

MEHER MONTESSORI SCHOOL

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Meher Montessori School is the Oldest AMI Accredited Montessori School in Southern California!

By Director Adela Muñoz

Hello Meher families and friends. We welcome spring with open arms and are enjoying the longer daylight, warmer days and not being stuck inside because of the rain. Although the rain was much needed, it sure did seem to go on for much too long. Not being able to be outside in the open air and sunlight was hard on the children and hopefully being outside more will help to stop the constant spread of these viruses we have been inundated with.

This is always such a busy time of year. In the last few months we have had re-enrollment for the next school year, summer school enrollment, partnership projects and the subsequent breakfast, parent night, public open house and a fundraiser. And now we start to wrap up the school year and get ready for parent conferences, classroom open house, primary graduations and summer school.

A short review on the happenings here. Our re-enrollment was overall very good. We have a solid group of returning students in all of our classrooms. That makes for a consistent and strong start in the new school year. The new children come into beautiful working environments and it really helps with their adjustment. The examples of children working joyfully are there for the new children from day one.

We also had a good summer school sign-up and our classes will be full and the children can continue with their beautiful work. We will also be scheduling at least one field trip that includes a bus ride that always seems to be the highlight of the trip. Also during summer school, will be provided with our own schedule of swimming lessons for children 4 years old and older at Elder Park. The Monterey Park Parks and Recreation Department is such a wonderful partner with us in providing this for our students. You will receive more information on the field trip and swim lessons soon if you enrolled your child for summer school.

During our re-enrollment time, the primary graduates spent a few mornings in the elementary classroom working on projects with the elementary students. The children really enjoyed being and working in the "big kid's class" and completed some great projects. We then had a breakfast in the classroom for all of the students and their parents so that the children could share their projects. It was a fun and joyful morning and for many of our primary parents, the first time they got to be in the elementary classroom.

Our parent night was a little less attended than usual but we also had much rain that week and that day. Still, the parents that were able to attend received some great information from the teachers and they had some great questions.

Our public open house was a huge success and we had over 35 families stop by. Parents had great questions and were really intrigued by what they saw in the classrooms and what they learned about Montessori education. We received many applications that day for new students to start in summer school and fall of this year and quite a few for the 2024 summer and fall. Parents were very concerned about making sure that their child had a spot for when they were ready.

Our Read-A-Thon fundraiser was a smashing success. Our Meher students and their parents did an incredible job of getting in the reading minutes and getting funds raised. We raised over \$18,000 and are overjoyed and thankful for all of your dedication and hard work. Top fundraisers and top readers all received a special gift. Thank you for your support and hard work. I will be sharing in the newsletter top fundraiser and readers from each class and some of the things that the funds raised helped us purchase. The teachers are excited to make their wish lists. A heartfelt thank you to Jennifer Lahoda, mom of Henry and Max, for coordinating and running this fundraiser. We could not have had such a successful fundraiser without her.

Parent/teacher conferences will be happening soon. You will get notifications from your child's teacher regarding scheduling your conference. Classroom open house will happen at the end of May. It is an evening where your child can share their work with you in their classroom.

Graduations and the end of the school year festivities will be here before we know it. It is such a special time honoring the primary graduates and all their hard work. It is always exciting to see them join the elementary class starting in summer school.

**Monday,
May 15th**

**Final School Year
Tuition Payment Due**

**Wednesday,
May 17th**

**Evening Open
House in the
Classrooms**

**Monday,
May 22nd**

**Parent Teacher
Conferences Begin**

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Mrs. Rivera's Class

Hello Families. We welcomed April with a breath of fresh air. We hope you all had a wonderful spring break. Some of the children shared their stories about how they spent their time away from school and it was lovely to hear all their adventures. There were trips to Disneyland, Hawaii, the mountains and even Paris. We were so happy to share our stories during group time. We are starting a new tradition in our classroom, as so many children are traveling. Children may bring in their favorite picture of themselves on a trip (please add the location of the place) and we will add this picture to our geography area where other children can see the picture.

We had a lot of special occasions this month. We said our good byes to our friends Charlotte and Vincent who relocated to Boston. They brought in special cupcakes and pizza for our classroom and we sang some songs for them as we celebrated their new adventures. They also brought in goodie bags for all the children. We also celebrated our friend Ezia's 3rd birthday. His family brought in cupcakes to share with the classroom. We sang happy birthday and enjoyed the cupcakes together. We ended our monthly celebrations with our friend Aleia's 3rd birthday. Her family provided pizza and cupcakes for our classroom.

