



## VMS Weekly News - February 10, 2017

*"Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school."  
~ Albert Einstein*

### You're invited....

Irene and Nora would like to extend an invitation to any parent interested in observing in the Elementary classroom. Anyone interested in the VMS classroom is welcome to email [nora@vineyardmontessori.com](mailto:nora@vineyardmontessori.com) and schedule a time to observe in the classroom.



### Save the Date for Big Night Out

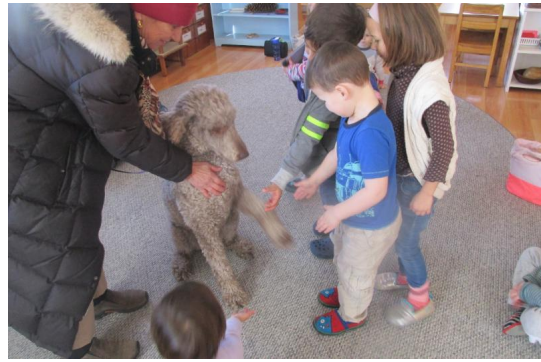
Our **"Big Night Out"** is coming up in the spring. Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 6th at the Harborview Hotel in Edgartown. Many of you are asking, "How can I help?" You received an envelope with all the information necessary to get sponsors and donation items.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. The BNO team is working together on creating an event you won't want to miss!

### Primary 1 Classroom

*- Miss Ty, Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca*

One of the highlights of this week was a visit from Monty! Mylarge, smoky-brown Standard Poodle came to visit for a few hours. He was my "show and tell"! I talked about the care of animals and what we humans need to do to help our pets. "What do we need to do in order to keep our dogs healthy?" I asked. One of the first responses was, "Exercise!" I guess that was because of all my talk of walking Monty. Then there was talk about the food, freshwater, grooming and going to the veterinarian.



The children have heard many stories about Monty and me as we walk in the woods each day, so he was welcomed as an old friend. I was going to put him in my car while I waited for my lunch break to bring him back to my house, but the children were so good, and he was so mellow, that I barricaded a corner of the class by Blossom's cage, and he just slept there. Many children came to visit and watch him sleep.

I have introduced table washing. There is a wonderful, graceful Montessori lesson in this, with a prescribed set of materials and actions. It is one of my favorite lessons and one that often captures the imagination of the students. I love to watch them carefully scrub the table in a circular motion and then glide a sponge vertically down the suds to begin rinsing. There's a lot of squeezing, drying and folding of towels as the children finish the lesson. I often think I hear a small sigh of satisfaction as they return the bucket to the shelf.

I am sure you have heard excited talk about the visits from the Tisbury Police and the EMTs of last week. This is a wonderful, informative series of Fridays that my class gets to participate in. Thank you to Miss Chris for arranging it!



## Primary 2 Classroom

- Miss Chris and Miss  
Holly

*"When dealing with children,  
there is greater need for  
observing than of questioning."  
- Maria Montessori*



Observation is one of the Montessori teacher's greatest tools, and one of the keystones of this approach to education. It has many levels of application. It can become a life-long tool to help us evolve, as parents, as teachers and as human beings. A teacher observes the class as a whole many times throughout the day, in a scanning, all-inclusive way. She watches for the flow of traffic, groupings of children, places where movement may be inhibited and difficult interactions among children. A teacher also carefully observes the work of individual children, asking herself, what material is he using, how is he using it, is he concentrating, should a teacher or assistant step in to help, is the child ready for the next step and challenge? He or she uses this observed information to plan lessons, to bring out new materials or to vary an existing activity, and to approach the child in a fresh way at a different time. Observation can be inspiring and energizing. Often times, parents may impose themselves on a child who is trying to complete an activity because they perceive the child as needing help. Actually, the child's development can be hindered by offering unnecessary help. The next time you feel your child might be struggling to complete a task, take a step back and just observe. You may be surprised that your child is capable of accomplishing tasks all by himself.

Due to the blizzard and a two hour delay, Officer Max, along with his firefighter friends, was unable to come to school on Friday. We are looking forward to his return next week.

The children were able to enjoy some indoor snow fun, exploring with snow, color, natural items and different tools to create some beautiful snow sculptures. The children discovered some observations as to how fast the snow melts and what happens when you mix two and three colors together. It was a fun way to spend the morning!





## Elementary Classroom - Miss Irene and Miss Nora

Over the past couple of weeks, we have welcomed the kindergarten students to visit the elementary program and experience some happenings in the class. Last Friday, they joined us for "show and tell" presentations, and this week, some of them joined an impressionistic lesson outdoors called, The Long Black Strip. As a long strip of black ribbon is rolled out, a story is told about what has been taking place during the life of the Earth as it was forming.



The story goes that the idea of the black timeline came to Maria Montessori when she was residing in India. She had recently had a conversation with a child who had told her that there was nothing that he could learn from someone in the West, as India had the oldest real civilization in the world. Later, she observed workers in the heat and dust of Madras laying black cables in the ground.

From these two things was born the idea of the Long Black Strip – 300 meters of black cloth that represented three billion years of our universe's history. The last few centimeters were colored white to represent the time that humans have lived on Earth. Today, we have reduced the 300 meters to 30 meters, and we have replaced the white strip with a red one. Though the timeline does not precisely represent the current accepted date of 4.5 billion years, it is an attempt to create an impression of the minuscule time that humans have made Earth their home. The Long Black Strip is a compelling lesson in humility.

The movie, *A Plastic Ocean*, had a huge impact on the students and inspired them to begin a project that will be unveiled at the Big Night Out! We are collecting plastic container tops of all sorts of shapes and sizes. Please have your children save them and bring them into our class.

Elementary I students were creative with their floor space and managed to lay out the timeline of Presidents with information cards, the nine's chain to learn the multiples of nine and the Imaginary Island all at once!

In last week's newsletter, we mentioned that in the Elementary I, it is common practice for children to have little work brought home. This may leave you bewildered about the students' progress. [Click here to read a great article](#) about how Montessori schools differ from public schools with communication and

homework. Feel free to set up an appointment if you would like to learn about a particular manipulative and how it benefits your child.



## Late Day

### - Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

Our weather pattern continues to have its ups and downs. Students have adjusted and have become increasingly skillful and responsible for their own outerwear. Afternoon and Late Day students have been practicing "sewing" with curly ribbon and heart shapes. They are proud of their finished product; however, the process is also an opportunity to improve fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

## Recommended Reading

*"Montessori Builds Innovators"* by Andrew McAfee

*"Why Small Schools Work: Good Things Come in Small Packages"* by Tim Seldin

*"Choosing Montessori for Kindergarten"* by Colleen, *"Children First, Always."*

*"Develop Leaders the Montessori Way"* by Ambiga Dhiraj

## Book Corner for Parents

*"Last Child in the Woods": Saving our children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* by Richard Louv

*"Montessori Madness!": A parent to parent argument for Montessori education* by Trevor Eissler

*"Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius"* by Angeline Stoll Lillard

## Book Corner for Children

## Vineyard Montessori School

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