



Tuckahoe Montessori School

Monthly Newsletter

April 2013

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**Staff News: Ms. Teresa
Moves into Lead Teacher**



Hello, TMS Parents, and Happy Spring!

Last week, during the Afternoon Student Showcase, I had an interesting experience that was, I think, typical of what many of us face each day as we try to balance the responsibilities of work and home with the needs of our children. My own daughter, a very proud Afternoon student, had, like all of her classmates, worked with tremendous focus in preparation for this unique evening. I'd heard bits and pieces from

her and of course knew, from an administrator's perspective, what the showcase would feature.

This knowledge offered no preparation for the impact I would feel as a mother. As the evening progressed, and I tried to move back and forth between my role as a director and that of a parent -- sometimes shifting from second to second -- I saw that this was one of the rare times when my daughter needed me to be completely hers. She needed my attention, my time, and the assurance that I saw -- really saw -- this culmination of so many weeks of work. And my attention wasn't going to be real attention if it was divided.

No matter how logical it seemed, floating between roles wasn't going to work, and perhaps it appeared odd that I didn't visit Ms. Holly's classroom as I usually do, but it was a night to sit at the side of this one little person who had so much to share with me.

The love and pride I felt blended with a sad understanding that, from a child's perspective there are those moments when our adult responsibilities overlap their precious moments, and the resulting strain is felt by parent and child.

There are so many distractions that demand our attention. Psychologists and neurologists are studying the impact this is having on children; but many are also exploring the effect this change is having on familial relationships.

Our impulse is, perhaps, to hope that a natural solution will emerge, that our priorities will align organically with our schedules. Evidence is pointing to the possibility that this simply won't happen for most families. We are all "wired" to notice that vibrating cell phone, to reply to that text, to answer that email.

Role

We are so happy to share the news that Teresa Drake will be taking over Lead Teacher duties in the Toddler Classroom when Ms. Elizabeth leaves the position. As most of you know, Elizabeth is moving to the Hampton Roads area, and with her departure, Teresa will assume the lead position, guiding our youngest students as they discover the classroom and their own enormous capacity for learning.

Prior to joining the TMS community last year, Teresa taught for five years at May River Montessori in Bluffton, SC. We're delighted that she will continue to share her experience and energy with TMS!

Last Chance to Sign Up for Tennis

Tennis begins during our first week back from Spring Break.

If you haven't already signed-up and have a child who would like to participate, Monday, April 8th, is the deadline.

Please contact Ms. Amanda if you have any questions.

director@tuckahoemontessori.org

Conference Sign-Up

Conferences are coming up! [Click here](#) to sign up for a time.

Special Dates This Semester: Conferences, Break, and Family Events

Here is an overview of the next few months of events that may require special planning: conferences, Spring Break, and Family Events where a parent or caregiver is asked to attend.

Monday, April 1- Friday, April 5
Spring Break

Tuesday, April 23
11:30am

School-wide Picnic for students and families

Afternoon & Elementary classes will resume following picnic.

One solution is to carve out time in a highly conscious and not entirely natural way, to clearly decide as a family that certain days or times of day are protected from all that distracts us. Another possibility, if a regular time is impossible, is to designate a specific phrase that your family can associate with special events or times ("phone free" ... "family time"...). Even the youngest children will come to understand and value this effort.

I will remember the Afternoon Showcase as a night of wonder as I watched my daughter, who is growing so fast, and one of of recognition that these moments are fleeting, and they form many of the treasured memories we will carry with us into the future.

Wishing you all beautiful days of blossoms and warm weather,

Ms. Amanda

Music Month Memories, Family Band Resources, and Mixes for Next March



Music Month was such a success! The organized activities and the pleasure of hearing music of so many genre's drifting through the school day after day brightened the month for children, staff, and visitors.

For families who would like to build on the momentum of Music Month and incorporated more music in their home, there are some resources below that can help you start your own "Family Band."

The musician Dan Zanes, a member of the 80s band the Del Fuegos, tells a great story about family music:

Before my daughter was born, I spent so much time thinking about the very first CD I would play for her. I was so focused on recorded music, I forgot I was a musician! I think it's a more meaningful experience if kids can listen to their parents singing or playing instruments. My father was probably a terrible singer, but I can clearly remember the songs that he sang around the house.

Zanes began playing and recording what he calls "Family Music" -- not "children's music" -- because his goal, and that of many musicians and music lovers, is to encourage families to make music together.

Maybe we'll see some family bands next March!



