



WINTER 2016
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

 CHILDREN'S
MEETING HOUSE
Montessori School

cmh connections

UPCOMING EVENTS

January

- 25 Winter After School Clubs Begin
- 31 Winter Open House
2:00-4:00pm

February

- 4 Junior Parent Education and Information Night
6:30-8:00pm
- 8 Loveland Valentine Lady Visit
10:00am at CMH
- 11 PP Winter Celebration and Valentine Exchange
8:45-10:30am
Junior Red Love Day
Senior Lunch and Crazy Hair Day
- 11 Priority Registration Ends
- 12 No School/Teachers Inservice Day
- 15 No School/Presidents Day
- 24 Family Astronomy Night
6:30-7:30pm
- 29 Senior Science Fair, *Open to All*
7:00-8:00pm

March

- 8 Parent Workshop
Melanie Higgins, OT
6:30-8:00pm
- 18 Grand People's Day
PP-9:00am, Elementary-10:00am
- 19 Goodnight Gala
6:00-10:00pm
- 25 Spring Break begins

Apr. 4 Return from Spring Break

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear CMH Community,

We are fortunate to be able to enjoy our beautiful campus all throughout the winter months. The children look out their classroom windows and capture busy moments of animal life every day. We frequently see large herds of deer, a wide range of birds, and many squirrels that are extra plump this year. The children all participate in Nature Studies each week with our Naturalist. These indoor and outdoor lessons continue to take root as students process all experiences and all of the information to which they have been exposed. CMH has so much to offer, and our Nature Studies program is leaving a vital and lasting impression on our children's education and memories.

"There is no description, no image, in any book capable of replacing the sight of real trees, and all the life to be found around them in a real forest."

-Maria Montessori

As re-enrollment time comes around each year in January it seems natural that families will ponder the value of a Montessori Education. What do you value in your child's educational experience? Most of the families currently coming to tour CMH, as you once did, want a non-traditional, developmentally appropriate atmosphere that is focused on the whole child. They are looking for a safe place that they can trust to help their children grow and learn for a large portion of their childhood years. These are reasonable expectations and occur in each of our classrooms. In a world that is focused on test scores and check off all the boxes, the desire for quick and easy results can become the value we think we are seeking. If you find yourself wondering about the true value of your child's Montessori education, I encourage you to schedule a time to observe in our classrooms, and while you are there take the time to notice how the three-year cycle at each level comes to fruition in the third year. Giving your child the time necessary to put all the pieces together socially, emotionally and academically in an environment that is specifically designed to meet their needs is beyond value.

Casey Reed
CMH Director

NEWS FROM PP1

PP1 has been a very busy classroom over the past several months! Children have learned our classroom routines and have made many new friends.

We have introduced a lot of new works about many different topics and we hope your child is sharing some of this with you. In Geography, we have learned about the 7 continents, North America, and now the United States of America. We will soon move onto Ohio. In Zoology, we have introduced insects, arachnids and the parts of the body, including the skeletal, muscular and circulatory systems.

Trees, leaves and seeds have been introduced in Botany, through puzzles, books and labeling works; we have recently begun the study of roots and why they are important to plants.

In Physical Science, we have learned about solids, liquids and gases, fossils, rocks and minerals and now various water works, such as sink versus float, surface tension and condensation. Art has been a very

busy area, too, with strip painting, sponge painting, pinnings, cuttings and painting at the easel.



PACT NOTES

It has been a busy year for CMH families and PACT events have been very successful. Thank you to all who have participated! We are gearing up for our annual auction, *The Goodnight Gala*, on March 19th. Mark this date on your calendar; you will not want to miss this fun event! Amazing items, including handmade treasures, Disney tickets, and so many more will be auctioned off for the benefit of our school. If you are interested in helping plan this event, please contact Suzanne Chevalier, JTCSFC@hotmail.com, or Lori Walker, ljwalker75@yahoo.com.

A big thank you to Bonnie McNett for hosting the successful ornament painting party, the Chevalier family for hosting the lovely Sips and Sweets parents' night out, and the Barbee family for opening up the doors of their business, The Silver Diva, to benefit CMH.

The CMH staff greatly enjoyed the Teachers' Holiday Luncheon; this fun event would not have been possible without the efforts of Lori Walker and the organizing committee and all of the parents who contributed. Amy Phillips has done a tremendous job organizing the snacks for the staff meetings and CMH parents have generously contributed for each meeting.

