

August 2017

The Leaflette

Tree of Life Charter School

Public Montessori Education



Community Rocks! Join In!

by Celeste Beck, Principal

Tree of Life's community began as a non-profit organization, The Beginning Project, founded in 1999 as a network and resource to support parents in doing the best for their children. Its main activity is Tree of Life Charter School, which provides education for the children, their parents, and the staff as a community of life-long learners.

It's important to take time to consider the priorities in our lives, and certainly our children are high on that

list. How do we show them that they matter and we care about them in ways that are really meaningful? Do we make time in our busy schedules to bond with them, to play with them, and to read and work with them? Do we eat meals without electronic devices and have real conversations?

This year we'll be focusing our parenting education discussion in Parent Council meetings, as well as in resources for you to read, about quality connections

with our children. School community projects and activities are a great way to do this! Not only do they show children that school and learning are important enough that you show up for activities and help, but it helps create a community of friends who help support one another. Real social interaction, not through electronic devices, is an important element of human development, no matter the age of the individual.

So come and join in our fun and activities this year and be a real part of our Tree of Life community!

Parent Council News

Parent Council is the school's parent/guardian body composed of every parent/guardian at Tree of Life. As a charter school, parents/guardians have an even more important role to play than in a traditional school, because charters are founded and run by a community of parents, staff, students, and governing board members. Our founding members in 2000 did the bulk of the work to get us started, and now it is your turn to keep us going.

Please take time to carefully consider your role on campus this school year.

• Each classroom asks that

2 of its parents volunteer to be **Class Parents**. Main functions of Class Parents are to manage parent volunteers for field trips, fundraisers, working in class. We ask for 2 parent volunteers to avoid burn-out and unnecessary stress. No experience necessary.

• Parent Council functions with 2 **Parent Representatives**. It is a 2-yr position that staggers so one year you assist, and the next year you lead. Autumn is retiring as Parent Council Rep and Shawn will remain to be the lead Parent Rep. Main function of Parent Rep is to run the Parent

Council meetings, to attend the Board Cabinet meetings, and to write a newsletter article monthly. Election in September. No experience necessary.

- We have a few committees that you can join such as the **Garden Committee, Site Committee** and **Fundraising Committee**. No experience necessary.

Don't forget: You are a needed and important member of the Parent Council simply by having a child enrolled at Tree of Life. We have a 1.5hr meeting 5X per year. We will have your chair waiting for you at every meeting!

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Brief Reminders:

—Volunteers needed to help get classrooms and yard ready: put up yard fence; help set up classrooms; yardwork, garden boxes, drip irrigation set up, etc.; call school at 462-0913

—August 10: Board Cabinet Meeting 4:30 PM

—August 15-17: Family Orientation Conferences

—August 21: First Day of 2017-18 School Year and Solar Eclipse Viewing Activities

—August 23: Class Orientation Meeting for Molly's class, Primary, 6 PM; Tony's class, Jr. El. 1, 7 PM

—August 24: Class Orientation Meeting for Stacy's class, Jr. El. 2, 6 PM; for Angela's & Betsy's class, Sr. El., 7 PM

—September 4: Labor Day Holiday, no school

—September 7: Board Cabinet Mtg, 4:30 PM

—September 14: Back-to-School BBQ at Redwood Valley Lion's Park, 5:30-7:30 PM

Primary Class News & Supply List

By Molly Johnson, Guide



Hello, I am Molly Johnson, your Montessori Guide (as some of you know because you will be returning as elders

and others know because they visited our class last year). I grew up in Fort Bragg, mostly lived in California and Colorado, have attended a myriad of colleges because I love to learn. I have a California Clear teaching credential from Dominican University and Montessori training from Montessori World Education Institute. My daughter, Emily, attends Ukiah High. We both had a lot of adventures this summer and hope you had a great summer too! I can't wait to see you again, and to meet the new students that did not make it in last year!

Parents & Guardians, usually we have a list of supplies we ask parents to donate each year, which the students share all year, including facial tissue, crayons, pencils, paints, paper, and other supplies. For storage purposes, and because I can buy better quality products in bulk for less money, this time I am asking families to donate \$35 (or more if you are able; less if you are not able) for the years' supplies.

