



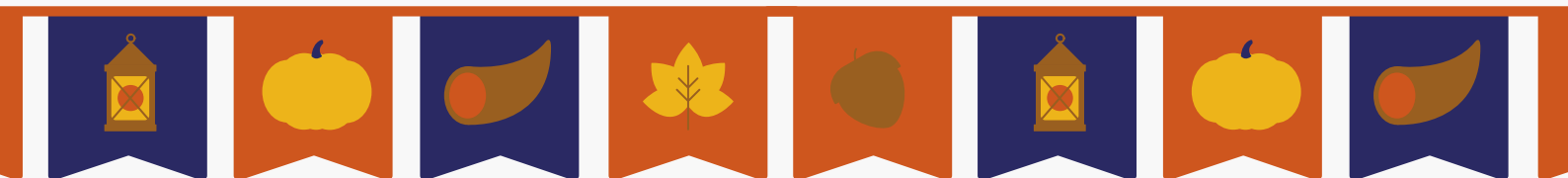
HMS

Monthly News

ARTICLES, TIPS, PHOTOS, & MORE!



November 2020



Montes(story) Time

Hello HMS Families!

This past Friday my daughter, Maddee, turned twenty. It's hard to believe how quickly time flies. As some of you know, Maddee is a fantastic baker and we task her with baking just about everything, but certainly, we could not have her make her own cake. When you are baking for a baker you need to get it right. So, this year I decided to look up some recipes online. I'm sure I'm not alone when I say it can be frustrating trying to get a recipe on the internet as every single recipe is embedded inside a blogpost, hidden within a long story, most often sprinkled with photos and ads, as well. It can be overwhelming. While I'm sure the blogger is a wonderful person, I'm not particularly in the mood to hear about their dog Gretchen's latest adventure to the park. What does Gretchen's game of fetch have to do with chocolate cheesecake?

Generally speaking, however, I do love a good story and in Montessori education, we have a ton of them. Stories can hook the imagination at any age, but they are especially intriguing during the elementary years. Not only is elementary the time when students can attend to several chapters in a read-aloud or dig into some books on their own, it's also a time when they can make greater connections to the world by using the power of their imagination. We often use storytelling to introduce a new concept. There are several classic Montessori stories that are told again and again, year after year. For example, in geometry there is a story about the Babylonians and stargazing. The story says that the Babylonians were quite interested in the location of the stars in the sky. They tracked a star for about a year- it was 360ish days- until it came full circle again. (360-full circle, interesting right?).

When learning to divide large numbers we tell the story of Ancient Roman foot soldiers. We use wooden colored pegs referred to as skittles. We tell a story where we need to distribute an amount of supplies equally amongst the soldiers.

Each skittle can represent a soldier when working with numbers 1-9, however, representing a large number such as 521 would take a lot of skittles. So the story goes on giving each colored skittle its own name and rank of the Roman army. Green skittles represent single foot soldiers. Blue skittles are decurions and represent ten people. Red skittles are the centurions that represent one hundred people just like the Centurions of the Ancient Roman army. Already division has become more interesting, right?



Imagine being nine years old and hearing the story told to you by your teacher connecting history, math, and imagination all while trying to figure out $521 \div 7$.

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Montes(story) Time, continued...

Stories don't have to be long either. They just have to be told well. They are great tools for the memory and help us associate things we know with new concepts. Each of the parts of speech in grammar have a symbol and a bit of a back story. We use a black triangle to symbolize nouns. We use the triangle as a representative of the pyramids and it is black to represent carbon. The pyramids are ancient buildings and carbon is a vital element. Nouns were most likely the first type of spoken word in history and in language development. And like carbon, they are extremely important. Each of the ten parts of speech in the English language have a different symbol and story in Montessori.



Children of all ages also love to hear stories about the lives of their teachers. We know that relationship building between the teacher and the students is vital for classroom success. Focusing on one situation or one moment in time with lots of detail and some humor can build a strong connection. And the relationship isn't the only benefit: listening to a well-told story can help students develop their literacy skills, such as attention to detail, comprehension, cadence, and fluency.

