



# Center News

## *Directors Notes*

### **Dear Parents,**

Everyone is seeking light at the end of the tunnel, eager for this pandemic that has overtaken us to finally get under our control. As I think that two school years have been indelibly stained with the words Covid-19, I find that despite the impact and the losses, there are so many reasons to be grateful.

I am grateful that our school has been able to safely stay open and functioning in a true Montessori approach, and remarkably free of the virus, with only one case on campus. We always had confidence in the children's abilities to adjust to any changes we would have to put into place, for Montessori educated students are known for their ability to adjust to new conditions and continue to pursue an education. But early on we questioned our ability to give them the education we are all dedicated to providing and that we believe they truly deserve.

What we found in living through these days, was that we were able to actually enhance the educational experience at school in many ways, just by being forced to look at things a little differently. And for this we are grateful. Moving the children more to our outside environments brought them closer to nature and it also brought the adults closer to nature. The study of botany and zoology has always been a part of the Montessori curriculum, but it took on a new importance and focus this year, and we believe we are all better for it. Similarly, our emphasis on spending time on art and meditation and yoga increased, as we realized anew the importance of these activities in our lives and the lives of the children.

We are grateful that we were able to reestablish a campus in Lakewood Ranch and welcome these new families to CMS and offer returning families a second location. Miss Betty and Miss Amy have set up their classroom and created a community at the Peace Presbyterian Church facilities. The children have had the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors on that campus and we look forward to a future where the Lakewood Ranch class can join our main campus for events and activities.

We are grateful that we were able to continue certain traditions that are important to the children and include our distance learners. The Elementary 1 team, along with a number of very dedicated parents and the support of the parents' association CEPA, were able to host the annual Holiday Gift Shop. The 3rd grade class had the opportunity to run the shop, with the distance learners coming to campus to participate. With COVID procedures in place and Miss Rachel considering every step, the children delighted in displaying their goods and helping CMS students shop. The middle school was also able to enjoy their annual Oompa Loompa class secret gift exchange. The children purchased gifts for one another and again, the distance learners were a part of the fun. We are grateful for this normalcy in all of their lives.

And we are grateful that we have been able to continue to offer our families options in their child's education, with one-third of our students remaining with online learning this year. Our teachers spent time this summer thinking of ways to better the experience and education for the online learners, and we are grateful to our teachers for their continued flexibility.

Now, with a vaccine or two in our midst, we join the others who rejoice at that light at the end of the tunnel. We share with you our gratitude for your support and cooperation and for the confidence you have had in us as we have negotiated our way through providing school for our students. We're almost there, and when we get there it will be because of our joint efforts that we have kept the virus away from our school.

Enjoy whatever holidays you plan to celebrate. And look for that light in the new year, the light of hope, of cooperation, of respect, and of joy.

More later,

Janice Mattina

Founding Head

# Center Montessori News

*Primary 1*  
Teacher: Ms. Saleha  
Assistant: Ms. Rosa

Experiencing a wide range of emotions is something adults and children alike share in common, it is simply part of being human! While most adults can navigate their emotional ups and downs with seeming ease, we must remind ourselves that children are just beginning this journey and have so much to learn from us along the way. The authors of the book *Positive Discipline for Preschoolers* tell us that the long road to emotional regulation starts by giving children a supportive environment where they are helped to “learn to recognize and name their emotions and understand that feelings and actions are different” (p.82).

In our classroom, we have been practicing a number of activities geared towards emotional literacy. The children love looking at the “Feelings Poster” and making their own drawings for different emotions. They point to how they feel in the moment and go back to the poster to point to a different feeling, this helps them build vocabulary for emotions and an understanding that feelings come and go.

We have also introduced a Positive Discipline activity named after the four basic emotions “Glad, Mad, Sad or Scared: The Wheel of Feelings.” As a group, we brainstormed words that are related to each of these emotions and wrote them on a paper, then on a large poster which we kept hanging on a wall for reference. Through the numerous experiences we are having in our classroom, the stories shared amongst each other and the children’s books we read to the group, our wheel of feelings is growing.

