

# MEHER MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

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

By Director Adela Muñoz

As 2023 comes to an end, I look back with a full heart of satisfaction and gratitude for the continuation of this beautiful community we call Meher Montessori Schools. Continuing the work of Dr. Maria Montessori by providing this real method of education to as many children as we can for so many years is something special and monumental. The staff and I thank you for your ongoing faith and trust in our work with your children. It means the world to us.

These have been very busy holiday months. It started with our Fall Fun Day, which was a day filled with a costume parade, a petting zoo and the first annual Meher pumpkin patch at the end of October. Our Thanksgiving lunch feasts in November and Parent Teacher Conferences, Toy Drive, Food Drive and Morning of Holiday Cheer are all happening this month. These are all wonderful times of bringing our community together in joy.

We also had a very successful Public Open House in November. Thank you to our families that recommended friends and family to come see our schools. We will be fortunate to have some new children and their families join us after the winter break. I'm sure you will all make them feel welcome and help parents through the initial school jitters that are a natural part of this new experience for them and their child.

Sometime after the New Year, we will be scheduling a morning coffee and talk with John Page, Founder and Executive Director of Meher Montessori Schools. It is a great way to learn more about Montessori education and the history of our schools.

I wish you all a safe and happy holiday and winter break. I look forward to what 2024 brings and to seeing all the good work in the classrooms that happens through the end of the school year. A reminder that for some of the children, especially the very young ones, the first days back after a two week break can be like starting school all over again. Please be assured that we will take good care of your little ones and help them adjust to the return with lots of patience and love.

**Wednesday,  
December 20**

**Morning of  
Holiday Cheer**

**Friday,  
December 22**

**School Closes at  
12:00**

**December 25-  
January 5**

**Winter Break**

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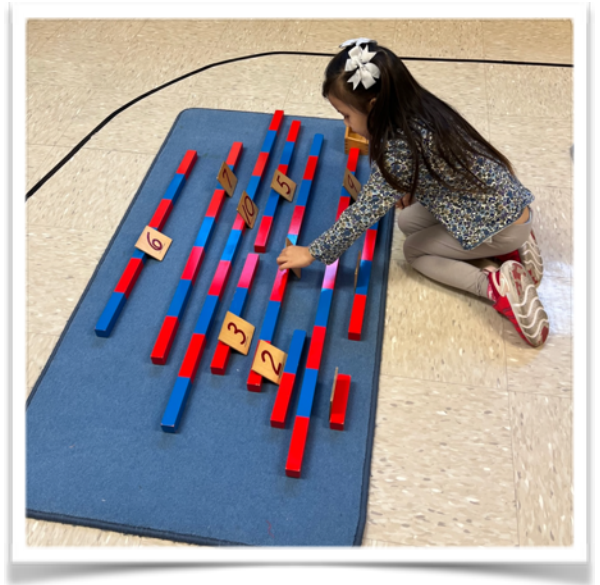


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## Mrs. Rivera's Class

Hello everyone. Our classroom is full of vibrant, energetic, smart and enthusiastic children who have adjusted well into their prepared environment. Our younger children love to explore and focus on materials from the practical life and sensorial areas. In these areas they develop their motor skills, critical thinking and memory to work on the materials safely, knowledgeably and successfully. Examples are: screw driver works, spooning and pouring beans, pouring water, tearing paper and cutting paper on the lines, painting, collage paper, punching paper on the line, polishing mirrors,



tracing cursive letters one at a time on the lined chalkboard, etc. These children are very busy working in their 3 hour uninterrupted period in the morning.

In the Math area they are focused on recognizing numbers from 1-10 and or 11-20 through lessons on the Ten and Teen Boards. After recognizing these numbers, they are inspired to write the numbers into the grid chalkboard in sequence. How their faces show gladness as they practice and see great results in their work. The older children (4.5-almost 6 yrs. old) are working on their reading and spelling, phonograms and puzzle words. Phonograms are combinations of letters that create unique sounds that may not match the phonetic expression of these letter combinations. For example, "ea" makes an "ee" sound; the child reads words like

"mean," "bean" and "lean". There is a list of more words of this sound that

the child practices before moving on to other phonogram words. Some children go further by creating their own words and sounding them out to me; they can go on and on and have fun learning it! Some children want to write them on their cursive line paper. A puzzle word on the other hand is a specific Montessori term for a word that can't be analyzed phonetically. For

this, basic "flash card" memorization (including the spelling) uses singular irregular words printed on individual cards. A few examples of these words are: is, I, at, me, he, to, for, she, you, her, and him. As the child reads a book, he or she pinpoints these words and learns the spelling thru the use of the moveable alphabet. The child may decide later to write them on cursive paper to fully memorize it. The children are improving in their cursive writing and are reading and spelling more. Most of them are able to write in small/regular spaces on their map papers.

