



The Leaflette

Tree of Life Montessori
Charter School

June 2010

Summer Break and Work

By Celeste Beck, Guide/Principal

For school staff, summer is the time for a break from our regular schedule, a time for renewal, and a time for planning. Some of us are taking workshops, and some of us are giving workshops, classes, camps, and other teaching/guiding experiences.

In preparing for next year, staff have already moved most of the furniture and materials from one classroom to another. I've been going through our storage to gather materials for the new class and to remove materials we no longer need. New materials are

being ordered, and math and social studies materials are being laminated, cut out, and arranged. Furniture also has to be ordered. I've also been working on the drip irrigation system so plants continue to be watered over the summer. This week we have been interviewing applicants for assistant positions. So, we have been very busy with preparation for next school year already.

How can you help? As part of this school community, we count on our family volunteers for maintenance repairs, cleaning, regular yardwork, and computer tech work.

We hope you can help us out during the last part of July as we are doing our final preparations for the next school year. Please call or email if you can:

- Patch roof in senior elementary before the rains begin again!
- Repaint older doors
- Repaint ramps with textured/no-slip
- Repaint picnic tables
- Rearrange computer set ups in classrooms
- Mow lawn over summer
- Fix timer connection to lawn sprinklers
- Organize garden shed
- Move furniture
- Clean classrooms

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Calendar

- July 17th?—Possible Rummage Sale
- August 14th—Work Day at school starting at 8 AM
- August 16-18—Family Conferences with Guides
- August 19—First Day of School Fall Semester 2010

Parent Council News

By Elaine Grothe, Parent Board Representative

Hello Tree of Life Parents! I hope you are enjoying your summer.

We would like to have a rummage sale in July, and would like your input on location and date. We have the choice of either July 17th or July 31st, and would like to do it at either Alex Thomas Plaza, or the school. **Please contact Elaine at 463-2792** in the next couple days with other ideas or suggestions.

Also, there were only a few Parent Surveys returned, so please fill yours out and e-mail or

snail mail (see address on last page of this newsletter) them to Rhonda as soon as possible.

We are also having a workday on Saturday August 14th to do yardwork and maintenance so the school will be ready to open on Thursday August 19th. Workday will begin at 8am.

Enjoy your summer!

Rummage Sale

The staff is going through our storage to cull out items we aren't really using and organize our supplies better. We would like to combine these treasures with your treasures from home to have a rummage sale to benefit the school. We will need people to work at the sale, transport items to and from the sale, and to price items. If you have experience doing this, we could really use your help. See Elaine's article to the left, and please contact her.



Ch...ch...ch...changes!

By Anthony Melville, Guide

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer weather that has finally arrived. However, before you know it "woosh" it will be fall again and school will be starting. That is why summer is not just a rejuvenating break for teachers but a time to make plans and prepare for the coming year. That is why many of the staff at TOL have already begun prepping for August. Celeste, Christopher and myself have spent a great many hours calculating what materials and essentials we need to purchase for the new primary class as well as moving shelves and shuffling furniture from classroom to classroom.

As you might have guessed there are still a great many more things to do! If you would like to help with

moving and cleaning the new classroom (and cleaning out the multipurpose room for the new Junior Elementary class) please let Rhonda know by calling the office and leaving a message, or emailing the school.

I will be at the school a few days in July in order to get everything ready by the start of the year and would welcome any assistance anyone is willing to give. Meanwhile, stay cool and remember that learning doesn't just take place when school is in session. Make summer extraordinary with your own new discoveries and share them with us when we return to school.

Junior Elementary News

By Stacy Strauss, Guide

It is officially summertime! Since I missed the last week of school and conferences, I want to let you know that if you have any questions about the end of the year conferences don't hesitate to call me. My number is 467-9036. I will be in and out of the classroom this summer while I am settling in to a routine with our new baby Freedom. For those of you who don't know, our classroom is moving into the multipurpose room. There is a lot to be done to make this happen. Thank you to Christopher and Tony who moved most everything into the room. Now there is much organizing and cleaning to be done. Anyone who wants to get a head start on next year's parent volunteer hours, please call me to set up a day

I can meet you there.

I am excited about the new school year and all of the changes it brings. I will be working the first half of each day while Barbara Lee will be working the last half of each day. Moving into the new classroom will give Barbara Lee and me a chance to really collaborate and make our new classroom even better than our previous one. The new classroom has a lot of carpet, which will be a challenge to clean. We will need a new vacuum. If you are interested in donating one, please let me know.

