

Montessori Schools of Central Texas Newsletter

December 2023

Mrs. Jennifer Watson – Director

News from the Top

The Most Important Montessori Lesson

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Upcoming Events

December 2023

12/1	Camp Christmas Registration Deadline
12/14	Elementary Angel Tree project ends
12/15	Christmas Party- 10:30 am (Todd, Prim, & Elem) Early Release - 12:30pm (All Classes)
12/18 -12/22	Camp Christmas
12/18-1/2	Christmas Break
1/3/24	First Day of Spring Semester

I love what a Montessori education does for a child's love of learning. I love the enthusiasm that it engenders. I love to watch the understanding that dawns on a child as a concept makes sense for the first time.

Montessori children learn to read – often very early. They learn their numbers – not just counting but understanding that seven is one more than six and not just because it follows six. They begin to add and subtract, even multiply and divide. They learn about leaves and leaf shapes. They learn about zoology, geometry, and time. There seems to be almost no end to the surprises of what our children learn.

It is ironic, however, that the most important lesson does not appear on a progress report. Montessori is the only educational philosophy that builds its structure on the lessons of grace and courtesy. The individuality of the classroom can only succeed if each child exercises care and consideration for his or her classmates by taking turns, helping each other, encouraging each other, and teaching each other. Grace and courtesy set the tone for the classroom. The quietness and the serenity allow the concentration that precedes significant accomplishment. Learning well the lessons of grace and courtesy will make your child stand out for the rest of his or her life but even grace and courtesy are not the greatest lesson.

The great lesson is the ability to positively control yourself. Most of us grew up with “self-control” meaning to do exactly what someone else told you to do – “be quiet, don't, stop, no, don't move” etc. The great Montessori lesson (and the one that takes great effort and often a lifetime to master) is self-control. The mastery of self-control leads to making wise choices. Wise choices come from focus, determination, knowledge, and controlling yourself. The way you learn to make wise choices is to be allowed to make choices (and live with the consequences.) And then, to make a better choice –living with the consequences until you have practiced enough to begin to make wise choices the first time.

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MSCT School Newsletter

Infant 1

With 2023 coming to a close, we're preparing for colder weather and Christmas celebrations. Throughout the month we'll be reading stories that focus on the reason for the season, the birth of baby Jesus. We are continuing to emphasize the students' understanding of the words "please" and "thank you" in English and Spanish and adding lessons about the shape and sound of a bell. Music

this month will be a variety of Christmas carols.

The infants who are participating in snack and table meals are progressing well. We know independent eating can be messy, but we encourage you to let your child hold their own bottle or open cup and eat with utensils during the holiday break. This will progress their table skills and fine motor skills.

Thank you all so much for sharing your littles with us! We love nurturing them and watching them grow and develop. We hope everyone has a blessed holiday!

--- Mrs. Terri Wallace



Infant 2

December will be a great month for our infant class. Each day we will be learning about the birth of Jesus during circle time and listening to Christmas songs. We'll also talk about wild animals, weather, Christmas colors, and we are going to start counting 1-2-3. In Spanish, we'll add the words "water" and "good morning," and continue singing songs in Spanish. This season brings many opportunities for sensory work that help us build our motor skills. We'll practice hammering golf tees into pumpkins to develop our hand-eye coordination, comparing fall leaves to differentiate between textures, colors, and shapes, and transferring items with tongs to develop our pincer grasp. We will also continue our practical life lessons like sweeping leaves, vacuuming, and cleaning the shelves. During lunchtime, we will be practicing scraping food into the trash and washing our plates in the sink. As a reminder, please make sure your little one has a jacket and warm extra clothing for the cooler weather days.

--- Mrs. Karla Torres

Toddler

This month in our toddler classes, we will be reading about the Christmas story, listening to Christmas music, and singing Christmas songs. For our small group lessons, the students will transfer jingle bells with a spoon in preparation for pencil grasp, practice putting on their own coats for further independence development, and we will have fun decorating a Christmas tree. The children will create winter-themed crafts, Christmas paintings, cards, and ornaments. For food preparation lessons, the students will prepare gingerbread cookies which will serve as an opportunity to teach serving food to one another. While outdoors, we will tend to our fall plants and make our own sand angels. In Spanish, we will learn the words for Christmas (Nacimiento del Niño Jesús), Christmas tree (árbol de Navidad), and snowflakes (copa de nieve). All of our teachers wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

--- Mrs. Clausen & Ms. Gonzalez

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Primary

During the month of December, the primary students will be focused on Christmas in many aspects of our curriculum. Our Biblical stories will center on the Angel who visited Mary and the birth of Jesus Christ. We will also be learning Christmas vocabulary in Spanish, creating ornaments and cards in Art, and working on a performance to share with you at our Christmas celebration.