If you would like to extend the work we have been doing in class to the home environment, a fun activity would be to keep a log at of all the feeling words your child encounters with you and revisit the list together and see it grow.



Olivia looking at the emotion poster and pointing at how she feels in the moment.

Yiyi looking at the feeling cards and identifying the different emotions.



Alexandra learning to name different emotions and making the facial expression representing them.

Juniper placing a sticky note with one feeling word on our Glad, Mad, Sad, Scared poster.



# Center Montessori News

*Primary 2*  
*Teacher: Ms. Crystal*  
*Assistant: Ms. Tammy*

What a perfect time of year to explore our senses, with all the festive smells in the air. We have brought back a few favorite lessons in the practical life area of the classroom. One involves the use of a mortar and pestle, to grind up cloves, and the other a grater for grating cinnamon. You can just imagine how nice it is to walk into our classroom.

The children have also enjoyed snowflake making. This lesson builds upon the child's cutting skills but also lead us into science research and discussion! Together we have discovered that every snowflake is unique. We then decided as our last science project of the fall semester to grow crystal snowflakes.

The children all loved the sewing lessons we have had over the last few weeks. We started with weaving, then threading and finally making their very own stocking. Each child hand sewn buttons onto felt. They came out so adorable, we hope you liked them!

Our kindergarteners are hard at work and are eagerly gaining skills in math, reading and handwriting. A new favorite in math for the kindergarteners is working with the stamp game. The exchange game is to demonstrate that 10 units can be exchanged for a ten-bar, 10 ten-bars can be exchanged for a hundred-square, and 10 hundred-squares can be exchanged for a thousand-cube. The benefit of the Montessori math approach is the children manipulate the materials, in effect "seeing" the math operation as it takes place, creating a better and more authentic understanding of the principles involved.

With the cooler weather we have had lots of practice being independent with putting on and taking off jackets, sweaters, and shoes. The children have all done great with this new addition to their transition and are all mostly independent with this. It does take a little extra time but it is definitely great practice. Remember to allow this independence at home where and when possible.

During the month of December, we listened to music of the Nutcracker ballet by Tchaikovsky during arrival and rest times of the day. Then during party day, we watched a live recording of a performance by the North Atlanta Ballet (Skyler's Grandmother's school in Atlanta). We had so much fun enjoying it during our Winter Crafts/Pajama Party. We had such a jolly time playing games, coloring crafting and dancing. There were beautiful sugar plum fairies all around the classroom!

One of the highlights of the season on campus is the Holiday Gift Shop program run by E1. Although, this year was a little different, it was definitely enjoyed by all. A generous portion of the proceeds go to Turning Points. The children had a wonderful time picking presents for their loved ones. Thank you to those who participated!

We hope you enjoyed the live circle times this semester. Thank you to everyone who was able to join us, we love doing these! We set some new dates for Spring soon.

Please remember to check transparent classroom for photos, an update on your child's progress, and lesson information. If you have any questions please contact me.



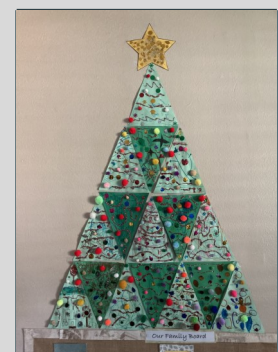
Vanique practicing her handwriting using the chalk board.

Isabella T and Luci working on the Map of the United States of America.



Eli sorting pom-poms by color using a small tong

Our tree made of triangles!



# Center Montessori News

## Primary 3

Teacher: Ms. Betty

Assistant: Ms. Amy

This month we started learning about the life and work of one of the most famous artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Pablo Picasso. We learned that Picasso's father was an art teacher and he encouraged Picasso to explore art at early age. Together we looked at some of his artwork and the children searched for shapes. We used our Montessori map to locate Spain, where Picasso was born, and the children observed the distance between Spain and Florida. Using a piece of paper with a face template, the children recreated Picasso's artwork. They used blue and pink to represent Picasso's Blue and Rose Periods. The children's artwork will be framed and displayed in our classroom. We will continue learning about other famous artist throughout the school year and the children will create artwork related to each artist.

