

February 2018

# The Leaflette

Tree of Life Charter School

Public Montessori Education



## Science (Fair)

by Celeste Beck, Principal

Science is, and always has been, my favorite subject. As a child, I loved looking at things under the microscope, growing different types of plants and animals, doing experiments with my chemistry set, checking out science experiment books from the library, and just basking in nature on our camping trips. My original career plan was to be a genetics researcher...but then I got

sidetracked by having children and wanting them to have the best education possible!

Over the past couple months, staff have been guiding students in developing science projects based on their interests. In the process, students will learn the steps of the scientific process, what makes a quality science experiment, and how to present the results clearly so others can learn from it. We encourage parents

to aid their children as needed during the process, but not to do the experiment or the write-up for them. Make suggestions about improvements, but allow the student to do the work.

Mark your calendars for our school Science Fair on Wednesday, February 28 from 4-5:30 PM. Even if your student's project isn't chosen for the county science fair, it's fun to visit and see the exhibits at Mendocino College 3/10.

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## Brief Reminders:

—Feb 1: Fundraising Committee Meeting 5:30

—Feb 12-15: Leukemia & Lymphoma Society student fundraisers

—Feb 14: Valentine Party fundraiser for Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

—Feb 16-19: Presidents Holiday Break, NO SCHOOL

—Feb 28: Science Fair, 4-5:30 PM

—Mar 7: Nonviolent Communication Workshops; **school dismissal 1:30 and no after school child care; workshop for parents with free child care from 5:45-8 PM.**

## Parent Council News

By Kristi Binderup, Parent Representative

Hello to all the parents of Tree of Life! 1/12th of 2018 is already over and I feel like I packed a lot of stuff into this one little month! We had toy day and the Parent and Guide meetings where we were provided with a nice report that had lots of detailed information about where our children are academically. Then Family Game Night was our parent meeting, and fun was had by all--who got a beautiful yellow scarf?

Coming up in February we have a 4-day weekend on the 16th -19th for Presidents Day(s). Valentines Day will be on the 14th of the month and this makes me think of LOVE; love reminds me of empathy.

As a school family I think it is really important to have a lot of empathy. We all come from different cultures and experiences. This is our strength as well as a challenge. I was recently at a training and the biggest take away was a reminder to think the best of others. When something frustrating happens or we make assumptions, we miss an opportunity to model empathy for our children. We are all busy, and communication is a challenge, but it can become a teachable moment when we have empathy for one another or for other children.

Talking about communication, we have the honor of hosting Jared Finkelstein

from Nonviolent Communication. "NVC training will empower you to: Motivate your child without threat of punishment or promise of reward; hear the needs behind whatever your child does or says; strengthen your emotional connection to your partner and children; listen so others are really heard." So mark your calendars for Wednesday, March 7; child care will not be available after school that day so that all staff can attend the staff training. BUT, there will be an evening session for parents and friends from 5:45-8 on family communication, and the school will provide free child care during that session.

Here's to a wonderful February!!

# Primary Fire Cats News

By Molly Johnson, Guide

Holiday breaks can be hard for young students, because it breaks their routine. Thank you for all that you do to help your children adjust to these changes and get to school bright and early!



Our school is like a family. We need everyone to come in and participate with their whole heart, and that has been happening with several families. Thank you so much to the parents who come in and spend a few minutes to several hours helping out in our class. If you have not had a chance to come in, please join us in class. You can work only with your child, or lead a small (or large) group. Bring in an art or gardening or cooking project, or game, sport, whatever you are passionate about and introduce your hobby to our students to give them a well-rounded education...it takes a village to raise your child, but it is also a gift to take the time to learn from these wise little people. Their presence is a gift, and they won't be this age for long...just ask the tooth fairy! They are changing from their younger selves to children on the second plane of development soon, so please, treat yourself to spending time with them now (and later of course). We have had parents who came in to sing, listen to reading (and grandparents too), help cook, help garden (when weather was nicer), talk about planets, do experiments, paint, guest artists that show their work, construction workers, CHP, nurse visitors, and more. If you have not completed your 30 hours of volunteer time, this is a fun way to spend time with your child and help the school.

