



Happy Birthday!

January

- ☺ Santiago Finch
- ☺ Stephen Cimino
- ☺ Electra Cimino
- ☺ Avery Edmondson
- ☺ Madin Murthy
- ☺ Callie Jo Rogers

February

- ☺ Mariel Phillos
- ☺ Sahana Venkatraman
- ☺ Simon Conn
- ☺ Chloe Spivack
- ☺ Jacob Gallagher
- ☺ Nicholai Lilly
- ☺ Mason Read

Director's Note

Happy New year! The cold weather has not dampened the excitement of the children as they returned to school! They are engaged in all aspects of the classroom and happy to get to work! Please note the Classroom news for details on what we are studying and the exciting visitors coming to TMS.

The teachers have enjoyed meeting with each of you to discuss your child's progress. It is important to remember in such a dynamic classroom environment your child is continually exposed to new ideas and concepts. These exposures accumulate into a wonderful skill set of knowledge, problem solving ability, and decoding skills.

The Montessori classroom provides a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural tendency to work. The child's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportuni-

ties to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities.

Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. The children progress at their own pace and rhythm, and develop into amazing individuals.

At Conference times, we often receive the question of what can I do as a parent to help my child. There are so many ideas: Read to your child and then ask them about the story. Have them "read" to you whether they are reading or not, encourage them to develop their own narrative. Play games as a family. Play rhyming games in the car. Go for a nature walk and point out the different sights and sounds. Go to the playground and climb! You must have strong shoulders to write!

Allowing your child to be independent at home, taking that extra minute to have

them put on their coat and shoes or even pour their own drink will prepare your child immensely for success in the classroom environment.

We thank you again for sharing your children with us. It is such a pleasure to participate in their growth!

~ Mrs. Amanda, Director

Staff Updates:

We have had some staff changes this year. Ms. Chris, our office assistant/teacher relocated to Alabama due to family reasons. She will be missed. Ms. Beth, who works mornings with our toddlers, will be teaching the afternoon student's science class and will be spending afternoons in the Lower Elementary classroom beginning this month.

In our Elementary classroom, Ms. Ramya has resigned as the lead teacher. In her place, Ms. Sandy Miller and Ms. Ali Haefner have taken on the lead role. Our Lower Elementary parents have had the opportunity to meet our new teachers and we look forward to introducing them to the rest of the TMS Community.

Ms. Beth, our toddler assistant

Welcome our new families

This January we welcomed two new families to our TMS community; Ready Coffey and Bridgette Schutt in Ms. April's class. The Schutt's information is listed below and the Coffey's are listed in the handbook. Please make them feel welcomed!

Schutt, Jeannie & Christopher
204 Popular Lane
Richmond, VA 23226

353-1333
theschutts@verizon.net

Bridgette Harwell, AM
7/10/07





Valentine's Day

We will celebrate Valentine's Day in the classrooms on Tuesday, February 14th. We are requesting two items. 1st: Please send your child in with a wrapped shoe box. The shoe-box can be wrapped in red paper, white paper, newspaper! 2nd: Please have your child bring their signed Valentines to class in **UNMARKED** envelopes. You only need to send enough for your child's class (27/child). The unmarked envelope allows each child to deliver his/ her Valentines without having to read the names. The activity thus remains an independent activity in concert with the Montessori philosophy. You can begin bringing the Valentines anytime; however the deadline is **February 8th**.

Classroom News!

During January and February, our classroom study topics are dinosaurs, fractions, money and the solar system. To describe a few of the lessons, the students will learn the names of the planets and make their own ordered solar system map as well as sing a song of the planets in which they actually become the orbiting planets themselves. They are finding dinosaurs hiding in the grass, making crayon rubbings of dinosaurs, as well as playing bingo with dinosaurs. We teach the students the names of the dinosaurs and they have a fun time trying to pronounce them.

In addition to these topics, we will be talking about Asia (Jan.) and Africa (Feb.) as our continents of study. Asia and Africa are such wonderfully rich cultures full of great art, food, and cultural traditions that we share with the children. For the first time, we have a Thai representative of the Asian American Association coming to the school. We look forward to learning more about the Thai culture. In Language, the students are learning some Chinese characters and creating them with black sand. Ms. Elizabeth will again teach some Swahili numbers to the students.

