



MCH News

September

WELCOME!

Dear Families,

Congratulations to all on completing the first month of school! The new children have begun the school year well, and the returning students have such great enthusiasm and are excellent role models. Leadership skills are developing as they assume their roles in the Montessori classroom. The children are becoming purposeful in their work with the materials and seem happy to be socializing on a regular basis.

Thank you, for your attendance at the Parent Orientation Evening on September 13. It was wonderful to formally welcome everyone to Montessori Children's House. Your decision to give your child an early childhood experience like Montessori is an important one. We are very

happy you have chosen MCH. We appreciate your support of our work at school – by volunteering, chaperoning, observing, attending conferences and visit nights, and we appreciate your work in preparing your children for school -- meeting all their needs for rest, nourishing breakfasts, health, and good natured support. Our goals are to offer a quality Montessori education to the young child, a beautiful and enriching indoor and outdoor environment, and a community with successful social interactions. All of our goals strive to "educate the human potential".

Our commitment to building relationships in the community extends to the area schools—we often have college and high school student volunteers come to work with the children and gain

experience in a professional and nurturing environment with the youngest learners in our community. Thanks to Anne, the teacher coordinator from the middle school, Reading Buddies we have so enjoyed over the years, began last week on Thursday afternoon from 3:00-4:00. We look forward to including this lovely program in the day for both of our schools.



The many activities in a Montessori classroom are difficult to describe in a newsletter. We have tried to capture some moments with the camera. You may access these photos on the community page of our web site at www.mchnorthfield.com. The photos can provide a perfect opportunity to discuss what your child does at school. Parents are always welcome to visit and observe during class time and we extend this invitation to you now. Please let us know a day or two in advance of your observation visit.

Everything seems to be going well with the drop off and pick up routine. If you or your child are having problems with these structures, please let us know. Pretty soon it will all seem routine and easy, but we know the adjustment can be challenging at times. The routines in the classroom (bathroom, snack, recess, etc.) have been absorbed by the children very well already. They are quite independent and very responsible and aware of where they are supposed to be and what ground rules should be followed. These are the "big works" of the first few weeks of school and they have done extremely well with them.



We celebrate the world of fruit with field trips to Fireside Apple Orchard this week where we have a full tour of the orchards, the sorting room, cool storage facility, pie making and the donut machine.

Thanks for sending in those permission slips and thanks to those who will chaperone our very first field trips! (Please remember to label your child's car seat).

Thanks!

Many of you have already begun to help provide our Monday snack. It is a nice way for your child to participate in the practical life of the school in a generous and helpful way. We certainly appreciate the contribution on Mondays. We have started a rotational snack duty and you will have a turn once or twice during the school year. When your child brings home the "Snack Box" it will be your turn to provide snack for the next Monday (the box will come home on Friday). The rest of the week's snack will be provided by the school. Below are some suggestions for snack--always enough for your child's class, please.

Snack Suggestions:

- mini bagels
- fruit slices/pieces
- small sandwiches
- snack mixes—cereal, pretzels, nuts, raisins
- muffins
- vegetables—carrots, celery, etc.
- celery with peanut butter
- cheese and crackers
- cheese
- pretzels
- raisin bread w/ cream cheese
- ...anything else you think the children would like. Keep it simple and remember that they can put the snack together—you provide the ingredients.



Upstairs News



It is hard to believe that summer has officially come to an end, but our year is just getting started. What a wonderful start it has been! The children have begun the year with enthusiasm and curiosity, and the returning students are already developing their skills as role models. The children are becoming familiar with the routines of the day, absorbing the ground rules, and socializing on a regular basis. Along with the Montessori materials in the classroom, we have begun the year with science and language materials concerning Colors, Fruits and Vegetables. These are appropriate subjects with which to begin the year because they are so familiar to the children and fit naturally into the cycle of the season, harvesting vegetables from

our garden and enjoying the bounty of the end of summer.

The children have discovered how much our animals also enjoy the fruits of the garden and they are eager to pick leafy greens or cucumbers for the chickens, rabbit, or guinea pig to eat. Taking care of our classroom pets, Chowder and Pete, is an important part of our work together every day. Feeding them is a favorite chore with the children and they eagerly take turns making sure our animals are well-fed.

We have had a lot of fun singing "Pass the Apple" as a way for us to learn each other's names and learning the movements for old favorites like "Ole Brass Wagon". Our line time is energetic and fun, but we have also been practicing the art of making silence. This is a beautiful opportunity for the children to experience stillness in their bodies and discover the joy of listening to the quiet. This is also something you can try at home to help your child learn self-control and practice listening to their own thoughts.

One of the first topics we cover at line time at the beginning of the year is Grace and Courtesy. This comes in the form of brief lessons that help us practice kind and helpful ways of being together at school. We have practiced moving carefully in the classroom, asking polite questions, handling materials gently, and greeting one another. We have also practiced learning how to share something special from home at line time on Mondays. If your child has something special

that they would like to share with classmates (a treasure found on a walk, an item that pertains to something we are studying, a souvenir from a special trip) they are welcome to bring it on Mondays and we will make time for them to show it at line time. I suggest that toys are best for sharing on a play date but if they have something that fits one of the above categories we look forward to hearing about it!

