

We are so glad to be back in school and wish all our parents and children a very Happy New Year! We thank you for all the gifts.

We had a classroom party on the last Friday before break to celebrate the holidays and, as always, it was great fun. This year the children received rubber duckies from their teachers – silly, but the children seemed to like them. The children could watch the movie, Elf, make a card, play games, and generally hang out. Everyone had a great time!

And, wow, did the year start off in a dramatic way! For those of you that haven't heard, there was a minor crisis in the classroom on Thursday, Jan. 5. One of the heater's blower motors went bad and burned out, filling the room with smoke. The students behaved ideally! They noticed first, informed a teacher, and quickly cooperated as we cleared the room and investigated. Repairs were made after lunch, and everything was back to normal by Friday morning.

We hope your holidays were joyous. May the year 2012 bring you many blessings!

## **General Announcements**

### **Continuing Montessori – February 2, 6:30 pm – DATE CHANGE**

There is a Parent Education meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 2nd at 6:30pm. The primary audience of this meeting is parents who have students who will be moving to a new level. The focus will be on the differences between Primary and Middle School. So we are expecting mostly parents of third year students. The Erdkinder teachers will also be having their own meeting to explain how their classroom is different from Middle School. We strongly encourage parents of our sixth grade to attend the Erdkinder meeting. If you're not in the "target audience", be assured that you are welcome to attend. We just wanted to be clear on the focus of the meeting. There will also be a brief presentation from Elma Pundavela at beginning of the evening.

### **Interest Fair**

Interest Fair is fully under way at this point. Your child has had several deadlines come and go already. On Tuesday, Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> they should have turned in their simple outline and bibliography (so far). The next deadline is on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>, at which time they should show all their work so far to their mentor, including notes, bibliography, and the state of their first draft, which may or may not be complete. On Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, a sketch and description for their poster and 3-D project is due. Often it is helpful to your child to structure time for working on Interest Fair. Working a few hours during the week/weekend may be enough to complete the research and writing without too much distress.

The effort is underway to recruit judges for this annual event. Most children in Middle School participate in the judging and all of Erdkinder is required to participate, making more than 100 children who will need to speak with judges. For the evening to go smoothly and efficiently, about 100 adult judges are needed. If you have friends, relatives or business acquaintances who might be interested, please consider inviting them to participate as a judge. Here are the particulars:

- When: February 23rd. Judges are invited to come for a complementary supper between 5:30 and 6:15; information for judges is given at 6:15 and judging begins at 6:30.
- Judges, of course, should not be familiar with any of the children they judge.
- Judging is usually complete by 8:00.

Thanks for your help! Please send names and contact information to Bill at [wreed@cducation.org](mailto:wreed@cducation.org).

### **Cookies and Carols**

We wish to thank you parents of the children who participated for your generous gift of time in bringing your children and making sure that they were fed and dressed appropriately. The concert went very well!

### **Terra Nova Tests**

You should have received a summary report about Terra Nova tests by this time. The information is about your child only, but will also be able to give a picture of grade levels and our entire school in comparison to national averages. If you have any concerns or questions about the report you received, please contact us.

### **Interim Reports**

Interim Reports will be mailed on January 20<sup>th</sup>. As always, it is a way of communicating with parents. Please contact us any time that you have questions or concerns.

### **Catholic / Montessori School Week**

The week of January 29<sup>th</sup> is set aside to celebrate and honor our connection with other Catholic schools and our Montessori Tradition. A committee of teachers is planning some exciting and meaningful activities to help us celebrate and appreciate the benefits of education from the unique character of a Catholic and Montessori School.

### **Spaghetti Dinner**

Please join your friends and family on Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup> for an “All School Spaghetti Dinner” provided by the Erdkinder classroom. Dinner is served from 4:30 to 6:30. Take-out orders are welcome and can be placed ahead of time. Look for more information soon!

### **Weather**

Winter is cold, wet, snowy, and sometimes muddy. Your child should have appropriate clothing for outside as well as extras in case shoes, socks, or pants become muddy or wet. The temperature in the classroom varies quite a lot within the day. Usually in the morning it is warm, but in the afternoon it gets colder. It may be a good idea to have a sweater or sweatshirt in a locker.

