



Newsletter October 2019

A Message from the Head of School

Dear Children's House Community,

October has been a fun month here at Children's House! The students are all working hard and having fun. The weather is starting to cool down a little, which has made playtime each day so much more enjoyable for both students and teachers. And, everyone has been getting excited for our Halloween festivities!

At the beginning of the month, we had visitors from Indonesia come to the school. They were in Florida as part of the Festival Indonesia in Orlando. They went into each classroom and showed the students the art of umbrella making. The Umbrella Master showed them the techniques, and then the classes had the opportunity to create their own umbrellas. They also shared a little about their culture with the classes. They were so excited to be at the school and loved working with the students!

Halloween brought lots of characters out for the day! We had our parade and sang songs, each class had fun activities for the children to experience, the Lower Elementary classes visited the Health Center to see the seniors they have gotten to know on their regular visits, and the Halloween Carnival was lots of fun! Thank you to the Middle School class and the sixth year students in Upper Elementary for preparing and hosting such a great event!

I would like to thank Solly Williams, and his crew, for coming and filling in the holes in the parking lot. What a surprise to see them out there working! This will make parking much less challenging (and much less bumpy!).

We're looking forward to a lovely November!

Take good care,
Ms. Kelly



Vey Miller, pictured below with students, is a parent of a child in Ms. Nettie's class. She is one of the people who helped arrange the Indonesian Festival and brought the artists to visit us.



"The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn."

~Maria Montessori



Children's House Community Group

Our next meeting is Wednesday, November 6 at 5:30. We'll be gathering in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us to elect the board members. Anyone interested in being on the board will be there to talk about what he/she can bring to the organization. You must be present to vote.

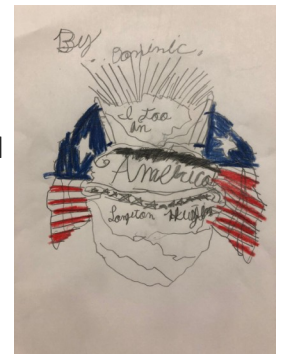
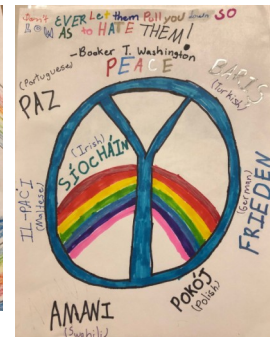
See you then!

Upper Elementary with Ms. Esther and Mr. Keegan

This month, Upper Elementary students have been hard at work reading and writing about people throughout history who have made notable contributions to our world. After our annual Halloween parade on Thursday, the students will return to the classroom to share their reports and projects with their classmates. In addition to their individual research, they have been reading quotes and studying people who have set examples of tolerance, anti-bias, and education for peace. Each week, our class discusses a person of interest using a quote and a poster from Teaching Tolerance Magazine. We then read short stories, poems, or biographies relating to each person and use them as a starting point for class discussions, journal writing, and our own artwork. Take a look at some of the inspiring work that our students are creating as we explore the important topics of tolerance, acceptance, and peace.

Langston Hughes by Logan James Elliott

The content of the poem "I, Too, Sing America" didn't really affect me because I have never been excluded for the color of my skin but it is important that we treat each other with kindness and fairness. It was important for Langston Hughes to write the poem because it helped us to stop segregation and show that we're all equal no matter the color of our skin. Poems like "I, Too Sing America" are important because they help us see from another standpoint of what is fair and not fair.



“Each moment is a chance for us to make peace with the world, to make peace possible for the world, to make happiness possible for the world.”

~Thich Nhat Hanh

Primary with Ms. Amy and Ms. Morgan

We have been very busy this month! We really enjoyed having the visitors from Indonesia come in and teaching us how to decorate our own umbrellas. There are new materials in the classroom to help us with our country studies. We have flags for all of the countries in North America! We also have new musical instruments to explore. At the beginning of the month, the kindergarteners went to the Marine Science Center. They enjoyed an eco-walk, and then got to see the different marine animals including turtles, fish, and birds.

Thank you to everyone who came to the Parent Education night! It's so nice to have parents come in and learn about everything going on in the classroom.