Our children had a fantastic time at the annual early release PJ bowling party. We had 88 bowlers, our highest level of participation yet! Be on the look out in E-News for more fun events this winter and spring...and plan your night out for *The Goodnight Gala*!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica".

Jessica Hughes
PACT Coordinator



NEWS FROM PP2

The new year is off to a great start so far! At this point in the school year, when you look around a working classroom, the children have really begun to develop a good work cycle and know the routines of the classroom. During work time, some children are choosing works from the shelves, others concentrating on a big math or language work, some having snack and others looking at books in the book corner. Regardless of what they are focused on, many of the children are what we call "normalized". By normalized we mean "when the children freely choose their work, concentrate, and are working blissfully on their own as members of a respectful, peaceful community." This is such a wonderful thing to see and experience and is unique to a Montessori environment. Unless a child has a question about a work, they are usually working independently. Maria Montessori wrote about this concept by asking a teacher about her greatest sign of success, the teacher responded by saying "The children are now working as if I did not exist" (Absorbent Mind). This shows us that we are meeting the children's needs with the materials and that they know their environment while being comfortable and happy within the classroom.

In PP2 the children have been very busy since returning from winter break. The works in our classroom are changing often to expose your children to new lessons and skills. In geography, we are beginning to wrap up our study of North American and we will soon begin talking about the United States of America. In zoology, we are beginning our study of the human body, which includes the bones and body parts. The children are also enjoying new practical life works such as sponge transfers, spooning, tonging and eye dropper tools which focus on large motor and fine motor skills. One of the most popular works is "food preparation" which involves prepping their own food as a snack; currently spreading cream cheese and/or jelly on a bagel. In art, there are a number of new paint works and among their favorites are fold painting and painting at the easel. Although we have children that vary in age from 3 to 6, all of the works in our classroom have a purpose and a goal and these goals are different depending on each child. Thank you for giving your children the gift of a Montessori education. We truly love watching them grow and learn each day.



NEWS FROM JUNIORS

Happy 2016 to all of our friends and families! We were dressed in our PJ's and ready to party on our last day before winter break, as we exchanged gifts and enjoyed a holiday brunch. This is always one of our favorite days in the junior class. It was also our time to practice the grace and courtesy of giving and receiving gifts in a thoughtful and caring way.

The students were delighted when we finally got some snow to play in during recess. In the classroom, we continue our studies in math, language and reading, as well as the cultural areas. In Geography, we have been focused on learning about Africa and it's 54 countries, and will next go on to the continents of Antarctica and Australia. In Zoology, all students have worked together to create a mural of both vertebrate and invertebrate sea life, beginning with using poriferans (sponges) to paint the mural's background. In Botany we are learning about the parts of a flower and stamens. History is exciting, as 1st levels are learning about their place in time, 2nd levels are focused on the Timeline of Life and learning about each of its periods, and 3rd level are learning about Fundamental Human Needs across time.

We began our new schedule of "specials" on Thursday afternoons, including Art, Spanish and Nature. Our Friday community meetings are a highlight of our week, as the students address agenda items that they have submitted for discussion and resolution. They are getting lots of practice using "I" statements as they express their concerns. In February we will have another visit from the Cincinnati Zoo Outreach program. We are also looking forward to going beyond the classroom to learn as we venture out on grade level field trips, as well as an all class trip.



NEWS FROM SENIORS

The Senior Class is gearing up for our annual Science Fair. Children (and parent helpers) are researching and choosing their topics for this exciting event. On Monday, February 29, the children will bring their completed projects to school. We will spend the morning presenting our projects to the class. Both the Preprimary and Junior classes will get a chance to visit during the day and interact with the students and their projects. During the evening, family and friends are invited to come and see the projects and discuss them with the students. We look forward to this experience, because our students always impress and amaze us.

The Seniors are excited to have the opportunity to study American Government, particularly the Judicial System by presenting mock trials based on fairy tales. Soon the Seniors will be busy choosing and learning their parts. The culmination of this project will be the presentation of these mock trials in a real federal courtroom in downtown Cincinnati. All families are invited to attend (*date to be announced*). Alumni teacher and parent, Stephen Richey, came to talk to the Senior Class about the American Government and the Judicial System. Many thanks to Mr. Richey for acquiring and arranging our visit to the Federal Courtroom.