There were two important holidays in November. Veterans Day and Thanksgiving gave us time to relax



Dec. 20 will be our Morning of Holiday Cheer! Come and have fun! Gift exchanges for the children in our class must arrive by Dec. 19th. and be worth no more than \$20. December is the month of sharing and giving so please help your child/children bring this value to life by supporting them to join in the above activities.

I am looking forward to the New Year and am always excited for what is ahead.

"What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future."  
Agnes M. Pahro

Mrs. Rivera

## Ms. Lopez' Class

Happy Holidays, Meher families! Our classroom has been celebrating the holiday season with fun activities. Our Fall Fun Day was enjoyed by the children and our Thanksgiving meal was delicious. Thank you parents for the tasty food sent in for our lunch. The children are busy creating punching work in the shapes of bells, snowmen, pine trees, candy canes, and gingerbread cookies. They are eagerly looking forward to the upcoming days. We also teach the children about holidays by reading books about Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa.

This month, we are celebrating the birthdays of Charlie, Benita, and Zayn. Happy Birthday to them!



The Primary classroom is designed to be an inviting space, which Dr. Montessori called "the prepared environment," filled with beautiful materials children are eager to work with.

and spend quality time with relatives and family members. In class we learned about these holidays by reading books. We are both thankful and also honor those that served our country. A list of what the children were thankful for was written on our chalkboard. Our Thanksgiving lunch was enjoyed by all. I would like to thank all our dear parents for their love, support, and most of all generosity to make our lunch fun and memorable. Dear parents, hugs and a round of applause to you all!

The children completed some projects related to Fall and Thanksgiving. They punched leaves and decorated them, and created their own turkey. These projects are displayed on the walls of the classroom and the staircase. They went home last month along with the classroom works placed inside a yellow folder. Thank you so much Ms. Mills for leading the children in their one-of-a-kind artwork! The children look forward every month to a fun art project!

To Ms. Guzman, thank you too for your untiring support and patience with all the children and helping to see that our classroom is neat and orderly. Ms. Tinajero's songs and her untiring energy keep the children moving and singing during group/circle time each day. From the lessons she gives in class to the wonderful stories read to the children, thank you so much.

Parent conferences are almost completed. If you were unable to schedule or make your conference please reach out so that your conference can be rescheduled.

These are the activities that will happen this month. The Food Drive and Toy Drive is from Dec. 11th-18th.





The children are encouraged to explore and make discoveries with these materials. Initially, a child is given a lesson on how to use a particular material and as they continue to work with it, they realize its amazing possibilities leading them to make exciting discoveries in the classroom.

Puzzle maps (geography maps) have become a favorite among the children. They are learning the names of countries and/or states while recognizing flags

from all over the world. One child was particularly excited by discovering that the flags they were learning about pertained to the puzzles they were working on, making the connection by themselves.



Our science cabinet contains baskets with beautiful items from nature for the children to study and observe up close. One basket is filled with rocks and minerals. A child observed them and looked them up in our rock and mineral book. The child then arranged

them in three columns of eight, discovering that  $8+8+8=24$ . Quoting Maria Montessori "Children display a universal love of mathematics, which is par excellence the science of precision, order, and intelligence."



Montessori strongly believes that it is important to avoid interrupting a child's concentration while working with materials meaningfully and purposefully. They should be allowed to work with the materials for as long as they wish, allowing them to explore and make beautiful discoveries independently. By providing them with this time and space, they can learn and grow in their own unique way.

A few reminders for the month of December.

1. Parent conferences are Dec. 6-15
2. School Shirt Day is Dec. 15
3. The school closes at 12:00 P.M Dec. 22
4. Winter break is Dec.25-Jan. 5th.

I hope you all have a wonderful Holiday Season and Happy New Year.

Warmly,  
Ms. Lopez



## Mr. Mindes' Class

Happy Holidays Meher Families! I hope your Thanksgiving break was filled with joy and gratitude. I am thankful that every morning I arrive at school there are happy and exuberant children filling my work space!

At the outset of school year, the Elementary class was presented with stories of our collective past - the Creation of the Universe, the Coming of Life, and the Black Strip to name a few. In a Montessori Elementary classroom, the study of History refers to a collective past, which starts with the creation of the universe and is followed by the rise and evolution of all living things - protozoa, plants, reptiles, amphibians, and, finally, Homo sapiens ...us! In history (actually all academic disciplines), we start with a big picture view, then narrow down into details.

Students have already begun to forge into some details from the past. Recently, I was so thrilled when a student, fascinated by squids, remembered a picture on

the Montessori Time Line of Life that was labeled - Giant Cephalopod, which look very similar to a squid. Unfurling the timeline, the student pointed, with great satisfaction, the image of a giant cephalopod, placed in the Ordovician period of the Paleozoic era. His enthusiasm led to an impromptu lesson on the geologic division of history into Periods and Eras.

