



Little Star Montessori

Newsletter

February 2010

General Updates

Office News

Registration for 2010-11

In-house registration for the 2010-11 school year began on February 1st. Scholarship applications will be available for the entire month of February, due back on March 4th.

We are attempting to implement a Friday morning program that would involve rotating teachers, and would include outdoor education and a variety of hands on activities. When you register, we ask that you select between T-TH morning programs for your 2-day minimum enrollment. Should we not have sufficient enrollment on Friday, we will cancel the program.

Registration opened to the public on February 16th.

Parking

As you have seen, when you come to drop off/pick up your child, our parking lot fills quickly. When you park, please make sure that you pull forward if possible to allow room for others. Make sure that you do NOT park alongside the front fence, as that is our fire lane. It also creates a blind spot so

From the Classrooms

Kinder

On the first of February, the kindergarten class tabulated the results from our new weather chart. Our very own pint-sized meteorologists recorded each day's weather, and then worked together to count and graph the weather patterns at the end of the month. Out of the 20 days recorded in our pie chart, bar graph, and illustrated diagrams, 9 days were cloudy, 4 sunny, 4 rainy, and only on 3 days did we see snow falling from the sky! Now in mid-February, it feels like



winter has been a faint whisper rather than an exuberant shout. If this weather keeps up, our playground will most certainly be clear of snow by spring break!

February has already been full of holidays and things to do: Black History Month, Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, President's Day and Chinese New Year have all been noted and discussed in our classroom.

that oncoming traffic cannot see children crossing. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Last Participation Opportunities

As we head into spring, we have just a few remaining events/projects coming up that we would love for you to be involved with. They include:

- **East 20 Pizza Sales** – Our second pizza sale is scheduled to start on April 5th. Please help us sell the vouchers to ensure that this local fundraiser is a smashing success for both Little Star and East 20!
- **Spring Fling Yard Sale** – We need your STUFF as well as hands-on helpers. Please contact Sara Crum for details @ 996-3415.
- **Spring Work Party** – We plan on holding a work party in May. All tasks will focus on our yard. We would like to finish the roof on the Big Louie play structure and move the play house. We will be also integrating natural playground elements, such as instruments, walkways, a tunnel made from willow branches, climbing rocks, etc. We are currently creating a plan and would love your help to put it all together.

Survey Monkey

To those of you who have already completed our online survey, thank you! We find your feedback very helpful. We do take the time to review your comments in our staff and board meetings, and consider alternatives to our programs/systems. If you have not filled out the survey, we hope that you will find time in the near future to do so.

Once again, here's the link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WG7R5GR>

According to the Chinese lunar calendar, the year of the tiger began on Feb. 14th. To celebrate, our classroom has been brightly adorned with lots of red decorations, dragons, and Chinese characters in anticipation of our Chinese New Year celebration. Tomorrow we



will perform a play for the preschoolers, have a parade, and a Chinese feast. The children have embraced the celebration! They have been wearing Chinese robes, using chopsticks, learning about pandas, listening to Chinese stories and folktales, and studying a bit of Chinese language with Eveline Wathen.

Rayma gave a lesson on a Chinese artist named Wang Yani, and the children made some wonderful charcoal drawings of monkeys inspired by her work. A few of these drawings are hanging on our front porch bulletin board. Stop by and check them out, as well as the giant collage tiger the children made!

Ardis Bynum came and helped the children make valentines. We love having Ardis visit! We think she has as much fun as the children do when she's here!

Kim Bondi joined us last week for a birding walk.



We plan on responding to some of your feedback in an upcoming newsletter, so stay tuned for information!

Thank You

Thank you to Laurel Hannah for heading up this past weekend's impromptu MVSTA food sales fundraiser and to those of you who stepped up to work the booth in the pouring rain. Also, thank you to all of you who helped sell Valentine Day Raffle tickets. We earned over \$1,100 from that

The Backyard Bird Count inspired her to come and tell us about birds we might see in our valley, what some birdsongs sound like, and how to 'pish' so that birds will come towards you. We will make pinecone bird feeders this week for the children to take home and welcome the birds back to the Methow after a winter away.

Stop by our classroom and see the amazing things these children are doing!

We wish you all the best!

Love, Baylie and Rayma

Preschool

Our preschool classes have been joining together for the last few weeks to discuss our world's oceans and the wondrous creatures that inhabit it. First we learned about the amount of ocean water that covers our planet. Sandy's demonstration included ten glasses set out on a tray - one glass was filled with fresh water to represent all our fresh water and lakes, one glass was filled with ice cubes to represent the polar ice caps, and eight glasses were filled with salt water for the oceans.