### **No School**

Don't forget that school will be closed on January 16th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

## **Bill will be Traveling Overseas**

From Jan. 17 – Jan. 27, Bill will be traveling with his older daughter's high school class as they visit Japan for 10 days. While he is gone, former Middle School teacher, Nancy Addington, will be substituting. Most of the students know Nancy, so we expect things to go smoothly!

## **Academic News**

### **Biology**

We continue our work in Anatomy with the study of the Circulatory and Respiratory Systems. The children are working in their packets, defining words, doing experiments, etc. Hope they are learning a lot of great information.

### **Grammar**

All children are focusing on sentence analysis at this time. If you are not familiar with sentence analysis Montessori style, ask your child to give you a presentation when you visit our classroom. The method makes analyzing sentences fun and successful.



We have just completed a focus on verbs, however, our focus on them never ends. We will be studying other parts of speech as the year proceeds.

### **Reading**

Fourth year students will soon begin reading The Long Winter, by Laura Ingalls Wilder. This classic story of Pioneer life will tie in with some of our studies in Ohio history, as we're looking at pioneer life in the Ohio Territory. They will have weekly reading assignments and discussions.

Fifth year students will be finishing up their book club groups for Gary Paulsen. The next book will be set in Egypt, around 53 B.C. It's called Cleopatra VII: Daughter of the Nile, and is part of the Royal Diaries series. We are hoping to get a sense of what it might have been like to live during this time long ago.

Sixth year students are finishing Detectives in Togas, and then will begin reading Catherine, Called Birdy, a historical fiction novel set in the Middle Ages, our next topic in history. This book provides great information on what life was like in the Middle Ages. Catherine narrates about the lives, the struggles, and the mindset of medieval people.

### **Writing**

The monthly writing project for January is the child's Interest Fair paper. Students are continuing to research. We continue to have lessons about taking notes, organizing information, and writing expository paragraphs.

All levels are also beginning some guided cursive practice. For the fifth and sixth years, this will be a quick, individualized review designed to re-teach letters rarely used that they may have forgotten how to form. For many fourth years, there are letters they don't remember at all,

or never learned. So the instruction will be less of a review. After Easter break, the expectation will be that everyone uses cursive for handwritten assignments.

### **History**

Fourth year students will take a test over the Timeline of Life the second week of January. They are using the Timeline of Life booklets that they made as study tools, as well as some additional worksheets that have them review the information that was presented to them. After the test, we will begin a long study of the history of Ohio. We will be using a traditional textbook for part of this study, as well as some other projects and activities.

Fifth year students have begun a study of Ancient civilizations. We will look specifically at Sumer, Mesopotamia, and then Egypt.

Sixth year students are concluding study and discussion about the civilization of Ancient Rome. We will then study the changes in culture that occurred in the Dark Ages and Middle Ages, as western Europe struggled to reestablish civilization after the fall of Rome.

### **Mathematics**

Susan is trying to gauge the interest people have in a summer Math/Science week. It would be during camp and would be the last week of camp (July 30-August 3). If you have an interest, please email or talk to Susan by the end of this month.

Math facts are getting attention already! Everyone completed addition in the first 4 days of the year. Several students have also done other sets. We will keep you posted as the class finishes each set. If you have time on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon or morning, let Susan know you want to help with facts. Thank you.

Everyone is taking a survey of skills. These should be finished by Thursday of next week (January 12). The tests should be sent home on the Friday or Monday after this. The information the students receive is which skills are strong and which skills need more practice and/or more information. They have 2 months to learn these and other skills and another survey is given in March.

### **Geography**

The sixth years will begin a study of simple machines. This combines research, using kits, and constructing examples of the machines.

The fifth years study rocks and minerals, including related studies of volcanoes and plate tectonics.

The fourth years continue the study of static and current electricity and of magnetism.

### **Thank You!**

As always, we thank you for your trust in us to participate in the education of your children. The “teamwork” attitude of our parents helps the students to progress as they best can.

Always feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Susan Walling – [swalling@cdeducation.org](mailto:swalling@cdeducation.org)

Karla McKenna – [kmckenna@cdeducation.org](mailto:kmckenna@cdeducation.org)

Bill Reed – [wreed@cdeducation.org](mailto:wreed@cdeducation.org)