

November Newsletter

Dear Parents,

-October Highlights-

We enjoyed meeting with all of you 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.

Near the end of October, we had a very enjoyable celebration of **Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights**. Throughout that week, our room had some special decorations and many lights (of course!) added, and the children created some other lovely decorations for the room - intricate, symmetrical designs on paper of the *diya* lamps. A very big thanks also to Gursaanj Gill and Ravtej Parmar who created the very beautiful, traditional Rongoli on the steps of our door which we're sure both children and parents enjoyed seeing each day.

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.).

The "grand finale" of October was of course our annual and beloved **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: kings, 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. A special thank you to the parents who helped the children get dressed in their costumes, and to all the families who put together goody bags of treats to share. A very fun and memorable day indeed - so much so that the class decided unanimously to continue "being" their historical person by writing their "names" on their assignments and calling everyone only by their historical name. So much fun that one day turned into the whole week!

Academically, the 2nds and 3rds completed their very big History study this past month. We traced the **beginnings of human history** which occurred in Africa. From there we followed the nomadic tribes crossing into and across Asia, and then over the Land Bridge to North and South America. We then learned of the change to an agrarian society in North America after the discovery of seeds by the Cavewomen. To complete this journey, we learned about what Maria Montessori called "The 11 Fundamental Needs" (i.e. Food, Clothing, Shelter, Health, and also needs such as Communication, and Social Acceptance). We'll be experiencing one final "act" in this story when we have an Early People Feast.

-Upcoming Events-

November will bring another cultural celebration. For our first week we will be 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. If they wish to, the children may write the name of a loved one in their family who has passed away and leave that slip of paper among the flowers.

In **Language, 2nd 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'?). **3rd Yrs**, having completed their work making singulars into plurals, are now finishing up work on the very challenging use of the **apostrophe for singular possessives**. So when do you use which: -s -'s ? The next step in the sequence? **using an apostrophe to make a contraction**.

We will also be taking the next step in our **History** study. For this, the 1st graders will join the 2nds and 3rds, and together we will begin by looking at one of the Native indigenous tribes, the Wampanoags, who had been living in the northeastern part of North America for about ten thousand years. We will then see how in the early 1600's the first Europeans came to live on this continent. These people were from England and came here to begin a village on the east coast of what is now the U.S. state of Virginia, naming their village Jamestown. Extending from that is how the Puritans, or "Pilgrims," also from England, later started a separate village farther north, finding not only a new home but also these new and helpful Wampanoag people. It is there that our tradition of "Thanksgiving" began. There will be special art projects for this study too. In preparation for Thanksgiving, the 1st graders will be making Wampanoag headbands and "earning their feathers" for their bands by doing good and helpful deeds at home. The 2nds and 3rds will be making Pilgrim hats and collars.

A few last notes - Because we've already had some chilly days and more are to come, we still need to leave the windows open a little for good air circulation. Because of this, the children may want to have some outerwear on to keep themselves comfortable. We do however, still want to maintain a "uniform" look to our classroom. Jackets for *outdoors* may be any kind of jacket. However, for classroom time, we still require that all sweatshirts, sweaters, vests, jackets, etc. be from Lands' End only, and have a MCH logo on them. So, if you do not have any of these from Lands' End, Kavita has quite a lot in her school uniforms "store." They are used, but we have kept only the ones that are still in very good condition, and offering them at a very reasonable price. Just let her know when you'd like to look at them.

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

Mary Anne, Toni, and Amira

Calendar:

Wed, Nov. 2nd - Celebrating Dia de los Muertos, or "Day of the Dead."

This will continue for a week.

Fri, Nov. 4th - Sharing Day, a picture of someone or something you are thankful for

Tue, Nov. 8th - "Election Day" at MCH, free dress if you wear red, white, and blue,
or something with a flag on it

Total Lunar Eclipse (maximum at 2:59 am)

Fri, Nov. 11th - Veterans' Day - no school and no Day Care

Thu/Fri, Nov. 24th/25th - Thanksgiving Holidays; no school and no Day Care.

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

-John Whitehead