

November Newsletter

Dear Parents,

-October Highlights-

October brought everyone (teachers included) more into the rhythm of these days of learning from home. The children seem much more comfortable with how to go about doing their assignments, getting them to me, checking later to see what is complete, what needs to be corrected, and what still needs to be done. I also believe this daily time in Google Classroom is giving all of them the experience of the great importance of the *written word*, especially when there are no verbal words to listen to in order to communicate. And I hope this realization will become "written" within them for the years to come.

Virtual though it was, I enjoyed meeting with all of you at **Parent Conferences** and being able to talk to you about how things are going with your child, as seen from my side, and most especially to learn how it is from your side. Since you are now the ones physically present to most all that they are doing and learning, it offers me a view and understanding I don't usually get. I can only be in awe of how much time and effort you are called upon to give, along with all the other demands of your jobs, household, and family. Please know that it is greatly appreciated.

There are 2 aspects of their assignments that I would like to talk to you about. One is "**Pesky Words**." A reminder - whenever you see my "PW" under a word in their Journals, that is what it means. But also, if you would please be sure that they (or you) have then written that word in the back of their Journals. In that way, they can independently take care of the spelling any time it comes up, and/or hopefully go to it on their own while they are writing. The second thing is about the **Timed Test**. I strongly recommend having them do a timed test every day. I've given copies of the tests to you, so if you could copy a supply of them, it would be a good help. I also recommend rotating the different tests because I have found in the past they can tend to memorize the first line or more, and then get a very fast time which doesn't accurately show a mastery of the facts. (yes, have seen this more than a few times...!) In fact, I think I will make a 3rd version of the addition test and send a copy of it to you to join the others.

We did have one October activity which was "special," and that was listening to stories read aloud. These stories were from a genre for "now you're older" - **scary stories**, complete with my 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. Though I got numerous requests at the end of that week for

"more scary stories," I turned it to them to write their own. We talked about what elements did we find in all the stories they heard? - i.e. full moon, black cat, ghost, darkness, wind, something unexpected happening, etc. I also told them about what is *not* in a true "scary story" - blood, anything gross, etc. From that point, they set out on their own to create their stories, and with wonderful results. They learned about rough drafts, adding new ideas, final drafts, how a story should look on a page. Then came the "art" element of creating a cover that would introduce their story. They have been so excited about this and have really done a wonderful job. In the week ahead we will now share our stories together. This has been their first "Big" project for the year, taking many hours, days, thought, and effort. Very gratifying to see how they have taken to it!

Our October ended with a most enjoyable time together, courtesy of Zoom, for those who wished (and it was about half the class) to show and share with us great **Historical people**. Thank you to all who helped their child "become" someone else. They shared with the rest of us something about who they were and what they had done. Greatness is always something to inspire, even done virtually!

-Upcoming Events-

As you undoubtedly saw in the bags of new materials you received at the recent Drive-Through, new lessons are ahead in several areas. Second Yrs will be learning about **telling time** and 3rds will be learning about **money**. During the several weeks that this is going on, these will be done in place of their regular DMS papers, but it still will be a daily sheet of some sort. Also in that bag were packets for the next Language lessons. 2nds will be working with the **Noun Family - Article, Adjective, and Noun**. They will then start marking those words in their spelling sentences with the corresponding grammar symbols (and finally seeing the reason for those 2 skipped lines!) Here you can refer to the sheet I gave you a while back called "Grammar 2.0" to know more of what this is about. 3rd Yrs, having finished their work with making singulars into plurals, have now been working on the very challenging use of the **apostrophe for singular possessives**, and when do you use which: -s -'s ?? for example, "many dogs" and the "dog's tail." Upon completion of that unit, they will move into another use of an apostrophe, that being words that are contractions: "is not" becoming "isn't". These units for 2nds and 3rds will most likely go into December. In addition, 3rd Yrs will also begin learning the individual **cursive letters**.

In October we spent time looking at the Night Sky, never wasted time in my opinion. Now we will add something new to look at just before the Night Sky takes over. It is the sunset. We will do this with the **memorization of our first poem** for the year, **november sunset, by the poet e.e. cummings**. And that is not a typo you just saw. e.e.

cummings did not believe in capital letters - and the children will find out (probably to their delight ;) that if you are a poet, you can write any way you want! It's a wonderful short modern poem. We'll practice together during Morning Circle to help everyone along. In the end, there will be a "final draft" and art work too. After creating a Scary Story, I believe they'll be more than ready for this.

One final note - I thank you so much for assisting your child in last week's Practical Life in the Kitchen assignment. The photos of "during" and "completion" were completely wonderful!! The children were so excited about this and told me in messages and in Morning Circle "Can we do it again?!" So, do it we will (just to let you know in advance). We will do "Practical Life - Cleaning" one week and then "Practical Life in the Kitchen" the next. Thank you for your support of this. It's so important in Montessori that children realize what they can do on their own, taking small steps to be sure, but still going steadily ahead. To quote Maria Montessori, "The child's inner desire is 'Help me to do it by myself.'"

With that, I wish you a very warm and enjoyable Thanksgiving with the small groups we all will have - but how thankful we are for them!

With gratefulness for all of you,

Mary Anne

Calendar:

Wednesday, Nov. 11th - Veterans' Day - no school

Friday, Nov. 13th - Sharing Day - "something you are thankful for" (may be an object or photo of something or someone he/she is thankful for) - To be shared during Morning Circle

Thurs./Fri., Nov. 26th/27th - Thanksgiving Holidays; no school

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me to do it by myself.'”

- Maria Montessori