There are stories everywhere in the Montessori classroom. Stories that have been practiced and stories that have been improvised. Stories that are part of the curriculum and stories that come up organically in just the right moment. Everyday we are creating stories for the future at school and at home. When we look back on 2020, it is my sincere hope that we can find some stories to tell, some true gems from such a challenging time. As for me, I hope to recall the rich and tangy taste of that chocolate Irish cream cheesecake my family shared to celebrate our favorite twenty-year-old.

Warmly,
-Aimee



Aimee Allen
Head of School

Remote Learning: Demon or Demonized?

Carrie Butler

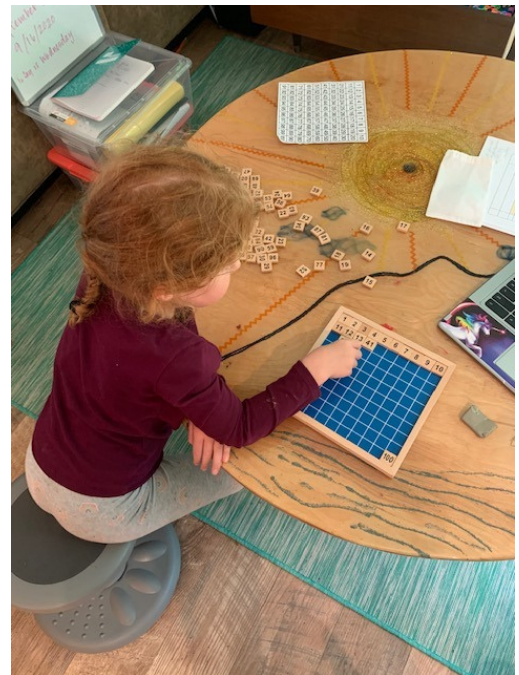
Remote teaching is new for most of us. We are apprehensive. We are concerned about our ability to organically build relationships with our students. Essence can be lost when virtually communicating. The teaching role shifts and we suddenly have seven or eight co-teachers: the parents. Our new co-teachers feel unsure of their responsibility. Are they doing it "right", are their children getting what they need? We all worry about our ability to capture the spontaneity of the classroom and freedom of choice when students are at home. We lament over lost opportunities for children to have numerous social interactions during a day. We hear a lot about remote learning as being the least preferred option. Society tells us that no one likes remote learning or remote teaching for that matter. Yet, at HMS, we see it differently...

We have seven families that make up our little cohort of lower elementary students. We started together this August with our shared experiences from last spring. Our community began the year as a group of families committed to helping their children learn. As a team we all had a desire to make it better than it had been before.

What we have at this point is a robust program filled with hands-on, experiential opportunities for these children. They have formed friendships with one another and look forward to spending time together online. The parents report having satisfaction in knowing more about how their children learn, the support they need specifically, and Montessori education generally. One parent reported:

"The HMS Remote Learning Program has gifted us, as parents, a richer understanding of our children's natural interests and learning styles. We understand Wren & Willow in a different way today than we did even 6 months ago. I couldn't have imagined all the good that would come from this experience; I feel a deeper connection to them as individuals and greater clarity about how to facilitate and encourage them as learners. Also born of this cooperative learning experience is a greater respect for what "The Montessori Ways" means for our children as they engage with their own education and contribute to our home and family. I'll be honest, before this level of exposure to lessons (specifically number and literacy work) I had an appreciation for what I perceived a Montessori education to be. Now, I really get it. I genuinely feel it's the best gift we could ever give our children, and as crazy as it sounds, I'm grateful we've had this time learning, bending and growing together as we all move through a lot of hard stuff."

-Amanda Howton



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The students are engaged and this looks different from on-site education. A lesson with the teacher is 30 minutes of uninterrupted one-on-one time. The rest of their work time they are being supported by their parents. They have fewer distractions and more quiet in which to do their work. This seems to allow them an opportunity to go deeper if they choose.