The next week we learned about fish and how their bodies, fins, gills and scales help them adapt to their surroundings. We got to see a sawfish nose, a porcupine fish, puffer fish, seahorse, and a shark jaw and egg sack from our schools collection. Last week we talked about whales and dolphins. We did several demonstrations including a blubber mitt to demonstrate how a whale's blubber keeps them warm. The kids also got to see a real piece of whale baleen, an orca tooth, and whale vertebrae. We did a demonstration on echolocation, to show how whales sense things in the water and how they can tell if it is hard or soft, large or small, etc. Dropping a ping pong ball onto several different surfaces, the children closed their eyes and listened to the sounds to guess if it was wood, plastic, carpet. Then we practiced our own kind of echolocation by using film canisters with three different types of sounds. The children shook their canisters and tried to match the sounds with other children to find their "pod".

This week we will discover sea shells and crustaceans. We will end our unit with some of the environmental issues that our oceans are facing.

fundraiser!



Sandy & Anna's Class

Our classroom has been abound with challenging work! The children have really been choosing a variety of materials from off the shelves and focusing for long periods of time. We have several children who gravitate towards the Insta-learn boards, working on identifying the numbers, letters and shapes. We've made several booklets with children, and they're so proud of their almost perfect numbers and letters. Other big challenges in our class right now are the 100's board and tile math. We have a number of children who have completed the hundreds board and are challenging themselves by scrambling all the numbers 1 to 100 and putting them back into place. As for tile math, you may have seen some amazing booklets come home filled with pages of math problems. The children love to put as many numbers together as they can and count them – even counting up to 4 sets of tile math, resulting in a number in the 200's! Wow, what a class! Many children love to work with puzzles, and some have been putting together 100 piece puzzles! The metal inset work has been amazing, and a few children have taken it to the next level, incorporating several different shapes and colors on one page. Such creativity!

Kim & Keri's Class

There has been a surge of interest in the language materials this past couple of months. The children are excited about writing letters, practicing sounds, and building simple phonetic words. At circle we have been reading together, using just a few letters to build word families, and then sounding them out. For example, we will write a, t, c and r, and then build as many words as we can (at, cat, rat...) Wow, they're beginning to read! We have recently brought out the geometric cabinet and are having lots of fun learning some new shapes and nomenclature. One of the activities we have been doing is placing the shapes on a table away from where we are working, and then taking turns finding matches for outline cards on our lesson rug. The children love to challenge themselves and like to think of more ways to make the work even more difficult. Our math materials continue to be popular, and we have been spending quite a bit of time working with our teens and hundreds boards. We use our golden beads to learn about the ones, tens, and hundreds columns, and the children are learning to make exchanges (ten units equals one ten). Writing numbers is ever more popular as the children learn more about them.

Please help us welcome both Isaiah Stoothoff and Rose Crandall to our classroom. We look forward to helping them integrate into our community.

During the past few weeks our classrooms have been filled with Valentine's Day activities, including crafts and cooking projects. The children always enjoy kneading dough, measuring ingredients, and especially making cooking projects to take share with their families. We hope you enjoyed the Oatmeal Cookie bars!

Thanks!

Sandy, Anna, Kim and Keri

Toddler

It's so nice to have the warming sun streaming through the windows today. The children too are energized by the return of the sun, anxious to be outside to soak it up, undeterred by the puddles and slush.



We continue to be amazed as we witness the rapid development of the children in this early stage of life. It is so fun to hear their language and communication skills develop. They know how to communicate so many of their needs and desires. There is much less tussling now that they can say, "This is my work," "I need more space," "Can I have a turn when you are done?" They are discovering the civilizing aspects of language. In the specialty classes –

yoga, music and gymnastics – we have also seen marked change since the beginning of the year. Most of the children rush to the circle in preparation and participate fully, clapping along in music, following Becky's example in yoga, and taking turns on the gymnastics circuit.

We have been doing visits to preschool with some of the older children to familiarize them

with the teachers and classrooms. We took the entire class down last week to hear Sandy's presentation on whales and dolphins. They all sat and listened attentively, acting like the preschoolers that so many of them will be next year.

It is always a pleasure to see the friendships solidifying, to witness the cohesion in the classroom and to hear the funny stories, conversations and toddler jokes.

We love each and every one of your children.

Love, Florence, Michelle, & Lindsay

Afternoon



The Afternoon Program continues to study nature by looking for animal tracks and discussing animal habits in winter. One day we found great, clear raccoon tracks in a nearby field.

We play outdoor games (i.e. relay races) or go sledding on a daily basis, and we have various treasure hunts to promote team play and counting. Our indoor time balances snacks with a good book and fun indoor art or games. Recently, the children made both Valentine's magnets and cards, and have been building Lego creations. We are happy to share time with your children, for one or all days.

Warmest regards, Teresa & Celeste

