

WMS Happenings

November 2011

Head of School News, by JJ Griebel

This is an exciting time of year!

The weather is changing and we are finding cool nights balanced by some beautiful fall days. We anticipate frosty mornings and the first real snowfall. We have begun the exciting season of holiday celebrations and family gatherings.

Amazing things are happening in our classrooms. The children have settled in, made new friends, and are discovering new lessons and things to learn. We can see bright eyes from new discoveries as they have those “ah-hah” moments. We can feel a joy in learning and an excitement to see what is next.

Wonderful things are also happening for our school. Great progress continues on our building expansion. We are working with the architect, engineers, and builder to refine and personalize our plans. In parallel we are coordinating the needed funding through mortgage and fundraising. There are many actions taking place that will come together and result in an exciting change for our school.

Share the excitement with your children. Ask about their work. Take a meal together. Delight in a walk through piles of crunchy leaves. Stay warm together while playing in the snow. Enjoy your family’s holiday traditions.

Share the excitement with the school. Come and observe your classroom. Invite a friend or co-worker to Come Find Out! Anticipate our successful building expansion.

Enjoy the excitement!

International Dinner

October 1, 2011



**Having fun with
friends!**

Grace & Sofia

Calendar of Events

November 18th: Spirit Day

November 23rd – 25th: Thanksgiving Recess, SCHOOL & WRAP-AROUND CLOSED

December 5th – 9th: Mitten Tree Collection

December 7th: Coffee in the Cafe

December 8th: School Picture Make-up Day

December 16th: Spirit Day

December 20th: Board of Trustees Meeting, 6:00 pm

December 21st: Elementary Holiday Tea

December 22nd & 23rd: Winter Recess, SCHOOL CLOSED, Wrap-around open

December 23rd: Wrap-around closing at 5:00 pm

December 26th – January 2nd: Winter Recess, SCHOOL & WRAP-AROUND CLOSED

January 3rd: School Resumes

January 6th: Coffee in the Cafe

January 16th: Martin Luther King Day, NO SCHOOL, Wrap-around open

January 17th: Board of Trustees Meeting, 6:00 pm

January 20th: Silent Journey, 6:00 – 7:30 pm

January 21st: Silent Journey Continued, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

January 27th: Spirit Day

January 27th: No Busing Available for Webster, check with your district

Office News

Just a few reminders:

- Please let us know of any changes to your phone numbers and emergency contacts that occur throughout the year.
- Please make sure that the school has both parents' cell phone numbers.
- Please sign up in the office to observe in your classroom.

***Note: Wrap-around will be closing at 5:00 pm on Friday, December 23rd.**



Toddler News, by Kim Gerrie

Dear Toddler Parents,

I am delighted to communicate how well our toddler environment has advanced as Ms. Iacobacci has made the smooth and successful transition into our toddler community. Ms. Iacobacci has been doing an incredible job with the children, in regards to both toileting as well as the classroom. As the toddlers continue to successfully adapt to the classroom, explore new work, and thoroughly absorb most recent lessons, we have begun to focus on encouraging independence within each individual toddler. In order to develop consistencies between home and school, I would like to encourage families to consider some adaptations for your home environment, in addition to some intellectual concepts to encourage independence in toddlerhood...

Appreciation and knowledge expand from experience. The truest of all experiences are ones in which we venture to encounter the world as an individual. At a grown age this act simply reinforces the person we know ourselves to be. However, experiencing the world autonomously in the toddler years is part of a unique process- Identity Formation. This surrounds the idea that your toddler has within them a natural drive to absorb and learn from everything around them as well as to embody their ultimate discoveries and experience. A valuable way of approaching this progression with your toddler is to begin by asking yourself who your toddler is as a person at this point in time. Consider developmental abilities (physically, cognitively, emotionally, etc) as well as their personal interests and deepest motivations. Also, ask yourself what qualities do you wish to instill within your child as he or she matures into a unique individual. This may include confidence, compassion, creativity independence, capable, wit, athleticism, and so on.