The only supplies your child will need to bring to school the first day are:

—a lunch box that closes tightly so ants cannot smell the goodies, labeled with student's name; in the lunch box students need:

—a cloth napkin
—a placemat (needs to fold and fit in lunchbox...could be a second cloth napkin; to make it easy on yourself you might want to have 10 napkins so you have a set of 2 for each day of the week)

—healthy food in reusable containers that your child can easily open and that don't leak

—a water bottle that doesn't leak,

labeled with student's name
—a bottle of sunscreen that stays at school with student's name clearly marked in Sharpie (we spend a lot of time outside)

—hat or cap with brim that stays at school for outdoor sun protection, labeled with student's name

—skid-proof indoor shoes that your child is able to put on and take off; these shoes stay at school so we can have clean shoes inside to keep our floor clean—important because most students choose to work on the floor with mats

*Be one of the brilliant people who takes the next advice to heart and saves LOTS of money and time...ready? Put your child's name on all above items, as well as on jackets, sweaters, long-sleeved shirts, hats. Children take off the layers and tend to leave them on the ground! We donate at least a thousand dollars of clothing yearly because children and parents do not collect their clothes from Lost & Found, and if there is not a name on it, we cannot return it to the proper owner.

Lastly, each child needs a big zip-lock bag with a change of clothes on the first day. We do lots of fun, messy, sometimes very wet projects at school. Students need a full set of clothes...shirt, undies, socks, pants in the bag with student's name on everything. This stays in their cubby all year. If we use the clean clothes, the soiled ones will be sent home in the bag, and we will need a new change THE NEXT DAY.

I am so excited about this year! Parents, join in the fun. Your children will only be this little once! They grow up so quickly! Come volunteer to listen to our emerging readers, work at our fundraisers, join a committee to make our school even more wonderful, connect with other families for playdates, drive on outings. There is actually a law that allows parents to take time off work for school events.

Thanks to Dawn, Jade's mom, for starting to book outings since June.

We are all here to work as a team—we are part of the village for your child, so always feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or with projects and ideas you would like to share with our class.

We look forward to seeing you soon! **Our class orientation meeting is Wednesday, August 23rd at 6 PM.** Happy Summer!

Community Work Days Coming Up

First of all, a big THANK YOU to the crew that has been building our new pergola funded by our Roots & Shoots auction last spring! Here is a sneak peek so far:



Our sprinkler pipes broke over the summer, but Joe has repaired them. So next up is to get our yard in shape! We have to wait until Fair is over, so we're planning volunteer work days for **August 12-13** with a 2nd chance on **August 19th**. If a week day works better for you, please call Celeste and she can set you up for a job during the week.

Volunteer jobs —email Celeste at celestebeck@pacific.net to sign up for a specific job:

- reinstalling the big yard fence after Fair is over
 - weeding, pruning, cutting out brambles, etc.
 - painting bookshelves, cabinets, touch-up painting
 - lining garden boxes with landscape cloth
 - preparing labyrinth area
 - moving peace steps to pond
 - fixing window screens
 - general sprucing up
- What do YOU see that needs work?

Jr. Elementary 1 News & Supply List

by Anthony Esserman Melville Guide



Hello, my name is Anthony (Tony) Esserman Melville and I am the Guide (teacher) of the Junior Elementary 1 class. I have been

teaching with the Tree of Life Montessori Charter School community for 13 years. Before that I worked in various Montessori schools for the majority of my adult life. I graduated from Melville Montessori School in Willits CA and went on to get my BA in Music Education from Sonoma State University. Since that time I have received a California Clear Credential, California Single Subject credentials in Music and Science, as well as both a Montessori Primary (3-6) and Lower Elementary (6-9) Credential. I enjoy playing music and singing with others, learning about new discoveries, doing science experiments, playing and coaching soccer, developing games, engaging in comedy improve, acting, LARPing, building and baking as well as camping, hiking, and kayaking with my family and friends. I have two sons; Ira (previously Ethan) graduated 1st in his class from Ukiah High School and is attending UC Irvine as a sophomore pursuing a degree in physics as an honors student. My youngest son, Pele, attends school here at TOL and will be in the Junior Elementary 2 class. My wife Sara is also an accomplished teacher who currently teaches students with disabilities at Mendocino College and is a supplemental special education teacher here in our TOL community.

Hello to all students and families of the Jr. Elementary 1 class. Yes I know, this may seem strange at first for former students that our room is

no longer Junior Elementary 3 but Junior Elementary 1. We changed the name to 1 since we will only have 2 Junior Elementary classes this year. To my returning students, I hope you have been reading regularly, writing letters to friends, playing strategic games, and finding many ways to engage your minds outside the classroom. I look forward to seeing you again in the classroom and continuing our adventure in this wondrous journey we call school. Something you should know about our class is that we are all friends. We take care of one another and help each other learn. We have 3 rules that we base our procedures on:

1. Take Care of the Things
2. Take Care of the People
3. Make it Work

With these rules we learn how to operate our classroom and create an environment where everyone can challenge themselves as well as enjoy learning. This year's focus is on the Timeline of Life as well as the history and biomes of Europe and Africa. If you or your family have things or experiences they would like to share about either of these subjects, please let me know and I will be sure to schedule in these activities in our calendar. There is much more to talk about and discuss in our initial conference. **Our class orientation meeting is Wednesday, August 23rd at 7 PM in the Junior Elementary 1 room.** It is very important that you *and* your child attend the orientation meeting and the conferences; your child's wellbeing and success will depend on it, so mark them on your calendar. By the way, the first day of school we will be experiencing a solar eclipse! Our school has made preparations to observe the phenomenon with the whole student body and has planned activities and lessons around this rare event. Get ready for the best first day back in school EVER!

