



FALL 2015
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1



cmh connections

UPCOMING EVENTS

October

- 12 Teacher In-Service/No School
- 17 Fall Beautification Day
10:00am-1:00pm
- 26-30 Conference Week
- 30 No School

November

- 3 Picture Retake Day
- 5 PACT Parent Social Morning
9:00-11:00am at CMH
Hosted by Bonnie McNett
- 5 CMH Community Meeting
6:30-7:30pm
- 7 PACT Parent Social Evening
7:00pm
Hosted by the Chevalier family
- 11 No School/Veterans Day
- 13 Turkey Trot/Walk-a-thon
- 18 Family Astronomy Night
6:30-7:30pm
- 25-27 No School/Happy Thanksgiving

December

- 2 Parent Workshop on Anxiety
6:30-8:00pm
- 11 PACT Parent Social Evening
6:00-8:00pm
Hosted by The Silver Diva
- 17 Holiday Concert, 7:00pm
- 18 PJ Day/Early Dismissal, 11:30am
PACT Bowling Party
Winter Break begins

Jan. 4 Return from Winter Break

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

CMH Families,

We are off to a wonderful 2015-16 school year. Our CMH Staff was well prepared for the school year, having spent countless hours over the summer on professional development, home visits and getting their classroom environments just right for the developmental needs of every child in their community. Parents have been actively engaged in the school events, with volunteers jumping in to help assure that things run smoothly. The children are happy and engaged while they work hard to be the best they can be socially, emotionally, and academically.

Committed Staff + Strategic Board + Involved Parents + Engaged Students = A Thriving School Community. This equation is certainly in balance for a successful school year.

We look forward to maintaining this delicate balance through open communication and partnerships with our families. Your child's teachers are there for you and your child, so please reach out to them as a valuable resource in whole child development. Fall Conference schedules went out last week via e-news so please take time to sign up.

No other philosophy of education values observation like a Montessori education. We encourage you to come in to observe your child's classroom. Teachers observe daily to see what choices children are making and where and how they are spending their time. This helps them understand the children and plan future lessons and guidance. Children are given the freedom to watch other children work and take in the many experiences going on around them before they delve into the material or "work" themselves. Uninterrupted observations are vital to the teachers and students at every level. When you get a chance to observe I hope you will be able to see teachers observing and some children simply sitting and watching the classroom activities around them. This is their most important work. Observation is not a time of critiquing; it is a time of valuable insight.

Casey Reed
CMH Director

NEWS FROM PP1

Our school year is off to a wonderful beginning and we are so excited to be sharing this time with your child. All of the new children are busy learning the rules and routines of their new Montessori classroom and the returning children are learning how to navigate their familiar classroom with new friends and new expectations. We take many weeks to orient the children to the ground rules of a Montessori environment—things that make our classroom calm and peaceful and set the stage for the independence, concentration, and growth that will happen when everyone understands and is comfortable with these ground rules.

We are also spending this time helping the children get to know each other, get to know their teachers, and get to know themselves. It is a true gift that Montessori environments are designed to allow children the freedom of choice, within the limits of the ground rules. The children are learning how to become a community of friends. These first months of school are so busy and filled with new lessons each day—we hope you are hearing wonderful things from your children and as always, please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions about what your child is doing each day.



PACT NOTES

Welcome to PACT! I am this year's PACT coordinator and this is my third year as a PACT coordinator and my family's fourth year at CMH. My son Sam is a first level in Juniors and my son, Nate, is a first level in PP1. We also have an 18-month-old son, Zach, and are expecting our fourth child this winter.

PACT stands for *Parents Assisting Children and Teachers* and by having a child at CMH you are automatically a PACT member! Please do not hesitate to contact me, jessicaranderson77@gmail.com, with any questions or ideas, or if you are looking for ways to be involved. CMH has a wonderful community and you can be involved as frequently or as infrequently as you wish.

Look for more information in the coming month about our Morning Social on November 5, our Parents' Night Out on November 7, and the Early Release PJ Bowling Party in December. Social gatherings are a great time to unwind and meet new families. The PJ Bowling Party will take place on December 18 after early dismissal, the kids then spend the afternoon bowling, eating pizza and enjoying time with friends before the winter break.

