

MEHER MONTESSORI SCHOOL

MARCH NEWSLETTER

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

By Director Adela Muñoz

Springtime is upon us and along with the time change comes more opportunity for outdoor adventures. We are so fortunate to live in a place where the weather pretty much allows outdoor activity year round. I invite you to make more time spending it in outdoor activities with your child. There is so much to discover and learn just by taking a walk in the neighborhood. As Dr. Montessori said, "Follow the child, walk at your child's pace, stop when they stop and allow them the time to take in what they may be looking at."

I am happy and proud to announce that our AMI accreditation renewal for both of our schools, Primary and Elementary classes, is complete and we continue to be the oldest AMI accredited school in Los Angeles County. The AMI consultants were thorough, supportive and helpful. They met with every teacher individually as well as administration for each school. This process guarantees consistency and quality in our Montessori education program and is the foundation of our schools and must be completed every three years. Congratulations to our incredible staff.

It is re-enrollment time at Meher. With everything that has occurred in the last two years, our spacing continues to be limited and your child's re-enrollment is crucial to our fall planning. We have already received several applications for summer and fall enrollment from parents of new students. The due date for the re-enrollment form and deposit is Friday, April 1st. After that date, we will start the completion of enrollment from new applicants to fill open spots. Please don't take the chance of losing your child's spot by not securing it during re-enrollment.



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The first of our spring fundraisers, Charleston Wrap, is underway. It is a 100% online fundraiser and runs through Wednesday, April 6th. Please register and send out your emails to friends and family as soon as possible so that the orders can start coming in. These fundraisers help us with ordering new Montessori materials, which are very costly, and one of the requirements for our AMI status. They also allow us to replace things like restroom sinks and do other upgrades that our landlord can't afford to do. We also will continue to purchase new playground equipment for the children. During the month of May, we will have our second spring fundraiser and that will be our Read-a-Thon. Thank you very much for your support.

Summer school information and sign-up will be going home next week and will be due before our spring break that will take place the week of April 18. Again, your on-time enrollment is key to secure your child's spot for summer school.

Finally, we will be having a public open house on Saturday, May 14th from 10:00 am-2:00 pm. You will receive more information in the upcoming weeks to share with family and friends that may be interested in enrolling a child.

Until next month,
Adela Muñoz

**Friday,
April 1st**

**RE-ENROLLMENT
DUE**

**Wednesday,
April 6th**

FUNDRAISER ENDS

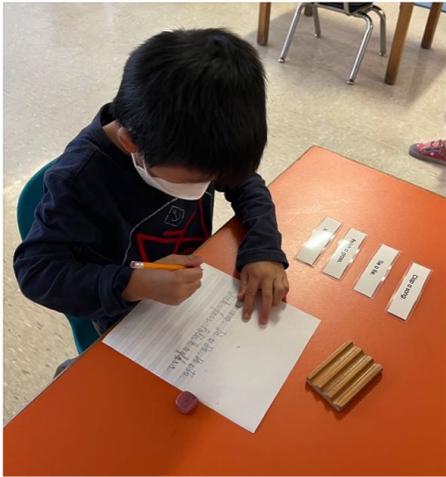
**April
18-22**

SPRING BREAK

Mrs. Rivera's Class

Hello dear parents,

Time really flies so fast, it seems like it was February just two weeks ago and here it is almost April and spring time is here. The children thru the artistic and original art instruction of Ms. Mills are once again busy getting ready for their spring projects! They started to color three small



flowers and a medium size caterpillar, and lastly a lily flower. These finished colorings will be used to decorate the walls of the hallway and the right side corner of the classroom. The indoor garden is unique and beautiful because it is

decorated with butterflies (the children punched them out), flowers of different colors and caterpillars too!

We celebrated St. Patrick's Day on March 17th with a snack party in the afternoon. Before lunch, the children enjoyed making a special fruit cocktail with a blend of apples, coconut jelly, papaya, cherries and pineapples. The children had this dessert in the afternoon. It was also Mahalia's birthday. She turned 4 and shared delicious cupcakes with the class, aside from the little snacks brought in by the teachers. For lunch, we had pizza for having a 100% School Shirt Day last month! The children also took



home a goody treat from Mahalia. We have Brooklyn and Serena turning 4 years old as well this month. Happy birthday to all three girls!

Art projects for St. Patrick's Day were done earlier in the month and will go home soon. Projects made by

the children inspire and excite them and help to develop art skills. The skills to color within the lines in a top down stroke process are skills that have been attained by the children through a series of work done in the classroom.

Some of these works are the metal inset, painting work, and cursive writing.

