

Montessori Schools of Central Texas Newsletter

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Dr. Jerry O'Donnell – Headmaster
Mrs. Jennifer Watson – Director

News from the Top

Mastery: The Great Motivator



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Upcoming Events February 2021

2/12	Valentine's Day Party
2/15	School Closed Parent/Teacher Conf. (Primary & Elementary)
2/21	Open House 2-4 p.m.
2/22	Pre-Registration Opens For SY 2021-2022 – Currently Enrolled Students Only
3/1	Registration Open to the Public

Do you remember when you were a child and your parent removed the training wheels from your bicycle? Anxiety was building like a crescendo as your heart pounded deep within your chest. Your mom or dad gave encouraging words as they ran along beside you until you suddenly realized, they were too far back to be holding onto your seat. "I'm doing it! I'm riding my bike all by myself!" The feeling of exhilaration swelled because of your newfound triumph. You probably beamed with pride for several weeks and told your friends that training wheels were for little kids; implying you were more grown-up now.

When a child feels a sense of mastery, rather it is learning to tie their shoes, walk, or catch a baseball, a feeling of mastery, and the wish to experience it again, transforms the child, from a reluctant, fearful learner into a self-motivated individual. From Edward Hallowell's, The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness, "One of the great goals of parents, teachers, and coaches should be to find areas in which a child might experience mastery, then make it possible for this child to feel this potent sensation. Mastery is the great motivator, because people like to do what they do well.

What holds a child back the most is a fear of messing up. Fear is a great disabler. Fear is what keeps children-and adults-from realizing their potential. The more you have felt mastery, the less likely it is that you will give in to fear when you approach a new activity or task. The more you experience mastery, the stronger the emotional muscle called confidence will grow. The best antidote to fear, timidity, and self-doubt is the feeling of mastery. Not only is mastery the great motivator, mastery is also the great builder of self-esteem. The memory of mastery is what keeps us coming back to try again, even if we fall short of our goal.

The mistake that parents, teachers, and coaches often make is to try and demand mastery rather than lead children to it. A great teacher is a person who can lead another person to mastery. The best parents are great teachers.

Each time you go through the [learning] cycle and reach mastery, you add another strand to your child's growing muscle of confidence and self-esteem. It is easy for an adult to guide a child through this cycle; all it takes is patience and time."

At MSCT, we are enthusiastic and celebrate with each individual child's achievements. If your child comes home with their underwear on backwards, their socks inside-out or their shoes on the wrong feet, do not think for a moment we are unaware or neglectful.

We are happy that your child has accomplished the independent skill of dressing themselves. In addition, as Montessori trained teachers, we also know that children will eventually self-correct when they are ready. It would be a disservice to a child to tell them you are proud of their accomplishment, but they did it all wrong. It is our moral obligation to lead a child to mastery, which gives the child the motivation to continue to try new tasks and leads to a greater self-esteem.

It is important to have consistency at home and at school. I encourage each of you to lead your child to discover mastery by setting them up for success. You can do this by teaching your child developmentally appropriate skills when your child is ready to learn. Be sure to encourage your child each step of the way without criticizing even if the results are not perfect. Remember it takes practice and repetition to perfect any given new task and a child will self-correct. Acknowledge and praise your child's work itself and never use vague terminology, such as, "Good job!" For example, be specific by discussing the child's choice of blue in their artwork or how organized they loaded the dishwasher which allowed for more dishes to be washed, and then you will see their self-esteem grow because of their sense of mastery. Most importantly, love your child. Being securely attached and connected to your child will foster a self-confidence to try new things.

Mrs. Jennifer Watson

Infant I – Mrs. Badger

During the month of February, we will introduce the children to the new practical life skills of learning to independently wash one's hands and how to clean a table after a meal is finished. This will provide opportunities to build coordination, sequencing of steps, care of self and the environment, and the sensorial comparison of wet and dry. For language development, the students will identify farm animals in English and Spanish, along with the sounds each make. In celebration of Valentine's Day, our treasure box will feature various red objects. Throughout the month, the children will also hear the color "red" in English and Spanish, as well as learn the sign in American Sign Language. Our balance, coordination, and leg strengthening exercises have been a great success as we now have five walkers and one crawler. This next month, we are happy to welcome a newborn and look forward to observing his development growth and success in our class.