Psychologically, it is important to consider this collection of ideas when addressing your toddler each day. Although some days may be more frustrating than others, your extremely intuitive toddler will sense and reflect your actual feelings versus ones you genuinely wish to see someday.

When looking into the physical environment consider individual areas of your home:

- **Bathroom:** Should have easy to reach shelves, sink, toilet, toilet paper/ wipes, toothbrush, tissues, hairbrush, soap, etc. These can be achieved with a step stool or sturdy bench. Once, most of these items are within reach of your toddler, allowing them to actually carry out processes on their own (even if this means brushing their teeth 5 times per one afternoon) will lead them to feel capable of caring for themselves.
- **Kitchen:** In addition to making eating utensils, plates, and napkins within reach, pick a low shelf or drawer in the refrigerator for foods that your toddler can seek

out and snack on when they feel it is appropriate. They will experience an immediate uplift in confidence when they are able to decide independently on a time to eat. Also, to know exactly what they want and where to find it without adult assistance.

- **Holiday activities & preparation:** As holidays are approaching, really try to support your toddler's participation in decorating and preparing meals throughout the season. Encourage them to apply their own ideas with where to place decorations or how they may wish to cut or decorate a cookie.

Primary News, by Lisa Maltese

Guiding the Child in Acquiring Language

In the Children's House we can offer guidance in three ways: Conversations, enrichment of vocabulary, and helping him to acquire written language for the language that he speaks.

The result – to help the child build self-confidence.

Conversation: The adult with the child is the most important language material. If the adult thinks naturally, carries out natural conversations with the children, tells the children stories and encourages them to tell about their own events, then she is a great help to the child in the child's task of organizing her personality. Through communication, the child is stimulated and stimulating. It is her experience that counts in the building of her personality. When it is built on self-confidence, the child's life is immeasurably enriched.

Another kind of conversation to have with children is the reading of books. Books for their age that deal with real life help the child to adapt to the world that he lives in. Fairy tales are for older children, between five to seven years of age. They deal with concepts that the younger child does not understand. These stories are black and white to the younger child and have frightening aspects.

Vocabulary: Vocabulary helps the child build self-confidence. The natural tendency is to learn and use words that fix the images of the things around us. Thus a person grows up in the country, might be able to identify more trees, flowers, crops and birds than a child who grew up in the city. A child in the city learns to identify buildings and streets. These years are the most fertile in the child's life for acquiring vocabulary.

So we name everything and let the child touch and handle things simultaneously. At this age it doesn't matter if the word is long or short, common or scientific. The child learns them all if the word is used naturally. It's natural for the child to say "Oh! The pistol is

taller than the stamen!” when he looks at a new flower. Just as another child might say, “There’s something sticking out of this flower!” It’s the same observation, but one child has the vocabulary to express himself exactly and the other child does not.

Written Language: The step from spoken to written language was a great one in the evolution of human beings. Spoken language can only reach the ear, which happens to be close to it. But written language can carry one’s thought to a far away place or to a remote time.

At the beginning of writing, pictures were used. As they became stylized and more complex, it was difficult to have a different sign for each word. Invention of the alphabet made it simple to write any word at all using only a few symbols. An individual now has power and a new ability in exchange for knowing a handful of signs. He can write anything just by representing the arrangement of sounds that he already knows. So can a child make this step while he is still in the Sensitive Period for language. He has psychic forces of concentrated motor activity, repetition, order and abstraction working for him.

On a different note, I enjoyed our Parent-Teacher conferences. It’s such a wonderful opportunity to discuss your child’s progress and to connect with the parents as well. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

I encourage you to schedule a time to come and observe your child in the classroom. It is wonderful way to see the workings of the class.

As the holiday season approaches, I wish you all many blessings. Your child is such a gift to me. I am amazed and proud of how they have progressed. Enjoy and cherish this time with your child.

