

Dear Parents,

September 2011

Congratulations to all on completing the first month of school! The children (22 new ones!) have begun the school year well, and the returning students have such great enthusiasm and are excellent role models. Leadership skills are developing in a lovely natural way as they assume their roles in the Montessori classroom. The children are becoming purposeful in their work with the materials and seem happy to be socializing on a regular basis.



Thank you, for your attendance at the Parent Orientation Evening on September 15th. It was wonderful to formally welcome everyone to Montessori Children's House. Your decision to give your child an early childhood experience like Montessori is an important one. We are very happy you have chosen MCH. We appreciate your support of our work at school -- volunteering, chaperoning, observing, attending conferences and visit nights, and we appreciate your work in preparing your child for school -- meeting all their needs for rest, nourishing breakfasts, health, and good natured support. Our goals are to offer a quality Montessori education to the young child, a beautiful and enriching indoor and outdoor environment, and a community with successful social interactions. All of our goals serve in striving to "educate the human potential". We invite you this year to support yourself, too, during this precious time in the life of your family. We will be offering Parent Workshops on a variety of topics at school. Watch for the announcement of our first workshop soon.



Our commitment to building relationships in the community extends to the nearby Middle School (on Fridays we welcome our new group of Reading Buddies from 6th grade), and the High School-- student volunteers come to work with the children and gain experience in a professional and nurturing environment with the youngest learners in our community.



Along with the Montessori materials in the classroom, we have been working with science and language materials concerning Colors, Fruits and Vegetables. These are nice subjects with which to begin the year because they are so familiar to the children and it gives us great opportunities to use the harvests from our beautiful gardens in many ways. We have had a lot of fun singing "Going on a Picnic" and "Aiken Drum" and playing "Pass the Eggplant".

We celebrate the world of fruit with field trips to Fireside Apple Orchard this week where we have a full tour of the orchards, the sorting room, cool storage facility, pie making and the donut-making machine. Thanks for sending in those permission slips and thanks to those who will chaperone our very first field trips! This curriculum emphasis also gave us the opportunity to make a delicious fruit salad to kick off our cooking program at MCH. Thank you for your participation in providing a piece of fruit for your child to contribute. It's nice to begin this kind of a regular group activity with a "potluck" so that everyone can feel they are part of the community.



All seems to be going well with the drop off and pick up routine. If you or your child are having problems with these structures please let us know. Pretty soon it will all seem routine and easy, but we know the adjustment can be difficult at times. The routines in the classroom (bathroom, snack, recess, etc.) have been absorbed by the children very well already. They are quite independent and very responsible and aware of where they are supposed to be and what ground rules should be followed. These are the "big works" of the first few weeks of school and they have done extremely well with them.



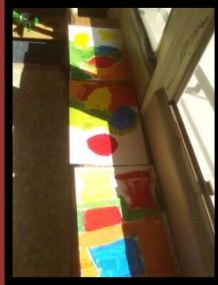
In the geography area we have been working with materials concerning the elements that make up the earth--Land, Air and Water--the world map and globes. Cultural geography work will begin soon with the continent of North America. A few fine "maps of the world" have been started in school already using a method developed by French early childhood educators that involves pre-writing skills and is quite lovely and satisfying to the young child.

The goings on of a Montessori classroom are difficult to describe in a newsletter. We have tried to capture some moments with the camera. You may access these photos on our web site at www.mchnorthfield.com. The photos can provide a perfect opportunity to discuss what your child really does at school. Parents are always welcome to visit and observe during class time and we extend this invitation to you. Please let us know a day or two in advance of your observation visit.

Welcome Emma Kleese (our two time Summer School assistant and long ago High School volunteer) back to Montessori Children's House! We are so glad you have joined us again.



Extended Day has been just fabulous! News for this group will be posted in the all school newsletter, so that families may follow the activities of the third year students/leaders in our school community. Thus far, they have been involved in welcoming our new students, demonstrating and modeling our classroom ground rules, and even giving lessons on materials that they are familiar with. This is such a thrill for them, and really serves to bolster their self esteem and reinforce their own knowledge. The Extended Day students also help in a big way to bring in the harvest at MCH. At this time of year we will be picking tomatoes, beans, peppers, potatoes and cabbages. The older students are so capable of seeing this kind of activity through to the culmination of a cooking class or a deposit in the composting pile.



Art at the Montessori Children's House: from Angie Ekern

"I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way- things I had no words for."
-Georgia O'Keefe

This beautiful quote connects to our first art lesson, a vibrant shape and color painting! Our extended day artists have been using their hands, hearts and minds together to create, communicate and discover. My heart is filled with so much joy to work with such creative young artists! Next week we will begin to explore the life and art of Eric Carle!

Here are some of the stories we have read that relate to our art lesson:

- "Mouse Paint" by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- "I Spy Shapes in Art" by Lucy Micklewait
- "Egbert, the Slightly Cracked Egg" by Tom Ross
- "Vincent's Colors" (words and pictures by Vincent van Gogh)



BIRTHDAYS we celebrated in September:

- PAT ROGNE-----September 6th**
- SOLVEIG SARTOR-----5 on September 8!**
- SHANA HODEL-----September 21**

Thanks!

Many of you have already begun to help provide our daily snack. It is a nice way for your child to participate in the practical life of the school in a generous and helpful way. We certainly appreciate the contribution on Mondays. We have started a rotational snack duty and you will have a turn once or twice during the school year. When your child brings home the "Snack Box" it will be your turn to provide snack for the next Monday (the box will come home on Friday). The rest of the week's snack will be provided at school. Below are some suggestions for snack--always enough for your child's class, please.

Snack Suggestions:

mini bagels

fruit slices/pieces

small sandwiches

snack mixes—cereal, pretzels, nuts, raisins

muffins

vegetables—carrots, celery, etc.

celery with peanut butter

peanut butter on crackers

apple sections with peanut butter

cheese and crackers

string cheese

breadsticks

raisin bread w/ cream cheese

...anything else you think the children would like. Keep it simple and remember that they can put the snack together—you provide the ingredients.



To take advantage of the beautiful fall weather we will have a photo day at school on Tuesday, 10/18. You may order a group photo of your child's class and individual photos for Extended Day students through the school. Order forms will come home following the photo day.

Dates to remember:

October 6 & 7—Fall Field Trips to Fireside Apple Orchard

October 18—photo day

October 20--21 No School—MEA

October 27--Parent Visit Night (your child brings you to school to show you what we do at MCH)

October 31—Halloween Party at school

November 4—No School--Parent Teacher Conferences

November 23--Alumni Visit Day

November 24-25--No School—Thanksgiving Break



We have been enjoying our time on the playground together at recess. We appreciate the help you offer your children in practicing their independence with shoes and coats. Soon enough it will be boots, hats, mittens, snowsuits...but for now -- Happy Fall!