

## October Newsletter 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Years

Dear Parents,

### -September Highlights-

We have successfully made it through our first month of the school year! September was indeed a time of getting used to being in the classroom, working in both large and small groups, having lessons and assignments to do, working on them independently, and spending time with friends. With regards to the latter, these years of 6-9 are such an important time to begin learning and developing social skills outside of the family circle. And the children are so happy doing this! Most probably they're not understanding why it feels so good, but simply knowing that it does is enough. So, a lot was happening throughout the month on many levels.

Academically, everyone began daily work in **Math** using the Montessori materials. Much of it was for review, and I did find that it was not unusual for students to have forgotten a lot of what was learned previously. But most everyone is now moving on to new areas and/or using more abstract materials for math to move along further in their level of understanding and ability to do the calculations. When a student is able to do 4-place addition at an abstract level (using no materials) and completely understand what he or she is doing, then they will move on to 4-place subtraction, which most of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Years have accomplished this past month. Everyone has also been practicing math facts. Fridays are our Timed Test days. Please be sure to look for your child's test sheet on Mondays and see how the progress is going. If it seems that not much is developing, I would strongly recommend working with your child with flash cards for 5-10 minutes each evening. Having them say the problems out loud will greatly help the memorization process.

In **Writing**, the 2nds are beginning the work of a true paragraph with a topic sentence, some supporting details, and an ending sentence. Thirds are further refining that ability with more descriptive language and multiple paragraphs. I will be sending your child's Journal home mid-month so that you may have a look at how the writing has been going, and you will then have a better idea of his or her "starting point" for the year. After having read your child's Journal, if you have any questions about writing please bring them to the conference. In **Language**, the 2nds are working on compound and root words - work which will further support writing skills, and 3rds have been working on singulars and the various plural spellings. **Spelling Tests** will begin next week. It's important to establish a routine for homework and test preparation. There will be a letter coming home next week with the details about how Spelling lessons and tests go. It will be a weekly homework assignment.

Also as part of homework, each child will also have a **Math Homework book** which will come home this week. Briefly, each child will do 1 page of the workbook each day. We

do rely on parents to correct the pages, which helps us out a great deal. The book should be turned in every Friday. I will look them over to see how it is going and return it to the students on Monday. There will be a more detailed letter for you coming home with the book with instructions of how it should be done.

We have started several **Cultural** projects during the past month too. In **History** we discussed and read books about the California Gold Rush - and had a little celebration for Admission Day. Hopefully your child was busy for a number of days searching for California flags as you drove around town. In **Geography**, they learned how to make a world map showing all the continents and oceans, and also how to do research reports of a country by using our Montessori puzzle maps along with an atlas to find the country's name and capital, and draw what its flag looks like. In **Botany**, we looked at different plant roots. We also had an "apple tasting" of a number of varieties of apples in conjunction with learning about Johnny Appleseed and celebrating his birthday last week. In **Zoology** we looked at some of the various animals in the 7 major invertebrate families. Sorting invertebrate phyla has been particularly popular. Lots of projects are connected with all the various cultural lessons, so look for them coming home.

Our afternoon "read-aloud" book was the hilarious *George's Marvelous Medicine* by **Roald Dahl** which everyone enjoyed very much. I find this book a natural for getting children's attention in a large group. This helps greatly in getting those who are rather reluctant in this area to have more of an experience of what "giving your full attention at circle time" is all about... ;)

#### -Upcoming Events-

In **Geography** we will look at an unusual view of the earth: the earth as it appeared 300 million years ago when all the continents were joined to form the supercontinent Pangaea. We will also learn about the various types of land and water forms to be found on our earth. In **History** we will be focusing on the cave dwelling Early People and their nomadic life. We begin with their origins in Africa, and later moving into Europe and Asia. We will then cross with them over a land bridge bringing them to North America to become the first humans to live on our continent. In **Zoology** we will look at the 5 major phyla of vertebrates and learn how to do research reports about them. In **Botany** we will focus on the various main parts that make up plants, looking particularly at the pumpkin.

For **read-aloud books** this month we will change to a very different genre: "scary stories." At this age they now feel quite ready for and enjoy the fun of them (i.e. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*). **Journal and Language** work will continue as it has been.

Later in the month **Geometry** lessons will begin for both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years. The children will be given an assignment after the lesson (usually 2 lessons per month) and have one week to complete it (in class). Then they will bring it home, so be on the look-out for it.

Geometry is always one of the children's favorite subjects, and we're sure they will be anxious to share their projects and knowledge with you throughout the year. It is so beneficial to have your child explain his or her work to you, no matter what the subject.

**Parent Conferences** will be held on **Thursday and Friday, October 21st and 22<sup>nd</sup>**. I will be sending home a sign-up sheet next week. Conferences are 20 minutes each. It is a time set aside to discuss with you how your child is adjusting to his or her new grade level. I will also be showing you some of your child's work.

Last but certainly not least is Halloween! It will be time for our annual Montessori Elementary **Historical Halloween Parade**. It will be very fun to be able to once again have our parade! It is a wonderful experience for the children, as they become someone whose life was or is an inspiration to all. It is an event the children long remember. Third Years will also be writing a short report on their historical character. More details about this event will be coming home soon.

One last note about **Friday COVID testing days**. Things went well last Friday, but we've thought of a few more ways to make it go even more smoothly. We will have the nurses set up their testing station at 8:30 at the lunch tables just outside our room. If you normally come at 8:45, we would ask you to please come 5 or 10 minutes earlier on Fridays so that the testing can be completed by 8:45 and thereby not take up too much of our morning class time. We'll see how this works and let you know if we make further changes. Thank you so much for being a part of this important work.

Much to look forward to in the coming weeks!

Best Regards,  
Mary Anne and Amira

### Calendar:

Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup> - Math Homework books go home

Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup> - Sharing Day - "a favorite book"

Monday, October 11<sup>th</sup> - Spelling Lessons/Homework begins

Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> - Theme Dress day! Golden State Warriors begin their new season today. Anyone with a Warriors shirt or jersey may wear it today instead of their uniform. Go Warriors!

Thursday & Friday, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> - Parent Conferences; no regular classes or daycare

Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup> - Historical Halloween Parade - 1:30 at the central lawn area. Parents welcome to attend.