Primary News, by Lisa Van Vechten

I want to thank all of the parents for meeting with me for the Parent Teacher conferences. Our time together was very insightful and informative and gives me additional tools to support your child.

During October we learned about the four steps of the water cycle (evaporation, condensation, precipitation and collection). The extended day students (two to three per group) represented and acted out the four cycles. They were quite dramatic especially when it came to the precipitation cycle.

Our estimation work continues and for October we had candy corn in a jar. There were many guesses (ranging from 5 to 350,000,000) from the children and parents on the number of candies in the jar. The correct number was 85 and the Bowen family guessed the exact amount. Congratulations.

During late September and October we discussed and read books about several holiday's such as Rosh Hashanah, Diwali and Columbus Day. In November we will be learning about Election Day, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving.

We have our nature table which is open each day to any item of interest to your child to share with classmates. There have been several items such as leaves, nuts, bones, seeds and photographs on display.

Lauren Nichols brought in a book about Washington D.C. which had lovely photographs. One photograph Lauren pointed out to the class that she had seen in Washington was the elephant that is on display at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. The book stated that the elephant was thirteen feet tall. Not being able to measure that high in our classroom we used a ruler and measured on the floor thirteen feet so the children could see how large the elephant was. They were very surprised how long thirteen feet was.

While the fall season has brought the opportunity to discuss leaves and leaf shapes we also have been continuing to look at and grow seeds. We grew several bean plants as well as wheat grass.

Our class fish died during October so I purchased a new one. This offered the opportunity for each child to offer suggestions for the new name and then we took a class vote. The winning name was Cookie. At about the same time we took suggestions and voted on a name for our hermit crab. The winning name for him was Chocolate Chip Cookie. I guess we can surmise that the children like cookies!

During the school day it is wonderful to see and hear the children's observations. One child doing table washing with a brush stated "the bristles on this brush look like the stamens on the flowers" and another time when a child was working with the geometry cabinet and had a drawer of circles she stated "this circle looks like a steering wheel". Precious moments of childhood wonder!

In October the extended day students went potato digging at Chase Farms in Fairport. It was a great trip. Before the trip we read some books on potatoes and how they grow. After the trip we discussed the trip with the first and second year students and the children helped to make mashed potatoes for snack.

Speaking of cooking, each day the children participate in food preparation for snack. During the week there are special cooking opportunities such as pancakes, making pudding, banana bread etc. that can then be eaten for snack. Food preparation offers many opportunities to support the curriculum in our classroom. Thanks so much for all of the snacks families provide each week!

On October 31st we had our Harvest Celebration. We have been discussing what fall harvest is and looking at the foods harvested. The children pick partners to sit with and

then groups of children serve the placemats, plates, cups, napkins, cookies etc. I was very proud of the children as they waited patiently to be served and then eat. We carved our pumpkin at the party. The children voted on the shape of the eyes, nose and mouth. The winning shapes were triangle eyes, circular nose and a mouth with teeth. We will keep the pumpkin in the classroom until it starts to rot and then as a group take it to our class garden to return it to the earth. We read our favorite fall book "Pumpkin Jack" which tells the story of a boy and his Jack O Lantern. If you have not read it I would recommend it. The children had a wonderful celebration and thanks to the families who contributed to the party.

We have been continuing to learn the continents and North American countries. We have explored the flags, food and looked at photos of life in these differing places.

The classroom is now open for observations so please take time to come and see your child at work. They love to have you visit.

Children Teach Parent's Night in October was a special evening. The children are so proud to show you all they have learned. Thanks to the families who were able to attend.

On Monday, November 21st, we will be celebrating Thanksgiving with our Tasting Party. There will be a sign up sheet on our bulletin board in the foyer. If you sign up for a cold item, please send it in on Thursday, November 17th. If you sign up for a hot item, please prepare the food with your child at home and bring them to school on Monday, November 21st at arrival. I will be sending home a letter explaining the details of the party.