The children have music class on Tuesdays and Thursday. They have so much fun using jingle bells, rhythm sticks, scarves, and drums to play along when singing holiday songs. They feel so proud and confident when they learn new words of the songs and love to sing to us and with their peers. Additional instruments will be presented to the children to explore as the school year continues.

There are certain experiences that only a school setting can provide. As educators, we see again and again the importance of participating in group activities and how this time together helps build healthy relationships in the classroom. This also encourages empathy and the idea that everybody's opinion matters. The children learn and model for one another how to be respectful of on another's opinions, wheter they feel they are right or wrong.

These life lessons are one of the reasons we have science experiments every Thursday. It is during this time that the children have the opportunity to express themselves and learn to feel confident talking in front of a group. Our most recent experiment started with a container filled with water, a container filled with vinegar and a container filled with lemon juice. We placed a group of coins in each container and counted to 120. The coins were then removed and the children were asked to compare the coins from each container, to determine which ones where the shiniest. The children concluded that the coins submerged in lemon juice were the shiniest. They also noticed that the coins submerged in vinegar left some residue or particles in the container. Their conclusion was conclusion that the particles were germs, and we discussed the importance of washing hands after handling money.

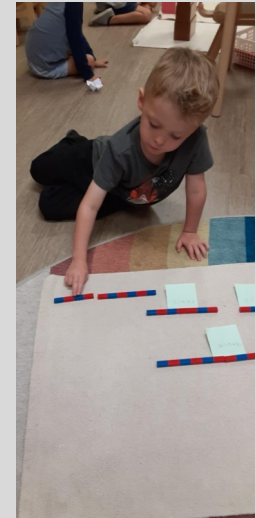
As our first half of the year comes to close, I see that the children are more confident in our classroom, in the activities and in their relationships with their peers. Our classroom commu-

nity is getting stronger , with the older students regularly helping the younger students in every day tasks, students showing respect for one another's work, and enjoyment and pride caring for the environment. The children have learned their responsibilities in the classroom, are increasingly independent with the materials, are following the rules and routines in a nice matter, and are truly thriving. It is such a joy to be a part of this process.

Thank you to Miss Alicia for providing musical instruments and songs for our music class.



Children spontaneously working together with Miss Amy.



Eadon is doing addition using the small Red and Blue Rods.



Will is practicing how to wrap presents.



Theo and Alec working together to decorate a Christmas tree.

# Center Montessori News

## Elementary 1

Teachers: Ms. Rachel & Ms. Giannina  
Assistant: Ms. Melanie

Dr. Maria Montessori created the Cosmic Curriculum to introduce the children to the entirety of the universe. She observed that children were inherently interested in the universe in which they live and the interconnectedness of all things, as well as their place with the universe. By giving the lessons and a framework of the universe, the child begins to understand his or her place and finds peace, harmony, and belonging within the world, understanding that we are all connected to one another. She said, "Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe... for all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

As Montessorians, we begin our lessons focusing on the larger parts of the universe, starting with the Big Bang, as well as various creation stories from different cultures around the world. We then begin to examine the smaller parts of the universe; including the physical earth with science and botany, living creatures, human beings and their fundamental needs, as well as geography and history. Inherent in all of this is the interconnectedness of all things. Lesson topics are inter-woven between many subjects and disciplines as we strive to educate the whole child.

With this in mind, we share an example of what this looks like in the classroom. This week, the children had a Meditation based on a painting by Russian artist, Vasily Kandinsky entitled, "Blue Painting," created in 1924. Prior to the meditation, the children were asked to identify things that they see in the painting. We then began to focus on our breath. As the children began their guided meditation, they also learned some details about Vasily Kandinsky and the style of the art work.