Until then, I hope this suggested list

of materials will help prepare you for the beginning of the school year. **Remember returning students: You should have a lot of these materials from last year. You can always reuse them and bring them back to school.**

ITEMS **WITH** YOUR NAME WRITTEN ON THEM:

1. One Primary Journal for writing in as your Work Journal
2. One Graph paper journal to use as your Geometry and Math Journal (Do you still have yours from last year?)
3. Two lined paper Journals to use as your Cultural Journal and Language Journal (you can also use the ones from last year...)
4. Four Folders with 3 folding clasps for holding binder paper for your record keeping (you won't need them if you still have yours from last year)
5. One pair of scissors
6. One blank sketchbook **or** blank set of papers in a file folder.
7. One ruler (with centimeters and inches)
8. One Compass (for drawing circles not for finding north)
9. Two small hand held pencil sharpeners (no electric sharpeners)
10. One Small Pencil box
11. One Large Eraser (for wonderfully big mistakes we all make eventually)
12. One lunch container
13. One placemat
14. One change of clothes in a zip lock plastic bag (to stay at school)
15. One pair of inside slippers or shoes (to stay at school)
16. One backpack (to bring each day)
17. One reusable water bottle (to bring each day)
18. One hat with a brim
19. One Pair of Closed Toed Shoes each day
20. One set of at least 12 colored pencils
21. 24 regular #2 pencils

Items without names

22. One box of Tissues
23. One cloth washcloth

Jr. Elementary 2 News & Supply List

by Stacy Strauss Guide



My name is Stacy Strauss and I am the Guide for the Junior Elementary 2 classroom. I have been teaching at Tree of Life since August

2000 when we opened the school in its current location. I have seen many changes and improvements in our small, close knit school and am grateful to still be a part of it. I graduated from Kansas State University (my home state) with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics in 1993. After teaching for two years at an outdoor science camp in Portland, OR, I discovered the Montessori Method and began my primary training at the Montessori Institute Northwest. I graduated with my primary AMI certificate in 1998 and also received a Master's in Montessori Education from Loyola University in 1999. I taught for two years at a Montessori Primary school in Cotati before I was hired at Tree of Life and moved to Ukiah. I received my California teaching credential a few years later. Now, 17 years later, I have a husband (Andy), two step-children (Raleigh and Jericho), two boys (Silas and Freedom), and two recently adopted dogs (Kelsey and Charlie) to keep me on my toes! I also enjoy vegetable gardening, crafts with my boys, board games, swimming at the river, roller coasters, traveling with my family, live music, cooking, and giving as much love as I can to those around me. I aspire to constantly improve my teaching practice and parenting, finally paint my house, get back to my yoga practice, and slow down my everyday movements.

We have a very exciting first day of school because we will be experiencing a celestial event! I am sure you all have been hearing about the solar eclipse of

2017! This is when the Moon will come between the Earth and Sun blocking the light. Here, in Ukiah, we are not in the path of totality, but we will have about an 80% eclipse. It is special because the U.S has not seen a total eclipse since 1979. The next total eclipse across California will be 2045. Of course, we will be viewing this celestial event using special sunglasses and pinhole projectors that we will make. I want to encourage parents to do the same wherever you are that day, so you can share this event with your children (please do NOT look directly into the sun without special eclipse viewing sunglasses or using a projector). This is the perfect segue into the First Great Lesson on the following day!

I am so excited to see all the returning students and welcome the students who are just entering the second plane of development. These new students are leaving the Sensorial Period of the first plane of development (age 0-6) and beginning the Intellectual Period (age 6-12). It is always exciting for me to welcome these "newbies" as they are an integral part of our classroom! We are going to learn SO much and answer all the questions that you have about this amazing world we live in! This is just the beginning for you and your intellectual journey. For my returning students, I am so excited to have you back to be role models, peacemakers, and teachers!

Please put on your calendar our Junior Elementary 2 class orientation meeting on Thursday, August 24th at 6 PM.