We have seven children graduating from our class this June. All of these children have completed the third and very important last year of the Primary program. The academic work learned and the leadership skills developed from being the oldest in the community in the last year of Primary is such a strong preparation for the Elementary years. Their cognitive and emotional development is strong and they have been in an environment where this growth has

been allowed to be developed at their own pace, through meaningful work and loving and supportive guides. These last months before graduation include a lot of journal writing and grammar work, extension in the math work and geography and culture work. Many times these older children also like to return to some of the early practical life and sensorial work that is part of their foundation and can be very soothing and calming.



A special thank you to Ms. Mills and Ms.

Ramirez for their constant follow ups, pouring of love (thru guidance, care and right conduct), making school and daycare time fun and also keeping our classroom clean and ready for the next day. Your dedication and passion are always appreciated; God bless always. Friendly reminders: Spring break next month; April 18th to the 22nd and Easter activities will be posted soon! Lastly, thank you to all of our dear parents for their continued trust, belief and support of the Montessori method and for your love for us, the children and our school as a whole.

"The teacher must give her lessons, plant the seed and then disappear, observing and waiting." Maria Montessori, "The Call of Education"

Ms. Mills, Ms. Ramirez and I thank you for the opportunity to serve your children.

Maria Rivera

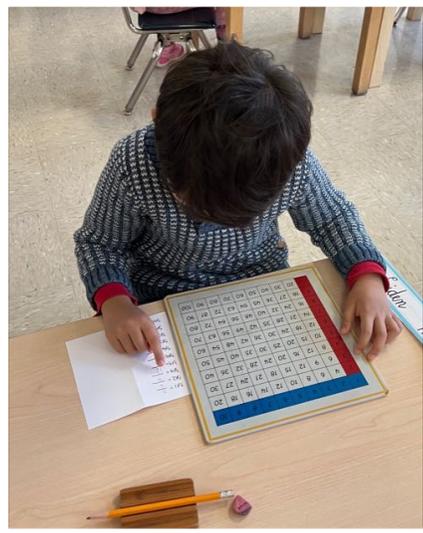


Ms. Lopez' Class

Hello Parents!

We have officially welcomed the season of Spring. Just like the flowers, the children are sprouting and showing the fruits of the hard work they've done all school year long.

The bank game has been a hit this month. This is the beginning of activities working with the decimal system. At



this point in the math area the children learn to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. The children work with concrete materials so they can see and understand what is happening in these systems of operations. Children see the values of each number with the beads they get. There's a cube for the thousands, a square for

hundreds, a bar for tens, and a bead for units. They are given a number, then they go to the "bank" and get that number in beads. Currently, the children are doing addition, so they know to put their quantities together to get the sum/answer of their operation. The bank game is a partner or group activity; therefore, the children learn excellent

teamwork and communication skills. As the children progress in the math area, the material becomes more abstract until they memorize their math facts.

This month, the children made pancakes in the classroom. We added spinach to our mix to make them green in celebration of St. Patrick's Day. The children enjoyed putting and mixing the ingredients, flipping their pancakes, but most importantly, they enjoyed eating them.



Daylight savings time started a great conversation about time and the sun's rotation. The children learned two keywords: rotate and orbit. They learned that the earth rotates, and orbits the sun. We did a fun group activity where some children were Earth and others were the sun. The children saw how when the Earth is facing the sun, it's daylight, and when it's not, it's nighttime. This month we celebrated Benito's, Max's, and Nina's birthdays. Happy Birthday to them!

Thank you, parents, for always being so supportive.

Until next month,
Ms. López

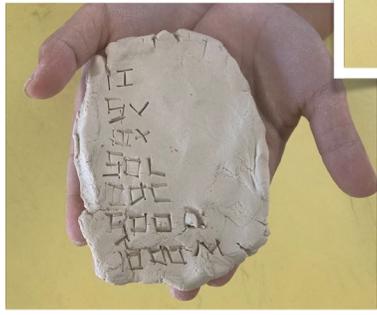
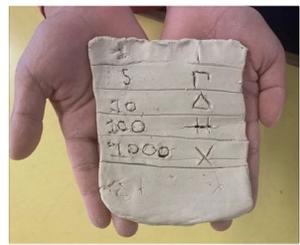
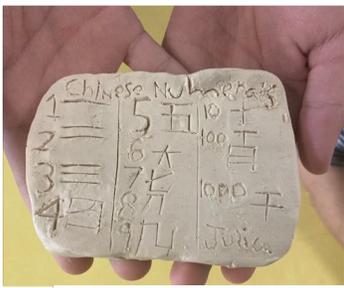


Mr. Mindes' Class

Hello Meher Families! Recently, I came across two Maria Montessori quotes that help us understand one important aspect of how our classroom functions, namely, the latitude students have to choose work that interests them. The first quote states "... [children] ... *decide and choose for themselves all the time ... they cannot learn through the obedience to the command of another.*" Our classrooms do not have students sitting in rows, passively listening to a teacher lecture. You will find our students huddled in groups talking about Greek myths, researching bugs, or showing each other how to use a protractor!