We are looking for all types of help for this year's auction. Every level of commitment is welcome! This is a fun event and a successful fundraiser for our school.

Jessica

Jessica Hughes
PACT Coordinator



NEWS FROM PP2

Happy Fall to everyone! The PP2 children have had a great start to our new school year. They have been working hard on learning the rules and routines of the classroom and are continuing to get orientated to their environment. We have seen lots of new friendships form and many old friendships continue to develop. The children were recently introduced to the Peace Rose and how to solve a conflict with a friend in a peaceful way. We talk a lot with the children on ways to be a good friend and kind ways to act towards our friends. It is so neat to see two kids talk about and solve a problem all on their own.

In the month of September we had a very special observation work in our classroom. We were able to observe the entire life cycle of a butterfly and had two monarch butterflies hatch in our classroom! We started with eggs, watched them hatch into caterpillars, and then were able to observe the caterpillars make their chrysalises. We were able to observe the chrysalises change from green to black, as the butterflies were getting ready to emerge. We had one butterfly emerge from its chrysalis during morning work time and one during afternoon work time. The children were so excited to see this! The following day we were able to release our butterflies into the wild so they could fly south to Mexico for the winter. This was such a special experience for the children!

We are looking forward to an exciting fall of working, learning, and exploring in our PP2 classroom!



NEWS FROM JUNIORS

Developing a community has been the primary goal of Juniors this fall. With so many new students and the combined classroom, the Junior teachers wanted to ensure that each of our students felt included and welcome in the larger environment. We've done various activities to help us grow and learn more about each other. Juniors began the year with team building activities such as classroom treasure hunts with new students and returning Juniors to learn more about where materials are in the classroom. We then worked on building marshmallow structures to discover how to work as a team without arguing.

Another large step in our community building has been starting weekly Community Meetings. In these meetings we've been developing a mini society of compassionate classmates. The students learned about how chaos in the classroom can prevent some students from getting what they need. They learned that people are not always either right or wrong, but sometimes two people can be right in an argument. We also discussed that in order to be successful we have to look for solutions to a problem instead of blaming each other. Finally, we developed an agenda box, which will house problems that occur during the week that the children would like to talk about and solve together. All of these steps have been great additions to helping us feel connected and a new large community.



NEWS FROM SENIORS

Happy New Year! We've had a great beginning in the Senior Class this year. We've settled into the routines of this new year and have enjoyed getting to know our new fourth levels. We had a great bonding day at our annual creek walk. The sixth levels started us off with a bang, as they presented the formation of the universe. Senior favorite activities so far have been: making movies, butterfly metamorphosis and release, building electrical snap circuits and experiments. The long black balloon was a particular favorite. We learned that the color black absorbs the most heat, and that hot air rises.

We are looking forward to our first field trip to SunWatch Indian Village and the Ohio Caverns. We have been studying about the formation of crystals and the Prehistoric Indians of Ohio in preparation for this field trip. We will shortly begin preparing for our student-lead conferences. Each student will have the opportunity to evaluate themselves academically, socially and emotionally. We're looking forward to a terrific year!



NATURE NOTES

Through the end of September our school days have been mostly sunny and dry and ideal for studying and caring for nature. Students have explored and sampled juicy apples, tiny hackberries, pawpaw and other seasonal fall fruits that grow on our campus. Sounds of crickets, katydids, and blue jays, along with many other birds, have filled our ears as we practice listening quietly to follow and decipher the calls and songs. Using tools to sweep, water, weed, and rake has also allowed connections to spark, form, and deepen between each child and their outdoor environment.

Butterflies, their beauty, behavior, and fascinating life cycles have been a part of every classroom for the last month. Students watched the transformation of egg - to caterpillar - to chrysalis - to adult insect that happened in "butterfly nurseries" that were placed in each class. In the surrounding fields and wood edges we have searched for

butterfly host plants:
Milkweed for Monarchs, Clover for Clouded Sulphurs, and Queen Anne's Lace for Black Swallowtails. We have gathered seeds, and will propagate, tend, and in the spring we will transplant the host plants around our campus to help in the sustainability of future generations of native butterfly populations.

Veronica

Veronica Brannen
CMH Naturalist

WISH LIST FOR BIRD STUDY:
Bags of Black Oil Sunflower Seeds

How Can You Support CMH?

