

THE MESSENGER



A NOTE FROM SUSAN

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CALENDAR EVENTS:

- 5/28 **No School** - Staff Development Day
- 5/31 **No School** - Memorial Day
- 6/2 Spring Concert
10 a.m. Violins only
6 p.m. All music students
- 6/8-10 UE to **Silver Bay**
- 6/8 **Primary** Field Day
- 6/11 and 6/12 **MS presents**
You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown
- 6/12 *Friends of WHMS*
End-of-Year **Picnic**
- 6/15 LE/UE/MS **Field Day**
Yearbooks distributed.
- 6/18 Moving Up/Graduation
- 6/22 Sue LaVigne's retirement party 5:00-9:00 pm

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of our school year. It has been such a pleasure to be the principal of such a great school, for ten years now, and I am so proud of all that we have accomplished as a school and a community!

We opened our new gym wing on May 8 of last year and we have been using it almost every day since. We have had so many opportunities to use our stage and gym, from musicals and plays to concerts and performances. We had our first WHMS basketball teams, played volleyball, and enjoyed indoor recess during rainy days. We had a pot luck dinner in the gym in the fall and hosted cultural events and basketball leagues. The music, Spanish, kitchen, lobby and art space has also been in continuous use. It has been a joy to see our children using our new wing in so many ways. How did we ever live without it?



Thank you to all of our dedicated faculty and staff for their amazing talent in and out of the classrooms, along with their love of the children and their deep commitment to the Montessori Method. I know I am not alone in appreciating how they show their passion for their work every day.

Thank you also to our incredibly supportive parents. You show your dedication to Woodland Hill in so many ways. Our annual Gala was outstanding, not only did we have a lot fun together, but we raised additional

funds to further support the school and our children. Some of the gala proceeds were used to purchase lights for our stage; you will enjoy seeing your child on stage at the Moving Up and Graduation ceremonies on Friday, June 18. We will continue to raise money for more lighting.

We also thank the *Friends of Woodland Hill* for their help in providing an author in residence, Hudson Talbott, and also for bringing in the shadow puppet theater production of *Sleepy Hollow*. They also provided funding for wireless microphones for our young actors. The list of parent and grandparent support goes on and on!

We know parents have a number of choices when it comes to educating a child in the Capital Region and we are so glad (truly!) that you have chosen Woodland Hill for your child and your family. I know I am biased, but you have chosen the best school in the Capital Region. Where else can you find such an experienced and dedicated faculty and staff, an excellent curriculum using a scientifically proven learning method that is seen as the best practice for educating children, offering an outstanding physical facility at a tuition that is below other comparable programs? Only here at Woodland Hill!

We look forward to celebrating the children and all the many wonderful ways they have grown this year at our Spring Concert and/or our Moving Up and Graduation.

Sincerely,

Susan

Spring Music Concert ~ Wednesday, June 2

10 a.m. - Violin concert (including Magic Violins)

6 p.m. - Band, Chorus, Handbell Choir, Chamber Ensemble,
Orff/Stomp, and Violins

Performers should arrive at 5:30 p.m. and go directly to their assigned room.

Please arrive "performance-ready," wearing nice clothes and dress shoes.

Making “Sense” out of Montessori

Edward Fidellow

Montessori is the only educational system that makes “sense” because it is the only education that starts off where your child starts - in the world of the senses. Our babies are born into a sensory world – they taste, they hear, they feel. They spend the first months of their lives wrapped in these senses. They begin to focus. Their eyes begin to take in their world. Their ears become attuned to your voice. They know what it is to be wet, to be dry, to be held, to be hungry, to be satisfied. Their senses are being refined day by day. Their hands grasp, their mouth tastes. They delight in the world they are discovering. Their minds are absorbing, categorizing, defining. There is a long period of intellectual foundational input before there are any external demonstrations of intellectual development. All the pressure to succeed in the world does not create the foundation. If our children can count to twenty or know their ABC’s before they are three it is a random demonstrations of facts. The solid academic foundation is built on the building blocks of the senses.



Twenty five hundred years ago the Greek philosophers observed that, “There is nothing in the mind that is not first in the hand.” The beginning of intellectual development begins with the senses. The senses are alive and operative long before the intellect can explain itself. Dr. Montessori understood the intrinsic value of “sensitive periods” when it is possible to acquire immeasurable gains (literally unconsciously) in language, in orderliness, in understanding because the senses are totally alive and receptive. It is the intellect receiving sense messages rather than intellectual messages that creates this great educational method.

