Winter Wonderland

foliage of fall and recently we have made our way through the snowy paths, to see the icy winter scenery. The children marveled at how changed our beloved wetlands was after a few weeks of cold weather. Mother nature had created wonderful works of art with rings of ice around trees, footprints in the snow, and a pallid grey sky provided perfect lighting as the day began to close. We created rides out of hills and fallen trees, explored ravines that had previously been too mucky to enter, and simply reveled in the joy that winter can bring.

pants, mittens, coats and even hats. Your efforts are greatly appreciated, as the children thoroughly enjoyed every second they had in this winter wonderland.



Each season the children have been able to enjoy hiking on a local trail which is within walking distance from the school. We have seen the glorious green of the end of summer, the fantastic

Thank you to all the parents for cleaning up the incredible aftermath of dirt and snow that covered our snow

Thank You

A very special thank you to Talya Kingston (Cara, CH1) & Hampshire student Nile who shared two amazing Creative Drama sessions with us! The children had a wonderful time.

A great big thank you to all the parents who have been able to take time to come to Morning Share to explore what your children are so proud of. Everyone has had a parent or friend at least once, and it brings such joy to the students. It's wonderful to see!



Best Wishes

Good luck and much happiness to Arayana Carr-Mal who is leaving our class of spectacular students. We will all miss you dearly, and wish you success at your new school.

The child has taught us that only in this early stage is he specially endowed with an acuter sensibility and interest than he will show later, when he will be able to study scientifically and precisely only if already equipped with an emotion and sentiment for those subjects. He will then no longer possess mere curiosity, but an intense interest, an enthusiasm based on emotion.

- Dr. Maria Montessori

Upcoming Events

Sculpture: Fridays in February & March

Morning Share: Thursday, February 11, 8:15—9:15 am

Winter Break: Monday, February 15—Friday, February 19 (School Closed—Winter Session Available)