Annual Truckin’ MV

Thank you VMS families!

We couldn’t have pulled off such a successful event without participation from you. Thank you to our subcommittee members, volunteers, attendees and everyone who helped spread the word about the return of our wonderful event.

Thank you, thank you!

◊ Banking Day next week will be held on Tuesday, November 24th

◊ Wednesday, November 25th — Friday, November 27th VMS is closed in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

◊ Please take a couple moments to fill out the survey which was emailed to you through Survey Monkey. The Survey closes on November 24th at midnight.

INFORMATION

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Thank you, thank you!
The Montessori primary environment magnetically draws young children to the area known as Practical Life, but nothing makes this area come alive more than the introduction of food preparation activities. Food preparation is the logical culmination of the Practical Life curriculum, activities the child sees in the home and in everyday life. Through movement such as slicing and chopping, stirring and mixing, peeling and juicing real foods, the hand begins the work of concentrating. The children have been enjoying the food preparation lessons that I put out this week. Apple slicing and walnut cracking are the first of many different types of food activities that the children will have the opportunity to use this year.

Dance class has been a wonderful way for the children to use their imagination and creativity. By creating shapes with their bodies to the direction of their teacher, Miss Jesse, the children are trying to imagine sharp shapes, soft shapes, high and low shapes and then make their bodies look like the pictures in their mind. The children move their bodies to the rhythm of the music, pretending to be the wind or waves in the ocean.

A big thanks goes out to the Laird family (Ava and Elise), for volunteering to take care of Blossom the Guinea Pig over the Thanksgiving holiday. Her cage will be all clean, and she will leave here with a water bottle, pellets, and a bag of hay. The Lairds will supply her with greens and apples and Ava and Elise will pay very close attention to our sweet little pet. Thank you again!

This week we carved up the beautiful pumpkin that has been gracing one of the tables since mid-October. Under Ms. Rebecca’s watchful eye, the children scooped out the slimy seeds, washed them, and spread them on paper towels to dry. Then, after Rebecca had sliced the pumpkin meat, some of the children tackled the daunting task of peeling each piece to get it ready to boil. The next day there was the smell of pumpkin seeds roasting while the children pureed the boiled pumpkin and measured ingredients into a fine batter. This batter became delicious pumpkin muffins, and everyone happily ate them before going outside for recess!

There have been a few missing objects from around the classroom and I would love for you to keep a lookout for them at home. There are several beautiful, sparkly flat glass beads (that are supposed to be in the bean tub) that may have made their way into a pocket or a backpack. Even more distressing is the disappearance of one of the tiny puzzle pieces from our North America map! This is very hard to replace, and all the children seem to be genuinely unhappy about this. Collecting “precious objects” is common in this age group, and if you find any little “things” among your child’s belongings, or in the bottom of the washer, please know that we would welcome them back!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving! Two songs we are singing about Thanksgiving are: “There’s a Big, Fat Turkey” and “Over the River and Through the Woods.” I am truly thankful for all your children and look forward every day to spending time with each one of them.
Late Day with Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina

We have enjoyed new activities on the playground and in the classroom this week. During Art Class, students were able to use the potter's wheel to embellish their pinch pots. Children are enjoying the process of working with clay and their skills and comfort level are improving.

Our outdoor play this week included raking, using wheel barrels and tires, which have encouraged a great deal of collaborative work. Children are developing strength, balance, co-ordination and teamwork abilities.

We had an opportunity to read the following books this week:

- Thanks for Thanksgiving
- Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks
- Soup for Supper
- When I'm Sleepy
- The Lion and the Mouse

Thoughtful discussions about thankfulness have sprung from the literature we have been reading. Through drawing the children have expressed their understanding when asked to draw what they are thankful for. Their work will be displayed in store front windows in Vineyard Haven beginning next week. Please watch for a display of their work.

Elementary with Miss Irene and Miss Cristina

The Elementary students are figuring out that blocking a play is much more work than anticipated! Our play is approximately 40 minutes long, which is a little longer than previous years, and it requires more physical acting on stage. There are only a few props involved therefore students have to mime actions while others are speaking. Joyce does an excellent job working with the students and implementing some of their ideas.

On Thursday I presented an impressionistic lesson to the group using the Biosphere Nesting Box. The lesson began by explaining the large box on the floor with the Milky Way etched onto the front. Slowly the largest box is removed as I briefly talked about our solar system inside the Milky Way and revealed another box with a picture of our galaxy. I continued to remove boxes and stack them as I gave information on biospheres, biomes, ecosystems, population (of plant and animal), individual organs & tissues, cells, and finally the last box with a picture of an atom on it. This lesson is meant to give an overview of new scientific vocabulary and to pique interest in the expansive and minuscule life around and inside us. I asked students which shelf the lesson should go on and their responses were geography, history and science. They were absolutely right but we decided to put it on our science shelf because of the follow up work. Their follow up work for this lesson includes a set of biome research cards which come in three levels of difficulty for finding information on plants and animals from different biomes around the world. You will see nesting boxes and dolls used in the Montessori curriculum starting at a very young age. Primary students use them to learn graduation of size. Later, nesting Matryoshka dolls are used to teach the concept of advanced zoological classification and the science of taxonomy.

Today students presented book reports on stories about Native Americans. For this project, students put together book jacket book reports. They used a large piece of paper folded to resemble a book jacket. The jacket included a cover illustration, an award that they had created to give the book, a summary, recommendations and why it received the award that it did, and quotes or passages from the book along with comments. They were very creative and informative.
Creativity: Essential to Learning

We know it involves creative expression and the imagination. It's relatively easy to understand how art and music activities or pretend play qualify as creative, open-ended experiences.