As the cooler weather approaches and the children need to wear coats, hats, mittens and boots please consider taking your child with you to purchase the items. At the store allow them to try to put the items on and see where there might be obstacles. We are working to offer the children independent opportunities and when they have clothing that they cannot manipulate or successfully (even after practice) put on or zipper it is a great source of frustration for the young child. We as adults have found many children's clothing items challenging so we can only imagine how the child feels. Thank you for your consideration in this area.

As the holiday season approaches if you would like to share your family traditions with the children please let me know and we would enjoy having you come to speak to the children.

The Montessori environment has unique materials that offer the young child the opportunity to prepare himself/herself for life by better understanding the adult world. While toys can be beneficial most of them do not mirror the real world the child is living in or preparing to live in. Montessori materials offer to lead the child on the road toward becoming a functioning and contributing member of the family and society. When a child participates in activities that assist the functioning of the family (home or

classroom) they build their confidence and self-esteem. Alisa McCoy states in “Why Montessori Materials, and Not Toys” (AMI/USA September 2000) that the child grows in his/her ability toward physical and psychological independence when using real life materials. The Montessori materials offer the child concrete interaction with the isolation of the quality being taught at the forefront of the material, thus supporting the child’s ability to gain the essence of the material. When the child is given this opportunity for isolation of a quality it leads his/her mind to order, clarity and classification about their world. The Montessori materials also offer self-correction which gives the child feedback and the chance to be challenged. The beauty of the Montessori classroom is the child is able to make many discoveries on their own each day while working with the materials. Montessorians call these discoveries “the keys to the world”. Take a second look at the activities your child has at home and see if you could make one or two implementations toward more purposeful interactions with their home environment. You will be thrilled to see the joy your child will exhibit as they move forward with their development.

We wish you and your family a very Happy Thanksgiving and holiday season. Thanks for all you do to support our classroom and WMS each day!

RECOMMENDED BOOK:
“Is This a House for Hermit Crab”?
By M. McDonald

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
Memorial Art Gallery Family Day
“Extreme Materials 2 Family Day”
Sunday, November 20, 2011: 12-5 pm

Primary News, by Carol McCoon

The Development of the Will and Obedience

In The Absorbent Mind Dr. Montessori starts with the theory that “man’s will proceeds from a great universal power (home) (p.230).” The impulse of the will is the impulse to act, and man is driven to improve himself. Obedience is an essential aspect in the development of the will, and Dr. Montessori outlined three stages of obedience.

Impulses drive the very young child who simply seeks to have his needs met. If a child experiences a structured, predictable environment he may frequently obey adult directions, but inner impulses will still interrupt his ability to obey all the time. Adults must be clever in giving commands while the child is in the middle of doing that action. Providing choices that are equally acceptable trains a child to make choices. Stage three obedience is achieved when a person knows what is expected and listens to an inner guide to work toward achieving goals. It is the child’s will that creates the power to obey. Not all adults achieve stage three obedience.

We see the drive to choose work and to work through to its completion every day in the classroom. Children arrive each day knowing that they will practice sandpaper letters, write with the moveable alphabet, or write words with the phonogram alphabet every day. Younger children are still learning what choices they may make, and they observe the older children closely. Following the example of the older children they begin to work with greater concentration. The Montessori materials invite action and the directress guides the careful use of the materials, so that the children have a specific goal and realize with pride when they have mastered a material.

A set of ordinary blocks may be used to build a tower, but by the addition of specific mathematical increases in size, the child begins to analyze his construction of the pink tower. Each time the child builds the pink tower he places the cubes more precisely. He has a goal before he starts, feels the pride in completing his task, and knows how to bring the work to a close. The child's will is activated and self-improvement results.