Have a great summer! I look forward to seeing everyone soon!

Endings and New Beginnings

By Christopher Melville, Guide

First of all, thank you, thank you, thank you, to all the parents and adults involved in the Dark Star class for making this year so beautiful. It is a wonderful class. These children have attained this level of mastery because of the "loving and intelligent defense" (Maria Montessori) given to them by you.

We completed our last full unit, in May, discussing life in various parts of Africa bringing the Biomes works back to much excitement. Our unit on Africa has been insightful and formative as we worked cooperatively on making an Africa political map, county by country. We read the book, [Africa is Not a Country](#), discovering just how varied life is in this amazing continent.

We also had our final field

trip this last month, camping at Lake Mendocino at the Ky-en Campground as the Bushay was closed due to budget cuts. We had a wonderful time hiking, studying plants and animals, writing, singing, and just plain hanging out, something many of our children are getting less and less time to do. We cooked meals on open flames, told stories, and the students prepared a nutritious and delicious breakfast for the whole class. Once again, a huge thank you to all the parents, grandparents, and friends, who helped to make this fieldtrip so smooth and stress free.

Next year will bring us some new branches at Tree of Life. With the development of the second Primary Class, the students

will have a much broader group of age mates at the school, as well as more opportunities for collaboration. Some students from the Dark Star Class will remain in the original Primary with me, and others will be taking on the challenge and excitement of building a new class community in the new Primary with Anthony. While I will certainly miss those pioneers who are heading to the new Primary, I am also excited to see them create something new and look forward to helping them to realize their dreams in new ways.

This month I asked my brother Nicko to donate his time and expertise as a physicist one morning and come do a liquid nitrogen demonstration: freezing flowers, balloons, and rubber

balls, and shattering them like glass. A huge group of students from all three classes gathered in my room to see more of the experiment, skipping their recess to do so.

"This is amazing," someone whispered.

"I have never seen anything like this!" someone exclaimed.

"Me neither," someone replied.

There is no age limit on wonder!



Science Summer Fun

Helpful Tools, Tips, and Projects for Parents

FamilyScienceQuest Features Fun Science Experiments For Families

Last month, Boehringer Ingelheim launched a new YouTube channel called FamilyScienceQuest. Families nationwide can take advantage of the information presented on this dedicated YouTube channel, featuring simple, fun science experiments that parents can conduct at home with their children—such as making colors explode in a puddle of milk, creating sidewalk chalk, and making a cloud. To access the video tutorials, visit this [YouTube page](#).

National Wildlife Federation's "Be Out There" Newsletter

As part of the National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) "Be Out There" campaign to reconnect children to the natural world, NWF is offering a free newsletter that includes articles, initiatives, and resources for parents and teachers. To learn more about the campaign or to subscribe to the

newsletter, visit the [NWF website](#).

Science: It's a Girl Thing!

Science: It's a Girl Thing! is using the power of social media to connect with parents and educators about how to foster girls' interest in science and technology, and why that is important. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the program offers web-based and easy-to-use resources for conducting science activities at home. It builds on everyday science that parents already know. Just as children are natural scientists, parents are natural teachers. Science: It's a Girl Thing! includes a series of short, entertaining, and educational videos and free downloadable PDF activity cards for parents to use in working with their daughters. The hub of this project is a [Facebook page](#).

Senior Elementary News

By Celeste Beck, Guide

Yes, I'm already planning for next school year! Our reservations for the Fort Ross Living History Program have been set, and we will be going November 4-5. This will be a wonderful experience, and we will need a lot of help from parents and guardians who head up the various work groups at the Fort: gardeners, cooks, artisans, hunters, and militia.

For some of the other field trips I have in mind, it helps if we make reservations in August, otherwise we have limited options as to dates. If you are strongly for or against any of the possibilities listed below, please email me at celestebeck@pacific.net so I know your preferences. Some of these trips are long distances, and in the past we have sometimes done two of them together with an overnight at a hostel.

- Ano Nuevo to see the elephant seals (Dec., Jan)
- Sacramento—State Capitol, Sutter's Fort, Indian Museum

- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Egyptian Museum in San Jose

If you have other ideas, please let me know. Sometimes there are places we go only during certain years to coincide with our curriculum.

