



Little Star Montessori

Newsletter

October 2009

General Updates

From the Classrooms

From Our Director

Seattle Trip

Last week, Anna, Baylie, Keri and I spent three days visiting six schools in the Seattle/Bainbridge Island area. The purpose of our trip was to observe teachers in their classrooms, interview faculty and administrators, tour school grounds, and return to Little Star with new ideas and fresh enthusiasm. We spent our time between and after school visits processing and dissecting our observations and experiences. This week, we will reconvene to devise a presentation of our trip, including a proposal on how we can incorporate some ideas into our own classrooms and school-wide systems. We plan to deliver our presentation to the staff and board next week. I will summarize the presentation in our next newsletter. Stay tuned for more details!

The Gift of Giving

"I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives."

~Tracy Chapman

Kinder

Last week, while Baylie spent several days visiting schools with Nicole, Anna and Keri, Michael Wilbur worked with me. Although we all missed Baylie, the children were delighted to have Michael return to school.

Michael brings a sense of fun and enjoyment to everything he does from baseball to math. We enjoyed and appreciated his being with us. With Baylie's return, we are eager to hear about everything she saw and learned from her trip.

Becky Studen came to our classroom to begin our first Yoga practice. The children were so attentive as we stretched, breathed, imagined and found our peaceful center. We will have regular yoga sessions with Becky throughout the year.

During our week with Michael, we explored the shapes of leaves with our Leaf Cabinet Box and corresponding cards. Several children traced and pinpricked leaf shapes to make booklets. As the children worked, we talked about the change in season, the tilting of the earth, the shortness of days and why leaves change



For over a decade, my primary professional role has been that of Director of non-profit organizations. In each of my positions, I have worked closely with volunteers to ensure that the mission of the organization is consistently met. I have found my work with volunteers to be highly rewarding, yet filled with continual challenges and frustration...until now.

I am repeatedly taken aback by the support provided by the families and community of Little Star. In the weeks leading up to the Fall Festival, Jennifer Hover breezed in and out of the office as she coordinated logistics, never once without a smile on her face. She thanked us repeatedly – more than we thanked her. Sara Crum has worked tirelessly to secure coordinators for each fundraising event, not once uttering a negative word. Brooke Bourn and her team have spent countless hours pounding the pavement to create the Methow's first-ever coupon book, while Ananda Bajema poured over the graphics, preparing the book for printing. Eveline Wathen has given no less than twenty hours per week over the last seven years as the President of our board. For many weeks, Ashley Lodato and Molly Patterson both worked full-time to pull off the most successful auction in the school's history, while simultaneously balancing their own work and active family lifestyles. These individuals are merely the tip of the iceberg. How is it possible to adequately thank each person who has given so much of his/her limited time to our school? Little Star would not be thriving in its 28th year if it weren't for each and every one of you. We appreciate you.

From all of us at Little Star, THANK YOU for your help.

Nicole

colors. First grader and Little Star alumnus Travis Grialou visited one day and gave us a thorough talk about how leaves make food.

On Wednesday, we took advantage of the weather and walked to the river to gather fall leaves, play and eat lunch. Michael read the story of the Ghost of Sleepy Hollow.



We decorated pumpkins with Mr. Potato-like features and beaded a large squash to look like a big shiny worm, which was sent down to the Fall Carnival. Maisy's mom, Sarah, brought us many pumpkins which were scrubbed, cleaned and decorated.

Our Time for Kids subscription has begun. This is a weekly news magazine for kids from Time Magazine. Each child has his/her own copy and will bring it home after we read and discuss the articles at school. The children will be introduced to national and international issues. It presents opportunities to explore the globe to locate the places in the news articles as well as broadens our world-view by making us think about people and places beyond the Methow Valley.

Our first issue of Time For Kids centered on Bullying, which was followed by a lively discussion on bullying and what can be done to prevent it. We will return to this subject many times over the year with stories, discussions and role plays to help our children know how to recognize and deal with bullying incidents either as a victim or by-stander.