At the end of the month and into February we will also talk about Polar Animals, Antarctica, and Reptiles. The educators from Reptiles Alive will be coming to share some reptiles with the students.

Our Students have also enjoyed visits from several of our parents who have come in to read to the class at the 11 o'clock group. Please let Dawn know if you are interested in

signing up for a reading time.

*Spanish: In Spanish class, we will be working on colors, clothing, and parts of the body. We will be reading *Azul el sombrero, verde el sombrero* (Blue Hat, Green Hat) by Sandra Boynton. We will also start our count up to 100 in increments of 10 each week.*

TODDLER NEWS: The toddlers have transitioned back into the classroom as if they never left! We continue to present new works in all areas of the classroom. The group has continued through their mastery of the geometric solids to include the ability to distinguish between an ellipsoid and an ovoid. We are presenting the solar system to them beginning with our planet earth, its moon and the sun. We are working on learning several dinosaur names including stegosaurus, tyrannosaurus and brachiosaurus as well. For our polar animals, the students are able to match penguin objects to photographs of the varieties of penguins. We continue to focus on manners, pushing in our chairs when we leave the table and waiting until all our friends are served to begin eating. Many of our toddlers have also begun visiting the primary classrooms. Our aim is to make them comfortable with their future classrooms and teachers!

TMS Studio!

Creativity is something with which every child is born. It can be defined as an idea taking physical form. It motivates action which usually involves materials such as tools, mental and physical activity and time. When we respect and foster creativity we help children develop the lifelong abilities to observe, develop opinions, express themselves and draw conclusions over all learning disciplines. The Art Studio has been introduced at TMS this school year. With Montessori principles in mind it is designed to give your children the same freedom of choice in open-ended, free flowing art as they have in their regular classrooms. Our intention is to provide an environment and materials to foster the innate creativity within each child. There have been many time sensitive projects, such as invitations, costumes, props, gifts, etc., that the children have been making this Fall semester. When there has been time available, the Studio has been open for exploration and learning. As the new year begins I will make sure that every Primary child has had the opportunity to investigate the space and equipment and understand the expectations of the Art Studio. You may have seen a small water color painting or a collage come home with your son or daughter. These are simple beginnings that have given your children the time to familiarize themselves with the Studio. Now we will explore the possibilities for coordination with and extension of the art presentations and work the Primary teachers offer in their classrooms. Throughout the year the classrooms have lessons about individual master artists. I would like to carry these lessons further with exploration of some of the basic elements of art in relation to those masters: color, line, space, shape, and texture. I will be asking for extra paper you may have at home or the office, interesting 'found materials,' 'beautiful stuff' (never junk!) and a variety of other odd things! I have just recently learned a new term for 'junk sculpture' or collage— "assemblage art"! I look forward to continuing to teach and learn from your children. ~ Ms. Jane

Thank you, Updates and Reminders

Parent Volunteers: Valentine's Day Volunteers: We need parent volunteers to help the students prep their valentine's day boxes and decorate them. We are asking for volunteers on Feb. 7th from 9 - 11. We are asking all families help in sending in a wrapped shoe box with their child before Feb. 7th. The shoebox can be wrapped in red paper, white paper, newspaper.

Outreach: Thank you to all of our families who have participated in the Thanksgiving Food Drive. We collected food to supply 600 meals to families in Central Virginia. You may have noticed there was not a Christmas drive. The outreach committee decided it was best to look later in the year when the need is still there but we all have more time. Be on the look out for flyers regarding our SPCA collection for Valentine's Day!

Contracts: Contracts for the 12-13 School year will be given out at conferences on Jan. 16th. All contracts and deposits are due by Feb. 1st. Please be sure to talk with Amanda and your child's teacher during conferences about any questions you have pertaining to next year.

Summer Camp: We are beginning our survey of parents who would be interested in a TMS summer camp this year. We will be sending out a survey for you to complete in the coming weeks.

Lower Elementary News!

The Elementary Students have returned with excitement and energy. We have had some staff changes for the new year. Ms. Ramya has resigned as the lead teacher. In her place, Ms. Sandy Miller and Ms. Ali Haefner have taken on the lead role. Our Lower Elementary parents have had the opportunity to meet our new teachers and we look forward to introducing them to the rest of the TMS Community.