---Mrs. Victoria Badger

Infant II - Ms. Rosa Gray

For this special month designated for love, the Infant 2 students will be learning the colors red, pink, and purple in English, Spanish and sign language. We will also use these colors to make special Valentine artwork. Valuing and developing friendships will also take precedence. The children will paint with a friend and create a "friendship" salad together.

I am asking the parents of the Infant 2 children to please bring in a copy of a family photo and of your child's individual photo for he or she to glue into a unique book that they are creating.

Independence builds self-esteem and allows your child to reach their academic potential. No matter how long the process takes, if a child can do it for themselves, please allow for the time with loving patience for your child to put on their own shoes, dress or undress themselves, etc. You'll find that with each success your child will accomplish the task quicker, they will take pride in themselves, and they will be ready for the next life lesson. For example, this past month, the students have been cleaning up after they eat. Allow your child to bring their plate, cup, and silverware to the sink at home. They can even scrape their uneaten food into the trashcan, wipe down the table, and sweep up crumbs on the floor with the right-sized broom. Please encourage your child to assist with clean up at home so that they can master this task and move on to the next developmental challenge.

It is my pleasure to positively mold and teach your child daily as it brings innate joy to observe their individual mastery of developmental successes. If ever you have a question or concern, and also when your child is showing readiness for potty training at home, please know that I am a strong believer in communication and I encourage you to reach out to me so that we can work together and your child will benefit greatly.

~~~Ms. Rosa Gray

### *Toddler 1 & 2 - Mrs. Ronelus & Ms. Armas*

February will be a fun-filled month for the toddler classes! We will explore the continent of Asia, discovering the culture, music, language, indigenous animals and tasting some authentic dishes. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the students will celebrate love and enjoy a pizza party with various sweets, as well as pass out Valentine's cards. Also on the agenda, we will discuss groundhogs, practice sorting, cutting, and spooning to build fine motor skills in preparation for handwriting. Our art projects will center on Valentine's Day and also include Asian inspired creations. For food preparation, the students will squeeze their own fresh orange juice and wash fruits and vegetables. While outdoors, the toddlers will practice throwing and catching balls to build gross motor skills, and hand-eye coordination.

~~~Mrs. LaDonna Ronelus & Ms. Yesenia Armas

Primary 1 & 2 – Mrs. Alvarado, Ms. Prudencio & Mrs. Prudencio

This next month, the primary students will be studying the anatomical parts of multiple species including horses, birds, bees, koalas, and arachnids. We will also learn the life cycle and metamorphosis of butterflies. In Spanish, the students will learn vocabulary relating to the house or la casa, the kitchen or la cocina, and Valentine's Day. Our Bible stories will be about Sampson, Gideon's Battle, The Battle of Jericho, and Deborah Leads the Way. Our continental focus will be Asia in which the students will work with the puzzle map, explore their culture with the Asian folder, and cook two tasty dishes. In math, we will learn how to take measurements. The science experiment will feature floating hearts and we will also observe insects in our outdoor environment.

