

MCHL NEWS

Tis the Season . . .

OFFICE NEWS

With only a few short days until Winter Break, there is a great deal of excitement in the air at MCHL. The children will spend the next few weeks learning about holiday traditions around the world. If you are interested in sharing your holiday traditions and customs, please contact your child's teacher. Each teacher will send home information about class holiday parties.

As the year 2012 approaches, we would like to kindle some thoughts about next year. While for some it may be the season for Sugarplum Fairies, here at MCHL it is also the season of re-enrollment. When you return from Winter Break, you will be receiving information about our programs for the 2012 – 2013 school year. Currently enrolled students will be given first preference, followed by siblings, and then if there are any openings we turn to the public.

We would encourage parents of children who are eligible for kindergarten (*age 5 before September 30*) to discuss the program with our teachers and if possible, visit a kindergarten classroom between 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. to get a full understanding of the value of this important Montessori year.



The construction on the lower level is moving along as scheduled. We anticipate it will be completed later this month. The new area will be used for our Infant Program and we will also add another toddler classroom.



Winter has arrived! Before you leave home, please check the weather report. Temperatures often drop during the day, leaving children uncomfortable outside. The children will still continue to have daily outdoor recess (weather permitting), so please dress your child accordingly. Mittens are preferred unless your child can put on gloves without assistance. Also, parents are asked to put your child's name on all of those nice new jackets and coats!



MCHL will provide tuition receipts upon request for tax purposes in January 2012. Our Tax I.D. Number is 54-1748774. If you have any additional questions, please contact the office by phone or via email at info@mchl.org.

IMPORTANT DATES

December 6	Biz Clips Video Shoot
December 8	PTA Meeting
December 11	Open House 2-4 pm
December 22 – January 2	Winter Break (MCHL Closed)
January 3	Classes Resume
January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (MCHL Closed)
January 23	Staff Development Day (MCHL Closed)



BIZCLIPS VIDEO SHOOT

On Tuesday, December 6th, a company called BizClips, Inc. will arrive at MCHL to film a 30-second live video to be used on our website. The company will set up classroom activities for children to work on, and we will stage lessons with the Spanish, Music and Art teachers, as well as a group working in the computer lab, in cooking class with Mrs. Perley and in a FitKids class with Ms. Peggy.

Once the video has been completed and edited, we will require your signature release if your child appears in the film.

OPEN HOUSE

Our enrollment and registration process begins in February in preparation for the 2012-13 school year. MCHL will host an Open House for prospective families on December 11th from 2 – 4 pm. If you know anyone who is looking for childcare, please tell them about our Open House.

USBORNE BOOK FAIR

A heartfelt thank you to all who made our Book Fair such a success. We could not have reached our goal without the hard work of the MCHL PTA and the strong support of all the families who purchased books. Thank you so much!!!

TOYS FOR TOTS

Each year MCHL participates in several programs that help the less fortunate. In December we ask families to donate a new, unwrapped toy which will be given to Toys For Tots, a foundation created by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.



The primary goal for Toys for Tots is to deliver, through a new toy during the holiday season, a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, patriotic citizens. There is a donation box located at each entrance if you would like to participate.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY



MCHL will use Fairfax and Loudoun County public schools as a guideline for delays and/or closure due to inclement weather. We may choose to open sooner than the public schools since we do not have to deal with bus transportation issues. Therefore, we would request that everyone check our website or call the office to see if we are open. This information will be posted on our website and answering machine by 6:30 am.

If, during the course of the day, roads are expected to become extremely hazardous, and Fairfax or Loudoun County schools close early due to deteriorating weather conditions, MCHL may close early.

Should an early closing be anticipated, MCHL will make every attempt to reach you via mass email, but it is your responsibility to check the website, www.mchl.org, on days of inclement weather. Also, be aware that it is your responsibility to keep us informed of your correct email address for our Google group.

In the event of a mid-day closing, please have a back-up neighbor or parent who will be available to pick up your child.

NOTE: There are no deductions in tuition due to days MCHL must close due to adverse weather conditions.





WELCOME BACK TO MONTESSORI 101

HOW WILL MY CHILD LEARN TO READ?

(The second edition in our series of mini-courses.)

Among the first materials introduced to each child in a Montessori classroom are the sandpaper letters. The sandpaper letters (wooden cards with a raised sandpaper letter, one for each letter) help develop the visual and muscle memory of the alphabet. The child traces the letter with his dominant hand, and says the phonetic sound as he does so. Each sound is introduced and practiced. The child will match certain objects to each sound and will perform countless activities reinforcing each particular sound.

Once several sounds are mastered, the child will be introduced to the moveable alphabet. The moveable alphabet is a large box divided into 26 compartments, each compartment containing several of the same wooden letters. The child then begins composing words. Three letter phonetic words like “cat”, “jug” and “mom” are best to begin with. The child hears the word, and tries to identify the sounds he hears at the beginning, middle and end of each word. He then finds the appropriate letters and places them in order on a rug. In doing this, the child is putting sound and symbol together and is able to build words without having to write or hold a pencil.

Maria Montessori recognized that the ability to compose words according to phonetic sounds develops in children earlier than their ability to read or recognize words. While the child may be able to hear the sounds “c-a-t” and convert them into a 3 letter word with the moveable alphabet, it can take quite some time before he is ready to read these words. Reading is more difficult and requires the child to analyze and then decode someone else’s words. Building words comes before decoding them. Writing comes before reading. Some children may be able to read words as soon as they can write them, but for many there is a long period between the mastery of the two skills. The pace is different for every child.

As soon as a child is reading the words he has composed with the moveable alphabet, he is ready to begin reading books. Each classroom has sets of phonetic books designed to accommodate beginning, intermediate and advanced readers. The child will read and practice the book with his teacher, and then take it home to share with you. It is a proud day for all!