We've all seen young children doing any number of imaginative things with wooden blocks: building a toy animal corral, a parking lot for cars, or a doll's cradle. What makes block play open-ended, after all?

**Open-ended is an utterly Montessori idea!**

While it is true you aren't likely to find a dress-up or fantasy area in a Montessori classroom, children enjoy daily opportunities for creativity in all areas of development, both in thought and expression. As soon as a lesson is introduced, children can use the work to conduct or "experiment" in their own way, to be a catalyst for their own epiphanies, and to absorb knowledge.

When we see the children in action, absorbed in activities of their own choosing, we see their amazing capacities for invention and perceive the scope and unlimited potential of their developing brains. Open-ended work, self-correction, and freedom of choice provide the trifecta of child development and the cornerstone of learning. A learning environment filled with open-ended inquiry and self-direction is so satisfying for children and integral to real learning!

**Why is creativity in the Montessori classroom so often misunderstood?**

Montessorians understand the importance of giving children a solid foundation in real things, a "base" in reality, if you will. When we bring a miniature replica of a dog into the classroom for the children to use as a language object, it looks like a real dog because it represents a real dog. Books with photographs and life-like illustrations are favored over those with cartoon depictions of things. Does "showing the child a real tree" squash creativity?

Of course not. Although people often equate creativity only with the arts and imagination only with fantasy play, creativity and imagination go hand-in-hand with all types of learning. Imagination and creativity surely have a comfortable home in academics! When we consider that open-ended activities are about the whole experience, it's easier to see how they are represented in the classroom.

Children's ingenuity prompts them to build walls and towers with their wooden blocks, thus experiencing geometry and testing the limits of physics. It is creativity that inspires a child to fit colored tiles together to make a design, tiles whose dimensions express numeric patterns small fingers "remember" with their muscular memory.

**Sparking the young child's capacity for creativity is essential to learning.**

Imagination powers the awesome ability to comprehend abstractions of every kind—to see something in one's mind that one cannot see in person or touch with the hands. We ask the elementary child, for example, to imagine other planets and, ultimately, the whole universe!

By exploring the world they can see and touch first, children develop a strong foundation from which to launch their imaginations. Comfort and success with a whole range of creative, open-ended activities unleashes the neurological potential of the child in ways that are simply not addressed by so many of the bright, flashing, single-purpose toys being marketed to children today. In a perfect world, open-ended activities would be the overwhelming majority of "things" we provide for our children.

“Nothing without Joy”

Loris Malaguzzi
Montessori Moment presented by Chris:

Apple Cutting Lesson: This lesson is found in the Practical Life area of the classroom. The four areas of focus in Practical Life are: Movement, Care of Self, Care of the Environment, and Grace and Courtesy. Food preparation activities integrate skills from these four groups into a highly popular and much needed skill for life. Each lesson on the shelf has a single goal. For the Apple Cutting Lesson the child first washes their hands and the apple. Then they slice the apple with an apple cutter and remove the apple pieces from the core. Once the apple is cut the child has the option of either eating the apple or offering it to a friend. Offering the apple to a friend is an opportunity for the child to use their “Grace & Courtesy” skills, using their words when they ask, “would you like an apple?” and then serving the apple to the other child. At the end of the lesson the child then cleans the plate and returns all of the kitchen tools and plates to their places.

Director’s Report:

(Please see attached for complete details)

Debbie will be meeting with directors from each of the preschools on the island to share information and resources: required processes such as regulations, licensing, CORI forms, etc.

Scholarship Program Reminder: The Deadline is December 2nd. Scholarship information has been distributed. Please contact Debbie with any questions.

Treasury Report:

Currently there is $13,250.97 in the bank.

Truckin’ MV:

We had a great turn out this year and sales are up from prior years.

Total Gross sales revenue from Truckin MV 2015: $3,954. Sales breakdown below:

$2640. Entrance fees
$640. T-Shirts
$122. “Pick a Car”
$552. Food (Does not include the amount that the food truck should be contributing.)

Expenses are not yet deducted. Totals will be calculated later this week once all expenses are accounted for.

Suggestions for next year:

- Bags for customers to place their t-Shirts and baked goods. Use paper bags with VMS logo stamped on it.
  
  Some people were concerned that Truckin’ MV was perceived as expensive. Next year we should figure out something for guests to get upon paying the entry fee. For example, a raffle ticket, Guess how many cars are in a jar ticket etc.

- More branding for next year. More banners, poster, etc.

- Have the Elementary students make signs for the event. Include a “thank you” on the signs from students.
Next Steps:

We will give each of the truck owners a t-Shirt to thank them for their time and donation. Elementary students are making thank you notes for the truck owners.

T-Shirts will be for sale in the school office.

Room parents still needed – Contact Miss TY for details.

Transportation for winter ice skating program will be needed.

Upcoming Fundraising Events:

Off Shore Ale “Dine to Donate” January 21st: Offshore Ale will donate a portion of all sales to VMS. More details to follow in January.

Winter - Nicole presented the idea of doing a “FILMRAISER” for a winter fundraiser. During the premier of a movie schools can raise funds by participating in the program. To learn more go to FILMRAISER.COM.

Winter - Family Dance Party: “Dance O’ Rama” This would occur in late winter or early spring. The PTO discussed the Harborview Hotel as a good location for the event. Next Steps: We will gather more information and vote on the date and location at the next PTO meeting: December 15th.

Spring - Adult Auction: This will be our main fundraising event in Late Spring. It will be an evening auction event for adults similar to events in the past such as Fly Me To The Moon.

Next Steps: The PTO needs to determine the date, theme, and location of the event.

Spring - Day Event: The PTO decided that we will not have an additional fundraising day event. Instead we would like to put more effort into Truckin’ MV to make it bigger and better next year.

Jennifer LoRusso

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