

MAY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents,

April Highlights

We have been enjoying Spring in a number of different ways this past month. Few experiences can compare with going out into beautiful hills and being surrounded by plants and flowers brought there after being collected in the wild from all over the world. That is what we did on our **field trip to the U.C.**

Berkeley Botanical Gardens. We learned first-hand how plants adapt to extreme environments. We wandered through desert cactuses (feeling so lucky to see them in their brief spring bloom!) and across a hillside of wildly colorful African flowers, to the exotic tropical rainforest plants in their large (and steamy hot) greenhouses. And extra treat was a hike to the Japanese mountain pond and seeing young newts among blooming irises and water lilies. We saw a lot and learned a lot! Thank you so much to all our drivers.

On **Earth Day** we had discussions on saving energy and water along with everyday ways to help our environment. Throughout the week everyone wrote about different aspects of our Earth and made an Earth mandala of his or her favorite parts of our planet's land, water, plants, and animals. We also made Earth "collecting" boxes. And everyone enjoyed the wide array of globes that came to stay for the week; so many different kinds! We are also continuing our "unwanted crayons" collecting, so they may be kept out of landfills and recycled to become new crayons for children in hospitals. Please encourage your children to ask cousins, friends, and neighbors for crayons that could be added to our collection boxes.

Our **Ancient Greek studies** came to an end with our **traditional feast**. This one consisted of kalamata olives (actually grown in Greece), feta cheese, spelt bread (an ancient grain enjoyed by the Greeks) with either olive oil or honey (another favorite of the Greeks), asparagus (named by them from their word *asparagos* which means to "spring up" which is exactly what asparagus do each spring when they emerge from the earth), grapes, and topped off with the delicious Greek pastry "baklava." It was indeed quite a feast. We had a number of new converts to feta, kalamatas, and baklava, so don't be surprised if you hear some requests!

We had one final great celebratory event in April, our long awaited and anticipated **Ice Cream Party!** It was earned by being the top selling class in the See's Candy fundraiser. Thank you again very much to all of you who sold See's and made this such a success, and in particular our **top sellers, for 2nd Years-Ethan Unisa, 3rd Years-Elijah Colmenero, and the top seller for the whole school, Sofia Garcia!** It is the money raised from this event that enables us to have additions to our class and curriculum like *TFK*, our "civilization feasts," and the visits from the Puppet Theatre and Insect Lab.

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are continuing our **civilization study of the Middle Ages**. There are so many fascinating aspects to life in Europe in the 10th Century A.D. - from castles, kings, and knights to monks in monasteries slowly and meticulously copying texts. The children will have their own "monastery" experience soon when they copy some pages from one of their own precious books - all in capital letters, as lower case and punctuation had yet to be invented. We will copy with only window light and candle light and at the same time hear Gregorian Chant from that period - the first music to be written down on paper. They will be "illuminating" their texts with their own designs, plus coloring some of the original designs from that period. This will transition to Guttenberg's invention of the printing press in 1450, and the monumental impact that had on civilization.

For Poetry, we've begun our next Spring poem, a more modern one, **Robert Frost's *The Pasture***. Besides beautiful words and images, there will also be a new type of art work to try. (Look forward to carefully fashioned little wooden rakes.)

In **Language** the Third Years will be finishing up their Adverb work and then moving toward the final chapters in their Montessori Grammar study. Their next step will be with **Pronouns**. Then by the end of the month we'll be ready for **Conjunctions**. The Second Years will be learning **Prepositions**. In **supplementary math work** and **Geometry**, the Thirds will continue working with fractions including an equivalent's project, and also doing a lot of exploring and measuring a variety of angles with their protractors.

We also have a special **writing and art project** this month - of which we cannot give details... (Doesn't that sound mysterious?)

Our **field trip for May** will be to the **Oakland Museum of California**. We'll visit their Natural History Hall and learn about how our state, so very large and diverse in topography, plants, and animals, has changed and evolved over the past several hundreds of years. It is appropriately entitled "Changing California."

Also it's time to be sure your calendars are marked for a very important musical date, **Friday, June 1st**. That's the date for the **Children's Chorus *Spring Concert***. The children have been practicing diligently and are getting quite excited about it. The theme this year is "Lullabies." It will be about 30 - 40 minutes in length, with refreshments afterwards.

Also to note on your upcoming calendar is the **3rd Year's final field trip** - a field trip for the whole family to the **Jelly Belly Factory in Fairfield**. The date will be **Saturday, June 2nd in the morning**. The **Third Year's Graduation ceremony** will be **Thursday, June 14th, at 5:30 p.m.** in the Social Hall. There will be a potluck dinner afterwards.

Sincerely,
Mary Anne and Toni

Calendar:

Friday, May 4th - observing Cinco de Mayo - a special free dress for all Hispanic Children; Sharing Day (theme: "Something You Have Made")

Friday, May 11th - Book Orders due (LAST ORDER FOR THE YEAR)

Thursday, May 17th - Spell-a-thon Fundraiser

Friday, May 25th - last day to turn in Spell-a-thon Pledge money

Monday, May 28th - Memorial Day; no school and no daycare

Tuesday, May 30th - field trip to the Oakland Museum, "Changing California"

Friday, June 1st - Children's Chorus *Spring Concert*, 1 p.m.

