

November 2016

# The Leaflette

Tree of Life Charter School

Public Montessori Education



## Attendance Is Crucial!

by Celeste Beck, Principal

There has been a rise in chronic absenteeism and tardies Statewide, and unfortunately it is showing up at our school too. Our absenteeism rate this year and last year have risen, **and we'd like you to help us fix this problem.**

Did you know that:

- Absences and tardies can cause a student to fall behind academically?
- Absences and tardies affect the WHOLE CLASS due to interruptions and teachers having to re-teach a lesson to absent students?
- Poor attendance and tardiness habits learned by children continue on into

their adult lives often affecting future education and employment?

-As a parent, you are legally required to bring your student to school each school day and on time?

You can help your child learn good habits for a lifetime by ensuring timeliness and attendance at school. Some tips to help you:

- Families should schedule vacations to line up with the school schedule. If it **can't be helped, do Independent Study** on the trip.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine. Set out clothing and backpack the

night before. Make sure that lights out time includes cell phones, video games, and computers.

-Have your child use an alarm clock, as well as yourself using one, so there is a backup in case one is not heard.

-Pack lunch the night before and store in the refrigerator.

-Show your child attendance and promptness matter by not allowing him/her to stay home or arrive late unless truly sick.

We can work on this together and I'm hoping to see a lot more of you arriving before 8:30 AM and attending daily! We want all of our children to be successful learners.

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## Brief Reminders:

—Nov 1: NO SCHOOL; district-wide staff training

—Nov 2: NO AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE; all children must be picked up at 1:30 PM

—Nov 2: 5:30-7 PM Nonviolent Communication Workshop Event for Parents; child care provided; potluck for dinner

—Nov 11: No school—Veterans Day Holiday

—Nov 17: Game Day

—Nov 17: Board Cabinet meeting 4:30 PM

—Nov 18: Progressive Feast

—Nov 19-27: Thanksgiving Break, no school

—Dec 20: Winter Party

—Dec 22-Jan 8: Winter Break, no school

## Parent Council News

By Shawn Lockhart, Parent Representative

I would like to start by giving big thanks to everyone who participated at the first annual "Taste of the World." I would call it a success and a BIG THANK YOU! to the parent volunteers, and to Tony and Sara for coordinating! The Farmers Market for Sharing the space with us. We had a wonderful turnout with lots of great music and entertainment along with some wonderful vendors, food, and demonstrations and really had a great community vibe. We look forward to watching this event grow

annually. THANKS!!!

I would like to remind everyone of an upcoming special event: "Nonviolent Communication for Families" with Jared Finkelstein from Bay Area NVC on November 2nd from 5:30-7PM which will be a free seminar to Tree of Life parents! Child care will be provided by the school, and we are going with a "POTLUCK" theme, so please feel free to bring a dish if possible.

We are still asking for help on some various projects

around the school! One of which is that we could really use some volunteers to help Joe put in the water and sewer pipes for the new classroom. It's a good way to get in your volunteer hours, and it greatly helps our school save some funds for other activities and projects. So please let Celeste or the office know if you're able, and there are always other various tasks that could use volunteers. Just check the board in the office.

Autumn and I hope to see you all at the next Parent Meeting on November 2nd.

# Primary Class News

By Molly Johnson, Guide

Our 21 young guides enjoyed working with their parents at conferences! OUR CLASS HAD 100% PARENT PARTICIPATION! THANK YOU!

Our outing to the Pumpkin Patch was a lot of fun. We gathered pumpkins, squash, and flowers and gathered for a picnic. THANKS TO EACH PARENT THAT DROVE AND CHAPERONED. WE WOULD HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GO WITHOUT EACH ONE OF YOU.

A big thank you to all who pioneered our first Taste of the World! Everyone who went came back with a smile and a positive story. Our volunteers worked very hard for months to make that event such a success!

Leading up to International Day, primary students prepared all of **Africa's flags (come visit our room and look up)** and worked on reports about Africa. We had the privilege of **having Jade's Uncle Ben, who came in and told us about his travels in Egypt. Ben taught us how to stand up like a camel, we went outside to measure out how big the smallest of the pyramids would be, and he told us that our classroom would just hold ONE PAW of the sphinx, because it is so huge!**

**Tita, Luciella's grandma, has been** volunteering as a reading coach, but she also prepared a presentation about her home country, Peru. The students were very enthusiastic when they were able to see all of the animals and landforms of Peru. When Tita returns to the U.S. in March, she will bring lots of realia from Peru, so students can talk about and hold real objects from Peru.

REMEMBER to read and ask your children to sound out simple words. Play rhyming games to attune their ear to language. Sing the alphabet song, but with sounds, not letter names, for fun. Encourage them to dictate stories to you (you can write in a yellow pencil, then they can trace words). Practice math family games. Here is an easy, cheap,

helpful, fun game: Put 2 beans in **your hand...see? I have 2 beans.** (hide one behind your back and show remaining bean) If I have one bean in this hand, how many do I have in the hidden hand? When that gets easy go to 3 beans, and when that gets easy for them move up to 4 beans etc. Switch out **the manipulatives** ... acorns, pennies, small leaves, pea gravel all work great. Remember to be sensitive to **children's attention span.**

We have had several wonderful birthday walks this month that included fabulous photos and delicious snacks. Please make arrangements with me to come in and **celebrate your child's birthday with the class.** (If their birthday has passed, **let's have a make-up session** so everyone can take their walk around the sun and be honored this year.) For those of you who are new to Montessori Birthdays, we light a candle which represents the sun. A family member tells a short **story about each year of the child's** life up to their current age, and we all celebrate that person with singing and a shared (sugar-free, organic) snack (popcorn is a simple and well-loved solution).