In Geography, we'll be studying Antarctica and the animals that inhabit that land. For Earth Science, we will learn about clouds and the water cycle, followed by an experiment for further understanding. The children will also learn to classify vertebrates and invertebrates.

Our small group lessons will focus on reading the temperature and parts of a fish. And for Grace and Courtesy, we will work on using "please" and "thank you" and learn how to ask a classmate for help.

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

Elementary

This has been a very productive semester filled with many learning opportunities. During the chilly month of December, we will be studying the earth's southernmost continent, Antarctica. The students will learn about the sparse number of inhabitants, such as seals, penguins, and migrating whales.

For Physical Science, we will be introduced to our solar system, naming and defining our planets, stars and constellations, moons of various planets, and the Milky Way. In Zoology, the students will research amphibians and be able to anatomically label their parts. Our Civics topic for the month will be our nation's presidential residence on Pennsylvania Avenue, the White House, in which we will learn the history, importance, and purpose of this famous landmark. In History, we will create "the long black line" for a better understanding of the age and history of our planet.

The featured artist of the month will be Leonardo da Vinci, otherwise known as the "universal genius". We will observe and discuss his many creative works. For Bible, the elementary children will learn the true reason for the season and prepare for Christmas when we study the shepherds, the Magi, and the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

--- Mrs. Abraham and Mrs. Walker

Camp Christmas, December 18th-22nd

Our teachers are excited to host **Camp Christmas** so that you may do some Christmas shopping without the kids or just enjoy some "me time" during the holiday bustle. **Camp Christmas** will be **FUN** Christmas-themed activities and an emphasis on the reason for the season, Jesus Christ. Activities will include crafts and gift making, ornaments and stringing of garlands, baking and decorating gingerbread cookies, the Christmas story and caroling, a dance party, classic Christmas movies, multiple games, and cooking a nutritious lunch. (Yes, lunch and two snacks are included!)

When: 8 am - 5 pm/Monday-Friday/December 18-22, 2023. Children may come and go within operational hours. **The last day to register is December 1st.**

Registration is open to our Primary and Elementary students. Please let me know if you'd like your Infant 2 or Toddler to attend. Spaces will be limited. The Minimum Donation is \$75/per day.

This fundraiser will benefit the Infant 2/Toddler playground and will support our Lead Teachers to be able to attend the Christian Montessori conference. **Even if your child does not participate, please consider donating!** All donations will receive a tax-deductible receipt. Thank you in advance for your support!



Happy
Birthday



Serving snack

- Fernando Castro-Rodriguez Primary 1 December 1st 5 Years
- Roman Bartha Infant 1 December 2nd 1 Year
- Madison Dixon Toddler December 2nd 3 Years
- Oliver Jackson Primary 2 December 6th 4 Years
- Breece Conley Upper Elem December 11th 7 Years
- Charlie Hilton Lower Elem December 12th 6 Years
- Anders McGraw Infant 2 December 13th 2 Years
- Charlotte Rodriguez Lower Elem December 15th 8 Years
- Avery Van Velzen Primary 2 December 18th 4 Years
- Arthur King Primary 1 December 28th 6 Years
- Johnathan Jones Upper Elem December 29th 9 Years
- Stevie Batten Infant 1 December 30th 1 Year

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Traditional education does not afford a child the opportunity to exercise real self-control, make independent choices and work through them to a successful completion. Traditionally, if you fail a test you move on. In Montessori, you strive for mastery before you move on. In Montessori you progress from strength (mastery) and not weakness (failure.)

This same wisdom applies to the lessons of grace and courtesy – learning how to deal with people – and when you offend, learning how to make amends and not brush it off.

The lesson (and benefit) of self-control is that it concentrates your power and enhances your achievement. Self-control is essential to making wise choices. Without self-control the child is subject to every interior whim and outside influence. Self-control helps focus the child to be able to make wise choices.

The most important lesson in Montessori education is not an academic one but one of self-control and focus. Your child will gain many academic skills in Montessori but the greatest lesson is self-control and with it the ability to make wise choices.



Notes from Mrs. Watson:

Thank you very much to our wonderful parents who came out to celebrate Thanksgiving with us. The day was spectacular, filled with many special moments from the heart-warming student performances to the delicious feast provided by our gracious parents.

We will host our 41ST annual Christmas Party (for toddlers, primary, and elementary) on Friday, December 15th at the American Legion Hall. Performances start at 10:30 am sharp and lunch follows directly after. The school will provide lunch for all students and parents. **Parent volunteers will be needed for this special event from 8 am - 1:30 pm.**

*****PLEASE CONTACT ME ASAP IF YOU WILL VOLUNTEER*****

Don't forget, early dismissal is at 12:30 p.m. for all classes.

We wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We look forward to a successful Spring Semester ahead!

Mrs. Jennifer Watson