



Little Star Montessori

Newsletter

November 2009

General Updates

From the Classrooms

From Our Director

The sun is shining and the grass is golden. There are still a few yellow leaves drooping from trees outside my window. Several children are making snow angels in the little snow we have spotting our play yard, while Keri stands next to them, smiling. I feel thankful to have the opportunity to work at Little Star.

Derek and I don't celebrate Valentine's Day. Instead, every so often we spontaneously celebrate I-Love-You-Every-Day Day. Similarly, we try not to leave our appreciation for this time of year. However, as we head into our long weekend, I wanted to take a moment to share my appreciation.

I pinch myself every morning as I drive to school, making sure that my life in this stunning setting is not a dream. The view from our windows is breathtaking. We are lucky to have neighbors who let us hike on their expansive land. We are fortunate to have a supportive community that would help us in a heartbeat. We are surrounded by people whose values echo ours, who invest time and energy in their children's education, who support local businesses,

Kinder

The Kindergarten class celebrated Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) this month and used the holiday as an opportunity to study Mexican customs, culture, artists, food, and language. Our celebration lasted two weeks, and culminated in a procession and remembrance of loved ones who have passed away. Every child brought in a photo, story, or memento to honor a family member, pet, or friend. We shared our memories and stories, and then ate a wonderful Mexican meal. Ashley Lodato made beautiful loaves of Pan de Muerto for snack that day, Molly Patterson came and helped the children make tamales, and we rounded the meal out with rice, beans, and agua de jamaica. Thanks for our wonderful parent help and participation!



We have been learning bits of Spanish through vocabulary and songs - we have learned our numbers, colors, a few body parts, and the names of some objects around the classroom.

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and cherish their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle. I appreciate blue skies and breathing fresh air. | *and work.*

This year, our Little Star families have pulled through for us in enormous ways, from the Fall Festival and Dinner/Movie Night to our work party and strategic planning brainstorms. Your help has freed up time for staff to concentrate on internal happenings. As a result, the school *feels* well organized, and the children are engaged in every classroom.

Although it's Thanksgiving, a time when we are *supposed* to appreciate what we have, please know that all of us at Little Star give our thanks to you on a daily basis. We appreciate that you have invested time in your children's school. It has made a world of difference.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Nicole

Office News

November Days Off

Reminder: school will be closed on November 25th and 26th for Thanksgiving. We hope your weekend is filled with family and/or community, and that you fill your bellies with delectable food! Have a great weekend!

Pick Ups

Reminder: Please pick up your child on time. When parents are late, teachers cannot move onto prepping their classrooms for the next school day, and Little Star must front the cost of their time. Thank you for your attention to this matter!



The Kindergarten class has implemented a "Marble Jar" in our classroom, which is located by the sign-in sheet by our front door. Every time someone witnesses a random act of kindness, helpful action, or compassionate, friendly words, a marble is added to the jar. Once the jar is full, the class will celebrate with a milkshake party. In only a few weeks our jar is already more than halfway full!

We have finished reading The Indian in the Cupboard as our chapter book. We will start a new one after the Thanksgiving break. The children really seemed to enjoy the story, and we love the sweet time spent curled up reading and listening before lunch. If anyone has any suggestions for a good chapter book to read with kindergarteners, please let us know!

We have begun a conversation about temper tantrums, and how we can communicate to others what we want. Rayma threw a tantrum in school one day to begin our conversation. Some children were a little scared, some surprised, others just plugged their ears, and some were giggling at the sight of an adult screaming and kicking her legs in the air. We heard from every student about when and why they throw tantrums, and what happens when they do. We expect to continue the dialogue, and incorporate other relevant topics.

We have been studying the letters of the alphabet, learning the sign language for each, and discussing the names of the letters as well as their phonetic sounds. During circle time we brainstorm a list of words that begin with the letter, and then write and draw pictures of those words. Up until this point, we have studied the letters of the alphabet through the letter K.

Thank you

Thank you to Sarah Berns for pulling off a warm and festive Dinner & Movie Night fundraiser. Kim Claussen and her team created a delicious Indian buffet dinner. Laurel Hannah decorated the Twisp Pub so beautifully that Aaron asked us to leave the lights up for their guests to enjoy during the holidays. Thank you to everyone who helped decorate, cook, bus and clean!

Thank you to Lori Valentine for working with the children to craft bright cards for the Christmas Bazaar. Stop by the office window to check them out – they make a great stocking stuffer! Thank you to everyone else who loaned a helping hand to Lori or at the Bazaar.

Red Apple Receipts & Ink Cartridges

Little Star collects Red Apple Receipts and ink cartridges. There are separate boxes for each in our entryway for your convenience. Little Star receives 1% of the value for each Red Apple receipt turned in on Little Star's behalf. In addition, we receive up to \$3.00 for each recycled ink cartridge. Please DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR RED APPLE RECEIPTS AND INK CARTRIDGES! Bring them to school instead!

After a wooden toy catapult captured much interest in our class, we introduced simple machines and basic principles of physics. We watched a video of some Rube Goldberg machines in action, learned the names of some of the simple mechanisms (such as the lever, pulley, ramp, pendulum, etc.), and will continue by building some of our own working machines after the Thanksgiving break. The children have a surprisingly intuitive understanding of the laws of physics!