The other Montessori quote I read: "*To give a child liberty is not to abandon him to himself,*" asserts the classroom limits that a teacher puts in place. Specifically, the teacher makes available those materials and activities that are most productive to the student's developmental stage. Likewise, a child's freedom is circumscribed by expected and agreed upon behavior: courtesy to one's peers, care for the classroom environment, and performance of purposeful work.

Happily, purposeful work arises naturally. For instance,



a few weeks ago, I noticed student interest in the Middle Ages crop up. Some students began to read about the armor knights wore, the weapons they used, and the castles in which they resided. In reading about the Middle Ages generally, they came across the monument called Stonehenge, which led a couple of students to the idea to model Stonehenge out of clay. I thought this was great because it also opened the opportunity for me to give a geometry lesson on the parts of circle (radius, diameter, etc.) as Stonehenge's construction was circular. I also knew that Stonehenge was built to align with the summer and winter solstices, which offered the chance to review the seasons, the solstices, and the tilt of the earth. Then too, Stonehenge, having been built during the neolithic period, offered a nice entry some history study. This is purposeful work in action, leading naturally to other avenues of exploration!

Academic Notes

Every school year, around the beginning of spring, I see a noticeable jump in students skills. Skills that appeared out of reach, suddenly, as if by osmosis, are acquired; of course, it's not osmosis, but the daily interaction with an active school environment. Struggling readers begin to recognize words and older readers develop their fluency and comprehension skills. In math and language too, a greater facility with adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, or identifying sentence parts and writing sentences springs forth. For that matter, lots of previously challenging skills and concepts are assimilated. It's spring ... it's a period of rebirth!

Until next month,
Len Mindes

Altadena News

It was wonderful to welcome all the families out onto the playground for February and March's School Shirt Days. Meher Altadena will continue to host a monthly School Shirt Social for the last two months of the school year. The dates are April 29th and May 27th.

Also, as there are still some kiddos who cry at drop off, here is a link to a [very helpful article](#). The author has several tips to help make the transition smoother for the child and the parent.

Mrs. Wildhaber's Class

Civilizations throughout history have been built through communication and collaboration. When the child can communicate with others, when they can express ideas and feelings, and the construction of their personality can occur. This is reflected in the main purpose of the language area in a Montessori classroom by helping the child's whole personality. It is so much more than reading and writing!

While the children have been gaining confidence in their language abilities over the course of the year(s), I have noticed an explosion of speech from the two and three-year-olds over the last two months. They come in eager to speak to each other, make silly sounds to a friend in the hopes of garnering a laugh, advocating for themselves by asking for lessons, declaring that they have to "go to the potty," and crisping up on their phonics.

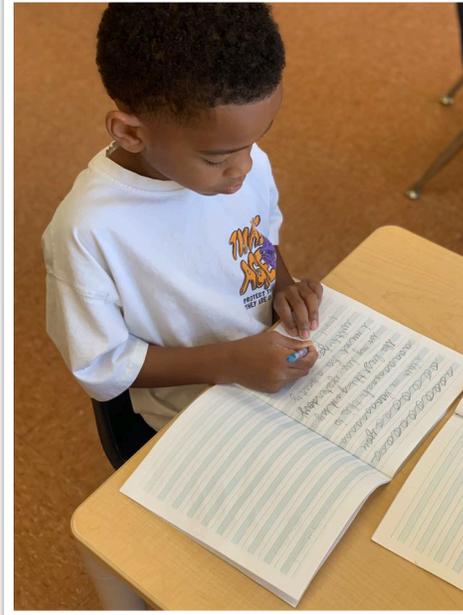


Aside from organizing and classifying the young mind by enriching their vocabulary, picture cards also give children the opportunity to practice their phonics. The child who confidently said "lllghtning" instead of "wightning" when working on the weather picture cards made sure the tip of her tongue was touching the roof of her mouth. Then there was the child who said "sponge" instead of "ponge" while working with the kitchen picture cards.

As the children have prepared their hands and wrists for pencil work through multiple practical life lessons, around

three and half years old, they start to directly prepare for written language through metal inset work. And since there are at least ten different metal inset lessons, they continue to refine their pencil grip and lightness of touch as they become more adept at written expression.

