

St. Joseph Montessori School  
Children's House Newsletter

November 2011



Dear Parents,

We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day for our field trip to the Pumpkin Patch at Lynd's farm. The children seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed picking out their perfect pumpkins, gourds, and Indian corn.

Despite the damp and chilly weather, International Children's Day was wonderfully festive, with the lively parade, the fabulous costumes, and the tasty snacks from around the world. Thank you to all who contributed cultural artifacts and delicious dishes for the occasion.

We had a delightful evening on Curriculum Night. We enjoyed watching the children show off their favorite activities in the classroom. We thank you all for coming. We welcome you to schedule your own observations of the classroom through the office.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents who attended Curriculum Night had a chance to sign up for Parent/Teacher Conferences. If you haven't already done so, please check with your child's classroom teachers to sign up for a time slot. We look forward to meeting with you.

Special Lunches

As the year progresses, we introduce the children to a variety of experiences in food preparation and food service. The social aspect

of sharing food with others lends itself to what we call, "lessons in grace and courtesy" and includes how we offer food to others and how we politely accept or decline the offer. To expand these experiences, we have traditionally included in our program three Special Lunches, in which the children plan, prepare, and share a lunch they have made for themselves.

While planning their menu, the children discuss nutrition and the basic food groups. During the preparation stage, they demonstrate their skills in scrubbing, peeling, stirring, slicing, etc. And while the meal is being shared, the children demonstrate their skills in table setting, table manners, and food service. It's a fun and enriching experience for us all! Our first Special Lunch is scheduled for December 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are asking for \$15.00 to cover the cost of food for all three special meals. Please make your check payable to *one* of your child's teachers

The Change of Seasons

Now that it's coat weather, we've all been practicing taking off, hanging up, and putting on our own coats. When dropping off and picking up your child, we encourage you to step back and let your child demonstrate his/her skills in independent self care.

*"... never do for the child what he has learned to do for himself." Maria Montessori*

Speaking of coat weather, the changing of the seasons is a good time to check out the clothing options in your child's extra clothing bin. Are all the components – tops, bottoms, etc., still in the bin? Is everything labeled? It is also extremely helpful to staff when all hats, mittens, scarves, and coats are labeled.

### Children's House Math Area

Maria Montessori viewed the traditional method of teaching math concepts entirely in the abstraction as severely hindering to the process of learning and the actual comprehension of the operations that were being symbolically represented. The math materials in a Montessori classroom are not designed to help the child memorize addition facts or multiplication tables in some playful, magical way; they are designed to help the child conceptualize the actual, physical operation the math problem is symbolizing. Dr Montessori's introductory math materials – the number rods, the sandpaper numerals, the spindle box, and the numerals with counters provide the fundamental components of arithmetic. The materials are concrete objects that the child can physically manipulate and arrange. The number rods are physical manifestations of quantity, the sandpaper numbers are a physical manifestation of numeric symbols and the spindle box and numerals with counters are concrete objects that combine the two.

The tens board, teen boards, bead materials and the four operation boards illustrate for

the child the workings of arithmetic. The tens boards and the teen boards provide a concrete introduction to the decimal system. The child is given physical manipulation activities to discover the abstract notion of the place value of units and tens. The bead materials introduce linear counting and the additional place values of hundreds and thousands. The addition, multiplication, division, and subtraction boards give physical demonstrations of the actual process of the respective operations.

*“Any piece of knowledge which the pupil has himself acquired – any problem which he has himself solved, becomes, by virtue of the conquest, much more thoroughly his than it could else be. The preliminary activity of mind which his success implies, the concentration of thought necessary to it, and the excitement consequent on his triumph, conspire to register the facts in his memory in a way that no mere information heard from a teacher, or read in a school book, can be registered.”* Herbert Spencer

### **Dates to Remember**

#### **November 18**

Photo Retakes

#### **November 15, 17 & 21**

Parent-Teacher Conference Dates

#### **November 23-25**

Thanksgiving Break – No School

#### **December 2**

Special Lunch

#### **December 4**

Winter Festival

