

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents,

December Highlights:

December was a busy month, as they always are. The children were very excited to bring home their December sewing project. It took lots of effort - from the start of sewing, then decorating, and even sawing (!) and sanding their own dowel to hang their creations, and then finally creating their own wrapping paper. They were so proud, and by the end, astonished by what they had accomplished every step of the way. Bravo to all of them! I'm sure this will be a long-cherished keepsake for your family.

Our read-aloud books for this month were the old English story of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, and also the wonderful tale of *The Nutcracker*. In addition to this story, we listened to Tchaikovsky's music from the ballet of *The Nutcracker* (often while we were working, which everyone wanted more of!).

January Events:

We trust that everyone enjoyed their Winter Break and all are looking forward to our days and weeks ahead. There will be a number of new lessons and special projects. In Language/Writing, though we will still have some of our regular Journal assignments, we will also start a big writing project. This will be each child's **Personal Timeline**. It is a tradition in Montessori Elementary for the children to annually make a Personal Timeline of their lives, with each "page" about one event for each year of their lives. It is a wonderful keepsake to have - to see how your child perceives his or her life throughout the years. More details about this project will be given to you separately from this newsletter.

Second and Third Years will also begin **grammar lessons** this 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** starting later in the month, the Second Years will begin working with **telling time**. The Third Years will begin working 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**."

Something new in Math starting this month is **Math Stories**. There will be sheets with a half dozen or so math "word problems" which will be done each Friday in place of Math Facts. The math that is needed to find the correct answer is always quite simple addition or subtraction. The challenge though is what exactly are the numbers needed and how should they be used, especially when it is mainly words you are reading? And therein lies the challenge, and the fun, of word problems!

In the **Cultural subjects**, we will begin a very special part of Montessori education. It is called The Timeline of Life, and is about how the Earth was formed, (a number of terrific "books" were made in Dec. about how the continents formed and changed!) and then the evolution of life on the Earth from the very beginning to the present time. This subject is obviously a large one - from microscopic organisms to simple animals and plants, to dinosaurs, and eventually to humans which is where we began in September with our study of Early People. This study of Evolution for the remainder of the year will thus bring us full circle.

We will also be discussing **the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** and the Civil Rights Movement in our country. I will be reading several excellent books about Dr. King and what he taught and accomplished with the hope that all people could live in peace with dignity and respect.

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 me and I will be happy to set up an appointment time for you.

Happy New Year to you all!
Mary Anne and Amira

CALENDAR:

Friday, Jan. 6th - Sharing Day - The children may bring something interesting they received as a gift

Monday, Jan. 16th - Dr. Martin Luther King Day - no regular classes

Sunday, Jan. 22nd - Asian Lunar New Year begins, 4721 Year of the Rabbit

We will be preparing for the grand finale - The Dragon Parade!

Feb. 3rd. All parents invited!

Tuesday, Jan. 31st - End of the First Semester; Report Cards go home