Thank you for sending in a piece of fruit with your child for our first cooking class! Making fruit salad together with fruit that each child has contributed is a lovely way to begin what will be a weekly activity for the rest of the year as we explore food preparation skills and sample foods together.



We have also begun the routine of sending the snack box home each Friday. The children are so eager to have a turn and share a snack with their friends. Thank you for helping them with this important exercise in contributing to the classroom community.

In the geography area we have been learning the names of the continents and the elements that make up the earth - land, air, and water. Soon we will start learning about the globe continent by continent, including language and cultural aspects of the people who live around the world.

One last reminder: now that cooler temperatures are upon us, we have lots of sweaters, jackets, and coats hanging on the hooks. Please label your children's things so that we can more easily keep track of where they belong. We often end up with doubles of things and it's not always easy to know who brought what!

The year is off to a great start and we look forward to all the good things it will bring!

Downstairs News



Congratulations on a great start to the school year! Everyone has been busy exploring the classroom during this first month. We have been getting comfortable in our classroom and absorbing the class routines and ground rules. It is an adjustment to enter a classroom after the summer for both returning and new students. The new students have already made tremendous progress and the returning students are already taking on their roles as leaders in the classroom.

A special focus has been on Grace and Courtesy lessons this month.

These lessons are for social scenarios as well as ground rules. They give the children an opportunity to practice using manners by acting out possible situations that we encounter in and out of the classroom. This month we have practiced how to walk around a working mat, how to carry one material with two hands, how to use a classroom voice, how to politely get someone's attention, how to raise your hand at Line Time, how to keep an activity on our workspace, how to put an activity away before choosing something new, how to ask for personal space, and how to cough or sneeze into your arm. Grace and Courtesy lessons are something we will continue to work on throughout the school year.

This month we have been studying fruits and vegetables as well as the world. The children have also been exploring colors by making their own color wheels and painting with primary colors. There has been a lot of creative exploration this first month. The children have been busy in the Practical Life area with pouring, scooping, squeezing sponges, tearing paper, stringing beads, rolling napkins, sweeping, dusting, window washing, and now apple cutting as well. This area of the classroom works on developing fine motor skills, confidence, coordination, concentration, independence, and order, which is the foundation for all areas in a Montessori classroom. In our Sensorial area the children are busy exploring and developing their senses. We are also busy in the Math area developing our counting skills and our ability to identify

numerals. The Math area uses concrete materials to learn abstract concepts. Many children have also been very busy in the Language area tracing our metal inset shapes in order to prepare their hand for writing. We have also been working on our expanding our vocabulary and learning the sounds of letters. At Line Time, we have been learning how to be in a group, singing songs, and reading lots of books. We look forward to studying trees, leaves, seeds, and North America throughout October. ***Please let us know if you have special knowledge about these topics of study that you would like to share with the children through volunteer opportunities (e.g. a presentation during Line Time, an art project, a cooking project, etc.).**

We have some animal friends in the downstairs class that you may have heard of. The children help feed and care for our turtle, Mr. Tickles, the fish, and our finch, Tweety. We visit the chickens and our rabbit, Rose, when we go out for recess.

The children are doing very well with the snack routine and many of them look forward to it every day. Thank you to those who have already received and returned our Friday snack box. We love the healthy choices that have been sent.



Extended Day has had a fabulous beginning to the school year! News

for this group will be posted in the all school newsletter so that families can follow the activities of the third year students/leaders in our school community. Thus far, they have been involved in welcoming our new students, demonstrating and modeling our classroom ground rules, and even giving lessons on materials with which they are familiar. This is such a thrill for them, and really serves to bolster their self-esteem and reinforce their own knowledge. The Extended Day friends also help in a big way to bring in the harvest at MCH. The older students are so capable of seeing this kind of activity through to the culmination of a cooking class or a deposit in the composting pile.



BIRTHDAYS we celebrated in September:

**Ms. Pat
Jude
Ms. Shana**

**September 6th
September 16th
September 21st**



To take advantage of the beautiful fall weather we will have a **photo day** at school on Friday, 10/15. You will receive a group photo of your child's class. Extended Day/K

students will have photos taken on that day, as well. All other students are welcome to order individual photos through the school but you will be asked via e mail to let us know of your interest **before** photo day, please. Order forms will come home following the photo day.

We have certainly been enjoying our time on the playground together at recess. We appreciate the help you offer your children in practicing their independence with shoes and coats. Soon enough it will be boots, hats, mittens, snowsuits...but for now-- Happy Fall!



Dates to remember:

October 3 and 4—Fall Field Trips to Fireside Apple Orchard

October 15—photo day

October 18 and 19 No School- MEA

October 25--Parent Visit Night (your child brings you to school to show you what we do at MCH)

October 31—Halloween Party at school

November 5—No School—Parent/Teacher Conferences

November 21--Alumni Visit Day

November 22 and 23--No School—Thanksgiving Break