"Joy is the evidence of inner growth"

-Maria Montessori

All Island Intermediate string orchestra concert

Congratulations to Carly and Grace, Elementary II classroom, for their participation in the concert!
Middle School- Miss Ty

In Montessori, we often talk of “big work” with the children. In primary, this may be a many-stepped math lesson like the 45 layout. In elementary, this may be a large timeline or a research project. In the Montessori middle school, besides the many academic challenges, one of the biggest works of the adolescent student is developing a personal identity. We do this in many ways.

Time to reflect on life by studying and thinking about identification with gender, race, religion, and ethnicity is done in small-group discussions and journaling. Confronting physical challenges can be done in off-campus activities, such as camping and/or ropes courses. Vision making, or the writing of personal mission statements, takes place in the eighth grade. Also, frequent goal setting for academics and behavior is done in individual conferences with teachers. All or some of these activities bring the young person closer to his or her personal identity.

This week, we got a wonderful thank you note from the 1st grade class of the Oak Bluffs School. Remember that right before vacation, we visited there and presented the Zero Waste work that we made for the younger students at VMS. Our students loved the colorful letter that was sent. It was nice to be appreciated!

We also continued with the clean-up of Camp Jabberwocky. The students swept and raked the many paths, along with the basketball court. As you can imagine, there was an enormous amount of deadfall from this winter, and we took advantage of the few warm days this week.
Elementary II Classroom
- Miss Irene

Brooms and rakes were left for our use by Jack, the caretaker at the Greenwood Campus, who thought that we may want to continue the Earth Day clean-up that we started last Friday. Last week, the kids scoured the woods and road sides near us to find trash, plastic, and recyclables. This week, we used the rakes and brooms to tidy the many brick walkways, cabin porches, basketball court, and archery field. Cliff left us a large cart to haul our many loads of leaves and sticks, which were strewn about from our late winter's storms. Jayden Fuller visited our classroom on Tuesday and was a tremendous help with this project. We are looking forward to starting some spring plantings to spruce up the campus for the arrival of the Jabberwocky campers.

Students finished up the *Wanderings of Odysseus* during April break. Odysseus's voyage home would have been lackluster without the wrath and assistance of many gods, goddesses, and nymphs. This led to a creative writing assignment, which was to design an original myth using one of 19 Greek gods, goddesses, or other minor divinities. The myth had to explain a natural phenomenon, teach a moral truth, or deal with an emotion. Two of the students wrote "The Gift", which involved the muse of astronomy, Urania, and the god, Zeus. Every 100 years, Zeus chose a muse to give a special gift to. He chose Urania, and her gift was a unicorn. To show her gratitude, Urania made a constellation in the sky in the shape of a unicorn that can still be seen today.

After doing a brief overview of the digestive system, including the functions of the salivary glands, esophagus, stomach, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, intestines, and rectum, the class researched some diets. Three types of vegetarian diets, including vegan, lacto vegetarian, and lacto-ovo vegetarian
were examined. Students were to find the advantages and disadvantages as compared to a diet that contains meat. Lacto-ovo vegetarians are the most common type of vegetarian in the western world, consuming dairy, eggs, vegetables, and grains.

One of the students discovered during their research and presented about an 11-year study in Germany which examined colon cancer among 1,900 vegetarians. Researchers noted fewer deaths from cancers of the stomach, colon, and lung in study participants than in the general population -- particularly among those who practiced some form of vegetarianism for at least 20 years. They suggested, however, that other factors, like body weight and the amount of exercise, likely affected mortality rates in the vegetarians they studied. The benefits of being a meat eater were pointed out as well, although the meat industry itself is found to be unacceptable in its practices, mainly in the United States.

Elementary I Classroom
- Miss Nora

The Elementary I class has made a smooth transition back. We finally got a break in the weather and were able to bring the classroom outside. We have been able to take a nature walk to the beach, have snack on the deck, and enjoy lunch on the playground.

