

November 2010

Dear Parents,

How did October slip by? It was a beautiful month in weather, spirit, and work. It is such a joy and relief to see the children start to remember, create great work, repeat their work, and try to do their best at whatever they do.

We still begin the morning with a song. This month we had a student teach us "You Are My Sunshine." We found out that it is not as happy as it sounds! Throughout the week we stop what we are doing to hear children perform songs they have created or picked out. There are also many reports given during the week to the whole group. I don't think it is possible to leave our classroom with a fear of public speaking. They love it!

The older students are diving into squaring and square root. Many students are in the final stages of practicing long division and multiplication on the materials, so they can do it abstractly. The younger students are loving their math facts and reading and writing numbers with the Large Bead Frame. Of course there is a plethora of many other works involving numbers happening at all times.

The older students had a fabulous trip to Pittsburgh to start off our study of the Industrial Revolution. They spent an afternoon seeing what it was like to live like a millworker and even the wife of a millworker. It was such a sight to see the boys with babies strapped to them as they tried to do the wash, cook dinner, and mend clothes! We also enjoyed the ride up the incline that the workers use to take to get to the mills. The next morning we got to experience how the wealthy lived. Later that day we all had fun at the Carnegie Science Center which was followed by a great river walk. We were all pleasantly nourished at the Golden Corral in the evenings. Our attendant loved the children and did many magic tricks for them. Back at the hotel we ended the days by a romp in the pool. The final day we all really enjoyed Falling Water. It thrilled me to see the students appreciate the architecture and how it fit in with the surrounding nature.

Lately we have been working like crazy on stories and poems for Samuel's Library "Winter Holiday Contest." Every day we have been brainstorming ideas, writing our thoughts, revising, editing, and doing the final copy. Whew! We are writers! Read our words! The youngest students are very clear on what a sentence is by now!

Many children have been taking advantage of the leaves to study venation, margins, and just their beauty. Today we washed an old cactus plant of mine who was a little dusty. The plant must be at least 35-years old! They were treating it with great care and love. It has the most incredible fuchsia blooms every Christmas. Also in science the older students have been learning about atoms and how they bond. The younger students have been learning about how some liquids are more viscous than others, and that a solid can be rigid, plastic, elastic or all three!

I have to say I think Dr. Montessori would be proud to see these children at work. Please do come by to see for yourself, one time is never enough. It took me at least three or four times when I was a new parent to understand the magic! Remember my late day at school is Wednesday if you would like to meet with me in person, and I can always be reached by email or the phone!

Fondly,

Deryn Semmes