

ELEMENTARY NEWS

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CALENDAR

Thursday, February 13

Valentine's Day Tea

Friday, February 14

NO SCHOOL - Staff Day

Monday, February 17

NO SCHOOL - President's Day

Wednesday, February 19

Elementary Parent Ed Night

Wednesday, February 26

Field Trip: Young People's
Concert at the Sandler Center

Tuesday, March 3

NO SCHOOL - Parent/Teacher
Conferences

Wednesday, March 4

Parent-Child Night, 4 - 6pm

BIRTHDAYS

Maryna - February 28

REMINDERS

World's Fair is set for March 27.
You can help your child by
starting to gather resources for
his or her chosen country.
More information to come!



Unit Study: Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece is alive and well in the Elementary class! When the children returned to school after the holidays, they found several new materials ready for them to explore. These materials spanned across the curriculum to include works in language, history, geometry, art, drama, and practical life. Many of the children gravitated towards the imaginative world of Greek mythology. Throughout January, the children worked to perform the play "Pandora's Box;" they memorized and delivered their lines, learned choreography and songs, as well as, created Greek vases for the set. A major highlight of the study was the field trip to the Chrysler Museum where the wonderful docents brought many myths to life through works of art.

Cross-curricular studies like Ancient Greece offer students multiple opportunities to engage in a particular topic based on their interests. The freedom to choose an activity makes learning fun and deepens their understanding of the subject.



Curriculum Corner

Over the next month, the children will largely focus on the Presidents of our country. In lower elementary, the children will begin to research different presidents and create posters that they will present to the Kindergarteners. The upper elementary students will research the job of the president and find out what it takes to be the Commander-in-Chief of the United States.

The elementary class will also begin working on the Fundamental Needs of Man: a traditional Montessori lesson that explores the things that all humans require in order to thrive. The children will discover how different people meet these needs in different ways both around the globe and throughout time.

Soon, the children will have the final two Great Lessons. The fourth great lesson is the Story of Writing, and the fifth is called the Story of Numbers. These lessons serve as the backbone of the elementary Montessori curriculum.



Three, It's a Magic Number

The Three Hour Work Cycle

"A teacher simply assists him at the beginning to get his bearings among so many different things and teaches him the precise use of each of them, that is to say, she introduces him to the ordered and active life of the environment. But then she leaves him free in the choice and execution of his work. Children as a rule have different desires at any particular moment, and one keeps busy at one thing and another."

- Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child

The Three Hour work cycle is unique to Montessori education. In the traditional school system, areas of the curriculum have specific time frames and limits. Dr. Montessori believed that the three hour work cycle is essential to help each child develop independence, order, sense of self and concentration in an uninterrupted work cycle with a key focus on movement.

In the Montessori class, children are allowed to work on a material they choose at their own pace, as long as they have been given the initial lesson, and they use the materials correctly and respectfully. There is an ebb and flow to the three hour work cycle. The children fall into concentration on their work soon after arriving. Around 10:00 or 10:30am, the volume goes up and the children appear to be unsettled and unfocused. To an observer, it looks like chaos. Dr. Montessori called this period the "false fatigue" period. The children must be allowed to re-focus and settle back into their work. The volume will return to normal and the children will concentrate on their work once again. This "second" work cycle can be stronger than the first work cycle, if the children are allowed to continue working. It is a mistake to pull the children together into group or otherwise interrupt the three hour work cycle, when this period of "false fatigue" happens. Often children do their best work during this second work cycle. It is very exciting to watch.

By: Anne Stackhouse