One of the first senses developed is the sense of order. The Montessori environment (where everything has its own special place) creates a sense of internal order, well-being and security in your child. The envi-

ronment, where things are consistent, orderly, color-coded and logical is perceived by the sensory organs before it is perceived intellectually by the conscious mind. Every sense is addressed in a logical progression by the sensorial materials. As adults we look at it as blocks and colors and strange apparatus that we perceive as “simple and obvious” but to the child every experience is new and exciting and adds to the foundation of their intellectual building blocks. And they come to this through their senses – literally “coming to their senses”.

The long progression through practical life and the sensorial materials is the preparation for the intellectual explosion that occurs in Montessori children. The sensorial education includes the sense of sight in the visual discrimination of dimension. The “famous” Pink Tower (which I swear looks just like building blocks) is the beginning of this intellectual marathon.

The red rods, knobless cylinders and all of the other apparatus are tools to enhance this visual discrimination of dimension and space, a skill needed for so many venues in life – like driving. (There’s a scary thought for when your three year old turns sixteen!)

The Montessori classroom continues to train and refine the senses in the discrimination of color. The beauty of life and art (and the ability to appreciate, name and produce) starts with a sense of color – all presented in the environment.

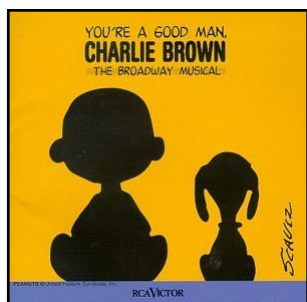
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“There is nothing in the mind that is not first in the hands.”



PIANO RECITAL

Our piano instructor, Livia Dennis organized a recital for the WHMS students who study piano with her this year. The group put on a wonderful recital, highlighting the skills they have acquired. Performing were Elijah Gach, Ana Stackelberg, Manasa Bala, Sofia Blitz, Alison Decker, Laura Decker, Amar Citron, Kaitlyn Mowry, Maris Seabury, Nicole Febus Aira Agrawal, Oliver Nathanielsz, Dantes Tapler, Veronica Febus, and Jason Eveleth. The recital was very enjoyable.



THE WHMS MIDDLE SCHOOL PRESENTS:

You're a Good Man Charlie Brown - The Musical

ShowTimes : June 11 @ 7:30 pm
 June 12 @ 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm

Admission: \$5 - Children younger than five are free

There is a **limited** number of WHMS 2009-2010 yearbooks left to purchase.
They won't last! If you forgot to order yours, see Meg for an order form.

Yearbooks will be distributed on Field Day, **Tuesday, June 15!**



Help us say *Thank You* to Sue LaVigne for **23 years** at WHMS (formerly MSA)! Sue started way back when... "*110 years ago*," she said. As a fitting tribute to her years of service to our community, we have planned a celebration to honor her, bid her a fond farewell and remind her how much she is loved.

Please join us at the Normanside Country Club on Tuesday, June 22, 2010
 from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Tickets are \$35 per person.

RSVP by June 15 to Moira Rienzo at mrienzo@woodlandhill.org.

Making "Sense"

Continued from Page 2

The "Stereognostic Sense" (my spell checker won't even accept this two dollar word – which means, "The perception of the form of an object by means of touch.") is covered extensively in a Montessori classroom. All of the triangles, rectangles, polygons and geometric shapes give entry for the child to the shapes of the world. He not only sees them, but touches them and internalizes (not just memorizes) their qualities and descriptions. And then we get to the botany cabinet where your child is introduced to the variety of nature's shapes.

The tactile sense is a refinement of the ability to receive perceptions through touch. The rough and smooth boards, the touch tablets and the fabric box all contribute to the foundational building blocks.

The auditory sense with the sound boxes and the bells and other musical apparatus tunes and refines the ear - an important sense skill for listening and for learning other languages.

The thermic sense (dealing with heat) is addressed by the thermic bottles and thermic tablets. The olfactory sense (sense of smell) and taste and the baric sense (dealing with weight) is addressed and enhanced.

Just like walking and feeling your way through a dark room, your child literally senses her way through the educational world until the lights get turned on and the conscious intellect begins to build the structure of her mind and thoughts. "There is nothing in the mind that is not first in the hands." The senses are the building block of all future academic achievement



"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."

