



INDOOR/OUTDOOR



**MONTESSORI JOURNEY
IN REVIEW**



COMING UP IN



COMMUNITY NEWS



Throwing “snow balls”- after a science class



SCIENCE FAIR



CLASSROOM BUZZ



LOOKING BACK

Introducing our outdoor classroom

As of Jan 1st for 2 hours every morning EC students have access to the new “outdoor nature classroom” with Miss Angela as their guide.

A third year EC student steps outside proudly displaying his lanyard (outdoor nature work pass) and picks up a magnifying glass. Within a minute, he finds a Monarch caterpillar on the milkweed plant and asks to put it in the observation box. He is thoughtful enough to include several leaves for it to eat and spends a few minutes observing at the tables.



I bring over a stronger magnifying glass and show him how to use it. Now he’s excited, “Miss Angela, look! He has antennae... Look at his mouth. Why is his skin like that?!?” Next he takes the sketching/creative writing work and spends 45 minutes creating a detailed artistic picture, and a short written description about his find.

Witnessing this exploration and learning, I am struck with how much I love my job! Starting at the beginning of this semester, I have a new role at the school. I am now the Nature Curriculum Coordinator. I spend 2 hours during the morning work period outside as teacher of the Outdoor classroom. There are two outdoor nature work “passes” in each EC class, which students can now choose as one of their work options.

Many articles and much research has shown the direct link between exposure to nature and increases in concentration and learning in the class room. Teachers have already witnessed this first hand in the classroom since the start of the outdoor classroom in early January.

Besides the ever-changing shelf of outside work, the children are invited to help with real work to maintain the yard; pebble removal from the drain and flower beds, year-round vegetable gardening, leaf raking, plant trimming, washing and filling bird baths and feeders and anything else that needs to be done.

Everyday has it’s surprises: a grub from the garden, a beetle discovered in the bushes, a bird landing in the sandbox. One morning we discovered ice in the bird bath and on another we got to “walk in a cloud” through the fog. Some days are rainy, but that just gives us an opportunity for “nature table” exploration indoors. Everyday rain or shine I get to witness the joy and wonderment children experience as they discover and explore within the natural world.



Be on the lookout for the upcoming “Nature Page” on the school website. It will include pictures and stories from the outdoor nature class as well as information about Adult/Family nature related experiences! If you have any questions about the outdoor program you can contact Miss Angela at: naturalknowledge@hotmail.com

Montessori Journey in Review

by Gordon Roberson

This weekend, we hosted our first parent enrichment opportunity of 2015. The Montessori Journey (or Silent Journey, as it is sometimes called) was a first for many in our community. The premise and purpose of the event is simple: we learn most when we choose to be silent, observe, and concentrate.

The first day of the journey was about noticing and discovering the environments through our eyes. We took in the experiences as if we were the child encountering the room and guides for the first time. Our journey started in the toddler environment, transitioned to EC, and ended with Lower Elementary. What happened when we were completely silent and were allowed to clearly observe the quiet, still environments? Most of us had to calm our urges to reach out or ask questions. We left with curiosities about certain pieces and hoped to touch materials the next day.

The second journey was active and busy. Upon our return the next morning, we were rewarded with a wealth of material, arranged and intended for our curious hands to discover--all of it interesting and laid out with care. We all manipulated work prepared by our guides and assistants and watched others in lessons. For many participants, this event inspired many 'aha' moments and we recognized new discoveries.

The progression of the silent journey was deliberate, watching each environment change with the developing needs of the child. I noted the following:

Toddler: Initially, we were struck by the materials and furnishings of the room. Everything was long and low in the environment, allowing for a child to easily access all materials. The space was spacious and inviting, spotless and beautiful. We saw the careful thought in which each material had been crafted and prepared. It was understood that each child leaves these capable teachers as an independent person of the world.



Early Childhood: The EC room was ready for everyone's watchful gaze. The carefully prepared room was welcoming and sparked curiosity for the next day. The teachers brought together a comprehensive and complete picture of the breadth of Early Childhood—an astounding amount of material and work!



We explored some of the exciting outdoor education work that Angela tirelessly creates and shares with our lucky students. Discovery and exploration were everywhere.

Lower Elementary: As I see this room every day, the Montessori Journey allowed me to see the space through the thoughtful progression from the other classrooms. This room too is orderly and welcoming. Material



is carefully placed on the shelves and entices the child to progress through the work. Additionally, teachers give lessons on material that is seemingly unfamiliar: test tube division, the checker board math, language work. The work and lessons were engaging for both parents and community.