They have continued their studies from the first semester in language, math and science. In Geography, they have been looking in depth at the history and culture of Egypt. To complement their studies, the students enjoyed listening to the Magic Treehouse Mummies in the Morning book. If you have not visited already, the Egypt exhibit at the VMFA is a must see! The students learned how to write their names in hieroglyphics as well.

In physical education, the students are continuing with CORE kids academy. Their coaches are highlighting muscles this month. The students are learning about how our bodies build muscles and how we maintain and develop them with exercise. In running club, the students are gearing up for the Kids Mile at the Monument Ave race on March 31st. We will run as a class and invite all family members and primary students to join us!

In Spanish, the students will be working on food, clothing, family members, and parts of the body. We are encouraging them to use their vocabulary in sentences!

We will also be learning the song for our end of the year play and collaboratively creating the choreography for it. Chinese continues to be a favorite for the students. They have mastered their counting up to 100, know several animals, colors, and other cultural vocabulary. With their mastery of the vocabulary, we will begin practicing the creation of the characters.

The students will begin two special projects this month. First, they will be hosting a tea for their Grandparent/Special Adult in February. The students will be in charge of the event from the creation of the invite, the menu and cooking, the décor, and the entertainment. Parents please remember to send in your addresses. Second, they will begin their independent study projects where they will have the opportunity to delve deep into an area of interest. We look forward to seeing what the students select to research and how they use their creativity to convey their new knowledge to their classmates.

Lastly, we would like to invite our lower elementary parents to join us on Feb. 2nd at 8:30am at the classroom. This will be the first of our parent education/coffees. Please mark your calendar for the first Thursday of the month. We will begin with sometime in the classroom and then move to the small dining room for coffee. Please let me know if you can volunteer to bring some breakfast snacks.

Afternoon Students

In January, we welcomed students turning five in the last half of the year into the extended day program.

A big welcome to:

Simon Conn

Roman Flores

Jacob Gallagher

Mackenzie Edmondson

Betsy Clarke

Elizabeth Kaufman

Gardner Kaufman

Stewart Bearden

Chloe Spivack

Mary-Stuart Hawkins

As a reminder for our new afternoon families, the class has Art on Friday with Ms. Pam. Though your children are careful please be sure to dress them appropriately. The afternoon students have field trips coming up for which we will be recruiting drivers. Please refer to page 19 in your red book.

Calendar Reminders

January 16th: No School: Parent/Teacher Conferences

January 20th: TMS Guest: Asian American Association Representative: Thailand.

January 24th: Parent Coffee at Tiffany and Joe Connor's house.

January 27th: Asia Day

January 31st: Afternoon Students: Field Trip to Science Museum

February 2nd: Lower Elementary Parent Visit Morning

February 9th: TMS Visitors: Reptiles Alive!

February 10th: Lower Elementary: Grandparent/Special Adult Tea

February 16th: Afternoon Students: Field Trip: Learning thru Archeology

February 20th: No School: President's Day

February 23rd: Tales of Griot: African Storytellers at TMS

February 24th: Africa Day



in the community

ChinaFest Family Day

Saturday February 11, 1:00-4:00 pm

Come celebrate the Year of the Dragon with VMFA and explore the richness of Chinese culture. Enjoy hunting through VMFA galleries for Chinese Zodiac animals. Have your face painted with your own Chinese Zodiac sign. Visit with puppets and puppeteers from Shanghai. Make your own dragon puppets, Chinese rattles and clay fortune cookies.

We are delighted to have two special performances at 1:30 pm and 3:00 pm

by the acclaimed Shanghai Puppet Theater. The six-member group will fly directly from Shanghai for our ChinaFest.

Don't miss it

"We cannot know the consequences of suppressing a child's spontaneity when he is just beginning to be active. We may even suffocate life itself. That humanity which is revealed in all its intellectual splendor during the sweet and tender age of childhood should be respected with a kind of religious veneration. It is like the sun which appears at dawn or a flower just beginning to bloom. Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child to open up himself to life." ~ M. Montessori