~Maria Montessori

www.crossmountainpress.com

GOODBYE MEGAN!



Megan Donnelly-Heg said goodbye to Woodland Hill Montessori School on Thursday, May 27. Megan's husband, Martin, received a promotion to become a law judge for the Workers' Compensation Board in Syracuse. Megan is starting her new position at the Montessori School of Syracuse as a Lower Elementary head teacher.

Congratulations! We'll miss you.

YEAR-END CELEBRATIONS!

You are invited to join us for
our
Primary Moving Up
Ceremony
Friday, June 18, 2010
10:00am
This is an exciting
end of the year event
All of the primary students
will be performing



JOIN US FOR
ELEMENTARY MOVING-UP
&
MIDDLE SCHOOL
GRADUATION CEREMONY

FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 2010
5:00PM

This is an exciting end of year event
All of the Elementary and Middle School
students will be performing

Friends of Woodland Hill are happy to invite you to the
FRIENDS FAMILY PICNIC
Saturday, June 12
4 pm.

Barbecue/Music/Games/ Fun for the Whole Family

Meals prepared by The Old Daley Inn Barbecue company.
RSVP by June 4 to friends@woodlandhill.org

Friends of
WOODLANDHILL
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

SOLAR POWERED UPPER EL BY AMINAH PRAILEAU



Solar Cooker Aminah Praileau

Yesterday, our class made solar cookers. I made my cooker with Gabby, Tucker and Veronica. We made it with two boxes, tin foil, black paint, used paper and some sticks. It turned out pretty good.

Our group decided to roast marshmallows in our solar cooker. We put them in the cooker, then put the cooker outside in the sun. We had to wear sunglasses and plenty of sunscreen so we didn't burn our eyes or skin, since the sun's

harsh heat and light were bouncing off of the tin foil, then into our eyes and skin. We had to measure heat and the angle of the sun so our food cooked as much as possible. At first we were going to explode the marshmallows, but since they had no gelatin in them, they needed to be at a higher heat to melt. So we roasted them. At first, the temperature was 73°F, then it was 95°, then 120°, then finally 151°. I think our solar cooker was a success.

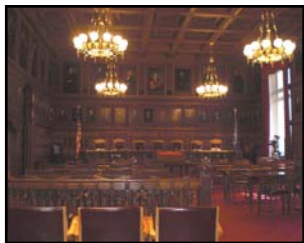
*Show your WHMS
Pride! Pick up your
FREE WHMS
bumper sticker and tell
the world you love
Woodland Hill*



MS VISITS THE COURT OF APPEALS



Susan Phillips Read, Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals



Students in the Middle School traveled to Albany on Thursday to visit the NY State Court of Appeals. There they met with Associate Judge Susan Phillips Read who explained what the court does and why it is an important component of our judicial system.

Students came away with some interesting perspectives about their visit:

“The field trip provided insight into our legal system.”

“I thought it was very cool that there was a secret door behind where the judge sits.”

“Judge Read explained how the court works. She told us about how the Court looks at cases to see how they were decided and reviews the laws in each case.”

WELL DONE

Congratulations to all students who participated in both the Northeast String Orchestra and the Little People's Orchestra on May 15 and 16.

Marla Bracco is our violin teacher and she praised the group saying, "The students have been practicing and preparing for several months and performed very challenging music at a very high level with a lot of excitement and ease. I am very proud of these students; all their hard work and dedication really showed at their performance. Congratulations."



Northeast String Orchestra

Justin Bruck
Tori Gernert-Dott



Little Peoples Orchestra

Max Heller
Chris Redmond
Conor McGinn
Aidan Singh
Christine Somerville



FREIHOFFER'S RUN FOR KIDS!

Jake Colwell invites students to participate in the *Freihofer's Kids' Run*. The *Freihofer's Kids' Run* is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, at the Empire State Plaza as part of the *Freihofer's Run for Women*.

Jake will be talking about this run in classes as well as having the children run the corresponding distance to their age group. He will also be sending pamphlets home for parents to view.

"I highly encourage that you take you child to this event or the *Run for Women*, even if just to watch. This is an inspirational event that promotes physical activity and a healthy lifestyle."

http://www.freihofersrun.com/kids_run.htm



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