



## Newsletter

December 2019 and January 2020

### *A Message from the Head of School*

Dear Children's House Community,

With December being such a short month, we decided to combine December and January for this newsletter!

December brought us so many fun activities. Along with their regular work, the students were engaged in learning about the holidays and different traditions. This is such a tangible and fun way for the students to learn about other cultures. The Holiday Performance was a wonderful way to celebrate the season and wish everyone well as they go off for the break. Ms. Deborah worked hard, along with Ms. Jessica, Ms. Sharon and other tireless helpers, to make the production a memorable one.

You may have noticed that the playground has received a bit of a facelift! As you know, the Friends of Children's House has been exploring some ideas to replace some of the existing structures. We had been noticing some loose boards and some wood that looked like it might be rotting, so we closed the larger tower structure. A parent was here one day, and took a walk around and said it seemed that the support portions seemed to be in good shape. That there were some things that would need to be repaired, and that it would be good to get it pressure washed and then sealed. So, he arranged a crew of workers that he knows and they spent the two conference days working hard to clean, repair, and replace everything that was in need. In February, they will paint it with something to help seal it, and also give it a little color. This will allow us to keep the structures in place while we fundraise and plan for a full renovation. Thanks so much to Solly Williams and his crew for their work. The teachers and students were all so happy to have the large tower open again!

On Monday, January 27, some of the school board members and some of the staff members joined me at the DeLand Area Chamber of Commerce and Orange City Alliance Installation Reception. We were invited as Legacy Members, as we have been members for 25+ years. It was a wonderful evening hearing all about the hard work being done by the Chamber of Commerce, and the Legacy Members all received recognition as well as a token from the Chamber.

Take good care,  
Ms. Kelly



*“The goal of early childhood education  
should be to activate the child's own natural  
desire to learn”*

*~ Maria Montessori*



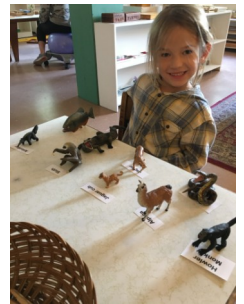
## *Primary with Ms. Amy and Ms. Morgan*

The children have enjoyed our new geography lessons and materials. Thank you to the parents who donated in our Change for Change coin drive! Because of your donations, we were able to purchase some new geography and cultural materials.

The room is a buzz in the afternoon these days. We welcome those students who transition from napping to staying in the classroom all day. The growth and development happening in the classroom is very exciting!



Addition Strip Board



Labeling the South American animals



Pricking: South America



Biology: The Human Body

## *Lower Elementary with Ms. Princess and Ms. Nikki*

In December, we went to the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville. We all enjoyed it! In class, we have been working on many different reports and fundamental needs. In spelling, we have been working on antonyms and synonyms. We are working on art with Ms. Nikki. On Tuesday and Wednesday, somebody came and pressure washed the playground and replaced the loose boards. The third years in our class have been writing speeches for the class President. We will vote on President, Vice-President, and Graphic Designer. The past few Thursdays, we have been doing fun activities in the classroom, such as scavenger hunts and riddles.

This month's article was written by Robert and Iyla

## *Friends of Children's House*

Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 5, at 3:15. The organization will be talking about forming committees for the playground, the DASH for the Future, the Silent Auction, etc.

See you then!



At right, Primary students enjoy having access to the big tower structure again.

*“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”*

*~Malcolm X*

## *What's Growing in the Garden?*

January brought temperature changes to the garden. The children enjoyed cool weather vegetables like snap peas, kale, tatsoi, as well as a few tomatoes and peppers. It is wonderful to have fresh vegetables in our Friday pizza salad.

Despite the cool temperatures, there are still many blooms in our butterfly garden, including the borage and calendula that we started from seed.

At the end of the month we are expecting a load of compost for our new strawberry bed. The compost, materials for the bed, and the strawberry plants were purchase with money from the grant that Miss Jessica received from the Volusia County Farm Bureau.



The borage is in bloom, and is hosting a helpful guest.



Students helping to care for the new strawberry plants.



Enjoying so fresh kale!

## *Lower Elementary with Ms. Nettie and Ms. Kalie*

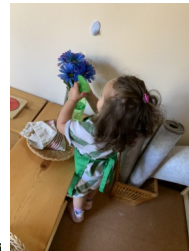
December was as busy as it was fun! We learned about the winter solstice and visited the Pioneer Arts Settlement. We also enjoyed making 2020 calendars to share with our families. The children worked so hard preparing for the music performance all month as well. It was exciting to see all our school families come together for the special event.