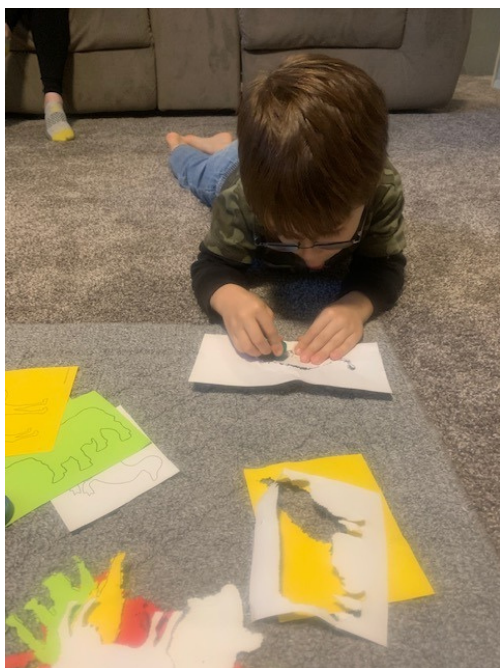
"The best part about being the remote program has been an opportunity to see truly how my child learns, there is such beauty in that, and also comes with hurdles. And of course the teachers. I am truly grateful for all you are doing to keep this "train" moving forward even when No one is truly sure where it's going. " -Judy Pagni

We began by building a website on Google Sites. This would act as a virtual classroom. Heidi Pavlu did a beautiful job building it so that it has "shelves" in each curriculum area. On the shelves are digital materials, information, books or videos, and any paperwork that the student might need to complete their work. This site operates as a central place to distribute class information, it is also the place where everyone can access the asynchronous weekly enrichment videos.

"The remote program has been a success for our family. The material has been picked to provide hands on Montessori learning at home, just like in the classroom! Social circles provide interaction between class friends and usually include a game to promote fun. The lack of classroom distractions has provided a great academic boost for our children, and they feel more accomplished academically this year than in the classroom in previous years. One of the reasons for selecting remote learning over in class or hybrid, was to have as little disruption during the year as possible to their academics. We have been pleased with our decision and appreciate HMS for their careful planning and preparing of their remote learning model. When one of my children would love school like this for years to come, something must be working very well!" -Heidi Pavlu



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We use Google Classroom to assign daily work. It allows the work to be assigned individually or for the whole class. When the child completes their work the parents take a picture and upload it, then I can review it and comment or ask for corrections. The assignments range in activities and it is my intention to make as many as possible hands-on and experiential. We try to keep the children off the screen as much as we can.

"Hands on lessons with supplies provided in their totes keeps learning fun and engaging. The kids are not tethered to a screen." -Natalia Harris

Lastly, we use Zoom to join together. Every morning we gather for half hour meetings. At their conclusion, the cameras are on as we do our work. This seems to help create a classroom- like feel and one in which if questions come up or anyone needs help I can easily be reached. In the meantime, I am giving one on one lessons in breakouts to the children. We also use Zoom for our interactive social time 3 times a week. These are 30-60 minutes chunks of time that the children can decide what they want to do. We started out offering activities, but it soon grew into a time to just hang out. They wanted to read to each other, they play, they talk, they play Pokemon.

"We are truly grateful that he has a set routine. Nelson has made amazing friends that he is excited to see everyday." -Natalia Harris

This Month's Staff Contributor:
Carrie Butler
Lower Elementary Teacher





Thank You,
HMS community!



Thank you!!!

We are so grateful to ALL of our generous donors for making this year's Annual Fund so successful!



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Anne Shaffer & Jeffrey Tuma



Board Corner

Dear Harbor Montessori Families,

Thank you so much for your generosity during the Annual Fund Campaign. We are grateful and inspired by this community. Did you know that 20% of the donations we received this year came from grandparents, alumni, or other outside friends of the school? We enjoy hearing from those members of our community who also recognize the positive impact that a Montessori education makes on the lives of our children. In total, this year we received 161 donations to the Annual Fund and raised over **\$56,000**. Our Board participation was 100%, parent participation 92%, and staff participation 90%. I'd say this is a community truly dedicated to HMS!

And speaking of dedication, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank Callie Crumpacker for her service on the HMS Board of Trustees. Callie started on the board in 2018. Callie also served on our Facilities Committee playing an important role in our school renovations and the building of our ADA accessible ramp last year. We will miss having her strong and compassionate voice on our Board. Thank you for everything, Callie!

On behalf of the entire board, I am very excited to welcome Danielle Cole Pasquale as our newest Trustee. Danielle is a current HMS mom and has been part of our school community since she and her family moved to the area three years ago. We are honored to have Danielle in our midst and look forward to working with her.



Julie Thorn
Board Chair