The children were very active in their academic work this week. Five girls worked in a group with the Golden Beads to add four numbers together to get the answer 12,356. The procedure took a total of 35 minutes. Each child stayed focused on the process the entire time. They were introduced to exchanging 10 units to a 10 bar on up to exchanging 10 -1000 cubes to make a 10,000 cube with 2-1000 cubes left in the 1000 column. They were very pleased with themselves when they finished and saw their answer. We saved the problem so the girls could review the exercise and read the answer to the class at

Office News

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences begin in November (and again in May). Teachers look forward to meeting with each of you to discuss how your child is doing socially, emotionally, and academically. This is a time for you to ask any questions or share concerns, and check out the classroom materials that your child is drawn to. **Watch for sign-up sheets that will be posted by the sign-in/out sheet in each classroom.** Once you sign up for your conference date and time, be sure to mark your calendars. Your child is welcome to our afternoon program during your conference at no charge (but please do sign up for the afternoon program that morning so we know how many children to expect). If you can't make your conference date, please call as soon as possible so we can fill someone else in your spot or work on classroom prep.

Immunizations

Immunization reports must be submitted to the office no later than Thursday, October 29th. Please note that this is a state requirement. Your child will not be able to participate in future field trips until your immunization sheet has been turned in. Thank you!

H1N1

The following is a note from the Country Clinic:
"We have nasal immunization for both H1N1 and seasonal flu available for people between 3 and 49 years old. Those with asthma cannot be given either of these immunizations. We have injections for H1N1 for ages 3-35 months, and no injections for adults for either flu. The state

circle.

Art in a variety forms is continuously being created all over the classroom. The metal insets have not had such creative use in years! Stories, paintings, designs, collage and the recent water coloring of leaves are just a taste of the ongoing projects.

Language, reading and writing are also continually being developed though writing books, silly sound books, movable alphabet work and word families. All the children seem to delight in these exercises and are unconsciously developing a strong foundation in this area. Reading stories also plays a part. This is a class of great listeners. We read two more chapters of An Indian in my Cupboard this week to a rapt audience.

I attended the play Robin Hood this week and was proud and delighted to see our children's artwork prominently displayed at the entrance and throughout the theater. This was our first public showing and it looked great!

With love, Rayma

Preschool

As we're completing our second month of the school year, the children are really settling in, forming friendships, and taking on more challenging work. We've accomplished a lot this month! Here's all the news for October....

Safety Lessons

We began our personal safety curriculum at the beginning of October. These lessons are presented at our circle times and, inspired by a picture and brief story, elicit lively group discussions. Our first lesson was about the importance of seat belts, and we demonstrated their importance with a doll riding in a moving chair. Without a seatbelt she really flew across the room when the chair had to stop. Yikes!! The next week we learned about crossing the street....hopefully everyone will "stop, look and listen". Fire safety was an exciting lesson for everyone, and we role-played what to do if someone wants to play with matches. We have talked at length about not keeping secrets that involve safety and that it is much better to have someone angry with us than for them to

reports that there are some coming, but at this time we do not know when."

Pick Ups

As our year unfolds, we have noticed that pick-ups are happening later. Please do come pick up your child on time. Otherwise, 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!

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!

Participation Opportunities

Following is a list of participation opportunities. If you are not sure how to complete your participation hours, or would like to take on one of these projects, don't hesitate to stop by the office to inquire.

Task

Help sell Methow Values Coupon Books, available November 2nd!

Sign up to help Sarah Berns with a movie night fundraiser at the Twisp Pub

Garden work

Check/tighten/replace screws on roof

be hurt. Our fourth lesson was about getting lost or separated from parents in a store, especially about not leaving the store for any reason, how to tell who the store employees are, and how to ask them for help. Related to this, we have talked about how important it is to know parents names, and we are practicing them almost daily. (Many children know their parents names only as "mommy and daddy"!) We will post the safety lesson for each week on our bulletin boards by the sign in sheets so that you can continue these discussions at home. If you have any questions about these, please feel free to call us.

Zoophonics

This month we have also started zoo-phonics, a multi-sensory method of using zoo animals for each lower case letter of the alphabet. The children are shown the letter, introduced to the animal, and taught the catchy tune and body movements that go with it. For example:

*"Allie Alligator's jaws are snappy,
When she grins you know she's happy"*

As we say this we use arms as alligator jaws opening and closing. Children pick this up quickly because they see it, hear it, say it, and act it out. We have copies of the zoophonics alphabet available for you and your child to work on at home if you are interested.

Rayma's Virtue Story

Two weeks ago the preschoolers joined the kinder class as Rayma told one of her captivating virtue tales using a felt board. The story, called "Brother Eagles", was about thinking for yourself, telling the truth, and taking care of those younger than you. The children loved the visual aspect of the story, and they always make for good discussions afterward.