As this class starts to work as a unit, respecting each other, the

classroom rules and supplies we can use to work on projects become more advanced. This month students will cook weekly, and we will try out our woodworking bench. Please remind your child that they can "train" us to offer even more exciting works by showing us how responsible they are. The more they are kind, walk, keep hands to selves, listen and respond the first time, the more often we can get out the hot plate and other fun tools that depend on everyone being safe.

**Fieldtrips:** Our outing to the Grace Hudson Museum and the Ukiah Public Library went very well. Thanks to all parents who drove and to all of the children who used their manners and listening skills when we visited each place.

Our outings next month are:

**February 7th, please bring your child to school by 8:15** so we can leave promptly at 8:30 so we can arrive at the Hopland Research Center-Rod Shippey Hall by 9:00.

We will also be visiting the Willits Museum, date and times to be announced.

**Very mild "homework":** Your child will bring a small paper home for the next several weeks to "teach you" the way we make our letters and numbers at school. I am working with each child individually to find out which letters and numbers are still confusing for them to write, then they will work on that sand paper letter/number at school and practice writing with me before bringing the paper home to work with you. Please sit with your child for the 1-3 minutes it will take to complete the "homework" to assure that they are starting at the top and drawing the letter/number down toward them. (Preschoolers almost always start a 1, 2, 3 etc. from the bottom and draw upward, so learning handwriting is counter-intuitive at first). At this point many of our students know how to form many of the letters and numbers, but none

know all yet. This slows them down when they want to do math and writing works. Thank you for reading with your children nightly. If you feel that your child is ready to advance to the next book please write a note in the purple folder as we can not read with every child every day.

**FIRE CAT PARENTS HAD 100% TURN OUT AT CONFERENCES! YOUR CHILDREN WERE SO EXCITED THAT YOU WOULD COME AND LET THEM TEACH YOU HOW TO USE THEIR CLASSROOM MATERIALS, SO THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

\*\*\*We need volunteers with creative ideas to help raise funds or people/businesses to donate money for spring field trips and special project supplies. When Maria Montessori taught, the children in her class could make biscuits when they wanted. They would mix, roll out, and cut out the dough. I would LOVE to make a child sized chef's counter in the kitchen for your children, where everything is their size, and they can bake and use our skillet and dehydrator whenever they would like (with assistance as needed, from staff). Thank you to all of the moms and the dad that helped with our snow cone endeavor last fall!



# Jr. Elementary 1 Fox Pack News

By Anthony Esserman Melville, Guide

It seems strange how fast the year goes by sometimes. We are already halfway through the year; can you believe it? This month the students were busy with portfolios and learning how the scientific process works. We started singing "Science is Real" again, which was back by popular demand. The students are also engaging in new works and challenges. Zoey and Brooklyn were elected as student council representatives. We did have to have a run off election between Dacota and Brooklyn, as they both got the same number of votes. In the second round it was a tight race, but Brooklyn took it by 2 votes. For a brief period of time we had another pet in our environment. A newt wandered into our classroom. We hypothesized on how the creature had made its way in. After a few days in a jar filled with rainwater and then a large, lidded plastic Tupperware container, it miraculously disappeared over night. Thank you, newt, for blessing our classroom and engaging the children to discover the difference between amphibians and reptiles.



The month of February will be a continuation of our focus on science fair experiments.

We will also continue to do exercises that focus on writing and drawing what we observe. Dr. Maria Montes-

sori once said, "We especially need imagination in science. It is not all mathematics nor all logic, but it is somewhat beauty and poetry." These are wise words to keep in mind when your child is designing their science fair projects. The 1<sup>st</sup> year students in my class will be doing a group project in class as an introduction to the scientific process. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years, however, will need to do their own projects. But that doesn't mean adults can't help. This is a great experience to share with your child and will have a lasting effect on your child's appreciation for science. With that said, be sure that you are aiding the child in doing the experiment, not the other way around. Please use the booklet that was provided as a guide. Come up with a project that was based on questions the child has raised. Remember to use only one variable. Be sure your child gets an early start on the experiment, because you will need to have at least 3 trials. And remind your young scientist not to hesitate from asking for assistance from others. Celeste and I have helped guide many a student to go on to compete in the county and state science fairs. Please do not hesitate to ask for advice.



