



# The Montessori Schoolhouse

Dear Families,

As another year races by, propelled by the momentum of our eager learners, we are delighted to share news and updates from The Montessori Schoolhouse. During this wintry season of chilly weather, our students are tackling topics ranging from what makes plants thrive to what makes countries thrive, and much, much more – read on!

## Lower Elementary

The Lower Elementary classroom is thriving. Students are observing chemical changes to test the **Scientific Method**, practicing math processes including **subtraction with borrowing**, **Venn Diagrams**, and balancing equations.



We have just begun our first Big Spring Unit, **The History and Culture of Italy**, which is so full of interesting topics, we can hardly breathe (Bell Towers, Leonardo da Vinci, pasta, Michelangelo and Venice!)

We have also begun our new Spring Science Unit: **Simple Machines and Inventions**. Our students are so engaged and so joyful every day that we can hardly wait to feed their learning.

And I mustn't forget to mention poetry. After lessons on **Metaphor** and **Adjectives**, and reading eloquent poetry from several sources, the students are writing their own Imagist verse. These are poetic gems.

### UPCOMING EVENTS & INFORMATION

#### Rodeo Break

No School  
Thursday & Friday  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

#### Spring Break

No School  
Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup>  
through  
Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>  
(School resumes  
Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>)

#### Parent Conferences

April  
*Stay tuned for details!*

#### Standardized Testing

The week of April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
through April 7<sup>th</sup>

#### Teacher Workshop

No School  
Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

#### AZ State Tax Credit Contributions

Contribute through  
April 17<sup>th</sup>!

# Upper Elementary

In Upper El, we began the semester by introducing our new class pets: hermit crabs! We learned about their habitat and diet, as well as their mutualistic relationship with sea anemones. We also learned about taking care of these cute little creatures, and the students are taking turns taking care of them. In all, we have four hermit crabs in two classrooms. Their names are Cocoa & Mocha in Perla's class, and Coco & Sunny in Paige's class. More recently, we have been learning about the **Plant Kingdom**, **Photosynthesis**, and **Plant Adaptations**, a lesson about how plants have evolved over time to survive in their habitats.

Our Geography Unit has focused on learning about America before, during, and after the **Revolutionary War**. More recently we dove into learning about **Democracy**, the **Three Branches of Government**, and **Voting**. In math, fifth grade students are learning about using **Decimals** across all operations in math. Meanwhile third and fourth grade students wrapped up **Fraction Camp!** The fourth graders have now moved onto working with **Decimals** using multiplication, addition, and subtraction, while third graders are learning how to **Read a Clock** and **Tell Time**. You might see if they want a watch now!

In Language, the students have been writing **Opinion Essays** about a variety of topics, including which animal they believe makes the best pet. More recently, we have been focusing on **Paraphrasing** and **Writing with Details**. The students really enjoyed writing a detailed paragraph about the most disgusting sandwich. Ask them all about it!

# Middle School

Winter in the Middle School has been busy and exciting. We did a mini unit on **World War I** in order to set the stage for our **World War II** and the **Holocaust studies**. We held a mock rigged election for a totalitarian leader of our classroom including student Secret Police. Two students had to be "escorted out of the room," no one voted for me, and instead there were 3 write-in votes for Anisa, one of our 7th graders LOL.



We've studied timelines, analyzed causes, and learned human stories of suffering and heroism. Our literature book is *Echo* by Pam Munoz Ryan, which is an interwoven narrative about multiple children in different situations during WWII, and students have enjoyed learning music from the book on our classroom keyboard. We're reading *The Book Thief* for our read-aloud, another Holocaust story. In science we're studying **Physics** and have made balloon rockets and calculated the momentum of moving objects. We're learning hands-on **Algebra** and practicing calculating the volume and surface area of 3D solids.

Students are practicing their research and informative writing skills through **biography studies** (significant

historical figures that students chose to write about include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Vladimir Lenin, Dolly Parton, and David Bowie).

We've had a few snowy trips outside with our Nature Teacher Treven, including a very frozen day on Mt. Lemmon.

Students are starting to anticipate the spring-- one student asked if we'll have a graduation ceremony for Josh, our very first Montessori Schoolhouse 8th grader! The answer is yes-- it's time to start those traditions.

## Preschool & Kindergarten (6<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

As we enter our second semester the children are excited about our new adventures in **Antarctica** and **Africa**. In the Mesquite classroom there are penguins popping up everywhere as we explore this arctic desert continent. The children are enjoying African animals galore in the Palo Verde room.



For our Lunar New Year celebration, we had the honor of welcoming Charles Prachachalerm to our morning circle. Charles is not only Livia's grandfather he is an accomplished Chinese calligrapher who enthralled us all with his beautiful art. He gifted all the children personalized characters of their names to take home.

