

THE COMMUNICATOR

MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

1.31.2017

This edition's theme:

Imagination

Upcoming Dates:

February 2: XD Parent Education Meeting

February 10: Coffee with the School Head

February 17&20: No School for Students

Children's House

Imagination is the real substance of our intelligence. All theory and all progress comes from the mind's capacity to reconstruct something. (Maria Montessori, The Child, Society and the World p.48).

As this quotation suggests, Maria Montessori valued an individual's imagination. She was also fervent in her belief that children need to gain experiences that are founded in reality. With this, the role of the Children's House classroom is to provide real, concrete experiences. These experiences provide a foundation for a child's imagination. Theory suggests that it is difficult for a child below the age of seven to discern what is real and what is fantastical. It is our responsibility to provide children with experiences that are based in concrete reality. Real experiences develop a child's knowledge base that allows his or her imagination to blossom.

The Montessori curriculum is founded in reality and meets the developmental needs of children. Children use their senses to perceive and understand our world. Our environment provides opportunities for children to refine and isolate their senses so that they can better perceive the surrounding world. An example of this is seen in the Food Preparation area of the classroom. Instead of having a pretend kitchen, children use real knives, glasses, and tools to prepare their own snacks. Experiences like these allow children to develop through critical analysis of reality. Children are not discouraged when they engage in fantastical play, but instead are offered real-life opportunities that meet their needs. Montessori classrooms look to provide children with the experiences they need in order to develop their imagination.



Lower Elementary

Beginning around the age of six, children move from an interest in understanding the concrete, tangible world around them, which was nurtured in Children's House, to an interest in understanding the extents and origins of the outside world. Children's desire and ability to use their imagination suddenly booms at this age, giving them a way of gaining knowledge about faraway places and distant times that they cannot directly experience. The Lower and Upper Elementary classroom is designed to nurture children's interest in the world by appealing to their imagination. Our curriculum is rich in stories and materials which draw children's imagination outside of our classroom to see the universe, world, life, and human societies with a sense of wonder and intrigue. By appealing to the imagination, the elementary classroom sows the seeds for future passions and engagement.



Upper Elementary

In the Upper Elementary, we continue to tell the stories that are told in the Lower Elementary, but with a more specific focus. We build on the Great Lessons and encourage the children to focus their imaginations on the smaller details. Imagine the lives of our earliest fossil relatives. Imagine the life that they lived and how they had to adapt in order to survive. Imagine the world around them. What do they eat? How do they communicate? Why can their fossils be found in different parts of the world? The Upper Elementary child will research to discover facts, but it is their imagination that makes what they are learning come to life.



In Upper Elementary, the children created a timeline of our fossil hominid relatives dating back 5 million years. They researched and imagined what life was like 5 million years ago.

Middle School

“The mind bases itself on the imagination, which brings things to a higher level, that of abstraction. But the imagination has need of support. It needs to be built, organized. Only then may man attain a new level. He is penetrating the infinite.” -Dr. Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence, 22

A Montessori education at the middle school level is based on abstraction. The students have far less need of materials as they have built and organized their minds in such a way that they can imagine the possibilities of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and human history. More importantly the students are able to imagine worlds, ideas, and objects that are yet to be. Their capacity for imagination is reflected in their creative writing, geometry proofs, gumdrop bridge designs, and projects that require them to consider life several centuries in the past and envision the future.

