

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, December 20
Winter Celebration @ 12:00pm

Wednesday, December 21 –
Tuesday, January 3, 2011
Winter Break (School Closed)

Wednesday, January 11
PTO Meeting @ 7:00pm

This Month's Birthdays

Nicholas Cantolupo
(6) December 5

Mary Foster
(5) December 15

Vincent Baker
(6) December 20

Ava Hines
(4) December 29

A Message from the Director

Dear Parents,

The Montessori classroom is an ideal environment for molding a socially-conscious and generous character. During her observations of young children, Dr. Maria Montessori realized that lasting peace is achievable through the heart of every child. Her philosophy and teaching method aim to keep the child's naturally peaceful and loving spirit alive. Parents and educators have the wonderful opportunity and responsibility to educate children to be peaceful citizens. To do this, we must emphasize both inner peace and the outer peace of social justice. Some practices that support this work include: appreciating and understanding ourselves, appreciating and understanding others, problem solving, study of and immersion in other cultures, involvement in community service, and involvement in national and global humanitarian projects.

One challenge of being a Montessori teacher is how to educate the young child about the injustices and pain in the world without making the child too worried, guilty, or upset. Our students require just the right amount of exposure to the world in which we live. Children deserve honest, yet simple, answers to questions.

This holiday season, the PTO has selected a local charity for our students to support. We will be collecting toys and hygiene products for the Christmas Smiles Foundation. They provide Christmas gift bags for over 200 local children attending Head Start programs. Head Start is a preschool program for young children living in poverty. For many of these children, this is the only gift they will receive for the holiday season. If you would like to participate in this drive, please place your items in the gift-wrapped box under the sign-in table starting Monday, December 5th. We will be collecting items until Monday, December 12th. If you have any questions contact Suzanne McEvoy (Torin's mom) at suzanne_t_mcevoy@yahoo.com or (480)794-0885. Items needed: crayons, coloring books, tooth brushes, tooth paste, new socks, hair clips/hair bows, and flashcards (the kind at the dollar store). Thank you for your generosity.

Best Regards,
Ms. Eva Foster

This month in the classroom...

December is all about celebrating the holidays and welcoming the New Year. The sights, sounds, scents, and tastes of the season are an absolute delight. We will make a lot of crafts and do a lot of baking this month. The children are exposed to the holiday traditions of Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and the Winter Solstice. I need two volunteers to help the children make potato latkes on the morning of Friday, December 16. Please e-mail if you would like to help. Parents are welcome to join us for a classroom Winter Celebration on Tuesday, December 20 at noon. The children will decorate gingerbread houses. This activity was such a hit last year, we want to do it again! Please see the candy construction list in the lobby to see how you can contribute.

Composer of the Month: George Frideric Handel

(1685 –1759) was a Baroque composer. He was born in Germany, but later became a British citizen. His most famous work, the oratorio Messiah with its "Hallelujah" chorus, is among the most popular works in choral music and has become the centerpiece of the Christmas season.

Artist of the Month: Pieter Bruegel

(1525 –1569) was a Flemish renaissance painter and printmaker known for his landscapes and peasant scenes. Bruegel specialized in genre paintings populated by peasants, often with a large landscape element. Making the life of peasants the main focus of a work was rare in Bruegel's time, and he was a pioneer of the Netherlandish genre painting. His earthy, unsentimental but vivid depiction of the rituals of village life—including agriculture, hunts, meals, festivals, dances, and games—are unique windows on a vanished folk culture. His most famous works include *The Hunters in the Snow* (1565) and *The Peasant Wedding* (1568).

For Small Hands-

The *For Small Hands* catalogs were sent home last month. The catalog is filled with "hundreds of age-appropriate, child-size items that encourage independence, creativity, and problem-solving." These items are wonderful compliments to the standard Montessori classroom materials and support the Montessori philosophy. If you're in the market for gift (birthdays, Christmas, baby showers) I hope you'll take advantage of these unique quality items. Plus, with every individual order over \$25 purchased the school earns free supplies and materials for the classroom. The deadline to order and support the school is December 31, 2011. Thank you for your support!

Montessori Scholarship Organization (MSO)-

Every household that files an Arizona State Tax Return is eligible to participate in this program by directing tax money to our private Montessori school to be used for tuition assistance. Single taxpayers can contribute \$500 and joint taxpayers can contribute \$1,000. The MSO allows taxpayers to choose where their state tax money is spent and supports parents in choosing the type of education they desire for their children. Last year, two students at PVMS were able to benefit. Please see the attached form and/or visit www.msosonline.com for more information.

Please DO NOT allow your little ones to scribble on the sign-in sheets. It creates a confusing mess. The sign-in sheets are required records of attendance checked by the Office of Child Care Licensing during school inspections to assure that PVMS is always in adherence to student to adult ratios.

PTO Corner

The PTO does not meet in the month of December. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 11th at 7:00pm at the school.

Thanksgiving Thanks

This year's Thanksgiving Feast was bigger and better than ever. Many thanks to the volunteers who cooked, cleaned, and planned. Amy Khan (Jadon's mom) did an amazing job organizing the celebration and she had lots of helping hands.

Wine and Cheese Soiree

This was a fun night out for the parents who attended. Thank you to Josephine Ventura (Julius's mom) and Patty Cantu (Alfredo's mom) for organizing this event.

Bike-A-Thon

Beautiful weather and outstanding participation made this event a big success. The PTO raised over \$1,000 and it was a wonderful time for children and adults. Thank you to Gabi Baker (Rose and Vincent's mom), Kristy Marrone (Madison's mom), and Josephine Ventura (Julius's mom) for making it happen. Victoria Collier (with lots of help from her mom, Joy) was our top fund-raiser.

Updated Website

Josephine Ventura (Julius's mom) has been hard at work redesigning the PVMS website. There are just two sections that need more attention. If you would like to submit a testimonial for the school it would be greatly appreciated. Please e-mail your statement to PalmValleyMontessori@gmail.com.

School Staff

Sadly, Ms. Deb has left our school. Her husband's sudden and unexpected job loss a couple of months ago prompted her to search for full-time work with benefits. She quickly found a position as a Reading Specialist at Corte Sierra. Ms. Deb's last day was Wednesday, November 23 and we had a small goodbye party for her. She will be greatly missed. I plan to hire a new part-time assistant in January.