We have also been lucky enough to have Jazmine and Hazelle's mom, Natalie, share her love of yoga with the children. The yoga bug is contagious, and we are happy to have a good bug to catch this year! Other popular visitors have been found on our Milkweed plant outside in our garden. This year we have had not only our Monarch butterflies we now have Queen butterflies! Such a joy to see the children so engaged and so protective of these beautiful creatures.

## State Standardized Testing Updates

Spring also happens to be the season of standardized English, Math, and Science tests in Arizona. Here are some of the key details to keep in mind:

- English and Math testing for grades 3 - 6 will take place the week of **April 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup>**.
- Science testing for grade 5 only will take place on **April 11<sup>th</sup>**.
- All students need to be rested, well-fed, and present!
- Also, please make an extra effort to arrive on time that week.

We will send out reminders closer to the testing dates.

## Odds & Ends

**Arizona School Tax Credit:** Thank you to all the families who have re-directed their AZ taxes to our school through payment of the Activity Fee. If you have not yet contributed, please consider doing so as soon as possible. You can allocate \$200/\$400 of your state income tax to our school until April 15, 2023 – every dollar you contribute, you receive back on your AZ Taxes! Ask Rosemary or Jennie for details if you are unsure how this tax credit works.

Lastly, we want to wish everyone a wonderful Rodeo Break and thank you for your ongoing participation in all things pertaining to The Montessori Schoolhouse!

We are thrilled to report that we are fully enrolled for the coming school year – including our newly launched middle school.

Warmly,

*Regine, Hannah, Jennie, Olive, Perla, Paige Noble, Summer, Rhonda, Jessica, Dolores, Maddy, Nui, Paige Isom, Emirse, Leah, Ana, Roxane, Treven, Dylan, Emmaline, Alyssa, Lil, and Rosemary*

### A note on absences...

Daily absences are very costly to the student, let alone weekly. Teachers present at least 2 full Circle presentations each day, one first thing in the morning and a second lesson after lunch. Please see the attached “What a Student Misses When They Are Absent” to gain further insight into how much is missed when absent from school in our Montessori classrooms.

### A Jellyfish

A jellyfish’s tentacles are like knobs and lanterns hanging like a mobile colors like the rainbow

When I see a jellyfish,  
it reminds me of the sea

- Kasiah (1<sup>st</sup> Grade)

“The essence of independence is to be able to do something for one’s self.”  
— Dr. Maria Montessori

# What a Student Misses When They Are Absent

Daily absences are very costly to the student, let alone weekly. Teachers present at least 2 full Circle presentations each day, one first thing in the morning and a second lesson after lunch.

Here is a sample of one week's lessons in Lower Elementary:

Monday	9AM Equations: Balance Math 1PM Adding/Minus
Tuesday	9AM Italy Object Basket: Intro to Spring Culture Unit 1PM Plurals
Wednesday	9AM The Scientific Method 1PM PE and Yoga
Thursday	9AM Parts of a Volcano, including video and demonstrations 1PM Rock Adjectives for Writing and Poetry

Needless to say, Upper Elementary teaches a similar, intensive sequence of non-repeating, invaluable lessons in Math, Reading, Writing, Science, Geography and History. Here is Week 7 work that was presented in Upper Elementary:

Upper El Spring Week 7 (February 13-17)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A.M	Plant Adaptations	3 <sup>rd</sup> Math: Reading a Clock 4 <sup>th</sup> Math: Introduction to Geometry Terms 5 <sup>th</sup> Math: Quadrilaterals	Branches of Government How a Law is Passed	3 <sup>rd</sup> Math: Telling Time 4 <sup>th</sup> Math: Types of Angles 5 <sup>th</sup> Math: Perimeter & Area	Students shared their "Most Disgusting Sandwich" paragraph on circle
P.M.	Writing with Details: Making a Sunflower Butter & Jelly Sandwich (with demonstration)	How to Paraphrase	Writing with Details: Write about the most disgusting sandwich ever!  OR Final draft of Opinion Essay (if not done)	P.E. Recess Listen to our Class Novel: Matilda	Chess and Curriculum Based Art Activities
Additional: Individual Math and Writing Work with a Teacher, Spelling Practice & Quiz, Reading Comprehension Practice, Scientific Reading Comprehension & Critical Thinking, Editing, Supermarket Math					

With days missed your student also loses their place in the social rhythms and connections in the classroom culture. Please consider these important losses when keeping your child out of school. Schedule non-medical absences during our many vacation days off to reduce missed classroom time.

Thank you so much.