Thank you to everyone who donated coins during the Change for Change fundraiser!



Lower Elementary with Ms. Nettie and Ms. Kalie

Lower Elementary enjoyed the Orlando Philharmonic orchestra, making umbrellas with Indonesian artists, a visit to the pumpkin patch, and celebrating multiple birthdays this month! We look forward to having a Historical Halloween as well. The children have been working hard and planning their days carefully to accomplish their work goals. Lots of math, reading, writing and spelling work in October! This month we also collected donations toward items on our wish list and look forward to having a few new items in the classroom to enrich learning in November.

Musically Speaking....

The students have been singing some "spooky" Halloween songs this month! They have also continued playing games, doing movement activities and learning all about music in general. The third graders have begun learning how to play the ukulele and the second graders are happily working on the recorders.



"When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts."

~Dalai Lama

Toddler with Ms. Tashira and Ms. Stephanie

The toddlers had a very busy month! They have really settled into the routine and have begun to really engage more in lessons. A parent in the classroom brought in some caterpillar eggs and they were able to watch them grow, form their chrysalises, and then emerge as butterflies. After that, they set them free. The butterflies landed on the children before they flew off into the world! The children helped make cupcakes that they shared with the families at their Halloween celebration.



Lower Elementary with Ms. Princess and Ms. Nikki

We visited the Pumpkin Patch downtown. We got our faces painted and bought lots of normal pumpkins and some strange shaped pumpkins. It was a lot of fun. Thanks for driving us!

We all have our own caterpillars. We observe them while we wait for them to change into Painted Lady butterflies. Thank you Ms. Lynn.

We are learning about Native Florida plants and we found a lot of them at school.

We are working very hard to finish then present our Halloween Historical Portrayal reports to the class before Halloween. We are having a lot of fun in class.

This month's article was written by Loec J. and Mark A.

*“Education is not just about going to school and getting a degree. It's about widening your knowledge and absorbing the truth about life.”
~Shakuntala Devi*



Pictured above:
The students working with the Umbrella Master from Indonesia.

Some of the caterpillars and the butterfly release



We are very excited to announce that our garden was given another grant by the Volusia County Farm Bureau! We received a check for \$200, which was used to purchase a new composter and a compost thermometer. Thanks to Ms. Sharon for writing the grant application!

What's Growing in the Garden?

Planting continues in the garden. Borage, salvia, African blue basil, and more kale have been added to our garden this month. The tomato and pepper plants are thriving and starting to produce some fruit. Waiting for them to ripen is always difficult for the students. Our lettuce and herbs are doing well too. The mustard greens are large enough now to feed to the chickens, and they love them. Several weeks ago, Ms. Jessica and the students planted calendula and borage seeds which are ready to be potted. Soon they will be ready for the butterfly garden!

As part of the *Parts of a Seed* lesson, the children dissected kidney beans and observed the embryo plant inside.

There is exciting news from the hen house... our two new hens, Betty and Bella, are laying eggs now. Along with white and brown eggs, we now have green! Gathering and washing eggs from the chicken roosting boxes is a favorite activity in the garden.

Students have started making steppingstones for our peace path. It is fun to decorate them with shells and sea glass.

Last week the primary students released painted lady butterflies in our butterfly garden. Students are currently observing painted lady caterpillars as they grow, form a chrysalis, and emerge a butterfly. Some of the caterpillars even have names. This is a wonderful way for the students to learn about the life cycle of a butterfly. A big thank you to Lynn Kee from Stetson University, who's daughter is in the Toddler class, for providing the butterflies and caterpillar kits for us.



The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul.
~Alfred Austin

From the Reading Nook

Happy Fall, y'all! As the weather cools and the holidays are on the horizon, we are looking forward to spending quality time with our families. During these quality times, I encourage you to continue your families' goals of personal and shared reading times. I've recently read that some parents are giving incentives for reading, which we as a Montessori community understand as rarely effecting long-term behavior change because of its emphasis on short-term external motivations instead of long-term internal motivation; indeed, because reading should be a habit, offering rewards is likely to backfire, even if we are misled by short-term successes. Instead, if your child doesn't enjoy the personal or shared reading you have, you should find something for them to read/listen to that will interest them. Not all children are going to love everything that is offered for them to read, and it is okay for them to start a book and stop when they lose interest. Just try to push through the reluctance and seek out help for your child's varied interests. If you want a resource that provides many developmentally-appropriate books for children, I recommend FirstBook.org, this website lists books by age range and subject.