Science

This month's science lesson was centered around our senses of hearing and smelling. A timely topic for October, Teresa talked to us about bats, especially their keen sense of smell and hearing, and how they use their senses to hunt and locate their babies amongst thousands of baby bats. One station focused on recognizing different smells and

Bike Day (or other outdoor fun) Coordinator (two mornings per month)



identifying one specific smell when they were mixed up. A second station involved shaking film canisters trying to distinguish which object was making the sound (rice, coins, beans, etc). The third station involved sound waves, and listening to how the sound changes with movement – this was especially fun as it involved a slinky, with string and cup attached at the ends and a child listening at each end as the slinky was shaken or struck with a spoon.

Guest Presenters

We are enjoying our special music circles with Celeste this year, and are excited that she will be teaming up with Pam Hunt for some of them. We are learning new songs. Last week, we played a new game called “Musical Squares.” As Pam played her violin, everyone moved, but when she stopped, we had to find a square.

We had our first yoga lesson with Becky Studen and the consensus was “Fun!” The children are so flexible. It is amazing to see them stretch and move, becoming butterflies and other characters of Becky’s stories. We look forward to our next lesson.

Barrett Hall came to give a presentation about his special service dog, Milo (whose name we must never say in her presence so she can be attentive to Barrett). We learned how she helps him know if he is going to have a seizure and how important service dogs are to the people who need them. Milo ended the presentation with a few tricks she knows (high jumps!). Thanks, Barrett!

Other News

While we didn’t get to take our orchard field trip because of the October snow, our harvest theme carried through in some recent cooking projects. In Kim and Keri’s class the children enjoyed chopping and mashing apples for our huge batch of applesauce (thanks to Nicole O’Driscoll for providing the apples). Sandy and Anna’s class grated zucchini and mixed and mashed up a batch of zucchini bread muffins. We love having yummy homemade treats in our freezer to eat throughout the winter. As Halloween nears, you may have noticed our classrooms became a little spookier, with ghost, bat and pumpkin art projects, decorations, and practical life activities. The children have especially enjoyed stories about Georgie the friendly ghost, five little pumpkins, and other spooky topics. Last week the children worked together to design some pumpkin carvings,



and contributed jack-o-lanterns to the pumpkin walk for the Fall Festival.

We look forward to November, with opportunities to give thanks and the hope of snowflakes flying...

With love – Sandy, Kim, Anna & Keri

Toddler

Autumn finds us busy with the adventures of the new season. Almost gone are the painted leaves and up go the cotton-ball covered snowmen. We bring out the paints, glue, scissors, sequins or some other messy fun every day. The class enjoys the music with Celeste and yoga with Becky Studen. Every Toddler is a chef in the making. They have great fun mixing up muffins, bread or noodles, or chopping and grating for some other treat.

The colder days can be a bit of a challenge for toddlers, but we still venture outside every day. We opt for a nature walk on the road and stop in for a visit at Jamie's Place where the toddlers chase the cat and the "grandmas" enjoy the levity that children bring.

Thank you for sending your children well outfitted for autumn adventures. Please label everything so that our lost and found pile doesn't grow with the coming snow mounds.

Thank you for sharing your children.

- Florence, Michelle & Melissa

Afternoon

Apples were our theme for September and into October. We peeled and cored apples from Celeste's orchard and made apple pie, measured each other in apples and charted the results, and visited our favorite apple tree and discovered no apples (a lack of pruning). We also incorporated different types of apples in our snacks. It's great to see that all the kids really love to eat apples!



We've become better at hopscotch and football, emphasizing touch football versus tackle, and discussions about why that's safer. Other popular games are Red Light, Green Light, Bean Bag Toss, and anything related to the boat. We acquired some paddles and fishing rods for the boat, and the kids are having a blast pretending they're out on a fishing trip. We're also teaching proper fishing techniques when we can.

October has brought Halloween arts and crafts, like making decorations for the Fall Festival. In addition, we decorated small pumpkins to take to Jamie's Place for some table decorations. It's always a fun visit there, and they really appreciate the kids. Last week, we enjoyed a walk into town for a last ice cream cone at Sheri's, and an impromptu visit to Winthrop Glassworks, where Barry and Garth graciously took time to demonstrate glass blowing and give the kids a tour.

The kids decided that our new tally chart should be about the birds we see from the playground, replacing our weather chart. We'll be counting eagles, ravens, and smaller species in the coming months.

Feel free to spontaneously sign your child up for our Afternoon Program-we've had room! Some kids come daily, some a couple of times a week. All are welcome!

We're having lots of fun, thanks for the opportunity!

Teresa and Celeste



Thank you for sharing your children!



Joe Beine