During this short month we will not be have any fieldtrips, but we will continue our Friday pasta fundraising for our three-day, two-night adventure to the Monterey Bay Aquarium March thirteenth through the fifteenth. Parents who are attending the field trip: we really need you to pay your \$67 fee for your Hostel stay as soon as possible. If you cannot pay it right away, please let me know when you can pay it. We have already reserved the hostel and made a deposit. This is the biggest trip of the year and promises to be one of the most inspiring.

Megan's last month volunteering to help with the pasta lunch on Fridays was January. We need other parents to step up and volunteer with cooking on Friday mornings. Please call or text me to let me know which Fridays you are available to help. We cannot do this without you! The funds raised pay for the children's fees. We will have to ask families to pay those fees if we can't do our fundraiser every Friday due to lack of helpers.

Thank you all for the opportunity to work with your children and watch them grow and change. Teaching may be one of the more challenging jobs out there, but one of the benefits is getting to see children learn in leaps and bounds. Being in community with your children day to day, I never lose hope for the future. These kids are going to change the world.



## Student Council News By Zoey, Presley, & Katarina

We elected a new student council. The president is Connor, the vice-president is Garret, the secretaries are Presley and Katarina, the treasurer is Lila H., the advertisers are Zoey and Brooklyn, the journalist is Zoey, and the historian is Ashya. Student Board elections will be held February 2.

Toy Day was fun. We brought toys to school and showed them around and shared them with others.

For our next Spirit Day in February, we're going to have a fundraiser week for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and to help kids with cancer. It might include a Valentine Party, a read-a-thon, and some other activities to raise money. Students will receive boxes to collect money from friends and relatives. Look for more information to come later in the month.

Here are some pics from Family

Game Night:



# Jr. Elementary 2 Kung Fu Chickens News

by Stacy Strauss Guide

Thank you everyone for attending your Kung Fu Chicken's conference. We had 100% attendance! Many positive things came out of each one! I have noticed a renewed sense of focus and desire to learn in some of the students. I also was able to do some pertinent one on one assessments, so I can plan more relevant lessons.

Currently, we are studying Early Humans. They are having fun making artifacts—caves, spears, cave paintings, bones, even a shoe—for their presentations. We will move on to the Ancient Civilizations of Asia and Oceania in February. We will also be focusing on fractions and our science fair projects. I just sent home science fair packets recently. I have given lessons on the scientific method



during class. The elders will be required to do an experiment and a project board, but the middles and

younger students will have a choice.

Speaking of choice, in a Montessori classroom, you will notice that the students have a lot of choices. There are certain core lessons that are required, but they have time to make choices on areas of interest to study and research. We want the classroom to be driven by the students making learning fun! We don't want to get bogged down with mundane worksheets but allow them to choose what they want to learn about. It is my challenging task to try to balance their school day with making sure they learn what they need for the real world and still allowing them to make choices about how they spend their time. This learning is intrinsic, coming from within, rather than extrinsic. Intrinsic learning is much more effective than extrinsic learning. It is also important for me to give lessons that inspire this desire to learn. All this is no easy task! Inspiring them is the purpose of the 5 Great Lessons that Maria Montessori herself told the children. You can help at home by role modeling learning yourself. Talk to them about their interests and then help them

to learn about it. Ask them what new thing they learned each day. Don't be surprised if they say (especially the younger ones), "I don't know," or "I don't remember." Keep asking and role modeling! Learning should not be a task, but a part of our humanness. One way to get there is by allowing them to have some choices in what they study. We are growing lifelong learners!

## Needs in the Classroom:

\* a new pancake griddle help with serving hot cider and clean up 3:00-4:00 on Fridays (Thank you to the parents who already have helped!) help with making stepping stone project to auction off at the Roots and Shoots Dinner/Auction on April 7th

## Field trips:

Tuesday, February 6, 9:00 Hopland Research Center for lambing Cost: \$3

March 13-15: We have scheduled our overnight field trip to the Monterey Bay Aquarium and stay at the HI Monterey Hostel and have sent our first payment to the hostel. The good news is that we have enough drivers. If you are a chaperone staying at the hostel, if you haven't already, please bring \$67 to the office to put in our field trip fund. If you would like to go and have not signed up, contact me because there is a possibility that we have an extra bed in the hostel. Hopefully, our fundraising efforts will cover the cost of students. The Monterey Bay Aquarium is free.