Middle School with Ms. Tara

The students just finished taking their finals for the first quarter grades. Phew!! They recently presented the initial phase of their Model UN country research projects to the class. This is the beginning of an in depth research project that we are very excited about. They have been working on a decimal math project where they are working within the context of running a restaurant. They have been using things like inventory lists, planning menus, working with margins, learning to figure server gratuity, and splitting tabs between multiple parties to help them practice multiplying and dividing decimals. And, they are continuing to work on CPR certification in Life Skills.

With Ms. Diane in Earth Science, they are studying plate tectonics. The students have given reports on different topics, including seismic waves and subduction zones. They are now building research projects related to earthquakes.

In addition to all of this, they have also been busy getting ready for the Halloween Carnival!

All of these titles can be found/reserved through the online and in person Volusia County library catalog.

Toddler Room:

The Thankful Book by Todd Parr
Where is Baby's Turkey? by Karen Katz
The Itsy Bitsy Pilgrim by Jeffrey Burton

Primary Rooms:

I Am Thankful by Suzy Capozzi
Frog and Friends: celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve by Eve Bunting
The Berenstain Bears: Thanksgiving All Around by Mike Berenstain

Lower Elementary Rooms:

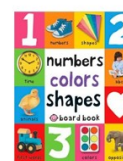
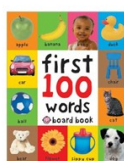
America's Real First Thanksgiving: St. Augustine, Florida, September 8, 1565 by Robyn Gioia
Charlie Bumpers vs. The Perfect Little Turkey by Bill Harley
Judy Moody & Stink: the Wishbone Wish by Megan McDonald

Upper Elementary:

Why We Have Thanksgiving by Margaret Hillert
Thanksgiving: The True Story by Penny Coleman
Mayflower Girl by Precious McKenzie

Middle School:

A Pioneer Thanksgiving: A Story of Harvest Celebrations in 1841 by Barbara Greenwood
The Circle of Thanks: Native American poems and songs of Thanksgiving by Joseph Bruchac
The Adventurous Life of Myles Standish and The Amazing but True Survival Story of Plymouth Colony by Cheryl Harness



En español

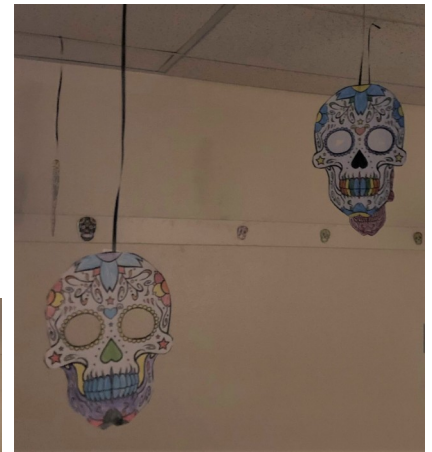
Dia de Muertos, the Day of the Dead, is a Mexican holiday celebrated over multiple days (for 2019, October 31 through November 2). It is a time for families to gather to pray and remember their friends and family members who have passed away. In Mexican culture, death is viewed as a natural part of the human cycle. Mexicans view it not as a day of sadness, but a day of celebration because their loved ones awake and celebrate with them. Some countries in Mexico call it as Dia de los Muertos.



People go to cemeteries to be with the souls of the departed and build private altars (ofrendas) containing favorite foods and beverages, as well as photos and memorabilia, of the departed, as well as marigolds (sometimes called Flor de Muerto, Flower of Dead). The intent is to encourage visits by the souls, so the souls will hear the prayers and the comments of the living directed to them.

After talking with her classes about Dia de los Muertos, Ms. Karen created an ofrenda in her classroom and invited everyone from the community to bring things to place there. The Primary classes colored in the small masks on the walls, and the Elementary classes colored the larger masks hanging from the ceiling. The classes all took turns visiting the Spanish room on November 1.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day_of_the_Dead



La vida de los muertos se coloca en la memoria de los vivos.