---Mrs. Carmen Alvarado, Ms. Prudencio & Mrs. Prudencio

Elementary – Mrs. Dolline Abraham

We will have many Physical Science lessons during the month of February. The elementary students will learn how volcanoes are formed and their parts. We will also identify black and fold mountains. Rock cycles, classification of rocks, and the effects of wind, water, and glacial erosion will also be explored. The students will study sound and participate in a crystallization experiment using Epsom salt. In Bible, we will research Jesus and Bartimaeus. The parables will feature the Mustard Seed, Leaven, and the Great Pearl. In history, we will learn to categorize the parts of a year and the clock of eras. In Zoology, we will take an in-depth look at the bird life cycle and name each part anatomically. We will continue our weekly gardening lessons and be able to differentiate between monocot and eudicot flowers. In addition, the students will label the parts of a flower and learn about the importance of pollination. Europe will be our continental focus in which the children will identify the countries, capitals, flags, and research European culture, also cook a few special treats.

~~~Mrs. Dolline Abraham

### STUDENTS IN ACTION





# Happy Birthday



|                           |                   |                                 |                |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| ▪ <b>Barron Ellis</b>     | <b>Toddler 1</b>  | <b>February 2<sup>nd</sup></b>  | <b>3 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Everett Tisdale</b>  | <b>Toddler 1</b>  | <b>February 5<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>3 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Jaecob Smith</b>     | <b>Infant 2</b>   | <b>February 5<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>2 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Harlan Hernandez</b> | <b>Primary 2</b>  | <b>February 7<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>6 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Cora Carlin</b>      | <b>Primary 2</b>  | <b>February 8<sup>th</sup></b>  | <b>6 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Sebastian Cruz</b>   | <b>Primary 2</b>  | <b>February 10<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>5 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Dakota Jones</b>     | <b>Toddler 1</b>  | <b>February 16<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>3 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Quinn Pomerence</b>  | <b>Toddler 1</b>  | <b>February 17<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>3 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Jacob Sanchez</b>    | <b>Elementary</b> | <b>February 18<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>8 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Cora Landers</b>     | <b>Elementary</b> | <b>February 20<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>9 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Ivy Green</b>        | <b>Elementary</b> | <b>February 24<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>7 Years</b> |
| ▪ <b>Breland Parish</b>   | <b>Elementary</b> | <b>February 26<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>7 Years</b> |

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## Dear Parents:

February is such a busy month for us, and I wanted to elaborate on some of the details to make your planning easier. Feel free to reach out to your child's teacher for further explanation of the many up-coming events.

## Elementary Community Service Project ends on Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>:

The elementary students participate in community service every semester to provide our students the opportunity to become active members of their community and impact society positively. By participating in community service, our elementary students will acquire life skills and knowledge while supporting those in need.

This semester, the elementary students would like to honor our military by sending a father of an elementary student needed supplies and cards of encouragement who is stationed overseas. Please join our elementary students in giving a small donation by **Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>**. Ideas: beef jerky, bar soap, canned sausages, tuna fish & crackers, hard candy, ramen noodles, chapstick, puzzle books, socks, etc. (Items appropriate for shipping-no liquids)

**Thank you in advance for your kind, generous heart!**

## Valentine's Day Party on Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup> for Toddler, Primary & Elementary Classes:

No lunch needed on this celebratory day! The students of these classes will have cheese pizza, various fruits and vegetables, and it's our one day of the year that we allow sugary treats...you have been warned.

Each child should bring a Valentine card with or without a treat for the number of students enrolled in their class. Please do not address the cards to anyone in particular, otherwise the teachers will spend all day sorting. However, your child may write their name in the "from" section, which is a great way to have them practice their signature.

The Elementary and Toddler classes request that each child bring an empty shoebox to be used as their Valentine mailbox no later than **Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>** to give the children time to personalize it. (Primary students are using gift bags provided by the school.)

## Number of students in each class including your child:

Toddler 1: 12

Toddler 2: 15

Primary 1: 31

Primary 2: 25

Elementary: 16

## Parent-Teacher Conferences for Primary & Elementary on Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup>:

Make plans to meet with your child's teacher to track your child's academic success and goals for the future. Sign-up sheets will be made available one week prior. Please find alternate childcare during your child's conference so that teacher's may speak freely and confidentially. (School will be closed for all classes on this federal holiday.)

## Annual Open House on Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> from 2-4 p.m.:

Please accept our invitation to our Open House on Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup> from 2-4 p.m. This is a great opportunity to tour your child's next class, meet upper level teachers, and invite your friends and family. The Open House is a come and go event. Light refreshments will be served.

Preregistration for returning students for the upcoming school year will begin on **February 22<sup>nd</sup>** and then will be open to the public for new parents on **March 1<sup>st</sup>**. A preregistration letter will be sent to you on January 29<sup>th</sup> outlining the changes that the Board approved over the holidays.

## Fridays are School Spirit Days:

We encourage our students and staff to show their school spirit every **Friday** by wearing a school T-shirt. We now have various school t-shirts available in the office for purchase for \$15 each. They range in size from youth extra small – adult extra large. If 2020-2021 is your child's first year of enrollment and you have not already received a complimentary T-shirt, please stop by the office and I will gladly provide one for your child. When it is too cold outside, children can wear a shirt underneath to stay warm.

**For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11**