Another great way to celebrate music, and the powerful connection between music and memory, is making a Memory Lane Mixtape.

Next March is your chance to share yours with us! We often ask parents who play instruments to visit the school and perform for the children, but for the 2014 Music Month, we're adding something new... Mixtapes!

Well, not "tapes" necessarily (although, if you want to go retro, we'll have tape players on hand!). A tape, CD, or thumb drive filled with your favorite tunes, whatever your preferred method, this is an opportunity to walk down

Monday, April 29
Parent Teacher Conferences: No
Classes for students

Friday, May 10, 2013
End-of-Year Family Field Trip
No classes

Friday, May 24, 2013
11:00am
School Closing Ceremony: All
Classes

April Birthdays

Toddler

April 22: Shiv's Birthday!

Primary

April 2: Beatrix's Birthday!

April 2: Sophia Bove's Birthday!

April 3: Koi's Birthday!

April 5: Ethan's Birthday!

April 7: Wesley's Birthday!

April 28: Fletcher's Birthday!

Elementary

April 8: Hanne's Birthday!

Staff

April 12: Ms. Dawn's Birthday!

April 30: Ms. Elizabeth's Birthday!

Calendar

Please Note: The [online version of the TMS Calendar](#) contains all updated scheduling information.

Montessori in the Home



An empty basket or tray is the perfect place to create an opening and closing activity for your young child.

As you use up spices, tins of tea, jars of sauce, etc., clean the containers and the lids and place them in a basket that is easy for the child to retrieve and replace when he or she is finished.

The everyday life of a household will keep the activity dynamic: as new containers are created, just replace and recycle old ones.

As children get older, more

your own Memory Lane with your child.

What was the first album/tape/cd/ you bought with your own money?

What was the first song you ever danced to?

What was your favorite song when you were little?

What music did your family play for you?

[An example from Ms. Shelby, the TMS Librarian: "I have vivid memories of my father playing The Doors "Light My Fire" whenever my mother was out of town. She wasn't a fan, but always made sure the album was easy for him to find. He and my baby brother and I would dance wildly around the living room, taking care to avoid the woodstove!"]

Making your Memory Lane Mix is a wonderful way to share your own history with your child!

Resources:

[Dan Zanes Family Band Workshop](#): Free videos to inspire homemade music

[DIY Instruments for Families](#)

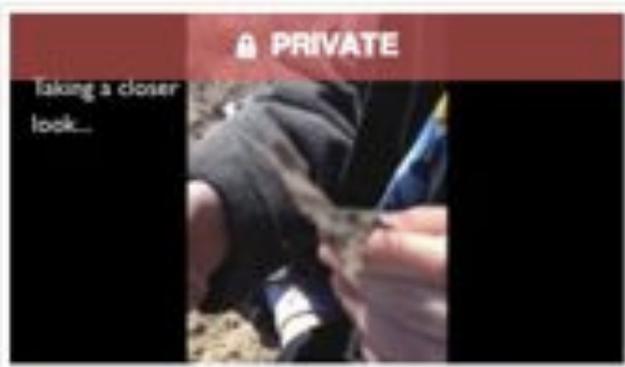
[Hohner Instrument Set](#)

[Melissa and Doug Deluxe Band Set](#)

Afternoon Student Showcase

Thank you to all the parents who attended our Afternoon Student Showcase. What a great evening!

Many of you asked for the opportunity to rewatch the science video Ms. Anna presented. For all of you, and for parents of younger and older students, here it is. Enjoy!



Afternoon Student Showcase Science Video

Vimeo password: soundbox

Great Books Elementary Theatricals

Each week, the children discuss and explore a fascinating story or poem. The works come from many different countries and traditions, but what they share is a complexity that allows students to dig deeper into meaning and larger implications.

challenging containers can be added.



Using a discussion framework of open-ended questions, many of which are posed by the students themselves, they engage in seminar style discussions that sometimes last for over an hour.

The culmination of weeks of reading and discovery is often very creative. Their recent story, the West Indian folktale, *Anancy and Dog and Puss and Friendship* resulted in an afternoon of imagination and improvisation.

We invite the TMS community to share in the theatrical fun!

Continent Day Information

Australia: Clark, Coffey, Downs, Hamilton, & Martin

Dates of future Continent Day planning meetings are listed in the TMS Handbook.

South America Day

Thanks to our parent volunteers who made this such a memorable celebration!