Kandinsky was very interested in how the arts were all connected to one another – especially the connection between music and art. In fact, Kandinsky even named many of his paintings after musical symphonies or improvisations. During the meditation, soft classical music played in the background, as Kandinsky frequently painted to music. Kandinsky also wrote about color theory and the idea of "synesthesia" which is the scientific name for a condition where a person associates sounds with colors. We ended the meditation by reflecting on our own favorite types of music, singers, and songs.

Following the meditation, the children were invited to listen to two different types of music and paint to the music. The first painting was created while listening to classical music just like Kandinsky would have done. The second painting was created while listening to a contemporary song entitled "Happy" by Pharrell Williams. The children delighted in this experience.

In connection with these activities, we read the book, "The Girl Who Heard Colors" by Marie Harris, a fun and colorful story about a little girl with synesthesia. Simultaneously in the classroom, the children are studying their geography puzzle maps. They can identify the countries of Europe, including Russia where Kandinsky was born, and Germany where he attended art school. In addition, we are studying the animals and the biomes of Europe.

The children's next experience with music and color came with Ms. Alicia in their music classes. Ms. Alicia is utilizing the Google Chrome Music Lab with the children to create music and songs. This is another way in which we have become creative in problem solving during the pandemic since the children cannot share the instruments or sing together. One of the applications through this website is even named Kandinsky! The children are using the Kandinsky application to make colorful shapes to write their own music, exploring sounds while creating their own art as well. Read Ms. Alicia's article in this newsletter to learn more about it!



"Blue Painting"

Vasily Kandinsky, 1924

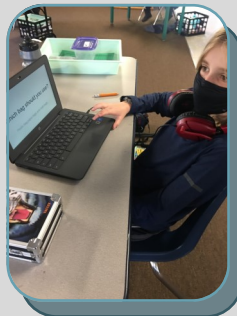
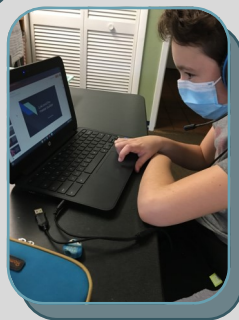


# Center Montessori News

## Elementary 2

Teachers: Ms. Jayne & Ms. Erica

“All work is noble, the only ignoble thing is to live without working,” posits Maria Montessori in her book, *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Work is what the E2 classroom is all about, even during these unprecedented times. Students are managing their work in a whole new way, using Google Classroom for their assignments and the organization of their work. Continuing to function in Montessori ways, students have learned to comfortably navigate a complex digital system. It is amazing to see the focus, flexibility, and diligence of the E2 students as they have worked toward mastery of this new platform. Google classroom has enabled E2 students and teachers to communicate assignments and share a variety of digital files, in a streamlined way, through the online platform. Recently students have been working on Google slides to create their own slide presentations to share with the class. This was a collaborative work in which students worked together to share digital and research skills as well as ideas about their projects. Pictured are some of the students working on the project as well as some of their slides.



“Our aim is not merely to make the children understand, and still less to force them to memorize, but so to touch their imagination as to enthuse them in their innermost core.” Maria Montessori. Hence, we work together to find many interesting and creative ways to accomplish our assignments. Recently we have been exploring both 2 D geometric rendered drawings and 3D geometric shapes. Students make their own unique designs and then folded them into shapes like cubes, triangular prisms, and tetrahedrons. Pictured is a student showing her tetrahedron project.



Another aspect of our learning this year has been the study of our ancient human roots. From Australopithecines to Cro-Magnon, we have explored our long and eventful human history. As part of this study we are reading the book *aloud, Dar and the Spear thrower* by Marjorie Crowley. This is about a young Cro-Magnon boy who has an encounter with a stranger from a neighboring clan. The boy is inspired to go on a quest to find his true talents and garner the superior hunting device the adl adl. Soon we will be reading and performing a play adapted from the book. Either on zoom or in a face to face presentation, the play promises to be an exciting activity in the coming new year.

