

Cayuga Heights Montessori House Newsletter

September 2009

*Once upon a time a monarch butterfly
Flying through the air and having so much fun
Laid an egg upon a milkweed leaf
And then flew away to play in the sun*

September is the month of new friends and butterflies! Metamorphosis abounds in our classroom. Caterpillars munch, sleep and fly away as butterflies. Children watch, listen and touch, and emerge as transformed individuals. They grow in confidence and independence, delighting in each other as they move through their day. Little children have a strong need to be independent, and this is beautifully facilitated in the Montessori classroom. This is their space, where they will discover, experiment and explore, free of interruptions or unnecessary interventions. In such an atmosphere, independence springs naturally. Children discover that they can put on their shoes, organize their belongings, clean up their snack, wash their table, and clean up their (many) spills! Such feelings of accomplishment and pride lead to confidence to try even more...and the glorious cycle of self-construction begins!



Each year, a new constellation of children begins its work of coalescing into a community of friends. To cement this growing sense of community, we will gather together regularly to engage in Peace centered community focused activities. Perhaps one week we will build a nature mobile, peppered with children's pictures and contributions gleaned from nature walks. Where better to display such a treasure but our Peace Corner? Another week, we may learn about Maria Montessori and her vision of a redemptive future through the promise of the very young.

As usual, Karen and I are standing back marveling at the transformation that is already taking place in our classroom. We observe returning students embrace their role as 'leaders', helping their new classmates, and modeling appropriate behavior. Little ones approaching us for help are encouraged to ask a friend instead. Teacher intervention is restrained and subtle, reserved mainly for help in conflict resolution and reminders of the necessity for kindness and safety. As Dr. Montessori so wisely observed "any unnecessary help is a hindrance to development".

Autumn is the season of freshness, color, bounty, and ... leaves, leaves, leaves. Expect your children to come home with many new words like: 'deciduous', 'evergreen', 'migration', 'metamorphosis', 'precipitation', 'hibernation'. Our study of leaves will include parts of the leaf (blade, vein, petiole, stipule), and types of leaves (simple, compound, simple lobed). Enjoy their tales of nature walks in our neighborhood, leaf raking, apple sauce, hot cider, and of course, planning our Harvest meal. Each season is reflected





in the young child, but it is hard to match the tableau of rosy-cheeked children throwing leaves into the air, serenaded by Canada geese, and cloaked in a gently descending October cloud. Then it's back into our toasty classroom for some hot cider!

As our community settles into a rhythm with each other and the Prepared Environment, our classroom will continue to swell with beautifully designed materials, in each area of learning. We have begun our study of the Earth which is the wonderful point of departure for study of the continents, land/air/water, and of course, life on our beautiful planet. This is all woven together with the threads of Respect and Peace, which illustrate Maria Montessori's commitment to 'growing' responsible stewards of the earth, and future ambassadors of Peace.

Enrichment studies of Yoga and French have begun. Our Yoga Program begins with learning to control our breathing and using breaths for calming, shedding tension and reenergizing. Yoga means to join, and helping the children bring together their thoughts and movements can improve their control over their bodies, and help them 'self calm.' In our French Program, the children have met *Cecile*, our weekly Wednesday visitor from France (a puppet!) who excitedly greets the children and is introducing them to this beautiful language with conversation snippets, vocabulary and songs. Dr. Montessori described children at this age as being in their sensitive period for language acquisition. They do not learn language the same way as adults, but absorb it like sponges. This is a wonderful time developmentally to expose them to languages.



Tara's Art Studio:

Our little artists have been having some fun. We started off the year with an artist interview where we were able to get to know each other, share our favorite colors, talk about shapes, lines and use of known materials - just the start of their portfolio. With the anticipation of our fluttering Monarch butterflies in the classroom, the children got a little messy making their very own, one of a kind, hand print butterflies. But oh so 'ooey, gooey', as they turned their hands into paint brushes and felt the colors between their fingers. Together, they each



took part in painting our class caterpillar and chrysalis. Before we knew it the fall chill hit the trees and left us the first gathering of leaves for us to use as an art form as we explored leaf rubbing. Still in the making, these leaf rubbing collages welcome in the colors of autumn and lead us into the study of the color wheel in the upcoming months. We look forward to watching our little budding artists as the metamorphosis of learning continues with their little hands and creative minds.

We loved meeting with all of you at our Parent Orientation. We greatly appreciate your understanding of our increased vigilance in health monitoring during this time of uncertainty regarding the H1N1 virus. We join the medical community in balancing a common sense preventative approach with heightened vigilance and observation. I realize that it is frustrating to be asked to keep a child with symptoms home 'an extra day', but we are committed to keeping our community as healthy as possible. Little children find it difficult to manage runny noses and coughing, and it is hard for the teachers to keep up with sanitizing the trail of a wandering child, throughout the day. Although colds and respiratory symptoms are NOT connected to H1N1, a community of children with overloaded immunity responses will be more vulnerable to acquiring other viruses.



Mark your calendars

- **October 8th** School Picture Day
- **October 9th** – No School, Staff Development Day
- **October 11th** – No School, Columbus Day
- **October 23rd** Field Trip to Grisamore Farms (We will need volunteers to drive children, so please check your morning availability that day.)
- **October 30th** Harvest Celebration (students only)

Thank you, merci, thank you, merci !!!!!

- For the nutritious and varied snacks, and for the beautiful fresh flowers for our classroom.
- To Amber for volunteering for another year as School Mother, and her co pilot Kristy
- To Sofia for volunteering to be our Lovely Library Lady