

November Newsletter

Dear Parents,

-October Highlights-

Our **field trip to Joan's Pumpkin Farm** was a wonderful autumn outing. There is always so much to see and do there. The pumpkins are almost a sidelight. Thank you to the many parents who accompanied us on this trip.

We enjoyed meeting with all of the parents at **Parent Conferences** and sharing some of the work that your child has been doing and what our goals are for the upcoming months. Remember that any time you would like to come and visit for a morning and/or afternoon, you're more than welcome. It's one thing to hear about what your child does, and quite another to actually see it in action. The children are always so thrilled when mom or dad comes for a visit.

We had two very big study "events" this past month. In History, we traced the **beginnings of human history** in Africa, to the nomadic tribes crossing Asia, and then over the land bridge to North and South America. From there we learned of the change to an agrarian society in North America after the discovery of seeds by the Cavewomen...which now brings us to the beginnings of the Native American tribes, our next big unit of study. The children did Journals, using this newly learned information, to write about life in the caves, and also created art work to depict those first homes. To cap off this past study, we had an **"Early People Feast."** We sat, barefoot, silent except for hand gestures (the spoken word had not yet been developed), in our darkened "cave," and ate leaves (lettuce, basil, mint, parsley, chives), roots (carrots), nuts (walnuts), berries (blackberries), and dried meat (beef jerky). This has proved to be quite a memorable experience, as we have heard from the teachers out at recess that the new favorite activity has become playing Cave People! It is complete with meeting in a group, using only hand gestures, and searching for "food." Maria Montessori would be so very gratified.

Our other big cultural unit was learning about **fruits**. We looked (and sampled!) the different families of fruits and saw first-hand how and why they are categorized as they are. This was capped off with the Grand Fruit Salad Party. Thank you so much to everyone for sending the needed fruit for your child's "committee." They made a fabulously delicious mixture, and it was a pleasure to see virtually everyone asking "more please!" Our giant bowl was completely emptied by the time they went home. There have been quite a number of converts over these past few weeks, and we hope the experience will instill a long-lasting desire for fresh fruit at home. In conjunction with all the tasting, most all of the children have completed their very big Fruit Book project. As we're sure you saw, it took a lot of searching to find just the right photos to accompany

all the facts they had learned about the fruit family classifications. Oh goodness, the excitement when anyone found the rare blackberry or pineapple photo! What was especially gratifying to see was how, over these weeks, the children have become very excited about the fruit in their lunches. So many continue to come and show us what they have, and also refer to it by its botanical family name (we suspect this brings an even more exotic element to it!).

In Math, everyone has launched into **Geometry**, which is always one of the favorite areas of study. Lessons are about once a week or so and then there is an accompanying project to do - so look for that to be coming home every few weeks. We're also seeing excellent progress with so many children on the **timed tests**! Thank you for the steady work you're putting into it at home. It's only 3 minutes, but makes a huge difference when done on a daily basis.

Our **read-aloud books** this month were from a genre for "now you're older" - *scary stories*, complete with darkened room and read to them by candlelight. The children were introduced to some old classics like the *Baba Yaga* folktales from Russia and our own American *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, along with more modern tales like *The Widow's Broom* by Chris VanAllsburg. After hearing all these stories, we discussed as a group what the elements were that we encountered in the "scary story" (darkness, full moon, mystery, element of surprise, etc.). Also in a literary vein, we completed **our first poem** and accompanying art work, *Witches' Chant from Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, and went off to recite to the other classes on Halloween to add to the spirit of the day. They all had such great expression, as we're sure those of you who heard them at the party and/or at home would agree.

We also had a wonderful celebration of **Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights**. Besides having the room adorned with lights, we also enjoyed artifacts from India, Indian sweets, and making rangoli designs. All the Indian/Fijian/Afghani children looked so beautiful in their native dress.