Our Easter egg hunt was a success. The children had a chance to go into our play area and hunt for eggs. The children were filled with joy and laughter as they ran to collect their eggs. We sang songs and had a snack party in the afternoon. We would like to thank the parents for helping out with our snack party. The children had a great time sharing their goody bags and eating all the delicious snacks. Next month we will be having another snack party

for Cinco de Mayo. There is a sign-up sheet at the sign-in table.

Our graduates have been working excitedly in the classroom. They have taken a huge interest in our geography maps. They have been writing in the names and coloring the states. Some of the children have taken it upon themselves to try to memorize the names and colors of the specific countries or states. The graduate children have also started writing in their personal booklets. They enjoy writing in it and personalizing it with their drawings. One child explained in detail what their drawing represented. It is important that we listen to their stories because it tells us what they think about, what's important to them and who they are as an individual.

The graduating students have also taken a special interest in the addition and subtraction charts. These materials help the children see the possible combinations of number 1-9 and also helps them memorize chosen to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month and would like a few books to read in the classroom.

Thank you
Mrs. Rivera, Ms. Tinajero, Ms. Mills



Ms. Lopez' Class

Happy April! I hope you all had a wonderful spring break. The children returned eager to see their friends, share what they did over the break, and resume their work.

We've celebrated quite a few birthdays this spring. In March, we celebrated Benito, Max, and Nina. We celebrated Jace, Kaden, Paige, and Ms. Bayon in April. Happy Birthday to them!

Thank you to the parents that attended Parent Night. Talking about the work the children do is always exciting. Showing you all what your children are capable of achieving is something I always look forward to. This year, the topic of conversation was the language area and what transpires throughout the primary years. Through three years, the children learn to express themselves clearly through conversation and writing and comprehend books and stories they read.

For the Easter celebration, the children enjoyed an egg hunt, and a pizza party followed. They decorated easter eggs with Mrs. Suh and decorated our classroom.

For Earth Day, the children repotted flowers. They each got their pot, flower, and some soil. The children got to work with the help of Mrs. Suh and Ms. Bayon. We read books about keeping Earth clean by saving energy, creating less trash and recycling, and keeping our surroundings clean.

The children got a special presentation from Kamilah's parents. They read a book about Ramadan and Eid-al-Fitr



and shared a few of their traditions. They received a special gift and learned the phrase Eid Mubarak which translates to "Blessed Holiday." Children learning about traditions and cultures other than their own gives them a better understanding of the world. As they learn everyone's uniqueness, they become more understanding and compassionate, making them great citizens of the world. In our classroom, we have our geography folders. There are 7 of them, each about one continent. These folders have photos of people, animals, and landscapes that belong to the continents. The children are exposed to how people look and dress on different continents. Indirectly, the children learn to respect and accept things they may not understand about people worldwide. Concurrently, they learn about geography, as they're always interested in the location of places. Thank you to Kamilah's parents for the beautiful presentation.



By this time of the year, the children's work begins to blossom. All their hard effort is showing through the work they are expressing. The children are enjoying the bank game, moveable alphabet, and reading. This time of year is exciting to see the children work and see how far they've come.

Thank you, parents, for always being so supportive and understanding. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Until next time,
Ms. Lopez, Mrs. Suh and Ms. Bayon

Mr. Mindes' Class

Hello Meher families! March and April brought with it a number of events. We held the Partnership Breakfast, a Back-to-School night, and a Saturday Open House. We also hosted two Montessori teachers-in-training and some non-Montessori educators. The Montessori teachers-in-training came to fulfill requirements for their teaching credential, while the non-Montessori educators simply came to observe our class. Afterwards, the educators (which included a school psychologist) commented on how impressed they were watching happy and lively students interacting with each other and their work. Their words reminded me to step back and appreciate the engagement and joy found in our Montessori classroom!

The Partnership Breakfast and Montessori "Periods of Development"

After the changes and adaptations our classes made to negotiate the pandemic, the Partnership Breakfast felt like a stride back to normalcy. Our students had the opportunity to work with the Primary students in preparing for the event. I thought seeing the younger students work with our students underscored Maria Montessori's description of the different stages of development for children. Generally, she broke human development into 4 periods: primary (ages 0 to 6); elementary (ages 7 -12); adolescence (ages 13 -18); and adulthood (18+).

Characteristics of the 2nd period Elementary child (7 - 12)

At the Back-to-School Night, we spoke about, among other things, the characteristics of the second period Elementary child - our students! I want to briefly mention three main characteristics of the 7 - 12 year olds that Maria Montessori delineated and that we discussed.

1) The Elementary student has a desire to escape the

closed environment. No longer consumed with internal growth like the Primary student, the Elementary student is interested in a wider social and societal experience. Montessori initiated the "going out," as one element of the curriculum to support this characteristic.