NATURE NOTES

Did you hear about the Salad Party in your child's classroom last month? Maybe you heard them chanting, "It's a salad party! It's a salad party!" Each child had planted, tended, and watched grow their own mini salad gardens in our GrowLabs with lettuce, spinach, and herbs. After about 6 weeks, we harvested the greens and feasted on, or for some kids just tasted, the yummy fresh goodness! We will be planting Milkweed seeds and other native flowers and grasses in our GrowLabs that will then be planted around our campus to provide much needed food for Monarch butterflies and other animals.

Preparing for our January Winter Bird Count has kept us very busy since we returned from Winter Break. All students have had lessons using binoculars and field guides to identify birds by sight. Preprimary use a basic color palette and size system of identification while Juniors and Seniors become familiar with patterns and features such as bills, habits, location, perching, and more. We have listened to bird songs to identify some common birds by ear as well. They have applied these skills along with silence, stillness, and patience while watching at the bird blind and feeding stations outside each classroom. After the Bird Count is completed, you will see a display that the students will install of all bird species found during our survey.

Veronica

Veronica Brannen
CMH Naturalist

WISH LIST FOR BIRD STUDY:

Bags of Black Oil Sunflower Seeds
and Nyjer Thistle Seeds

Meet Lisa Merida-Paytes

ELEMENTARY ART TEACHER

Lisa Merida-Paytes holds an M.F.A from the University of Cincinnati (1997). Her work has been featured in exhibitions and publications regionally, nationally and internationally for the past 15 years. Lisa's passion is art and passing on the knowledge that she has acquired to budding artists. Elementary students working with Lisa this semester will learn and practice the aesthetic elements of art, techniques and skills while they describe form with light, drawing formulas, etc. The students will work with a variety of materials including block printing, painting, and casting paper sculptures.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD

It's a joy to see the school at work this year. So many volunteers and staff contribute their time and energy to make CMH the wonderful place that it is!

In September I listed the goals for the Board this school year. Here is an update on those goals:

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

- The budget continues on track, thanks to careful spending by Casey Reed and others on the staff. A big thanks goes to Margaret Pfarr, who entered the school in a Campbell's Soup contest where we won \$10k!! Looking ahead to next year, the dominant factor in the school's budget is enrollment. Susan Maggard is leading the Marketing Committee in a big push for new students, which will include targeted direct mailing, two open houses, and other activities that will get the CMH name considered by many potential new families.
- In October, we refinanced the school's debt, which is about \$965k. Our Treasurer, John Chevalier, found and arranged the new loan that has several advantages for the school. These include eliminating the escalating repayment terms of the prior loan, reducing the required minimum annual payments, and freeing \$150k in reserves. We also have the option to accelerate the payments should we choose to end the loan early.

Maintaining the physical facilities

- It is our goal to connect to the Loveland sewer system, but this requires an intercounty agreement that has not yet been signed. John Phenix has been diligent in staying in touch with the Metropolitan Sewer District of Cincinnati to facilitate this, with a target of being ready to do the work this summer.
- Our neighbor, the Grail, intends to lease or sell part of their land. CMH proposed to purchase some land that is adjacent to our property. Our proposal was rejected, but the Grail has stated publicly that it will retain ownership of the Oratory (aka "the Barn") and the land in front of it. The Grail has not yet made a final decision on what to lease or sell, but we do not expect the land surrounding the school to change significantly.

Recruit new Board members with specific skills

As 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. Please contact Donna if you are interested in serving on the Board.

Franco Medeiros
CMH Board President



GOODNIGHT GALA

shh... an adventure awaits!

Join us Saturday, March 19th for an evening of collaborative giving and joyful celebration to benefit the children, faculty and community of Children's Meeting House. This year's theme, *Goodnight Gala*, is based on the imaginary world of children's books.

Enjoy fantastic food, visiting with CMH parents and teachers, and bidding on a variety of items and services—like the beloved class projects—in the live and silent auctions. The night comes to an end with the much-anticipated class quilt raffle. Look for details to come soon!



Auction Co-Chairs
Suzanne Chevalier & Lori Walker

For up-to-date information, follow CMH on