In January, we were so glad to be back together after the winter break. This month we discussed the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and saw footage of Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. It was enjoyable to begin these lively discussions about justice and allow the children to think critically about their own rights. The children also worked as partners to exercise their sense of justice in an activity called Fair or Unfair? This month, we also learned about the three ways we get our skin color.

*"Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."  
~ John R. Wooden*

# Toddlers with Ms. Tashira and Ms. Stephanie

The toddlers have been busy exploring their world and constantly discovering new things. The teachers have been making changes to the physical environment to make everything more accessible for the children. They are getting so independent! During the first half of the year, they worked on establishing a routine, now when you walk into the classroom it is very common for every child to be engaged in work. They are working on a lot of Practical Life skills and have been enjoying some new materials in the classroom.



## “UN-Paper” Towels for Sale! Handmade by our Upper Elementary Students



The students are extremely proud to be selling their first batch of UN-paper towels. These washable, reusable towels come with snaps so they can be joined together on a paper towel holder. Every student had the opportunity to learn how to thread a sewing machine, wind a bobbin, experiment with stitching styles, use the machine, and attach snaps. We would like to say a very sincere THANK YOU to our parent volunteer Katie Del Buono, who donated her time, supplies and expertise to help guide our students through this project. Since each towel has been handmade, they all differ slightly in size and stitching styles. Choose matching towels or mix-and-match, while supplies last.

**\$8 for 6 towels**



# *Respectful Boundaries*

I'd like to remind everyone of the drop off and pick up procedures. Sometimes as we get further into the school year, we settle into a routine and it's hard to remember that there are rules in place. It happens to us all!

Our doors are locked until 7:50 each day. We do have the early drop off available at 7:30. If you need that earlier drop off time, please park out front (near Pennsylvania Ave) and go to the door at that end of the hallway. You will see a doorbell button, and when you push that someone will come and open the door for you. Otherwise, you are welcome to enjoy the playground while you're waiting for the main doors to open.

Our start time is 8:00, and we give everyone a five minute grace period before your child will be considered tardy. At 8:05 or later, your child needs to come to the office for drop off. Someone in the office will walk your child to class, or give Upper Elementary and Middle School students a late pass. The only exception to this is the Toddler class. If you are late with your Toddler, please do walk them to their classroom so they are not having to make two transitions, which can be a challenge for them. Please remember that five tardy days equals one absence. It is very important that students arrive on time so they don't miss any of the school day.

If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, please come to the office and we will have your child come and meet you there.

Once the school day has started, and prior to the pick up time, please come to the office and let us know that you are on campus. And, if you need a restroom, the only one available for both buildings is the one located just past the Fellowship Hall.

## *Primary with Ms. Caitlyn and Ms. Cory*

What a lovely winter season we've had so far! We've enjoyed the cooler weather as well as discussing a lot of the changes and cool elements of winter. We talked about winter solstice as well as the different celebrations in our world. We learned about a lot of holiday traditions in our classroom, and the kindergarteners even went to Barberville to hear about the pioneers and their holiday traditions. From Kwanzaa to Chinese New Year, we got a lot of great insight to how other cultures celebrate this lovely time of year.

As we're finishing out our first month of 2020, we're gearing up to have our first annual full class field trip to the Athens Theatre to see Seussical Jr. We are so excited to introduce all of the children to this lovely local resource of performing arts.

We've been learning so many things and truly are enjoying our progression into the second half of the school year. We have welcomed some new children into our environment and the class, as always, are being lovely role models and peace-keepers to help get into a great routine again after the holidays. We can't wait to see what this new, fresh year holds for all of our children and the community!



## *From the Reading Nook*

As we reach the half way mark to the school year we need to reflect on our children's reading abilities. We need to help our children learn to read now so that they may read to learn in the future. Here are some tips for families to help at home: Toddler/Primary – Ensure your child knows the letter names and sounds. Singing the alphabet is wonderful but you need to take it a step further by identifying the letters in isolation. Primary/Lower Elementary – Begin putting letter sounds together to make words; such as cat. Practice the 'read, write/spell, read' routine to memorize sight words. As children learn to read the Montessori method employs sight words and phonics (sound out words). Lower/Upper Elementary – When your child is reading focus on their comprehension. They should be reading for understanding now. Practice identifying the stories characters, setting and events. Engage in retellings of the stories you've read together and ask your child to retell a story their reading on their own. Upper Elementary/Middle School – As your child is reading to learn now ensure that their reading is varied and diverse. They can now employ all the reading strategies to begin comprehending and understanding the text. This means that your child will begin learning about different topics as they read.