- 2) The Elementary student passage to abstract thinking, which explains the Elementary child's oft-asked question "Why"?
- 3) The birth of an internal moral sense.

The Montessori lessons and materials

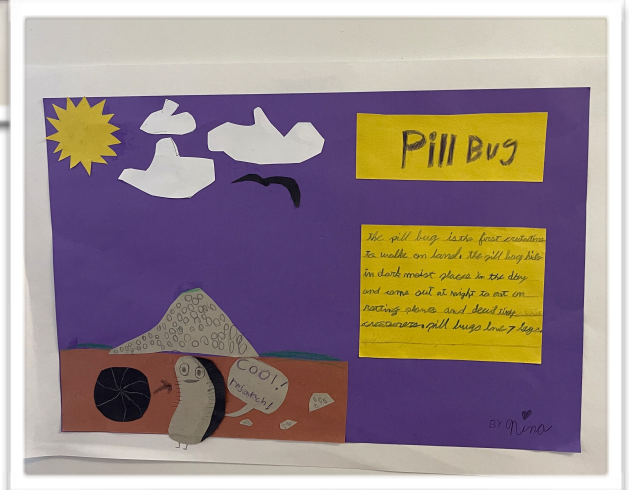
While Montessori may not be the only educational theorist to divide human development into four stages, her eponymous method was constructed specifically for a child's stage of development. In other words, the Montessori materials, its lessons, and class structure are formulated to fit the traits of Primary, Elementary, and adolescent students.

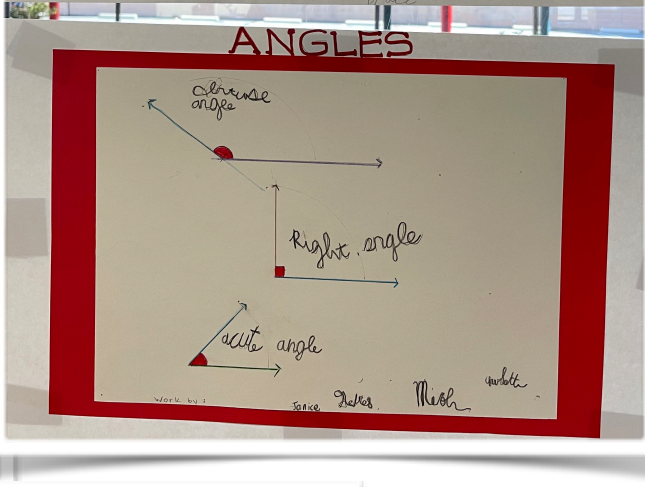
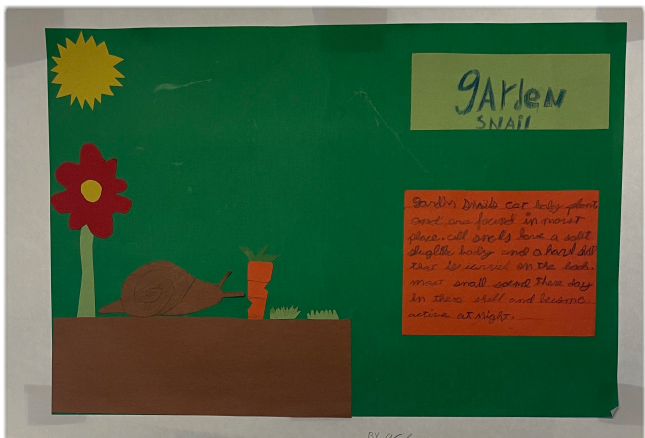
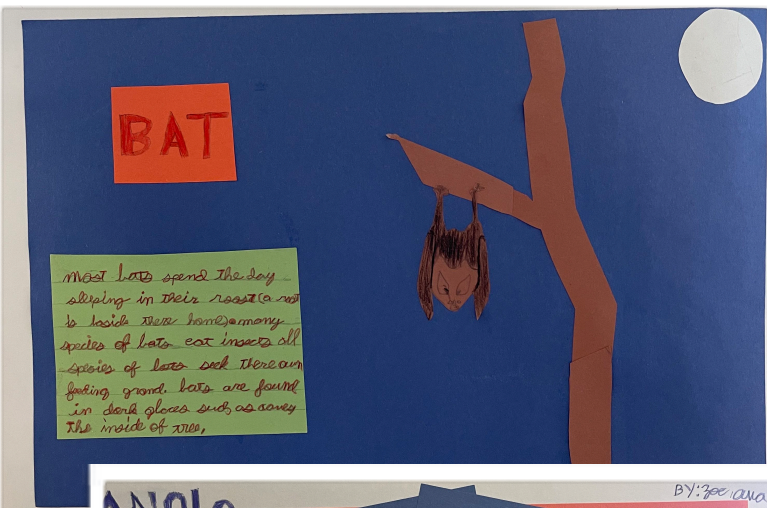
Speaking of lessons!

