“The satisfaction which they find in their work has given them a grace and ease like that which comes from music.”

— Maria Montessori in *The Discovery of The Child*

**Calendar**

**Thursdays until April at 2:30 pm:** Elementary Game Day: All elementary students are welcome in the Elementary I classroom.

**Saturday, March 24th:** Big Night Out, our largest annual fundraiser! Tickets for sale in the office.

**Thursday, April 5th:** Special Visiting Day - 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM
Primary 1 Classroom
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

I hope everybody had a great winter break! I am glad to see that everybody made it safely back to the island after this past stormy weekend.

It was exciting to see the students come to school with big smiles on their faces and very happy to see their teachers and friends. At circle time, they got to tell the whole class where they went and what they did during the winter break.

Many students continue to have an active interest in geography. At this time, this study/learning is mostly about the physical world, and that means a lot of activity with the puzzle maps. Since three- to six-year-olds love to do puzzles, and love to know the names of everything in the environment, we follow the children’s interests by offering puzzles of real value: the continent maps. As Michael Olaf says, “Children easily absorb and memorize the relative sizes, shapes, and locations of continents and countries of the world in this motor-sensorial time of life.” Many of our children, from the younger ones to the oldest ones, are working on puzzle maps and creating their own wonderful maps to take home.

This week, I 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. They love to carefully scrub the table in a circular motion and then glide a cloth vertically down the suds to begin the rinsing. There is 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.

Primary 2 Classroom
I hope everyone enjoyed their vacation week, whether you traveled off the island or had a "staycation". Hopefully, no one had any major damage to their homes due to the crazy storm. The children were very happy to be back at school, sharing their storm and vacation stories. Everyone settled in nicely and went happily off to work. I would like to thank Colton and his dad, Mick, for taking great care of our class guinea pig over the break.

I added some new lessons over the break that include metal polishing, mirror polishing, plant care, and table scrubbing. All of these lessons fall under the Practical Life area and are more complicated lessons than the ones before. Each lesson has multiple steps and takes quite a bit longer to do than many of the previous Practical Life lessons. The children have now expanded their ability to follow many steps, stay focused longer, and incorporate many skills to complete these activities.

Miss Ava began a new unit on seeds. The children were able to look at different seeds and then create a time line of the life cycle of a seed. We will be planting some seeds next week that will be transplanted into our gardens later in the month. The children were able to bring home the felt that they created these past few weeks.

We had a new student join our class, and she seems to have enjoyed her first week of school. We welcomed Electra Saltzberg and her parents, Amanda and Rich, to our class. Please make sure to introduce yourselves when you see them at drop-off.
Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

Elementary I students have had a very busy week. We started with sentences analysis with verb/predicate and subjects. We continued our study of influential African-Americans in our culture studies. We read a book on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights movement. We listened to an original recording of his powerful speech, “I have a Dream”, given August 28, 1961 in front of the country. As always, skating was a blast, and Addison has decided after a few lessons, “I was made for skating!”

We continue looking at impressionist artists. This week, we observed how Van Gough used his brush strokes to show movement by using colors that made him feel good and not necessarily the color of the object he is painting. He used layering to create a more dynamic and interesting composition to accent the movement. As we created our own masterpieces, Emily was inspired and told us, “I’m just going to go wherever my mind takes me.”

Mary-Sage came in for our weekly gardening class. We read a book about the first peas to the table contest. This was started years ago by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. He used to have a friendly race with his neighbors each spring to see who could get the first cup of peas. We have continued this tradition with all the island schools. The winner will be announce at a family gathering this spring at Morning Glory Farm. In science, we have just begun to explore the sun, earth, and gravity.
Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

This week, students are putting final touches on country display boards with their Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) partners and organizing binders that they will be taking with them. In art, we are finishing up our Big Night Out project with Valentine Estabrook. The finished product will look fabulous in any home!

Ann from the M.V. Museum met with us to go over the contents of our whaling logs, which will be on display at the Museum this spring. Our kids had the choice to make a captain's log or a journal, which is more personal. Students stained the covers of their logs to give them a leathery look. They will take many of their writing passages for the project and organize them in a fashion that they find most realistic. Along with these, the students will decide which, if any, pages will have hand drawings of their life at sea. This was a common practice for captains to do during this time period. They are also encouraged to bring "miscellany", such as bible passages, handwritten prayers, old ribbon, photos, pressed flowers, or locks of hair from home to add to the pages. Even more exciting was getting to use a quill!

The students continued to work on dialogue by cutting up sheets of sentences, responses, and punctuation, which were all mixed up. When they finished, their job was to locate the correct punctuation and responses and then write them out. They will need to recognize written dialogue and its components as they write their plays with Joyce.
Middle School
- Miss Ty

The Middle School teams with Upper Elementary for most special classes, and drama with Joyce Maxner has been especially interesting this semester. The class is divided into two groups with each one writing their own twenty-minute play. Matthew’s group is writing an adventurous story about three children lost on an island in San Francisco Bay with an escaped murderer who is also on the island! The play will be written, practiced, and produced by the end of the semester. Drama class always concludes with some excellent improvisational acting games, which the students enjoy immensely.

Art class has continued with island artist, Valentine Estabrook. The students have finished their reverse painting, and the finishing touches of the ocean background will be applied over the next week by the artist. The process has been amazing to witness, as individual panes of glass get transformed into an underwater world.

Matthew will be headed for New York City next week, as he and the Upper Elementary students participate in Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN). He is paired with sixth grader, Silas Stanek, and will be attending the middle school section of the program. All the students have worked extremely hard to write position papers and create display boards for their countries. Matthew and Silas are representing Uruguay, and their topics are: The Situation in Somalia and Effects to Global Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts.
Late Day
- *Miss Weezie and Miss Cristina*

The whim of Mother Nature seems to be the focus lately. Our students had tales to tell about losing power at home and alternative plans made as a result of our recent storm. On the positive side of nature education and discussion, we completed a follow-up project to the elementary students' Zero Waste presentation. Students helped to decorate a large recycling bin complete with logos and reminders of items to recycle. The concepts of reduce, reuse, and recycle are ideas that young people understand and can help facilitate at school and at home.

To further reinforce the Zero Waste theme, we read: *My Mama Earth, Franklin Plants a Tree, On Earth, and Green.*

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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