Please bring to your conference during the week of August 14-18 or on the first day of school these items with no name written on it for donation for classroom use and items with name written on it

for personal use:

Items with NO NAMES written on them:

- *a big box of Ticonderoga #2 pencils (only Ticonderoga please!)
- *pencil top erasers (these are important because the eraser always is used up before the pencil tip is!)
- *2 or 3 Pink Pearl erasers (to erase the wonderful, important errors that we make!)
- *a box of tissues

Items with names written on them:

- a set of colored pencils with name written on each pencil
- a good quality pencil sharpener
- a pencil box
- a drawing pad
- inside slippers/shoes with nonslip soles
- an extra set of clothes in a clear, ziplock bag
- a hat with a brim
- a reusable water bottle (to stay at school) We have a Brita filter to refill it
- a reusable lunch box (to be taken home each day)
- a cloth napkin and placemat to leave at school
- a backpack to bring each day
- a pair of closed toed shoes to wear each day

Student Support

Sara Esserman Melville, Supplemental Special Education Teacher



I earned my my MA in Education with an emphasis in Special Education from Sonoma State, where I also earned Special Education credentials. Additionally, I have my Primary Montessori

credentials.

I have been involved with TOL for twelve years. I teach Academics for Adults with Disabilities at Mendocino College as well as being the Special Education teacher on the Ukiah campus of the CCC. I have been working at TOL three days a week and will continue my position this year.

Sr. Elementary News & Supply List

by Angela Reglin, Guide



A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. So, as I find myself in the middle of my story journey

through life, who I am will change, and I am not sure as to who I will become. For now, I am a mother of three energetic boys, a wife, and a Montessori teacher.

California has offered a new sense of home, a new beginning, but I have not forgotten where my roots were sown. Summer lent time for me to return to the old stomping ground in Wisconsin where I attended my first rodeo, experienced plenty of thunderstorms, and kindled long-time friendships.

Fishing and swimming in the local rivers and creeks have become our family's favorite outdoor pastimes. From the Redwoods to the tide pools, we have enjoyed our explorations.

Welcome! Summer warmth, sand between your toes, and hopefully some lazy mornings lent to relaxing days. It's a fresh new beginning to a brand new school year. The tide shifts from summer nostalgia to a more structured day, but exciting nonetheless!

The first day of school lends a unique experience of safely viewing an eclipse...it is such lived experiences that lead to inspiration and curiosity. Within the first week we will use that experience to dive into the First Great Lesson. As part of the integrated studies experience, students will explore astronomy and physics, learn the art and structure of essay writing, and begin to soar in their independent quest of learning. Maria Montessori said, "Free the child's potential and you will transform him into the world." For stu-

dents just entering the senior elementary classroom, they have had tender loving hands holding them up along their way, but it's time to take a half step back. They may stumble at first or walk sideways, maybe even fall. Those tender loving hands will help them back up and send them on their way... watching and waiting..but unless we let go, they cannot even see their own potential. The senior elementary team is excited to help this new group of students soar.

Academic supplies needed (please provide as many as you can):

- 8 folders with brass fasteners
- 3 composition notebooks
- A large glue stick
- Fine tipped markers
- Pencils
- Erasable pens(portfolios)
- Scissors
- 2 packages of lined paper
- Highlighters
- Colored pencils
- Sketch pad/tracing paper

Personal items:

- Water bottle that stays at school
- Hat with brim (outside use ONLY; stays at school in cubby)
- Sunscreen suggested
- Tea cup
- Complete set of clothing in Ziploc bag

Suggested donations to class:

- Dry erase markers
- Flavored herbal teas
- Honey
- Large scissors
- Pencils(LOTS)
- Extra lined paper
- Facial tissue

Our new co-teacher in the Sr. Elementary class will be Betsy Irwin, who is moving here from Illinois. Betsy is an experienced Montessori Guide who has worked at both Primary and Elementary levels in many different schools. Most recently, she also worked at a nature center doing nature programs for students. Look for more information about her in our next newsletter!

School Mom

Celeste Beck, Principal

Welcome to our 18th school year at Tree of Life. I've been here from its



conception and kind of feel like its mom, going through birth pangs, terrible twos, teenage

anxiety, yet all the time seeing the beauty of its development and what it has to offer the world.

I never planned to be a teacher, even though friends and aptitude tests said I would make a good one. I have always loved science and have a degree in Biology from UC Riverside. Before my children were born, I worked in a laboratory. Montessori Education became a passion of mine when my children were very young, though I first became interested in it when I was a teenager babysitting children who attended a Montessori elementary. But when it was clear that my children would only have Montessori if I became a teacher, I did that and started a school near Yosemite. After moving to Ukiah in 1985, I directed New Morning Montessori for several years before helping to start The New School of Ukiah and Tree of Life Charter School.