~ Marcus Tullius Cicero

Primary with Ms. Caitlyn and Ms. Cori

The wonderful month of October has officially come to a close! We enjoyed lots of fun activities and studies, raised money for an awesome cause, we learned all about the continents and oceans, and had the best time celebrating Halloween amongst our school community.



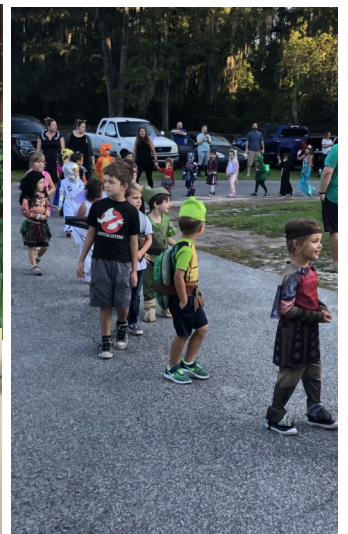
Now, we welcome the month of November, and hopefully cooler weather. This month, we will be learning about so many wonderful things. Our main focus will be our home continent of North America and all its beauty. Within that, we will learn about many elements including Native Americans, Thanksgiving, trees and leaves, landforms, Veterans Day and the landmarks and animals native to our continent. While we get closer to the holidays, please keep an eye out for emails regarding events and notices.



Thanks as always!

Pictured at right: The class really enjoyed counting the change each Friday, then recording their progress. Thanks to everyone who contributed!

Halloween



Who was Maria Montessori?



Dr. Maria Montessori was born in Italy in 1870. She was a forward thinker who broke the gender barriers and enrolled in an all boys technical school to become an engineer. However, she ended up moving to the University of Rome and enrolled in Medical School. She faced great animosity from her peers and professors, as she was the only woman in the program. For example, she was made to perform dissections of cadavers alone, after school hours, because they felt it was inappropriate for her to be in a room with a naked body while men were in the room with her. In her last two years, she studied pediatrics and psychiatry, and worked in the pediatric consulting room and emergency service, becoming an expert in pediatric medicine. After all the hostility she encountered, she graduated from medical school in 1896 with honors.

After graduating, she continued the research she had begun in college at the University's psychiatric clinic. She observed children with mental disabilities, and these observations helped to form her future work in education. In 1900, she was appointed co-director of the Orthophrenic School, which trained teachers in educating children with mental disabilities. She was there for two years and developed methods and materials which she would later adapt to use with mainstream children. The Orthophrenic School was a huge success. The children enrolled had been considered "uneducable", but ended up passing public examinations given to mainstream children.

She went back to the University of Rome and enrolled in philosophy courses (which included what we now consider psychology). She also did various independent studies including anthropology and educational philosophy, and did experimental research in elementary schools. It was during this time that she started thinking about adapting her methods of teaching mentally disabled children to mainstream education.

In 1906, she was invited to oversee a group of children of working parents in a new apartment building for low income families. This gave her an opportunity to try her educational method to mainstream children. Someone suggested the name Casa dei Bambini (Children's House), and the first Casa opened on January 6, 1907. She had fifty or sixty children between the ages of two and seven. She had brought the materials she developed at the Orthophrenic School, and they were introduced to the children in the classroom. Maria did not teach the children herself, but guided the teacher. She observed the behaviors of the children and this continued to help form her educational method. She saw deep attention and concentration, multiple repetitions of activities and a sensitivity to order in the environment. She also noted that given the choice, the children would choose the practical activities over the toys, and were not motivated by rewards. Then, she saw that self-discipline emerged spontaneously.

Dr. Montessori then created the physical environment based on her observations. She used tables and chairs that were light enough for the children to move, and she made sure all the children's materials were placed on low shelves so the children always had access to them. She included an outdoor area and encouraged children to come and go as they please. Through the years, she added, altered, and removed the materials as she observed the children working with them, and saw how frequently they were chosen by the children.

She believed that children are individuals and it's important to treat them as such. She experimented with free choice, uninterrupted work and the freedom of movement and activity within the limits of the environment. Through this, she saw that independence is the aim of education.

More to come next month!

Source https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Montessori