

December 18, 2011



**Dear Families,**

Well, it has been quite an interesting outdoor winter season for us so far this year. We are hoping for snow to make the outdoor environment a winter wonderland, but recently it has been a bit disappointing. We continue to have fun on the playground, though, and everyone is doing so well with their winter dressing—bravo! Waterproof mittens and boots are a real help out on the playground to keep fingers and toes warm. A scarf or neck warmer is also a nice addition if your child likes to stay toasty outside.



During the school year we learn about customs that are held by people throughout the world. Our cultural geography shelf is filled this month with objects from and activities about Europe. We learn to yodel (as you have perhaps heard by now), learn

European dances; we light candles for Hanukkah this month and decorate a small Christmas tree and a bird tree. One of the holidays the children learn about and participate in is "Lucia's Day." Every year on December 13, "Lucia's Day" is celebrated in Scandinavia. Lucia, even when still a very young girl, gave her wealth to the poor. Later, after she died, in honor of her good deeds, she was made a Saint. Her name, "Lucy," means "light" and because she died at the turning point of the year, at the winter's Solstice, when the nights begin to get shorter and day's light lasts longer and longer, she also became a symbol of light to the people of Scandinavia who live so far north. In Sweden children honor Saint Lucia and celebrate the wonderful things she did when she was alive.



They prepare special buns, the girls wear glittering Lucia crowns and the boys wear "Star Boy" hats. They clean

and wrap up toys to give away and hold a festival of lights ceremony with a procession where they share their "bread for hunger, light for darkness and toys for prosperity and goodwill."



We will be celebrating the holiday season at school by emphasizing the spirit of sharing and giving. The children have been busy decorating a bird tree with treats outside, and making small gifts to share with their families and, of course, something special for our Reading Buddies. As a part of holiday celebrations we hold a gift giving charity activity as it is a wonderful way for children to experience the sense of giving that is at the heart of the season.



If your child would like to participate would you please help him/her choose a toy from home that is still in good condition, but no longer a favorite. It should be cleaned up, wrapped as a gift and tagged indicating whether it is suitable for a boy or a girl. Please bring this gift to school on Thursday, Dec. 22. We will give these toys to a charitable organization on behalf of the Montessori Children's House students.

Thursday, December 22nd will be the last day of school before our winter break. School will resume on Tuesday, January 3rd. Thursday we will have a small holiday party on the line. If you would like to join us afterwards for some singing and treats on the playground you are most welcome.

### Winter Wear

Children may come to school carrying instead of wearing their snow pants (unless they have been playing outside before school.) This makes it much easier for them to hang up their belongings and get on with the day's activities. It also helps alleviate major congestion in the coat area. At MCH we will have outdoor recess every day unless it is too cold (below 0 degrees with the wind chill factor). Please dress your child for the weather and for playground exercise.



**Magpie alert:** Please help us with any small items leaving the classrooms in pockets. A small pink cube or other item that finds its way into your home may not be too noticeable, but it could have significant importance in the classroom environment. Thank you for returning anything of this nature to school.

## Extended Day



--visiting our wreath for the Winter Walk fund raiser and Angie at the NAG.

## Happy December Birthdays



**Maggie Cohrs**-----5 on December 2  
**Annika Reister**-----5 on December 5  
**Toby Meerts**-----3 on December 14

## Welcome

to Adam Chakladar and Mabel Goodman in the downstairs class starting after the winter break. We look forward to getting to know both of these new families at Montessori Children's House and we are so glad to have you in our school community. We also extend a very warm welcome to Julie Cohrs who has joined our staff as a support assistant in the

downstairs classroom every morning. Welcome, Julie!

## Thank you

to everyone who has brought snack to share in the Snack Box so far this year. All of your generosity does not go unnoticed.

And special thanks to Lilly Sabo-Hambrick's family for donating field trip snacks this year!

We also want to thank parents for their time sharing activities with the children this month—Emily Custard, Swedish pressed cookies, Amanda Eastvold-Pettis, German pickle ornaments, Anne Sabo-Hambrick, Norwegian Yule traditions. What a gift you give to bring these experiences to our school. Thank you.

## Calendar

December 22--last day before winter break

January 3-- school resumes

We wish you all a joyous holiday and a relaxing vacation! See you in 2012. Jingle all the way!