In another bid to history, this time in mathematics, a student wanted to learn about the famous number (pi ... 3.14...) and Euler's number ('e'). In fact, the student declared with great exuberance that he wanted to "learn all the symbols in math!" Luckily, I happened to have on hand a lesson on pi, which explained the famous number in terms of its earliest beginnings - a ratio between the circumference and diameter of a circle. The lesson involved a compass, a string, a ruler, and scissors, and the student performed the lesson with great concentration.

Additionally as always, students were offered a slew of lessons and activities, which included adding fractions, adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers, division, quadrilaterals, parallel lines, right angles, identifying

verbs, adjectives, pronouns, botany lessons and other topics of interest. A significant amount of reading was done as well. Happily, I am starting to see our younger students read with more fluency, accuracy, and confidence.

I look forward to seeing everyone after the break during Parent-Teacher Conferences! Until then, I wish you all a most joyous and peaceful holiday!

Len Mindes





# Mrs. Wildhaber's Class

## Red Ribbon Week

In October, we had a hygiene drive tie-in with Red Ribbon Week. The church was very grateful for the wonderful donations. During Red Ribbon Week, we picked a focused topic to expand on during group each day. On Monday we talked about ways to keep our bodies healthy on the outside, like with soap, sunblock, chapstick, etc. This made the connection to hygiene drive items seamless for the rest of the week. On Tuesday, when we talked about fruits, I was so impressed with all the fruits they could come up with beyond the 12 provided in our fruit picture cards, that I made a new set of just the fruits they came up with. They were lime, lemon, avocado, mango, cherries, passion fruit, kiwi, dragonfruit, pear, clementines, lychees, and rambutans. I also took this opportunity to share that if we can see the seed, that identifies it as a fruit, which is why avocados made the list. And we also talked about stone fruit, fruit with the seed hidden inside a pit, like cherries and mangoes.

When discussing exercise and ways to move our bodies, I did the same thing. It was so interesting to hear what the children thought of when it came to exercises. Based on the children's contributions, I made cards for playing basketball, stretching, cycling, running, skipping, playing soccer, playing tennis, playing pickleball, scootering, swimming, walking, and playing football. My favorite part was selecting a football photo of New England Patriots Myles Bryant, a Meher alum!

## In the Classroom

The month of November kicked off with leaf study. I started by reading classroom books about leaves, and the children were really into it. They connected the fact that we have veins just like leaves and how both use veins to move vital nutrients through our bodies. The children also learned why leaves change color and fall in autumn: less sunlight. We also discussed that falling leaves can still provide nutrients through the soil on the ground.

The children were interested in continuing with leaf study, so we talked about the names of some different leaves and how they got their names. For instance, the smoke tree leaves got their name because, from a distance, the leaves look like curls of smoke around the tree. This was also an excellent opportunity to re-introduce the leaf cabinet and provide some scientific

leaf names to the children. The children enjoyed connecting some of the names to other information they already had, like how an ovate leaf is shaped like an oval and almost sounds the same. Some of the older children even took to tracing the leaf cabinet leaves, metal inset style, and making a booklet of them.

Speaking of connecting information learned in class to other areas, I would like to share a conversation I recently had with a student at lunch. The student, looking at my jalapeño said, "I know that peppers and bell peppers are different. Peppers are more curved, like rainbows, and bell peppers are shaped like quatrefoils." I could not make this stuff up if I tried! I attached a picture of our quatrefoil from metal inset for reference.



In November, we also spent the month celebrating our diverse cultures. Children were invited to bring a snack representative of their culture to share with their classmates. We had families bring food from 10 different countries! The children were so excited every time we marked a different country on our paper map to keep track of where all our classmates' roots came from. Many families also brought books or coloring pages to accompany the snack. Some even sent me a song or two to play for the children on the laptop. This naturally sparked a renewed interest in our geography materials and puzzle maps. Children were particularly interested in seeing the flags of the various countries.

While the month-long celebration is over, families should not feel that this is only limited to November. We welcome special snacks all year long. Every day is a good day to highlight a classmate's heritage. Just reach out to me beforehand to make arrangements.

One of the many beautiful things about a mixed-age classroom is the way the older children become leaders for the younger children. Well, the older children have really stepped up their game this year. In October, one decided to hold the hand of a two-year-old who struggled during line-up. Now, all of them have taken it upon themselves to hold the hands of a little one during line-up to help them know where to go. And when they are in group, they spread out so a little can sit between them for extra support. The little ones have all adapted to this new way and will look for a hand to hold or an open space between two older children to sit down. These small changes, initiated by the older children, have made transitions smoother in the classroom.