This cycle is repeated throughout the day and the Montessori child is transformed into a person who chooses to follow the inner drive to work and learn. Before long children are following extensive directions carefully. According to Dr. Montessori the functioning of the will is an unconscious process. It only becomes conscious through the repeated experiences of making decisions, patiently waiting for that which one wants, and persistence in working to completion.

As the will develops and a child becomes more obedient, it may appear that the child obeys to please an adult. We can assist in clarifying the purpose of the work by reflecting back to the child what was done well. By redirecting the focus to the work that was done, greater self-esteem may result. We may enjoy the feeling that our child wants to please us, but it serves the child more to show that our greater pride is in the child's effort.

Elementary News, by Jo Landis

We are enjoying the change of seasons. The children are already thinking about our Thanksgiving Celebration which will take place on Tuesday, November 22, 2011. We will let you know the details as soon as our plans are made.

The "Great Lessons" and many key introductory lessons have been given and we are really into new and more advanced work in every area of the curriculum.

The elementary child has new needs in this plane of development. The children now are using the language skills they developed as a tool for exploration. When they look for answers, as they do their research work, the children are using not only their reasoning minds but the power of their imaginations. This is critical in the problem solving they are confronted with each day.

Listed below are a few thoughts as to the role of “imagination” in the elementary classroom. The ability to imagine is a faculty of the human being. This power needs impressions and is related to the sensitive part of our nature and the senses. We know what is cooking by the smell because we have sensed this previously in other ways.

We use the power of the imagination (1) to gather images and put them together, (2) to apply these to reality and (3) to make inventions which have never been seen before. In the primary class the child must experience the real world with its customs and behaviors. He explores sensorily. In the elementary classroom he explores with these learned facts plus his imagination. The child must build the necessary base before his imagination is of real use to him for problem solving

The child in the second plane of development enjoys fairy tales and myths because they give him a vision of what only those without human power can or cannot do. In turn his imagination begins to set the moralistic stage for development of his sense of values.

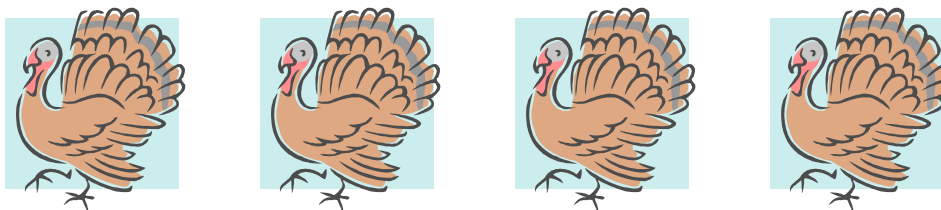
Through imagination and his fascination for the unknown, the child is able to give gratitude for law and order of the universe and to mankind for the efforts of the past. Through the use of his imagination he develops a sense of both gratitude and appreciation which are essential to him in life.

The presentations in the class give a picture of the whole. The child finds the details and facts which interest him, returns to the whole and classifies this information. He can store the information freeing the imagination.

Presentations in the classroom are given and the child is driven to explore. The materials in the classroom are limited to encourage exploration outside of the classroom. We in turn use the creative force of the human mind to interest him in seeking more knowledge.

When the child is at rest, again the adult creates another unrest. In this way we are using the creative force of the human mind to interest him in seeking more knowledge. The senses then combine with the imagination to present the intellect.

There is nothing more exciting than to watch reasoning develop through the study of geometry; appreciation for nature through the study of botany and zoology; writing of reports, poems and stories through the study of language and a better understanding of mankind through the study of the “Needs of Man”.



Wrap-around News, by Mani Verma

I hope everybody is enjoying beautiful fall weather. Children are having fun collecting leaves, acorns and pine cones. They are reading stories related to coming holidays. We have planned lots of fun crafts to encourage the creativity. We will learn that Thanksgiving is a festive meal of thanks and celebration that is shared with family and friends. ". As a culminating activity we will grow a "tree of thankfulness." The children will generate a list of things they are thankful for which will be displayed on our tree. Children will make ornaments and we will decorate our tree with them.