After the journey, I was amazed by the reactions and comments from the participating families. Parents commented on the feelings of confidence and independence in their children. Several parents remarked on their desire to have experienced a Montessori classroom and noted that math concepts would have understood rather than memorized. Many agreed that it felt that they were leaving their child in a special place. Other joked that they didn't know why their child didn't express what they did today--there is just so much

happening! The participating parents overwhelmingly agreed that the Montessori Journey is a necessary process to understanding their child's experience.

These comments will continue to inspire me in the classroom as we approach new lessons and work. The classrooms are a shining example of our intent to educate the whole child as they progress through their own journey.



Priority re-enrollment now open!

As we begin the enrolling process for the 2015/2016 school year we hope you share our pride in how well all of our students are progressing! It is this personal growth, which parents see cultivated in their children, that causes our school community to expand and flourish. We know your child's education is an investment in their future and we thank you for choosing Montessori House for Children.

February 1st – 15th is *priority re-enrollment* (for current students); general enrollment opens to the wait pool on Monday, February 16.

If you have any questions concerning re-enrollment Yaneth Poo will be happy to assist you. She can be reached at: yaneth@montessorihouseforchildren.com

Love and Service

This Feb at MHFC we will be focusing on showing our love through acts of service. While chocolate is delicious, and roses are beautiful, acts of service big or small can help to change the world.

The EC and Toddler classes will be lifting hearts by sending cards to children at Texas Children's Hospital. Further information will be given on individual classroom pages.

Be sure to follow our FB page in Feb. We will be posting family service project ideas!



Calling all Scientists and all Future Scientists!

The MHFC Science Fair will be held on Tuesday, February 3 from 6-7pm. All families are invited to support our budding scientists and learn more about their projects. Experiments range from studies on buoyancy to irradiation, comets to clothes construction.

Why a Science Fair? The science fair gives students a chance to study areas of science that might particularly interest them. They go beyond the limits of the classroom to develop their own ideas. They use their own initiative to plan and create a science project using the scientific method as a guideline. Then, by displaying their project at the Science Fair, students share what they have learned with others and are recognized for their efforts.

COMING UP

Backyard Garden Workshop

Is your family interested in growing your own organic vegetable? Miss Angela is a Certified Organic Vegetable Specialist through Urban Harvest here in Houston and she is offering this information to our community. The class will include site selection, building of raised beds, attracting native wildlife and planting schedule plus much more! It is a very brief summary of "Year Round Gardening for Metro Houston" by Bob Randall, founder of Urban Harvest. There is no charge for the class, however, the book is highly recommended. It costs \$45 and can be purchased at the class. To sign up please email Miss Angela at naturalknowledge@hotmail.com no later than Feb. 20th. There is a minimum of 5 participants.

SAVE THE DATE, SPRING
CARNIVAL MARCH 22ND!

MORE INFORMATION
COMING SOON....



- Feb 3rd Science Fair
- Feb 7th 8-11 a.m. Positive Discipline session1
- Feb 12th 9 a.m. Parent Coffee
- Feb 12th 6 p.m. Book Club
- Feb 13th 5-6 p.m. Great Grow Out
- Feb 14th 8-11 a.m. Positive Discipline session 2
- Feb 16th **School Closed**
- Parent Teacher Conferences**
- Feb 17-18th **School Portraits**
- Feb 19th 6-7 p.m. Parent Assoc.
- Feb 21st 8-11 a.m. Positive Discipline session3
- Feb 27th **Early Release**
- Feb 28th 8-11 a.m. Positive Discipline session4
- Feb 28th 12-3 p.m. Backyard Garden

The Great Grow Out

Through the Katy Prairie Conservancy and the Native Plant Society of Houston, we have been gifted with seeds from 22 varieties of native flowers! Now it's time to get those seeds planted so we can put the plants in the ground this Spring.

If you and your family would like to "grow out" a flat of seeds, please email Angela at naturalknowledge@hotmail.com. All materials and instructions will be provided.

LOOKING BACK



Thanks to all the families who participated in last month's presentation of "Annie"

it was a great success!

A Special Thanks To All Our Volunteers

Your contributions to the school are much appreciated!

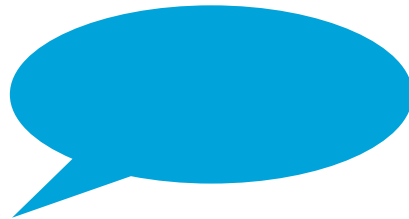
Parent Readers

Library Parents, Garden Day Volunteers

Parent Coffee Volunteers

Class Volunteers

Classroom Buzzzzzz



- EC: When Miss Maitreyi announced to the children that she would be traveling to India to tend to her sick mom, the children suggested "hot chicken soup and rice", "apple juice" and "lots of hugs and kisses!"
- EL: Sisters arriving in drive-through waved hello to a friend arriving in the next car. When they all got inside the girls (twins) asked their friend why he hadn't waved back. He replied: "I thought both of you were someone else!"