

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents,

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS * * * *

December weeks were busy! The children worked very diligently on their **Christmas gifts** for you - both in their designs and execution - and were so thrilled with them and excited to give them to you. We hope you will enjoy them for many years to come. You may have noticed that the sewing projects occur in each different grade level of our program at MCH. Sewing, we have found, is such an excellent way to develop fine motor skills, follow very new and generally unusual directions, and expand the ability to see and create something artistic in both color and design.

We had a wonderful **field trip to *The Velveteen Rabbit***. The children looked so sweet as they sat and watched the performance with their very special "friends" on their laps. It is always a great experience to have a book come alive for you. We're sure they will long remember it. Thank you to our drivers **Fatima Carroll, Heather Gutfeld, Ahmed Nikzad, Nileshni Maharaj, Patrick Tomas, Beverly Vasquez, and Yuki Yamashiro**.

We were doubly fortunate to have not just one, but a second terrific December **field trip**. It was to see a performance of **Ballet Folklorico** and our very own Montessori alums, **Ariela Moreno** and **Jude Gallardo**, dancing with the company. It was a wonderful tour of Mexico, seeing the different styles of dancing, costumes, and customs from each region. How important it is these days for the children to have opportunities to understand and appreciate our neighbors. A very memorable trip indeed. Thank you to **Nicole del Rosario, Kiros Ghirmay, Heather Gutfeld, and Ahmed Nikzad** for driving.

The **Cultural Cookie Exchange** was great as always. By partaking in this experience of "tradition," it becomes yet another experience for the understanding and growing realization of what "Time" is about. And speaking of "time," thank you for all the *time and effort* you put into it. We know (from our own experience!) how much work making the cookies is, but we can assure you it is well worth it. When we hear comments like "My grandma showed me how to put the decorations on so carefully" and "The dough felt so sticky but my grandma said that was just right" and "I could make the shape by just putting my finger in it" and on and on... We know these were experiences they will remember for a long time. The cookies were delicious and beautiful, and the children

seemed so proud to share them. It was very sweet to hear them talk to each other during the party telling how much they liked each other's cookies. The Third Years were even talking during the days before about how much they were looking forward to what they had tasted from their friends' cookies last year, remembering many details about who made what and what they were like. Be assured, this experience makes a *very* big impression on them.

Before our Cookie Exchange and party, the children hosted a **Holiday Open House** for the Kindergarteners and First Years. This is what we consider "advanced Practical Life." Just as they learned "practical life" skills like carrying, pouring, grace and courtesy, etc. in Montessori Pre-School, here they learned through practice and experience how to be gracious hosts to guests. They each had a specific area and holiday activity in the room to explain to our young visitors and to also make them feel welcome in "our home" - including serving them refreshments. The children were so excited about having guests; it was a wonderful experience.

UPCOMING EVENTS * * * *

We have two more big **writing projects** in January. The first is to now finally complete our **Native American** studies which had to be paused for the Pilgrims. The children had all earlier chosen which area they wanted to live in and learned about it. Now will be some writing and a little art work too. And yes, another Feast is coming! (which is I think the main reason they voted in December to continue this project after the holidays) We're also ready to recite our Native American poem, **Longfellow's *from the Song of Hiawatha***. The children will also be making their **Personal Timelines**, which is the fourth and last of the major writing projects for the semester. (#1 was *The Cave People* and #2 is the Pilgrim "*Letters from the New World*" book.) The Personal Timeline is a continuation of our study of timelines in our History area. It is a tradition in Montessori Elementary for the children to annually make a Personal Timeline of their lives. It is a wonderful keepsake to have - to see how your child perceives his or her life each year. Upon completion, the Timelines will be on display in class for a while, and then will go home around the beginning of the 2nd Semester. More details about this project will be coming home mid-month.

Second and Third Years will begin **grammar lessons** around the end of the month, and will be learning **Verbs (2nds)** and **Adverbs (3rds)**. After the lesson, they should begin marking that part of speech when doing their Spelling homework sentences. We

have been sending the corrected Spelling homework home each week so that you can see how your child is doing with mastery of the grammar parts of speech. Be sure to always look for it on Mondays.

For some **special math work**, the Second Years will start working with **telling time**. The Third Years will finish their work with money and making change. The end activities for money are "**purchasing items**" at "Safeway" (with practice being both a clerk and a customer) and finally a very fun "**Allowance Game.**"

In the **Cultural Subjects** in History we will begin our study of the **Egyptian Civilization**. We will look at this ancient civilization just as we did the Cave Dwellers and Nomadic Peoples: through Montessori's "Fundamental Needs of People" and see how the Egyptians fulfilled those needs. This is always a favorite study for the children.

More in modern times in our **History** study, we will be discussing **the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** and the Civil Rights Movement in our country. There will be a number of excellent books for the children to read about Dr. King and also some books read to them. We will also see a movie about Dr. King.

Now that **Winter** is definitely here, please remember to have your child wear his or her MCH school sweater, sweatshirt, jacket, or hoodie for inside the classroom, as it is too cool inside the room to have only a short-sleeved polo shirt.

The end of January also brings **Report Cards**. As in the past they are not given with a conference unless of course you would like one. If you do, please contact us and we will be happy to set up an appointment time for you.

One last note to **Third Year parents**. It is now the time to begin the decision making process about where your child will be going for 4th Grade. To give you some information we hope will be helpful, Mary Anne will be having a special meeting for you on Wednesday evening, Jan. 17th. At that time we can discuss points for consideration in making that important next-school decision, and answering questions you may have, Another set of dates you may want to keep in mind is Jan. 28th thru Feb. 2nd when Catholic schools have their annual Open Houses and visitations for prospective families during Catholic Schools Week. *Wherever* you are considering for your child, it is very important to visit the school, talk to the teachers, and observe a class in action to get a feel for whether that school is a good match for your child.

Sincerely,
Mary Anne and Toni

CALENDAR:

Friday, Jan. 5th - Sharing Day - The children may bring something interesting they received as a gift; Book orders are due

Monday, Jan. 15th - Dr. Martin Luther King Day: NO SCHOOL and NO DAY CARE

Wednesday, Jan. 17th - 4th Grade Information Meeting for 3rd Year Parents, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 31st - First Semester ends; Report Cards

And...NIGHT OF THE SUPERMOON, BLUE MOON (2nd full moon in the month) AND TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE!