

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents,

We welcome all of you to the new school year. We've had our orientation to the room and class procedures, have practiced "being-back-in-school," and have spent time getting to know each other during the past week. Now we're ready to begin in earnest this week. The children will be getting back into the swing of things; "rediscovering" some previously learned facts and concepts as quickly as they can and then, after demonstrating that, moving on. We begin this month rather slowly so that we can ensure a good transition to the new grade level. Each successive year of Montessori Elementary is *distinctly* more challenging and involves a greater level of responsibility, focus, and involvement in academic work. Therefore, it is a good time in September to remember the adage "Well begun is half done." We will be adding major assignments every week in **Math, Writing, and Language** until we arrive at the full schedule. **Reading Groups** will be underway. **Spelling Tests** will start in a few weeks. Weekly **Geometry** lessons will start the beginning of October. **Grammar** lessons will return too. There are many exciting areas of learning to be covered in the year ahead.

The **Cultural subjects** are also one of those "exciting areas." September is a time for becoming reacquainted with the 4 areas of the Montessori Cultural curriculum: Botany, Zoology, Geography, and new for the Second Years, History. Cultural lessons are given to the class as a group and projects are shown that can be made individually. Through the Cultural Subjects the children truly connect to the world around them and, thus, find themselves as an integral part of that world. And by adding History at this level, we are not limited to only the immediate world, but experience in unique and memorable ways the world of people and places from times past.

For the most part September is a time of quickly reviewing the basic areas previously learned in the cultural subjects, but with a unique twist. In each one the children will see how these subjects are approached at this new level. In **Zoology** and **Botany** for instance, we will review the Vertebrate and Invertebrate Phyla and the Parts of the Plant which they have studied previously. The difference now is

how we go about our projects in these areas. Now the emphasis is on working with the subject matter more as "research reports" and utilizing books from our large library. It will also include new terminology and definitions of the parts of the animal and plant that are more detailed. "Books" will be put together composed of several paragraphs along with research for new information. Picture pages are compiled too. The end product truly fits the description "Project."

In **Geography** we will be reviewing maps and will start research in this area also. At this grade level for instance, "making a map" means, besides naming the countries and capitals, looking for particular islands, straits, peninsulas, etc. on the various continents. They will learn to use an atlas for this research.

In **History** we have a brief review of calendars, and then move on to a very exciting part of the Montessori History curriculum, the study of civilizations. This month we will begin with the early cave people and the nomadic tribes that crossed Asia from Africa and then went across the Land Bridge to North America, finally becoming agrarian people. We will also have a daily reading of Christopher Columbus' Journal from his journey across the Atlantic and trace his progress on a map each day until he reaches Santo Domingo in the Caribbean Sea on Oct. 12th. We have already begun more "recent" history by learning about the California Gold Rush and our territory becoming a state after that big event. This will be capped by a **celebration of California Admission Day on Friday, September 7th**. The children should also be on the look-out for California state flags as you drive around town.

To hear more about the Montessori curriculum for the Second & Third Years, be sure to attend our **Parent Back-to-School Night on Wednesday, September 5th from 7 to 8:30 p.m.** Please note that we do not offer Child Care. So please make any necessary arrangements, as this is a *Parents Only* event. This is the only required meeting for elementary parents for the school year. We look forward to seeing you there and sharing with you what lies ahead for your child in the next ten months.

The next important date on your calendar is **Monday, September 10th**, as this is the date for **Picture Day** here at the Harder site. School sweaters should

be worn on that day, and girls should also wear their uniform jumpers. If you have ordered your sweater but it has not yet arrived, we can always share a sweater for the photo.

With regards to **uniforms**, our expectations are that the children come to school each day in clean, properly fitting uniforms - all pieces purchased from Lands' End. (Yes, we can tell the difference.) There are some new choices which we've added for this year too. Lands' End also offers standard sweatshirts (with or without hoods) and a hooded sweatshirt jacket. These may be more comfortable for your child than the uniform sweater, especially for those who want to wear something more than just a shirt during class time. By having the children wear the Lands' End sweatshirts or hoodies with a logo, it helps us maintain the "uniform look" while in the classroom. When ordering, please request "Classic Navy" for the color. Check your Lands' End school catalog for details. Lands' End also offers a very nice **jacket, outdoor vest, and pullover**. They are Polartec, so they are soft, warm, and easy for movement. If you need to buy a jacket or vest for your child for the upcoming cold weather season, please consider one of these. Also remember **standard, soft white or black athletic shoes only (no thick, chunky soles, lights, or fancy logos), EVERY day**, and even girls with their jumpers (no maryjanes, please). This is for the children's safety as they run and play outside. Thank you so much for helping us out with all these uniform issues. You can't imagine what a difference it makes in the class when everyone is following the same guidelines. Your efforts are very, very much appreciated.

******PLEASE NOTE: We still have many used uniforms (all parts) still in very good condition. Let us know if you would like to look at them.***

For those of you new to our class, our **bathroom procedure** is as follows: the morning Day Care children go to the restroom about 8:35. If your child arrives at 8:45, please have him or her go to the bathroom just before you leave home. The children will then also have a chance to use the restrooms mid-morning. Next opportunity for going to the restroom is when we go as a group to wash for lunch. The children then go again at the end of lunch recess. We have found this procedure eliminates a lot of back and forth to the restrooms, and ensures that everyone is supervised when they go there. We also insist that even if they don't

need to use the restroom, they still go there to wash their hands. We've been doing a lot of hand-washing practice over the past several days. (Ask your child about "Water, Soap, Bubble Machine"!) We have hand sanitizer available in class too. If you wish, you can send a small personal bottle of hand sanitizer for your child to keep in his or her desk. And while sort of on the subject of water...it's fine for the children to bring a water bottle to school to keep at their desk, which seems to prompt them to drink more frequently and stay hydrated.

A word about Communications to 2nd Year parents. Unlike the Mail Folder method you are used to in Kindergarten and 1st Yr., we will hand any letters, notes, etc. from us directly to you at 2:45 cars. If your child is in Day Care, we will put all notes in your "pocket" of the Day Care binder directly behind your sign-out sheet; so please check there each day. It seems we typically send out some kind of communication at least once a week. We also will always have a copy of our current newsletter at the front of the binder for reference. *The monthly newsletters along with its calendar can also be found on our website haywardmontessori.org on the "Parents" tab. There you can also find copies of the calendars for Holidays and Events for the Year and all the Theme Dress information and dates.*

A great deal lies ahead of us. As always, we view this as a partnership with you in the education and development of your child, and we will be keeping you posted every step of the way. The children have been diligent and delightful these first few days and we're happy to be with them.

Sincerely,

Mary Anne Ryle and Toni Tomacci

Life affords no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than the raising of the next generation.

-C. Everett Koop

CALENDAR:

Wednesday, Sept. 5th - Back-to-School Night, 7 - 8:30, Parents only

Friday, Sept. 7th - observing California Admission Day: first "THEME DRESS DAY" of the year. Room 5 children may wear a shirt that says "CALIFORNIA" on it, and/or blue jeans (invented by Levi Straus during the California Gold Rush), plaid shirt or one that says "49ers" on it; otherwise, wear uniforms;
Sharing Day (theme: "something you got on a trip this summer");
Book Orders due

Monday, Sept. 10th - School Picture Day; uniforms, school sweaters; girls must wear uniform jumpers;
observing National Teddy Bear Day - bring a teddy bear to school

Friday, Sept. 14th - Children's Chorus begins

Friday, Sept. 21st - observing First Day of Autumn, THEME DRESS DAY
Elementary children, if they wish, may wear clothes that are mostly brown, orange, yellow, &/or red; otherwise, uniforms

Wednesday, Sept. 26th - celebration of Johnny Appleseed's birthday with apple varieties tasting