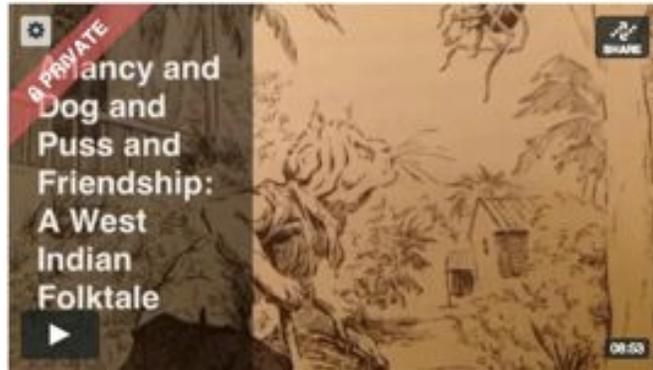
In Games the Porter and Paris families shared how soccer in South America is called football. The students were able to try on some of the jerseys from the different countries and then played football on their own.

Art: Using the pillowcases that were turned in, Joanne Whitlow helped the students transformed them into Carinval costumes using markers, stencils, etc. She described the celebration of Carnival in Brazil and provided some pictures for inspiration.

Geography: The Gallagher family took the students to the Amazon rainforest where they could look at the many animals that are found there. The students then picked their favorite animal figurine and then where able to create a mask of that animal. There were some very creative creatures!

In Artifacts, Emma Spivack and Julie Hottinger shared some Incan figurines and musical instruments. The children concluded with making a mask to finish off their carnival costumes.

In Food, the students were able to taste some wonderful creations including flan, a red bean and pesto dish, and some sausage or Chirizo. These delicacies were prepared by the



Vimeo password: [soundbox](#)

New Spanish Video

Our Spanish Enrichment Video Collection continues to grow.

Ms. Stefani is working to create a resource for families so that the children's Spanish work at school can continue at home.

The most recent addition is the "getting dressed" song, *When I Wake Up In the Morning*. The students learned the vocabulary words for clothing during the month of February, so you may hear some singing along as you play the video!



Vimeo password: [soundbox](#)

Thank You!

Thanks to John Bettler, who added the beautiful welcome mosaic to the playground sidewalk. We are so grateful! People will appreciate its beauty and the work that went into it for years to come!

Bove and Bazianos families.



Thanks, too, to Shelby Driskill, who created a "Dance Party" for the Primary and Elementary students on Friday. The children learned the Twist, the Swim, and the Pony (some even got to try the Jerk and the Mashed Potato) while listening to Gladys Knight and the Pips' "Heard it Through the Grapevine", Booker T and the MGs' "Hip-Hug-Her", and more.



Parrots of Paradise



What a great day! The students really enjoyed getting close to the beautiful birds.

For more photos of the children and their feathered friends, visit the school's [photo page](#).



Action from the Egg Hunt



From the Toddler Classroom



March has been such a wonderful month for the Toddlers! Maria Montessori would be so proud of these confident learners. This year is flying by, and in such a short time they have grown so much!

Signs of their amazing development are everywhere, from the quiet, calm, and peaceful focus they have as they work, to the natural care they take with their environment and each other. Recently, a child noticed that another needed a tissue, and without a word, without mentioning it to a teacher, he simply left his work for a moment, gently handed her a tissue, and returned to what he was doing. A lovely moment!

This month, the Toddlers will be making some wonderful discoveries! Our content of the month is Australia and in addition to learning about Australian animals, the children will be preparing Anzac biscuits, cookies made from oats that are very popular in Australia. For our craft, we will be making boomerangs!

The students will be studying amphibians this month and, as part of their frog study, will be matching different types of frogs.

Insects will also visit the Toddler classroom in the form of real life samples (carefully selected to be interesting, not frightening) preserved in glass so the children can observe them through magnifying glasses.

And of course, it being Spring, germination and growth will be discussed and observed. Our little bean plants are beginning to sprout!

From the Primary Classroom



As Spring really begins (though there are always those surprise snows!) the Primary students have been able to see the process of germination and growth all around them. We will continue to discover the wonders of the season and we watch the trees and flowers bloom and discuss germination. Students will also work on the parts of a flower as part of their explorations.

This month's insect studies will highlight the features of insects including their head, thorax, abdomen and six jointed legs. We will also learn the parts of a honeybee!

If you have flowers in your garden or flowers that you pick up at the store, your child is always welcome to bring them in for flower arranging.

Our continent for April is Australia! It is always a fun topic of study since many of the animals present on this continent are not found anywhere else in the world! The koala, platypus, wombat and kangaroo are always popular!