Looking around the classroom, one will see metal insets and picture cards out at any time of the day from a wide age range of children. And while phonetic reading is gaining



momentum with the midrange students this time of the year, the graduates are receiving more complex language lessons. Currently, they are working on word families, answering guided questions after reading informative text, and developing imaginative

stories. Next month they will go deeper into the function of words and begin working on sentence analysis.

Until Next Month,
Mrs Wildhaber



Ms. Tinajero's Class

The three-hour uninterrupted work period is an important component of an authentic Montessori classroom. Montessori devoted her life to observing and serving the children, she observed endless hours to prove that the



uninterrupted work period is a benefit for the child and useful to the teacher.

This work period is essential because it gives the children the opportunity to make connections with the materials and it allows the child time to take in the information the material is giving her/him. It is also when the building of coordination, concentration, independence, and

order, and the assimilation of information is able to occur. The uninterrupted work period also gives the teacher time to observe the children and help in lesson planning. This work

period is similar to when an adult has a work assignment due and wishes to stay focused till their work is done.

Our morning Montessori work period begins at 8:15. Washing hands before working with the material is the first thing done upon entering the classroom. Lately, the children have been interested in the language and

the geographical areas. I have moved materials around and it has sparked a new interest in these areas. I have observed that when children are not given this time, they can come into the classroom somewhat distracted and unwilling. They are also aware that they have come in late because all of their classmates are already concentrating on their own work.

“When the time available is less than three hours, the child is unable to accomplish this feeling of satisfaction. Hence, it is

crucial that all Montessori schools respect the three hour uninterrupted work cycle knowing that it is the foundation for the child to achieve lengthened periods of concentration, discipline and normalization”.

Punum Bhatia, PhD,
“A Montessori Morning: The Three-hour uninterrupted work period”

In the classroom the children have really enjoyed our observation shelf. Since it's spring we were able to order some lady bugs and caterpillars. The

children talked extensively about how a ladybug starts as a larva then it turns into a pupa and finally turns into a ladybug. Some of my older children were able to do some activities that allowed them observe, draw, and write about their ladybug friends.

We also talked about how our caterpillars transformation into beautiful butterflies and also what they eat and how they turn into their chrysalis (pupa) then become butterflies. There was a lot of conversation every time there was a different phase with both ladybugs and butterflies. Finally we released them into the garden.



John F. Page Founder and Executive Director Meher Montessori School

When I first began my career as an AMI Montessori teacher in 1972, I was impressed by its the powerful approach to human development. The entire philosophy works to make children powerful, happy and self-sufficient members of a society.

However for me, there was a missing component: how to most effectively talk so children would listen and how to listen to them so they would talk on a deeper level. In other words, in our training there was no emotional component that was specific to communication.

Fortunately, our school was very close to where Dr. Thomas Gordon lived and originated Parents Effectiveness Training. I found out about P.E.T. and took the parent training course myself two times over a period of a couple of years. The change in my classroom was dramatic.

I later became a trainer of P.E.T. and conducted classes for parents many times at our Monterey Park school. And while I have no plans to offer the class again in the near future, I do encourage all our parents to learn effective communication skills. The P.E.T. philosophy is elucidated in the P.E.T. book, which has sold more than 4 million copies!

The following is from a recent blog post on the Gordon Training website (the company founded by Dr. Thomas Gordon):

At the very root of the Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) philosophy is a belief that children aren't bad or mischievous; they simply

behave in ways that satisfy their particular needs at the moment.

A baby cries because he is hungry; a four-year-old sticks her hands into a can of paint and spills it on the carpet because she wants to play with the paint, to explore; a sixteen-year-old comes home later than you feel is safe because he feels a need to be with his friends.

Children have the right to meet their needs, but parents do too. It is in meeting

these conflicting needs that most parent/child relationships get into trouble. Some parents insist on obedience from their children, so they get their needs met at the expense of the children meeting their own needs.

Other parents, wishing to spare their children any hurt and aggravation, give in and let their children get their way, but then the parents suffer. Either way someone is left feeling resentful of the other. It is this constant cycle of power struggles and the subsequent pent-up resentments that result that slowly begin to erode the parent/child relationship.

But it doesn't have to be that way. There is a third option: Both parents and

children can get their needs met.

Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) is made up of a very specific set of communication skills that enable parents to positively influence their children's behavior. When parents use the skills they really are amazed at the dramatic improvements in their families and in all their relationships.

P.E.T. was created by award-winning psychologist and a three-time Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, Dr. Thomas Gordon in 1962.

