"There is no greater education than one that is self-driven."
- Neil deGrasse Tyson

Calendar

December 5th: Big Night Out Meeting - 7:00 PM at Henry's (Harbor View). All parents welcome.

December 22nd - January 1st: December Recess -- School Closed

January 2nd: School Reopens

January 18th: Dine to Donate at Offshore Ale

Primary 1 Classroom

-Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

This week, I presented the lesson of “Solid, Liquid, and Gas”. This basic science lesson for the three- to six-year olds is an exploration of the properties of matter. I began by explaining that all matter is made up of molecules.

I then began with the fact that a solid has its molecules stuck so close together, it is stiff and cannot move easily. I chose two children, and we acted out being stuck together. I then said that this state of matter does not change its shape easily; it keeps its shape unless acted on by an outside force.

Then came the acting out of matter that is a liquid. I chose two other children, and we held hands and sort of slid around the circle. I explained that liquid sticks together but takes the shape of any container holding it. For gas, the two
children I chose and I were not connected at all and were very far apart, acting like we were floating. Gas molecules, I explained, want to expand and move further and further apart. The actual exercise on the shelf contains three examples of each: solids, liquids, and gases. Children take the tray to a rug and sort the glass jars containing the various samples.

Primary 2 Classroom
-Miss Chris and Miss Holly

This week, I brought out some new lessons that were presented throughout the week. Some lessons were presented during morning group time and others were presented individually. Many of the children are excited about the new lessons of sink and float and magnetic and non-magnetic. These lessons are used throughout the day, and I have been observing the children using the magnetic wand to find other items in our class that might be magnetic.

I have also introduced painting at the easel. While many children have done easel painting at home, doing it at school provides many more opportunities to expand the lesson while still enjoying the aspect of painting. A child must first put on an apron, get the paper on the easel (which many times needs a friend's help), put his/her name on the paper (which also needs a friend’s or teacher's help), decide what to create, and then clean up once finished. The clean-up process has many steps starting with hanging the finished product on the rack to dry. A bucket with water and a sponge is used to wash the easel to remove any leftover paint, and if needed, a towel is used to dry off any excess water so that the next person's paper doesn't get wet. The apron gets rolled back up and put back on top of the easel. It seems so natural for us as adults to assume that this is what would happen when one was done painting, but for a child, each and every step is a growth in his/her sense of order and level of concentration. Following each step and checking to see if the lesson is ready for the next child is a complex sequence which builds independence, order, concentration, and coordination.

We began our food preparation lessons by introducing the nut-cracking work. This is often a favorite work as the children get to crack a whole walnut, remove the meat from the shells, and then either eat the pieces or pass them out to friends. The children are using their social skills, including manners, by offering a nut to a child by saying, "Would you like a piece?", and the child receiving the piece would answer, "No, thank you" or "Yes, please". A child is also experiencing patience as he/she needs to wait until he/she is offered a piece before reaching into the bowl. We will be introducing other food preparation lessons throughout the school year.

During gardening, Ava brought in a long pot in which the children transplanted our celery ends that have re-sprouted inside. We will continue to see how big
they get. She also gave seeds to the children to plant in individual pots, which they will get to take home once the seeds sprout.

Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

The Elementary I class wrapped up their whaling unit with the M.V. Museum this week. Beth brought a long blue ribbon that we unraveled in the field. This helped give the students a size perspective of the largest animal in the world. She brought a yellow ribbon the size of a sperm whale so that the students could see the size ratio. They were able to see that three sperm whales fit into one blue whale.

Some fun facts:

- The blue whale is so big it is almost the same size of a space shuttle orbiter, two New York City buses, and longer than an NBA court.
- They can weigh up to 2000 tons. That’s about eight DC-9 aircrafts or 15 school buses.
- They can produce sounds louder than a jet engine and can be heard for 1,000 miles away.
- Their tongues weigh as much as an elephant’s tongue. One-hundred people could easily stand in one of their mouths.
- Their hearts are the size of a Mini Cooper and can weigh up to 2,000 pounds. Its heartbeat can be heard two miles away. A human can easily crawl through their major arteries.