This week, we read about presidents of the past and the different things they have done with their families while living in the White House. One day while on the South Lawn, Michelle Obama decided it would be a good place to plant a kitchen garden. On the first day of spring, she invited a group of twenty-five fifth-graders from a local school to help plant the garden. Some of the seedlings they planted were from seeds passed down by plants from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello 200 years ago. The garden was an enormous success. It can now provide vegetable courses and salads for as many as 140 guests—
appetizers for as many as 1,000! The first family and all of their staff bring their kitchen garden to the table every night.

Our garden is starting to grow. The garlic and peas have sprung from the soil, and our seedlings at the green house are doing well. On Wednesday with Mary-Sage, we problem solved about how to water the plants when no one is around. We finally came up with a system using recycled bottles. We are hoping to catch rain water and have it disperse into the root system.

Primary 2 Classroom
- Miss Chris and Miss Holly

Have you ever wondered what is inside the beautiful and colorful boxes sitting on our shelf? These enticing "reading drawers" contain a cleanly structured program that provides a systematic and sequential presentation of the phonetic elements used in the English language. When a child has learned the sounds the Sandpaper Letters make, they can begin using the reading drawers. The program uses a four-step approach in which the children spell the word depicted on the card with a moveable alphabet, a process that involves encoding or using the phonetic principle introduced to make a word. In the next step, the child lays out all of the cards and matches the label cards, thereby decoding the phonetic information. Additional practice in decoding involves writing the words and reading words that follow the same phonetic principle in a booklet. The children that have started this program are able to chart their progress when they complete each drawer.

We had our first dance class this week. Jesse, from the Yard, came to our class
and showed the children how to move their bodies to different tempos. The children formed their bodies into "high" shapes and "low" shapes, "quiet" shapes and "loud" shapes. It was a real treat to have this wonderful experience. Dance class will be on Thursdays for the next four weeks.

I hope everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing vacation. The anticipation of warmer weather and beautiful spring flowers are on my mind. We will be planting flowers, herbs, and plants this Saturday during Family Yard Day. Please stop by with your gardening gloves to help beautify our school.

Primary 1 Classroom
- Miss Cristina and Miss Rebecca

I hope everyone had a wonderful and restful vacation. The children were very eager to be back at school and spent the beginning of our morning sharing the highlights of each child's vacation week. Afterwards, the children were excited to get back to their lessons and spend time with their friends.

This week, I was very happy to see children picking some multiple-steps lessons, like table washing or dusting. The child takes out the mat, the soap, the scrub brush, and the sponge and begins to scrub a table that may have had a small mark from an art project on it. I love to see someone sweeping some crumbs from snack into a pile and then using a brush and pan to pick them up. All these lessons not only help clean, but they help children develop concentration, become aware of order and sequencing, gain more control over their movements, and become more independent. A basic premise behind Maria Montessori's philosophy of early education was that every child is eager for real work. Even when we adults think that the work is a chore, children in the primary classes have a deep respect and love of caring for their classroom.

This week, we started movement class with The Yard, an extra-special activity for our busy week. It was a lot of fun, and the children love it. We will be movement every Tuesday.

In gardening with Miss Ava from Island Grown, the children got to plant sunflower and carrot seeds in our garden. We all are very happy to be able to spend time outside. There is so much that we want to start doing outdoors, like hammering, using the water and sand tables, and of course, walking to the beach to find treasures.

On Wednesday, the children baked banana bread to enjoy as a group snack. Our rainy days can be fun with baking and going outside to look for worms in the mud. They love it!
Late Day
- Miss Weezie

We are finally enjoying some wonderful spring weather, and spirits are high. We are able to replace boots and snow shovels with sneakers and gardening tools.

Our literary program is very strong. Students are now attending and able to focus on longer, more complex stories. They have improved listening skills, which allows me to use an open-ended or completion prompt. For example, I might say, “Tell me what is happening in this picture.” Or I let the child fill in the last word in a rhyming book. These types of prompts increase fluency and the student's understanding of the structure of language—all pre-reading skills. Remember: There is no app to replace your lap. This week, we enjoyed Mama Built Little Nest, Tillie Lays an Egg, and You Nest Here with Me. See you on Saturday for Family Yard Day!

Recommended Reading
"There’s No Such Thing as the Real World" by Peter Piche in Montessori Parent
Read article here.

Book Corner for Parents
"Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the age of artificial intelligence." by Joseph Aoun

"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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