## Different Parenting Styles by Dr. Jim Fay

Last summer at our annual retreat, a woman approached me and shared a story I've heard countless times from parents (wives and husbands) from every walk of life: "My husband is a good man... but we go back and forth over how to parent our kids. It's causing major friction in our marriage, and I'm horribly worried about the kids."

With the tips listed below, many caring couples have strengthened their marriage and raised healthy, responsible kids:

**Love your spouse for who they are... not who you want them to become.** Very few people change by being pressured, nagged, or criticized.

Most find it safer to try new attitudes and behaviors when they feel securely loved and valued. When was the last time you told your spouse that you were head over heels in love with them?

**Agree on some core values.** Many people disagree about specific parenting practices...but most seem to agree on core values. Sit with your spouse and identify five or so principles on which you can agree. Examples might include: (1) Kids need to feel loved unconditionally; (2) Kids need healthy limits; (3) Kids need to see their parents loving each other; (4) Kids need to help out around the house; (5) Kids need to experience the natural or logical consequences of their actions.

**Agree that you'll probably handle some things differently.** When the kids complain that your spouse handles things differently, respond by saying, "That's because we are different. If you have a problem with what your mom (or dad) did, that's between the two of you."

**Agree to always do whatever you can to make each other look good.** Even if you think your good spouse has done something unwise, support them in the eyes of the children. Discuss your disagreement when your kids are not there to hear it.

**Agree to place your primary emphasis on the happiness of your marriage.** There are times in every marriage relationship when it seems tempting to side with the kids instead of one's spouse. Wise husbands and wives avoid this trap! They understand that the best way to love their kids is to first love and respect each other.

# Sr. Elementary Imagine Dragons News

by Angela Reglin, Guide

The Imagine Dragons are at it again! We are tapping into our creative power in designing a mural for the logging conference held in March at the Redwood Empire Fairground. Last year, our class won an honorable mention award. The theme is Growing Careers in the Redwood Region. Students have been designing some sketches, but your ideas and help in the classroom are always welcome.

Students are actively studying historical civilizations, the systems of the earth, and developing their questions for the science fair. Our school science fair will be held February 28<sup>th</sup>. Students have excitedly begun their background research

and have selected their experiments.

In other news, we held our first formal debate. Many of our younger students were terrified to speak, either because they did not use their time to prepare or because it was difficult. Nearly all students overcame this obstacle and had the support of their teammates in doing so. It is important that students develop the capacity to truly hear their opposition. All students were challenged with rebuttals. They had difficulty acknowledging the opposition and responding, so we will continue working and debating. Students are encouraged to generate their own topics for debate.

I am thankful for all you diligent parents in meeting with me for conferences to celebrate your child's success and areas of possible growth. It is truly imperative in this system that all team members work together and feel supported in the development of a child's wholistic education. Your child has an incredible opportunity to be part of their own educational plan, which means they are being encouraged to hold themselves accountable and develop a strong sense of integrity. Many new studies show a sense of empathy, integrity, and compassion are more valuable in the work place than stem skills. It is these skills that Tree of Life works so hard to help students develop so that they truly can be lifelong learners.

## Welcome to Kristina Long

We welcome Kristina Long to our school! She has been hired to fill the co-teacher position in the Sr. Elementary class. Below is a brief autobiography so you can get to know her a bit:

I have always dreamt of becoming a teacher. I attended elementary school in Suburban Illinois and I feel that I received a top quality education. School was enjoyable and I began to dream of becoming a teacher very early in life! I created my own classroom in my house and was supported by my parents to do so.



My tenth grade social studies teacher in Tucson, Arizona was very patient and very kind. Each day he would walk into the classroom singing "What's it all Abooooout?!" This was a very enjoyable, low pressure class where I learned a lot about how to become a quality teacher. His supportive and nice attitude felt very welcoming and encouraged my classmates and myself to want to learn.

I attended a Junior College in Huntington Beach California at 19 years old. This is where I first began my

college career and where I really became interested in learning various topics that I had never studied or participated in previously. I found out that I am very interested in Anthropology, Mythology as well as Creative Writing. I also had the opportunity to train on their swim team. Although I am not very competitive, I enjoyed it and will enjoy encouraging kids to swim because swimming exercises all of your muscles and your mind which can really help people to focus and advance in school.

All of these experiences have encouraged me to become a teacher, and I look forward to passing on my love of learning for the rest of my life.

