



ALPINE MONTESSORI

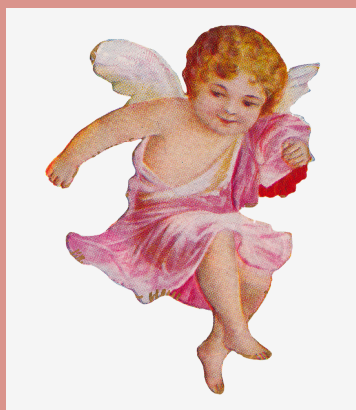
"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled"
— Plutarch

DATES TO REMEMBER

2/12 Valentine's Day parties, all classrooms

2/15 President's Day, school closed

Looking ahead...



March 8-12
Spring Break,
school closed



Notes From 908

Maria Montessori once said "Of all things love is the most potent." As the first newsletter of the new year, from all of the staff at Alpine Montessori, we would like to express our deepest gratitude and fondness for our students and their families. Historically, the school community has always expressed itself in the form of events and gatherings, volunteerism and involvement. This year has posed so many challenges to the norm, and yet here we are, having a great year despite the hurdles! This is due entirely to our hardworking teachers and dedicated parents, not to mention each beautiful child we serve. From all of us at AMS, happy New Year!

The teachers always note that children tend to return from the long winter break refreshed, relaxed, and somehow, a little more grown up! It's a great time to introduce new concepts, and we always see a burst of renewed energy in the student's work. We hope you are all enjoying the tentatively warmer days we have been seeing. As temperatures rise, we are again grateful to have our outdoor environments in use. Traditional Montessori methodology often incorporates the natural world into the learning experience, so we welcome the brighter days ahead with relish!



The Primary Side

Working with the Primary group really is a constant source of joy. Simply overhearing a conversation between two children in the hallway can make our day! At this age when the students are constantly establishing and re-establishing their rights and preferences, learning boundaries and discovering their own abilities, the teachers gently guide but often take a step back to observe. Maria Montessori said “Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child open up himself to life.” Ms. Irene reports that the class has had a lot of nice conversations lately about kindness and peaceful conflict resolution, in conjunction with our observation of Marin Luther King, Jr. Day. They have also been learning about the color spectrum. Kindergarteners have been making great strides in reading, and also delving into abstract math concepts. Montessori math materials are praised worldwide for their ability to illustrate mathematical concepts in the concrete. But when a child is ready to “move into the abstract” by leaning less on the use of the materials, it’s a really exciting milestone for them!



Many of you have asked if there are ways that you can help, and there are! The following are small maintenance jobs on our to-do list. Please call or email the office if you are interested in volunteering a little of your time, and thanks!

*The pink tower and the red and blue rods in the primary classroom need repainting.

*The children use wooden planks on the playground to balance, build, and as props for imaginative play. These planks are on their last legs currently and need replacing. Any boards of various sizes would be greatly appreciated, provided they are relatively smooth and free of nails.

PLEASE-

We ask that families not idle their cars outside the school during pick up and drop off. The fumes are unhealthy for the children as well as harmful to the environment. Thank you!



From the Upper El

The upper el students returned from the holiday excited to see one another and bursting with energy! Sound like anyone you know? It's been such a rewarding year thus far with this group of curious, social, and passionate young people! Before we released for the break, the class donated \$218 to the Family Crisis Center, funds raised by the sale of their own handmade Christmas cards! Amy tells us that areas of study recently include levels of government, American history, poetry, negative numbers, tectonic plates and continental drift, as well as animal classifications. The upper elementary age is the perfect time to instill a love of research, so the students are often following several vastly different threads of interest simultaneously. We believe this paired with the "grace and courtesy" lessons that Maria Montessori placed so much emphasis on, really begins to show us what she meant when she sought to educate "the whole child."



Valentine's Day parties will be held in all of the classrooms on Friday February 12th. The children will exchange cards which may be purchased or hand made. In Primary and Lower El, please have your child sign his or her card, but not address them specifically, as this will make them easier to distribute on party day!



*We get by with a **LOT** of help from our friends. We would like to thank the following people and businesses for their contributions to our school.*

WE THANK YOU!

Amanda Thompson, for donating a beautiful book about the Moon to the school!

Lower Elementary Lines

The lower el has been a busy bunch since we returned from our winter break! Ms. Joyce reports that the class has been having discussions about Civil Rights and peaceful protest, as we recently celebrated the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. Other areas of study include money and fractions, and the children have been making some really great “math art” that has to do with pattern recognition and is quite beautiful. Also of note, Writer’s Workshop is back! This is a great way to introduce the children to writing as a form of expression, and is also wonderful for teaching young minds how dynamic and expressive the English language can be!

From time to time we like to share a few tidbits that we have learned over the years about communicating with children on the often turbulent ride that is parenthood! Have a browse of these helpful hints!



MONTESSORI AT HOME

Phrases that Nurture Respect, Confidence, and Community



Would that be helpful? When a child is sad and wants comfort, be sure to bring them into the process of figuring out their needs. “Would a hug make you feel better?”

What’s your plan? This question helps when there is conflict in need of resolution and aids the child in deciding how to reconcile an issue.

You feel strongly. Different from “you feel sad” or “you feel angry,” this broad interpretation helps a child to connect to his or her feelings and often brings reflection to the child as they learn to identify their emotions.

That was helpful/friendly/generous/gracious, etc. In this instance, being specific helps the child define what it really means to practice these virtues, as opposed to casually giving directives like “Be nice” or “share your toys.”

You wish you could _____. I understand. Offering empathy in a situation where the child is feeling frustrated gives the child the message that you are mindful and listening to their concerns.

I remember when you couldn’t _____ and now you can! Everyone is learning! It is nice to help the child see their progress over time and to celebrate these small victories. Doing so instills confidence and pride in the child’s everyday efforts and gives them the courage to move forward.

You are in charge of your body. When you hear an emphatic “I don’t want to!”, this is a good response, followed by an alternative that you can both agree on. “Don’t want to nap? No problem, you are in charge of your body. You can rest quietly while the others nap.”

We welcome input from our families! If you have something that you would like to see covered in our newsletter, or if you have something that you would like to contribute, please email us at admin@alpinemontessori.org. Articles, ideas for articles, events to put on our “dates to remember” calendar, and more are welcomed!