We will also introduce a new classification to the students; Amphibians. We will talk about how these differ from reptiles and other animals in our kingdom.

From the Elementary Classroom



What an amazing month March proved to be! Looking back, it's hard to know where to begin.

We have a classroom of extraordinary students, doing such extraordinary work:.

Ms. Pam led the them in their study of Freda Kahlo, and the result was lovely portraiture and an explosion of eyebrows!

Two students who were studying Ancient Egypt presented their findings to the class in the form of a play. This led to more theatricals including a number that centered on important figures in Ancient Greek history.

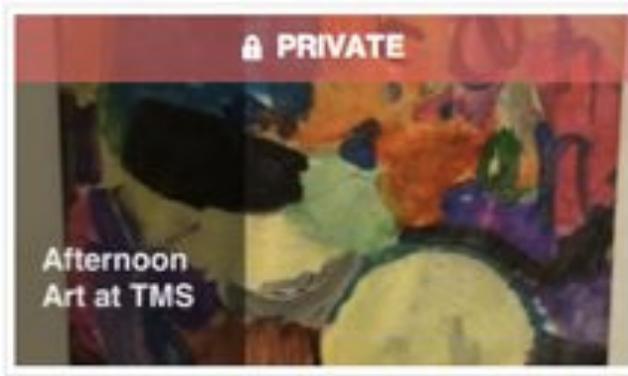
Our Greek Festival was a huge hit! A day of food, fun, Olympic events, and costumes!

In the coming weeks, we are looking forward to the Spanish Feria (details below) and our last Community Lunch of the year.

Reminder: Elementary Spanish Research Presentation: Friday, May 17th @ 1:30 p.m. Details can be found below in "Spanish at TMS" section of this newsletter.

Art at TMS

Here is a video of Ms. Pam's talk at the Afternoon Student Showcase. It gives a glimpse of some of the wonderful projects our students do as they explore movements throughout art history and the work and lives of individual artists.



Vimeo password: soundbox

Spanish at TMS

During the month of April, at the Primary Level, we will be learning of different locations in the community. At the Elementary Level, we will review this same topic along with professions and different modes of Transportation.

We'll bring back some of our favorite songs and games from throughout the year and review previous vocabulary with new books.

Upcoming Elementary Spanish Event:

Our Spanish Fair, or *Feria* is coming up on Friday, May 17th at 1:30 pm. Each child has an area of the room where they will set up a tri-fold display of their research and dish or activity (dance, game, etc.). They'll each get 3-5 minutes to recite their Spanish paragraph and describe their dish/interactive activity. Parents will then be free to visit each one and try different foods/games/dances/etc.

Project Guidelines & Expectations:

Expectations of Student in Classroom:

- 1) Research (Due: Fri. March 29) - **all students have completed their research**; while there are some students who wish to continue researching, they have all met their assignment requirements
- 2) Paragraph (Due: English - Fri. April 12; Spanish - Fri. April 19; Memorized Fri May 10) - the students will write a few sentences of their favorite findings about their country (in class); these sentences will be translated into Spanish with missing words so that the child may look them up in the Spanish-English Dictionary to fill in the blanks; they will then memorize these sentences to present on the day of the Feria.
- 3) Trifold Display (Due: Wed. May 1) - students will work with Ms. Amy to decorate a TriFold Display with their findings from their research of each respective country.

Expectations of Parents at Home:

- 1) Trifold Poster (Due: Mon. April 8) - PARENTS PLEASE BRING IN BY MON. APRIL 8
- 2) Dish to Share or Learned Activity to Teach (Due: Fri. May 17 - Day of Presentations) - PARENTS PLEASE ASSIST YOUR CHILD IN COOKING A DISH TO SHARE OR LEARNING AN INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY (i.e. game or dance) TO TEACH AT THE FERIA

A copy of the *Feria* Assignment Chart can be found at the [Printable Forms Page](#) of the school website and a master copy is available for photocopying in the Elementary classroom.

Trifold displays are available at the Willow Lawn A.C. Moore. A coupon for 25% off can be found [on the store's website](#).

Chinese in the TMS Elementary Program

In April, our beginning Chinese class will be learning about electrical appliances and Chinese PinYin, the pronunciation system. We'll also learn about many foods.

Our experienced students will learn about "my house" including furniture. They are also learning to talk about their family and home now. Later in the month we will be studying the variety of things that can be found in the garden.

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