## NVC Comes to Tree of Life

Join us for a special Parent Council Education event with Jared Finkelstein of Nonviolent Communication of the Bay Area. On Wednesday, March 7, Jared will hold a workshop for parents/guardians at Tree of Life School from 5:45 to 8 PM. The school will provide free child care

during the workshop so that parents/guardians can attend the event. Potluck dinner will be held from 5:30-6 so you and your children won't get hungry! Bring something simple. The school will provide beverages.

Nonviolent Communication was developed by Marshall Rosenberg. We practice it at Tree of Life to help us understand and acknowledge our feelings and

needs in order to develop relationships built upon mutual respect, compassion, and cooperation.

Parents/Guardians can learn and practice NVC to help strengthen their emotional connection to their children and partner, to reduce family conflicts and sibling rivalry, and to motivate without using reward and punishment. Join us for a dynamic evening of learning!

## Tree of Life Charter School

241 Ford Rd.  
PO Box 966  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Phone: 707-462-0913  
Fax: 707-462-0914  
E-mail: [treeoflifeschool@pacific.net](mailto:treeoflifeschool@pacific.net)  
Website: [www.treeoflifeschool.net](http://www.treeoflifeschool.net)

### ***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**

We are more than half way through the school year! Hard to believe, but it is time to start planning for Fall 2018. You should have received a questionnaire during Guide-Led Conferences that included a survey on plans for your student to return in the fall. January and March are open enrollment for the next school year and we need to know how many spaces to make available for new students. Copies of the survey are available in the office, and we will be following up with families for whom we still need information.

Please see the monthly calendar distributed with each newsletter for special event and schedule information. Note there is no school February 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> for the Presidents’ Day Break. Looking ahead, Open House will be on March 8<sup>th</sup> from 6pm – 8pm; this is a great time for current families to socialize and check out the classrooms and to invite friends who may be looking for a school for next year. Our annual Roots & Shoots fundraiser will be on April 7<sup>th</sup> at BARRA of Mendocino and is now in the planning process, look for information from Parent Council and Fundraising Committee.

As always, independent study is available in the office for days your

student is unable to be in class; thank you for your continued effort to support your student and the school by completing and turning in packets.

I will be working on December and January childcare invoices shortly and will distribute as soon as possible in February.

Office hours are 8 am - 4:30 pm. Should you have questions please do not hesitate to contact me; phone 462-0913, fax 462-0914, email [treeoflifeschool@pacific.net](mailto:treeoflifeschool@pacific.net).



## Heart Health

February is often called Heart Health Month due to its association with Valentine’s Day. Most people are not aware that the Standard American Diet (SAD) is causing children to have the beginning signs of heart disease! In a recent study, 100% of children tested who ate the SAD had fatty streaks in their arteries by age 10. This is simple to remedy with a healthy lifestyle: eat LOTS of vegetables and fruits, eat whole grains, eliminate refined sugars and fats, eat legumes/beans, eat nuts and seeds for healthy fat; don’t eat too much...keep your weight at a healthy level; exercise at least 30 minutes daily; don’t smoke and don’t hang out in smoky places.

We all want a healthier world, especially for our children. We can get there by making small changes to support our health goals. Here’s an easy heart-healthy smoothie recipe to get you started. Let your child do the measuring, cutting, and blending:

**MIXED BERRY SMOOTHIE**  
1 cup pomegranate juice  
1 banana  
1 cup frozen berries  
1/2 apple  
1/2 T ground flax seeds

Blend. Add ice if you want it colder!

# 2018

# February

# Tree of Life

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	01 Fundraising Mtg 5:30 PM	02 Pasta Lunch & Apple Cider Fundraisers	03
04	05	06 8:15 Jr. El. Class field trip	07	08 8:15 Primary Class field trip	09 Pasta Lunch & Apple Cider Fundraisers	10
11	12 Fundraisers for Childhood Cancers all week	13	14 Valentine Party Fundraiser	15 Board Cabinet Mtg 5:30	16 No school	17
18	19 No school for Presidents Day	20	21	22	23 Pasta Lunch & Apple Cider Fundraisers	24
25	26	27	28 Science Fair 4- 5:30	01	02 Pasta Lunch & Apple Cider Fundraisers	03
04	05	Notes: March 7 NVC Workshops--NO AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE; 1:30 dismissal Savings Bank every Wednesday +B75:H84morning!				