### Suggested book titles

Toddler:

1. *My First Trip to the Post Office/Mi Primera Visita Al Correo* by Katie Kawa
2. *I love you all year through* by Stephanie Stansbie

Primary:

1. *My Community* by Grace Jones
2. *Love From the Crayons* by Drew Daywalt

Lower Elementary:

1. *Roosevelt's Rough Riders* by Andrew Santella
2. *Making Choices in my Community* by Diane Lindsey Reeves

Upper Elementary:

1. *Eleanor Roosevelt* by Kem Knapp Sawyer
2. *Pies from nowhere: how Georgia Gilmore sustained the Montgomery bus boycott* by Dee Romito

Middle School:

1. *The Firefly Code* by Megan Blakemore
2. *Genuine Sweet* by Faith Harkey

*Fearlessness is not only possible, it is the ultimate joy. When you touch nonfear, you are free.*  
~Thich Nhat Hanh

## *Middle School with Ms. Patsy*

I'd like to take a moment and welcome Ms. Patsy back to Children's House and to the Middle School classroom! We are so happy to have her back in our community. And, I want to thank Ms. Tara for her years here, and wish her all the best. ~Ms. Kelly

Ms. Patsy has been getting to know the students and having them participate in some community building exercises. They've enjoyed them so much, they are asking to do more! They have also just begun some of their Florida Virtual classes. There have been big changes in this classroom, and the students are rising to the occasion!

Middle school students have been continuing their earth science studies with Ms. Diane. They have finished a unit on geological processes and are halfway through studying the earth's water systems. They have written research papers on topics such as glaciers, rivers and streams. They also have addressed current global water issues such as sea-level rise and aquifer depletion from bottled water companies. The students teamed up to build erosion boxes to better understand the power of moving water on the earth's surface.

In art, middle school students have been creating surrealistic artworks, also with Ms. Diane. They have been doing these paintings on illustration boards donated to our school by a local artist.



Testing the erosion boxes



A student working on her surrealistic painting

# Montessori in the News.....



The December National Geographic Historical Special was dedicated to great women in history. Maria Montessori graced the cover.

“A woman who opened a path in the male world and promoted radical changes in the teaching of all the children. The firmness she showed in her progressive ideas and her tireless desire for improvement changed the world of education forever.”



Eder CI

Yesterday at 9:02 AM · 🌐

A day like today January 6 but from 1907 opened its doors the first house of children in the neighborhood of San Lorenzo in Rome, Italy.

⚙️ · Rate this translation



The first Casa dei Bambini, San Lorenzo, 1907

## Musically Speaking....



While it is nice to be out of program mode with the children, I have to say how proud I am of every one of them for their holiday performance, Winter Celebrations around the world, in December. There are many ways that performance serves the child as well as the viewers. Ms. Jessica continues to assist me on three afternoons a week and has been a huge help in classroom management as well as providing some of the lessons. Thank you Ms. Jessica!

We are back to regular lessons in music, and as you can see pictured here, the Middle School music students have successfully completed building their cigar box ukuleles. Good job guys!



The Upper Elementary have started working with hand chimes and have expressed a desire for a creating a garage band using items like pots, pans, barrels, garbage cans, brake drums, and anything else we can put our hands on. In addition, an optional guitar class started this past Wednesday.

In Lower Elementary, the third year are learning ukulele and will also be learning hand chimes. The second year is continuing their work with recorders, and the first year is becoming better acquainted with the Orff instruments, like the xylophones. We will be adding folk dancing in coming weeks. These various media facilitate learning and experiencing music theory, music history, global music, observance of holidays, instrumental skill development, and working together as a community of players, just to name a few. The best part is that we are having a lot of fun while appealing to the whole child.

Kindergarten children are reading and performing rhythms well, and will be using the Orff instruments to engage in a more systematic ensemble mode. They also know the families of the orchestra, their classifications (how they produce sound) and they are one of the best singing groups ever! The youngest children, including the Toddlers, continue to build a music repertoire by all of the same means: singing, dancing, playing, and big time movement. Basic concepts in music (slow/ fast, quiet/ loud, high/low.... Including terminology) are explored and then used in ways for the students to draw from creatively.