These last couple of months the students received lessons in identifying the subject and predicate, verb tenses (present, past, and future), polygons, lines, rays, segments, quadrilaterals, river nomenclature and function, structure of the earth, fraction operations (division, multiplication, addition, and subtraction), functions of the leaf ... I'm realizing the list is a long one, so let's just say there has been a lot of learning going on!

Until next time,

Mr. Mindes and Mrs. Gonzalez





Mrs. Wildhaber's Class

Happy Spring!!

As new life is blooming all around us, from the flowers in the garden to the birds in the nest on the Meher Montessori awning to the insects crawling around outdoors, there is a lot of wonder and observation happening outdoors with the kiddos. I encourage everyone to keep the wonder going at home with evening walks and open-ended questions. Something so simple can create such beautiful memories.

You Are Just as Good as Anyone

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, MLK's message continued into February for Black History Month. Pioneers like Rosa Parks and Ruby Bridges reappeared in March when we honored Women's History Month. We also read books about women who were the first in their fields, persevered, and never gave up.

Starting with one important cultural event in our history, we continue to build upon it from month to month. This helps the children to develop a base understanding of how the efforts of a wide variety of people have paved the way for us, as a diverse group of people, to be where we are now. And by making sure our little classroom library, as well as our early reader books, are always stocked with people of different ages, abilities, backgrounds, varying family dynamics, and cultures, I am ensuring that the students are constantly exposed to representation and have the opportunity to see the beauty in our differences.

Next month we will keep the thread alive by highlighting the beauty and effort of Asian American and Pacific Islanders.

Community Helpers

As the long days of spring bring more outings and adventures, which lead to more community interactions overall, I thought April was a good month to discuss community helpers in class. We read books about what a community helper is. The simplest definition was that a "community helper is someone who makes the neighborhood cleaner, safer or better." Another reason April is a good month to highlight community helpers is because it can be tied into Earth Day, which was April 22nd. By making our communities cleaner, safer, or better, we are also taking care of our Earth. We even had a special community helpers edition of Show and Tell! A few Meher families shared items from their jobs that fit the community helper definition. The children enjoyed bringing in something that mom or dad uses on the job and then explaining what it was and why their parent uses it. The children got to see life-saving tools for babies, plans for trains and buses, and a conductor's wand/baton for the philharmonic.

Several books in our classroom library have pictures of a wide variety of community helpers. I chose these books because they include non-stereotypical portrayals of varying community helpers. Female firefighters and doctors, male nurses and teachers send powerful visual messages to young children, letting them know their gender does not determine their career path. I also ensured the books depicted people of color, differing abilities, and a broad age range. These qualities have always been my focus in selecting books for the class library. It is of the utmost importance that the children are exposed to representation of all walks of life in a positive way at this time.



In the Classroom

There has been a lot of growth, development, and exploration happening in the classroom. Children are excited to observe their peers and then eager to ask me for the same lesson after a few days of observation. You can always tell when a Montessori child is getting ready to observe a classmate by how they instinctively place their hands behind their backs as they approach the other child's workspace.

Allowing children to observe their peers is essential to a Montessori classroom. This is also one of the reasons why Montessori classrooms are mixed-age environments. I can only imagine how boring it must be for these young, developing minds to be in a classroom where everyone is doing the same thing! The free-flowing, mixed-age environment allows children to support each other in the classroom, revisit materials they have long since mastered, and dive deeper into materials with extended lessons. Many children have been bringing their Kindness Cards back to have me read them aloud to their classmates. I encourage the children to do this. It helps their classmates recognize kindness and sends the message that even the little things count. When I fill out a kindness card, I do not tell the

child they are getting one. It is meant to be a surprise in the mail. Therefore, please be sure we have your child's current address to ensure they receive their card in the mail. If your address has changed, there is a yellow change of information form on the coat rack you may fill out.

Next Month

Our second round of Parent-Teacher Conferences and our Open House for families will happen in May. Look for those emails later in the month.

I want to close out this newsletter with the word "yet." When your child tells you, "I can't..." or "I don't know how to..." Follow up their sentence with the word "yet." Such a small word can make a massive difference in your child's approach to challenging tasks in life.

Until Next Month,

Mrs. Wildhaber,

Ms. McCray & Ms. Van Ness