We are all very much looking forward to the whaling museum next week.
The Upper Elementary students returned from their long weekend refreshed and rejuvenated. We plunged back into the last of our ancient Far East projects. Students were assigned to one of two groups to collaborate on a project. They decided as a group which of the five assignments they would work on. One group chose to create a digital display of costumes and apparel worn by Chinese during various time periods. It was required to display their findings and the significance of various items worn during that period. The other group was to show how Chinese music was different than the music found in the Americas and in Europe over time. Their projects will be presented next week.

The sequence of the whale hunt and the harpoons used were the topic of discussion this week at M.V. Museum. Blown up, real-life photos of a crew at sea during the different stages of the hunt were placed in chronological order by the students. These heartbreaking photos transported us back in time to the difficult life of the crew and whales at that time. Kids held the harpoons that made many men rich. We also read the book *Whaling Days* by Carol Carrick, which details the stages of the hunt and the processing of the blubber to get the oil. In the year of 1939, there were 39,000 blue and finback whales killed! Only a small number of some whale species are left and others are close to extinction.

Homonyms were the focus for language this week. Students started conquering a list of 175 words, some of which have three and not just two spellings and meanings, such as vain, vein, and vane. I have seen them pray to move forth towards the fourth quarter and not fall prey to an unproductive scene! After writing all of their words in sentences and studying with their friends, they will...
Middle School
- Miss Ty

Last week before vacation, Matthew handed in his latest project...this one in English Literature. He constructed a cube out of poster board and came up with a six-sided shape that he used to answer some specific questions on his latest novel: Lord of the Flies, by William Golding. In a nutshell, the novel is set on a desolate island in the Pacific during a fictional world war. There, children who survive a plane crash try to survive with little food, no shelter, no grown-ups, and no rules. Humans turn hunters; innocence is lost! Among the questions answered on the cube, Matthew analyzed the meaning of a quote from the novel, explained and illustrated three symbols, described and illustrated five characters, and described William Golding’s purpose in writing this novel. This is a wonderful, creative report! If you get a chance, drop by the middle school and look it over! (I really mean it!)

We have begun the study of cell structure and function in science. Matthew is learning that cells are the basic unit of structure of all living organisms. We began by “dissecting” an onion and obtaining a piece of the shiny onion tissue. Matthew placed a small piece on a slide and carefully stained it with a drop of iodine. Observing it under three powers of magnification with our microscope, he then drew what he saw as part of the observation. We included one for your viewing pleasure!

We continue our weekly trips to the MV Museum for the whaling study. This
week, we got to examine enlarged photos of whaling as the students attempted to put them in the order they thought each would happen in an actual whale hunt. Then everyone got to examine some harpoons and other tools used in the production of whale oil.

The Late Day Program
- Ms. Weezie

Our Late Day students have enjoyed two more weeks of creative inspiration and experience with Pam Benjamin. For me, just entering her sunlit studio is a treat. The students have now worked with clay, including the potter's wheel, made leaf collages with various pre-cut paper shapes, and on Monday, mosaic tile was our theme. Students were shown photos of ancient mosaic tile work and then given poster board with an animal or sun design. Tables were then laid out with colored paper squares as well as beads for students to arrange and glue as mosaics. It was suggested that students start on the edges of their design and then fill it in. This work will continue next week. The process involves patience and dexterity as well as creativity.

Books we have read this week include: Indian in the Cupboard (elementary class), Fish Has a Wish, Millions of Cats, and Lion and Bird.

A big thank you to Whittier's mom, Tracy, for the new tether ball pole and ball. We need a volunteer to help with installation. We are anxious as this will be a great addition to our outdoor activities. We are grateful!
Recommended Reading
"There's No Such Thing as the Real World" by Peter Piche in MontessoriParent
Read article here.

Book Corner for Parents
"Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14" by Chip Wood
"The Six Stages of Parenthood" by Ellen Galinsky

Book Corner for Children
"What Do You Do With An Idea?" by Kobi Yamada

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