Pictured is a student showing the costume for the play



# Center Montessori News

## Level 3 6th Grade

Teacher: Ms. Deana

It's hard to believe that the first semester is over. Our classroom is a busy hive of activity and we are comfortable with our routines.

We started this work cycle with lessons on polyhedral shapes. The students learned about the five Platonic solids and thirteen Archimedean solids. They learned to calculate the number of faces, edges, and vertices for each shape. They made small paper models and are in the process of making larger models from sheets of cardboard. Our geometry lessons this cycle were about naming triangles by their sides and angles. They learned the definitions and etymology of acute, right, obtuse, equilateral, isosceles, and scalene. They practiced sorting and categorizing the different types of triangles. We finished our studies on weather and atmosphere with a final lesson on severe weather. We moved onto combustion. The students had background readings and then performed some experiments to show how oxygen is necessary for combustion to occur. They learned about different parts of a flame and experimented to see how gravity affects a candle's flame. We watched a video to show how the development of the Davy Safety Lamp saved the lives of miners by dispersing the heat from a flame to lower the temperature so it didn't ignite the gasses in the caves.

Our first novel that we read as a class was *Loser*, by Jerry Spinelli. It's about a young boy who is nicknamed "Loser" by his classmates because he is so awkward and clumsy. He is endearing and enthusiastic and eventually wins everyone over. The students had a project to complete after finishing the novel. They had a choice of writing a letter to the author, creating a scrapbook about the main character, researching the postal system, or writing an essay about bullying. Their reading this fall also included a book of their choice for a book report. They were required to write a book report that included four paragraphs and also prepare a food that was somehow represented in their book.

Another fun writing activity this cycle was an essay and a presentation about how to do something. We had students show us how to make ice cream, do card tricks, set up an email account, and even make a chocolate microwave mug cake. We held a writing celebration where the students could share some of their writing with each other.

Each day I am amazed by these hard working, caring, and fun sixth grade students!



# Center Montessori News

## *Ms. Alicia's music notes*

The Google Chrome Music Lab was created in 2016 as part of the Music in Our Schools Month celebration. On this website you will find experiments designed to help you explore music and sound. The Music Lab is an excellent tool for students of any age to discover how music relates to science, math, and art. Music teachers can also use it to teach concepts and help students practice music skills. Each experiment on the website is free and it is not necessary to set up an account. It can be easily accessed with your phone, tablet or computer. You can learn more about how the Chrome Music Lab began at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdwmtU-FkrA>.

At the beginning of the school year the E2 and L3 students began exploring different experiments on the Chrome Music Lab. They used the Rhythm Lab to practice and create rhythm patterns and Song Maker to compose their own music. There is even the capability to save songs the students have composed.

Most recently, the Elementary 1 students began to learn about the Kandinsky Experiment in the Chrome Music Lab. Vasily Kandinsky was the inspiration for this experiment with his belief in the strong connection between music and creating art. This experiment turns anything you draw into sounds. Circles, rectangles and pentagons become singing characters. Non-pitched percussion sounds are created by drawing triangles and hearts. Lines, stars and scribbles become various pitches. The pitch is higher or lower depending on where you draw on the page. The three instrumentation choices are blue and green for the synth sounds, pink and purple for the pitched percussion, and orange and yellow for orchestral instrument sounds. After the picture is drawn you simply push the play button to “hear” your work of art. The Elementary 1 students first began by learning what kind of sounds the different shapes and lines would create. Then each class collaborated to create and draw pictures and listen to their creation. They particularly enjoyed the ability to change which instruments played their composition. During the second class the students had an opportunity to individually make the sounds come alive using different lines and shapes. Some students drew abstract lines and shapes but others tried writing words or drawing objects to see what sounds that would create. The possibilities are limitless and the students each brought their own unique approach to “drawing” their songs. We will continue to use this experiment and also explore the other ones available at the Chrome Music Lab website. If you and your child would like to try these musical experiments at home the link is: <https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/>.