We continue to enjoy our guests in the classroom - this month we had arts and crafts time with Lori Valentine, Sara Jinks, and Angie Dahlstrom, science with Teresa, and yoga with Becky. We look forward to music next month with Celeste and welcoming other exciting guests into our classroom! After yoga last week one child said, "Becky, thank you so much!" his voice filled with gratitude, and a peaceful smile upon his face. We are lucky to have such talented and generous members of our school community. Thank you for sharing your talents and passions!

In a final note, please help us keep your children warm and dry by sending proper clothing as the weather changes and snow fills our playground. Children need snow boots, pants and a warm jacket, as well as mittens or gloves and a warm hat. A bag to hold all these articles of clothing will help us all stay organized! Thanks for your help! We look forward to a fun filled winter with time to sled, walk, play, and run!

Baylie & Rayma

Preschool

Science with Teresa this month focused on our senses of sight and taste. Teresa had several stations with fun experiments, such as optical illusions, tasting different flavors such as sour, sweet, bitter and salty, and a station with different foods and drinks to try to guess what they were by sight and taste.

Thanks to Lori Valentine and many other parent volunteers for helping the children make holiday crafts in our classrooms. What precious creations you made! The children loved working with stamps and paints, and eagerly awaited their turn. You find cards with the children's artwork at the local holiday bazaars in December.



During yoga with Becky this month we took a quick trip to the desert, riding our camels, practicing our snake postures, and our course 'doing the laundry' after to wash off all the sand and camel spit!

We were lucky to have both Celeste and Pam this month for music. The children really enjoyed singing "Do Re Mi", "This Land is Your Land", and learning about "rounds" (which ended in many giggles).



Thanks again to Stella Scholz and her mom Lisa for bringing Pippin the pony to share with us in late October. The children enjoyed brushing and petting her, and were thrilled with some quick pony rides around our play yard.

Conferences have been going really well this year and we appreciate the time everyone has taken to come in and discuss classroom activities, ask questions, and of course talk about your beautiful children. The first week of December will be our last scheduled meeting times, so if you haven't gotten to meet with us yet, please put your name down. We would like to remind you that you are free to call at anytime or pull us aside if you have questions about your child or what is happening in our classrooms.

As Thanksgiving nears we have done some fun 'turkey' crafts and artwork. The children have so enjoyed the pinecone turkeys that our lunch tables have become miniature turkey farms. This week we will celebrate Thanksgiving with a special cooking project – pumpkin pie! The children always love mixing, rolling and baking (and eating, of course!), and we enjoy the opportunity to celebrate and give thanks with them.

Upon our return from the Thanksgiving holiday we will begin a study of winter. We will



learn about the solstice (why are the nights so long?) and weather (why is it cold?) and also get an up-close look as snowflakes. We will be learning about hibernation, and how the animals that don't hibernate make it through the cold season. Weather permitting, we hope to go out on some nature walks to some favorite spots around the neighborhood. Be sure to send warm clothes!

With love, Kim, Sandy, Anna and Keri

Toddler

Finally, some snow on the ground. Please make sure the children come with all the warm and woolies required for outdoor fun. Please consider that twelve small bodies means. 24 mittens, 24 socks, 24 boots, 12 hats and that clear labeling is very helpful in the suiting up ritual.

Thank you to all of you for providing fresh, nutritious snacks. The children anticipate every day's "snack surprise" with excitement. If you have forgotten your snack day, please bring something latter for our cupboard that we can use on a future snackless day.

As our school year rolls on, the children are bonding with their classmates and forming an ever more cohesive group. While some have special friends, they mix it up and are very caring and compassionate with everyone. It is a pleasure to spend our mornings with all of them.

We have had several reports at conferences that parents are hearing lots of counting in English and even some Spanish. We will continue to introduce Spanish numbers, colors and phrases. Don't be surprised if your child asks for "agua, por favor."

One last thing: please let the office know if you have a planned absence. Call as soon as you know our child is sick so that we can let others come to fill the space.



Happy Thanksgiving!

*Thank you again.
Florence, Michelle and Melissa*

Afternoon

We have been having a wonderful time facilitating games with your children. They really like Bean Bag Toss, playing hopscotch, (on the dry days), practicing stretching, and football. Games of tag are also great fun.

We try to enjoy the outdoors as much as we can, and we appreciate parents sending outdoor clothing. We plan to visit Jamie's Place, and hope for everyone to stay well, as they really love seeing the children circle through. We will also help with creating decorations for the Christmas tree in Winthrop.

Our afternoons include sitting together and enjoying a snack and stories. Recently, we've been counting the birds we see at Little Star. This gives the children a chance to talk about graphs and counting. We're often involved in an exciting story when you come to pick up your child at this time. Don't hesitate to interrupt us if you're in a hurry and need to leave, for your child can take their snack with them. Otherwise, your child can stay and enjoy story and snack. It's helpful, however, if we keep a quiet background at this time to keep the children focused.

We also appreciate your help in signing out when you pick up your child. As this is a licensing requirement, it's important for the success of our program.

Wishing you all a healthy and joyous holiday season,

Celeste and Teresa

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