Please remember to have the following items here for your child when it snows as we go outside each day if weather permits:

HAT & MITTENS, SNOW BOOTS, WINTER COAT and SNOW PANTS

If your child does not have a heavy coat and boots when there is snow on the ground, he/she will not be able to join us outside for outside play. Children need fresh air and large motor exercise daily, and enjoy snow play very much – please remember to have these items so that your child may be able to enjoy the winter season.

Children are enjoying after school Art and Little Gym classes.

Please bring the Wrap-around enrollment form on the due date. We really appreciate your help.

JUST A REMINDER:

- **There is no Wrap-around on 11/23/11 - 11/25/11 & 12/26/11 -01/02/12.**
- **We are closing at 5:00 pm on 12/23/11.**

WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY THANKSGIVING AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS.



Board of Trustees News, by Christine Vargas

The Board of Trustees continues to move forward with leading the school through some new initiatives. At this time, we have set the Strategic Plan for WMS for the next 5 years. It is a new milestone for our school, as this is the first Strategic Plan established by the Board of Trustees in the history of our school. I would like to thank Board Member Marcos Esterman for helping us with this accomplishment. Now that the plan is in place, it is our Head of School who will be responsible for the execution of this plan. We look forward to supporting JJ as she starts the execution work to make this plan a reality. In some cases this work requires creating the strategies that we will use to achieve these goals. In other cases, it is about ongoing due diligence by the Head of School, our staff and the Board. If you would like to find out more, please feel free to contact me at cvargas1@rochester.rr.com.

On Thursday, November 10th, both JJ and myself, lead by our Design/Build team appeared in front of the Town of Penfield's Planning Board to submit our site development plans for review. The questions presented were straightforward with no surprises. Their board made very positive statements, including that they are pleased to see the school moving forward with our expansion and the enhancement of our facility. We have a fair amount of work ahead of us as we look to start the detailed design phase of the process. We plan to have an upcoming parent meeting where we will be providing more details of this project. Look for a communication coming shortly.

Ongoing Programs

You can help our school with these ongoing programs:

- Box tops
- Soup labels
- Ink & toner cartridge / cell phones / electronic gadgets collections
- Target credit card
- United Way donor #1637
- Good Search

Your continuous support to Webster Montessori School is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Auction/Wine Tasting Event News, by Nancy Zurell

2012 Spring Fundraising Event

Planning is well under way for the upcoming 2012 Spring fundraising event. We have had a couple of meetings to date and I would like to thank everyone that has attended and volunteered so far. We are still in need of help, so please contact me at nancy.zurell@frontiernet.net if you need volunteer hours. A schedule of meetings will be sent out soon so please watch for that.

We have picked a location and started planning the menu. Event details are below:

Category	Details
Date	Thursday, April 19, 2012
Time	6:00pm – 10:00pm
Location	Monroe's Restaurant at the Historic Spring House
Address	3001 Monroe Avenue Rochester, NY 14618 (about 15 minutes from Webster Montessori School; very near I-590 South exit 2B)
Event Type	Buffet Station Dinner (<i>vegetarian options available</i>) Silent Auction Live Auction
Childcare	Will be provided at Webster Montessori School (contact JJ Griebel for more information)

This year we will be offering the following tiered pricing structure:

Purchase by Date	Ticket Type	Price
By March 1, 2012	Single	\$65
	Pair	\$120
	Tables of 8 (limited number available)	\$480 (\$60/person)
Between March 2 – April 10	Single	\$70
	Pair	\$130
After April 10	Single	\$75
	Pair	\$140

Spring event central is currently located on the bulletin board in the cafe with event details and highlighted auction items. Keep checking there for updates.

Our Trip to the Apple Farm

Primary Full Day Students

October 2011