In the next newsletter, I'll include a list of supply items that students should have by the first day of school. Generally, they are the same as last year.

During the next few weeks, I will be away on a couple trips. But starting July 14th, I'll be very busy with getting our classroom ready, as well as revising the Family Handbooks and other documents.

And, finally, thank you again to all of the parents, guardians, grandparents, and others who helped our school and our class last year. Thank you to our bridging students, who helped our class through their leadership and role modeling!

Math Fun

Keeping up math skills over the summer can be fun. Here are some ideas for activities you can do together as a family.

- Math card games that involve addition, such as "21", gin rummy, etc.

- Cooking following a recipe using fractions (even better—halving or doubling a recipe)
- Practice making change with a pretend store
- Beanbag matrix: draw a large chalk grid on a paved area that is 5 by 5 or 10 by 10. Mark the numbers along the

top and down the left side. Take turns tossing a beanbag or marker into the grid—where it lands is the equation to solve...for example if it lands on the axis point between 2 and 5, solve $2 + 5$ or 2×5 . Write the answer in.

- Slam-dunk: Player 1

stands 10 ft. from basket and another player calls out an equation (you can use flashcards if you want). Player 1 calculates the answer silently, bounces the ball that number of times while walking to the basket, calls out the answer and shoots.



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Education for Life!

“Like parents everywhere, we care about our children, want what’s best for them, and know that their experience in school can have a great impact on the quality of their life. We want them to have an education that is worthy of their beauty and potential. We want them in a place where they are known, not as faces in a crowd, but individually and personally. We want them in a school where they receive direct, high-quality attention, where their actual needs are met, where their potential is being realized.”

Office News and Reminders

By Celeste Beck, Lead Teacher/Principal

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS:
Celeste and Rhonda will be away on vacation trips until July 14th. After that date, it will be easier to contact us for information, as we will be at school several times a week to check messages and take care of business.

ONGOING FUNDRAISING:
Please remember to continue to save used printer cartridges and old cell phones for recycling at school. We recently received a shipment of colored construction paper using our points!

We also collect Box Tops for Education.

We earn significant funds from those of you who have signed on to Escrip and use your Safeway cards and registered credit cards for purchases at various venues. We also appreciate all of you who

continue to use your Raley’s Q card when shopping there. Raley’s Q cards and Escrip can be accessed online at raleys.com and escrip.com

This year we would also like to start collecting recyclable cans and bottles for fundraising. Let us know if you’re interested in organizing this project.

CONFERENCES:

Rhonda will be calling families in late July or early August to set up conferences with their Guides. These meetings help the Guide and family know what the student’s learning goals are. It is imperative that the student attend the conference—we can’t do it without him/her. For new families, the meeting is a great time to ask any unanswered questions.

Family Surveys

Our annual Family Survey was sent out in May. It is very important to us that you complete the survey and email, snail mail, or bring it in to us. The Board and Staff use your comments to help make improvements to our school. In addition, this survey is one of the assessments we do, and we must report the results to our School District as part of our annual report.

Unfortunately, only a few people turned in their surveys this year. You can help us make our report more accurate and give further feedback to the Board and Staff by completing your survey and sending it in.

Thank you for your help!

Introduction from BarbaraLee

I am very excited to be co-teaching the Junior Elementary class with Stacy for next year. I first became interested in Tree of Life when my two children attended many years ago. They attended a preschool where I obtained training in Montessori, but when we moved here and their dad died, I decided to become a single subject teacher in science. I am currently getting my multiple-subject credential, and will be studying next year to get my Montessori credential.

I love music and play piano and guitar. And I love games and swimming. I look forward to some fun outings next year and working with all the returning students, as well as the new ones. In my experience as a teacher and parent, I feel that this age group is one of the most fun to work with because the children are so open to learning new things.

Calendar and School Hours Changes

Please note that school begins on Thursday, August 19th. During the three days prior, Guides (Montessori teachers) will be meeting with families. Our school year is very similar to Ukiah Unified’s, but there are a few small changes.

Next year, school will begin at 8:30 AM but will end most days at 3:15 PM instead of 3:30 PM. Wednesdays will continue to have early dismissal to facilitate staff meetings, but the dismissal time will change to 2:45 PM.

Montessori Quote

“A child’s inner life is nourished by an environment warm with love.”