Our **Panera Fundraiser** looked to be a big success! We achieved our goal of having 50+ flyers turned in that night, so we will receive the maximum amount available for our proceeds which is 20% of the amount Panera took in from all of our families' orders. We will receive that check in about a month, so we will let you know the amount as soon as we find out. **We thank you all so very, very much for the great enthusiasm you showed in your support of this event.** Everyone seemed to be having such an enjoyable time too. Even the Panera folks told us how impressed they were at the support for this fundraiser. Bravo to our MCH Family!!

To end the month we once again had a spectacular **Historical Halloween Parade!** Thank you for all the help and assistance you gave your child to "become" his or her historical person. It really takes on a feeling of epic drama to see them all lined up: queens, statesmen, inventors, literary figures, and humanitarians. We know that a lot of effort goes into planning and putting together the costumes, but we think you would all agree that seeing them as these inspirational figures makes it very worthwhile. We can assure you that they talked extensively among themselves about their "people" for days ahead of time. It was a great learning experience. We also enjoyed a very fun party afterwards. A special thank you to the parents who helped the children dress in their costumes, and to all the families who brought such yummy treats for the party. A very fun time!

-Upcoming Events-

The Third Years are becoming more adept with handling **money** and are now ready to begin making change. If there's not a long line behind you, it would be very good for your child to pay a cashier, count the change to see if it is correct, etc.

In **Language**, Second Years are finishing their work on **Root and Compound** words. It is very important for them to understand and be able to readily identify and use the term "root," particularly with spelling. ("What is the root word of the word 'baking'? And what is the rule you use when you add the suffix 'ing'?) Third Years, having finished their work on making singulars to plurals, are continuing work on the very challenging use of the **apostrophe for singular possessives**, and when do you use which: -s -'s ???

Poetry memorization this month will be *from The Song of Hiawatha* by **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**. With this poetic legend, written almost two centuries ago, we will be imagining ourselves with the Native American Ojibwa tribe of the Northeast, and the baby destined for greatness among his people.

For part of our **History** study, we have already begun discussing the various **tribes of Native Americans throughout North America** and how the life of each tribe was in large part determined by the climate and habitat of its specific area. We will also then learn about the first European settlements in North America at **Jamestown** and later the **Pilgrims at Plymouth Plantation**. Of course this is all leading up to our **Thanksgiving Feast and Celebration** done with Jo's class. Once again the 2nd and 3rd Years will be the Pilgrims, so don't be surprised if your child only responds to his or her chosen Pilgrim name the last few weeks of November.

We also are marking the important Mexican holiday, **Dia de los Muertos**, or Day of the Dead. It is a time to remember those loved ones who have passed away. We will read

some books about the customs of this day, and have a Dia de los Muertos "altar" with traditional decorations and marigolds. In the upcoming days, if they wish to, they may then write the name of a loved one in their family who has passed away and leave that slip of paper among the flowers.

As an enrichment to our Native American study, our **field trip** on Wednesday, November 14th, will be to the **deSaisset Museum at Santa Clara University** to learn about our local Native American tribe, **the Ohlone Indians**. We'll be able to see many of their artifacts and a re-creation of one of their tule reed shelters. We'll also be able to see an original adobe structure on the campus.

Many good wishes to you and your families for a warm and happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne and Toni

Calendar:

Thursday, Nov. 2nd - Celebrating Dia de los Muertos, or "Day of the Dead." This will continue into next week.

Thursday, Nov. 9th - Sharing Day - "something you are thankful for" (may be an object or a photo of something or someone he/she is thankful for);
Book Orders due

Friday, Nov. 10th - Veterans' Day - no school and no Day Care

Tuesday, Nov. 14th - **SEE'S CANDY MONEY DUE**

**A HUGE thank you for helping us with this important fundraiser
Field Trip to Santa Clara University to learn about Ohlone Indians**

Wednesday, Nov. 22nd Thanksgiving Feast and Celebration in the courtyard
Pilgrims wear plain colored clothes

Thurs/Fri, Nov. 23rd/24th - Thanksgiving Holidays; no school and no Day Care

Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.

-John W. Whitehead