I love to garden and create vegan recipes with the produce. I enjoy singing and playing a variety of musical instruments, and teaching children to sing, play instruments, garden, cook, and do science experiments! I have three grown children, all of whom had Montessori educations, and three grandchildren whom I just visited.

Please visit me in the office or on the yard...introduce yourself so I can meet my goal of learning everyone's name! I love to hear your ideas and suggestions, and I look forward to spending some time working with you for the benefit of our children this year.

Tree of Life Charter School

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Phone: 707-462-0913
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Education for Life!

Regular School Hours:
M, T, Th, F—8:30 AM-3:15 PM
W—8:30 AM-1:30 PM
Before School Care 7:30-8:30 AM
After School Care until 5:30 PM
Student-Led Conference 2:30 PM Dismissal
Guide-Led Conference 1:30 PM Dismissal

From our charter:

“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

by **Danza Davis, Business Manager**



Hello, my name is Danza Davis and I am thrilled to be joining the team at Tree of Life as your new Business Manager. I have bachelor degrees in

botany and studio art, teaching experience in traditional and digital art, and business experience as the primary assistant in an accomplished, education-focused Bay Area art studio. I am always excited to learn new skills and look forward to being a valuable resource to the school community. At home, when not enjoying the company of my large, boisterous family, I enjoy painting, particularly my favorite subjects, plants and insects.

Welcome to the new school year! I look forward to getting to know all of the families in the welcoming, thoughtful environment that sets our school apart. We have been working hard on improvements to our campus and are excited to share them with you. Thank you to the volunteers who have given their time over the summer and stay tuned for upcoming projects. Throughout the school year please

be sure to update any contact information that may change (new cell/phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, etc.). Tree of Life communicates with you through a number of ways: emails, phone calls, newsletters, bulletins, and One Call Now. When you receive these messages, please listen to, read and respond as/if applicable. They always contain important and pertinent information. Parent response forms are located in the office, and they are one of the ways you may communicate with us. Concerns, appreciations, suggestions that you may have can be submitted so that we can take them into account to better serve you. Communication is key to success!

Registration packets were mailed out to all families at the beginning of July. If you have not received yours, please contact the office as soon as possible to obtain one at 462-0913 or by email, treeoflifeschool@pacific.net. Please return packets by August 7th. It is imperative that all required paperwork be received prior to the first day of school to prevent any delay in your child’s admission. Included in packets were our Extended Care Program applications, information and agreement forms, fee schedule, and deposit/payment information. These are required in order for us to enroll your child (ren) in our before and after

school care programs. Your patience and assistance is always appreciated as we get up and running in the new school year.

Guide-led conferences for individual parents/guardians and your child, will be held August 15-17. Additionally, important information and paperwork will be reviewed and Guides will go over student goals. I will be contacting families shortly to schedule your conferences. If you have little availability at this time, I encourage you to call the office and get scheduled sooner while we have many openings. We will also be holding class orientations for all parents and students during the week of August 21st. At these class meetings, you and your child will meet as a class with your Guide, meet families, your child’s classmates, and visit your classroom. Additional information on the time and format of these orientations is available in this newsletter. See you on August 21st!

Notice about lunches

We are unable to continue with our lunch fundraisers this year, for a variety of reasons. Classes will be having different types of fundraisers to raise money for field trip expenses instead. Please remember to send a nutritious lunch and snack with your child daily that does not contain foods or beverages with refined sugars or artificial sweeteners. Thank you.

2017

August

Tree of Life

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	01 Office opens	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10 Board Cabinet Meeting 4:30 PM	11	12 Yard and school work party 8-2
13 Yard and school work party 8-2	14 Staff Orientation 8:30-3:30	15 Student/Parent Orientation Conferences	16 Student/Parent Orientation Conferences	17 Student/Parent Orientation Conferences	18 Classroom prep	19 Yard and school work party 8-2
20	21 First School Day Solar Eclipse!	22	23 Class Meetings: Primary-- 6 PM, Jr. El. 1-- 7 PM	24 Class Meetings: Jr. El. 2-- 6 PM, Sr. El.-- 7 PM	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	01	02
03	04 Labor Day Holiday No School	<p>Notes: Bring a nutritious lunch with ice pack to keep cold! Label all of your child's belongings and outer clothing. Check Lost & Found frequently! Make sure your child has a reusable water bottle. Have a daily conversation with your child about the day: What was your favorite thing about today? What did you learn that was new for you?</p>				