In September I added new handwork lessons to the classroom. In addition to sewing a button, I added sewing on card stock and weaving on cardboard. To make the weaving age-appropriate, I premake the warps in alternating colors, and the children do the wefts. I was not prepared for how successful it would be in the classroom! The children enjoy the challenge and push themselves to improve their weaving skills. Some have become so skilled that after the holiday break, I will show them how to do the warps themselves. If you have extra yarn, buttons, thread, fabric, or felt, please feel free to donate it to the school for our growing handwork section of the classroom. I hope to add new materials as the year progresses.

Alas, we did not attain 100% School Shirt participation in November to earn a December baking activity. This month's School Shirt day is on Friday, December 22nd, our half day. Let's finish out 2023 with 100% participation and come into 2024 ready to bake!!

Reminder: if your child receives a kindness postcard in the mail, they are welcome to bring it to school for me to read aloud to the class. The kindness cards always start with "it was kind of you to..." This allows the recipient to shine in the classroom while highlighting how kindness can look.

#### Altadena Library:

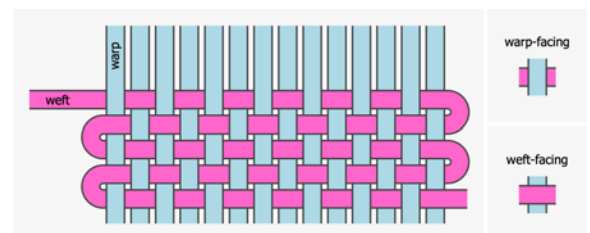
For those who don't know, the Altadena Library has a lot of free events for children and adults alike. I highly recommend subscribing to their newsletter for information on not only their events, but also other events in the Altadena area. <https://www.altadenalibrary.org/altadena/>

#### Mark your Calendars:

December 9th:	Altadena Tree Lighting Ceremony
Week of Dec. 11th:	Parent/Teacher Conferences
December 15th:	Toy Drive Ends
December 19th:	Walking Field Trip to Fire Station (Tentative)
December 20th:	(Voluntary) Winter Goodie Bags Due
December 21st:	Winter Marionettes Show
December 22nd:	School Closes at 12:00/School Shirt Day
Dec. 25th-Jan. 5th:	Closed for Winter Break

The staff at Meher hopes everyone is able to enjoy time with the loved ones over the holiday break. We look forward to seeing everyone again after the New Year.

Until 2024,  
Mrs. Wildhaber



*This vignette from Parent Effectiveness Training is a good reminder for parents to do some introspection if they find themselves often unaccepting of their child's behavior, or want their children to behave in a certain way so that people will think of them as good parents. I urge all parents to get the P.E.T. book, study it, and integrate the training into their parenting. I am a certified P.E.T. trainer and gave parenting classes for many years at Meher.*

*John F. Page, Founder and Executive Director*

# Do You Like Yourself As a Parent?

Date: December 4th, 2023 | BY [Dr. Thomas Gordon](#)

Studies show that a direct relationship exists between how accepting people are of others and how accepting they are of themselves. A person who accepts himself as a person is likely to feel a lot of acceptance for others. People who cannot tolerate a lot of things about themselves usually find it difficult to tolerate a lot in others.

If the honest answer indicates a lack of acceptance of himself as a person, that parent needs to reexamine his own life to find ways to become more fulfilled from his own achievements. Persons with high self-acceptance and self-regard are generally productive achievers who are using their own talents, who are

actualizing their own potential, who accomplish things, who are doers.

Parents who satisfy their own needs through independent productive effort not

***A parent needs to ask himself a penetrating question: “How much do I like who I am?”***

only accept themselves but also needn't seek gratification of their needs from the way their children behave. They don't need their children to turn out in a particular way. People with high self-esteem, resting on a firm foundation of their own independent achievement, are



more accepting of their children and the way they behave.

On the other hand, if a parent has few or no sources of satisfaction and self-esteem from his own life and must depend heavily on getting satisfaction from the way others evaluate his children, he is likely to be unaccepting of his children—especially those behaviors that he fears may make him look like a bad parent.

Relying upon this “indirect self-acceptance,” such a parent will need to have his children behave in certain specified ways. And he is more likely to be unaccepting of them and upset with them when they deviate from his blueprint.

Producing “good children”—high achievers in school, socially successful, competent in athletics, and so on—has become a status symbol for many parents. They “need” to be proud of their children; they need their children to behave in a way that will make them look like good parents to others. In a sense, many parents are using their children to bring them a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem. If a parent has no other source of self-worth and self-esteem, which is unhappily true of many parents whose lives are limited to raising “good” children, the stage is set for a dependency on children that makes the parent overanxious and severely needful that the children behave in particular ways.