E-Waste Recycling Program at CMH

Please send in your used ink jet cartridges, old cell phones and small electronics/gadgets like cameras, GPS devices, calculators, game consoles and iPods. In turn CMH sends the collected electronic waste to *Planet Green Recycling* for dollars.

BOX TOPS and Campbell's labels

Send them in to the office throughout the year. CMH receives ten cents per box top or label.

Kroger Community Rewards

If you shop at Kroger please be sure you register your Kroger Rewards card with CMH as your designated organization. Remember you need to re-register each year for this program.

Amazon Smile Program

Amazon shoppers be sure to register CMH as your organization of choice and we in turn enjoy .5% percent of your online shopping.

Target REDcard Program

Target will donate 1% of your credit or debit REDcard purchases to CMH.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD

It is my pleasure to serve as President of the Board of Trustees. It's a blessing to have such a capable group of people who strive to ensure the long term quality and health of the school. By harnessing the strength of volunteers from the Board, PACT, classroom helpers, fundraisers, and other areas, CMH is a greater place for our children.

The goals of the Board this school year include:

Ensure financial health of the school by right-sizing the annual budget and refinancing the debt.

The current classroom structure represents right-sizing the staffing to the enrollment while maintaining the quality of Montessori education we expect. Casey Reed has critically examined many of our expenditures and cut costs where it made sense. As a result, our 15/16 budget shows a slight positive cash flow even before refinancing considerations.

In 2002, the school borrowed about \$2 million to construct the present facility and serve more children. The principal is now \$965,000, but the annual principal repayments will increase from \$120k to \$165k over the remaining term. Also, fees associated with the loan will be increasing substantially beginning in 2016. Our Treasurer, John Chevalier, found a refinance loan with five year fixed interest rates, level repayments, and no requirement to hold \$150k in reserve as our current loan has.

Maintaining the physical facilities.

CMH's septic system is showing its age. Our goal is to connect to the Loveland sewer system. This will improve reliability and reduce maintenance costs. While physically straightforward, the sewer connection is politically complicated. CMH is in Clermont County, but the sewer is owned by the City of Loveland and run by the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati. John Phenix, with Board Consultant Greg Dale, has navigated this maze and is monitoring the progress of the necessary intercounty agreement.

CMH owns about 5 acres of land but uses many more that are owned by the Grail, our neighbor on all four sides. The Grail intends to lease or sell some or part of their land. The Board submitted a proposal to purchase about 4 acres to the front and side of the school in order to ensure our continued use of these areas.

Recruit new Board members with specific skills.

Vice President, Donna Chrobot-Mason is leading the recruiting effort. A healthy Board has natural turnover, and so it is necessary to recruit new members every year. To add the most value, Donna is recruiting for specific skills sets, including Accounting, Human Resources, Development, and Montessori Education. To achieve balance and perspective, she is seeking primarily non-parents for these roles.

On November 5, we will have a Community Meeting to update these and other issues pertinent to the quality and health of the school. I invite you to attend.

Franco Medeiros
CMH Board President

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

FALL BEAUTIFICATION DAY & GARDEN SWAP DAY SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 10AM-1PM

Join us for our Fall clean up of the CMH grounds and our very first Garden Swap! Do you have bulbs that need dividing, perennials that need to be split, or extra flower pots, trowels or gardening gloves? Bring along your extra plants, bulbs or supplies to trade for brand new treasures. CMH will be providing a pizza lunch at 1pm. Let us know you can make it at RSVP@cmhschool.com.

TEACHER APPRECIATION COMMITTEE

This committee (*Amy Phillips, Coordinator*) organizes snacks and treats for the staff meetings and little special touches throughout the year for our beloved CMH staff. We will be organizing the Holiday Staff Luncheon for staff in the coming months. Stay tuned for more information and if you would like to be involved please contact *Lori Walker, Holiday Luncheon Coordinator* at ljwalker75@yahoo.com.

SPRING AUCTION COMMITTEE EVENT DATE: MARCH 19, 6-10PM

We are ready to start on this year's theme, planning and donors. After the theme is chosen we will divide into sub-committees and get to work! You can be as involved as your time allows in this annual fundraiser. Contact the office to be added to the auction communication group.

For up-to-date information, follow us on