**Dallas' mom Jennifer will be joining** us to listen to students read. If you have any time, and can commit a half hour or an hour a week (or more if you would like), we need more people to volunteer. Every child loves to have someone that can focus 100% on them as they learn to read. Although children read with Molly, they all would like to read every day, so we need extra help when available.

Please remember to pack:

1. Lunchbox
2. Bowl and spoon (if students are eating hot lunch)
3. Napkin and placemat daily

4. Spoon if you are sending yogurt, applesauce etc. Please send juicy items in a container with a tightly sealing lid in case your child does **not finish their food. We don't want it to drip all over their lunch box.**

5. NO SUGAR, NO HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP etc. Check labels. Be fair and follow school policy.



## Progressive Feast-Nov. 18th

Wow! Thank you to all those great cooks who made food for our International Day feast. It was really delicious and so diverse and interesting.

This month, on November 18th, the students will be cooking a feast, with one course in each classroom. When our school first opened, there were just 2 classrooms with Celeste and Stacy as the 2 teachers. Back then, **we made "stone soup" before Thanksgiving break,** with each student bringing an ingredient for the soup and some nice handmade bread. We were small enough then to all sit together in one classroom to share our meal.

As we grew, that became more difficult. Benj Thomas, who was one of our teachers later, introduced the idea of a Progressive Feast where each course was made by a class and served in that classroom. Student groups progress through each classroom and eat just one course of the meal in each. We usually have a soup, salad, main course, dessert, and appetizer. And we decorate the tables with fall-themed centerpieces. **It's really fun! Check and see if your child's class could use some adult help that day...or the day before...for food prep.**

# Jr. Elementary 1 Class News

By Mary Anne Kenealy, Guide

## Field Trips

Our field trip to the Luther Burbank Theater was a lot of fun. The children enjoyed the play and the tour of the sculptures on the grounds afterwards. Many parents have expressed interest in visiting the



children enjoyed the play and the tour of the sculptures on the grounds afterwards. Many parents have expressed interest in visiting the



you forgot to contribute and can, thank you very much. Also, I'd like each child to have their own drawing pad.

## Homework

Please remember that the spelling homework is included in the Monday folders. Please have your child write the words a few times each night. The spelling tests are on Fridays. I will also start sending home math homework for the children, which can be turned in on Fridays, as I am seeing that this group could use some home practice especially with learning math facts.

**About that "1960s home"** - It also had a piano and guitar. This week I am unveiling one instrument for our "children's house" at school. Please remind your children they will explore it for 4 minutes (sand timer) at a time and more in increments of 4 minutes if no one else wants to play and if their playing is pleasing to the rest of the class. Thanks!

Tuscany Castle at the Castello di Amorosa Winery in Calistoga. Spring would be a great time to visit after the rainy season, perhaps in March. I will keep everyone posted on a date for that.



## International Day and Book Fair

A big thank you to the parents who brought international dishes for the potluck! Thank you also for supporting the Scholastic Book Fair and the generous book donations for our class. The *Pete the Cat* series are wonderful for all of our emerging readers.

## Classroom Supplies

We are in need of more Kleenex...we ask that each student's family contribute one box at the beginning of the year, but we didn't get our full supply. If



# International Day Celebration



# Jr. Elementary 2 Class News

By Stacy Strauss, Guide

## The Importance of Imagination Over Fantasy

The imagination is of utmost importance in the education of the child in the second plane of development--ages 6-12. In To Educate the Human Potential, Maria Montessori says, "The secret to good teaching is to regard the **child's intelligence as a fertile field** in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming **imagination.**" It is important not just to have the child memorize facts, but to give them a passionate taste of each subject (to plant the seeds), so that they can begin to imagine more of the same and have the desire to learn more. This is why we introduce so many subjects, such as biology, chemistry, and algebra, that are normally saved for high school classes. Maria Montessori also talks about the difference between imagination and fantasy. To have an imagination is to be able to use the knowledge that you have and be able to create or think of new ideas--ideas that can actually come to fruition, such as a cure for cancer or a solution to global warming. To fantasize is to think **up ideas that can't necessarily be real**, which has a different purpose than the use of the imagination. As a parent, you can help **your child's imagination develop** by allowing time for your child to



explore and research anything of interest. **If you don't have** knowledge of that subject, then learn with them! Be glad when they ask questions! Allow them to try to figure out the answer, even if it makes a mess! As your child develops and grows at Tree of Life, these seeds are being planted and will be nurtured by **your child's imagination and grow** into new ideas that will change the world!

We have been so busy with research recently (Time Line of Life, animal kingdom, North and South America), then preparing for student-led conferences, that the students have been excited to get back to some of their routines. I have been observing lots of students demonstrating their mastery of skills through teaching and helping. Many have been doing work of their own choosing with a sense of satisfaction on their faces. They are developing a sense of community in the Fire Fox classroom. Let me know if you are available to be a reading helper. Many of them love to read to adults one on one.

### Field trips:

December 9: Luther Burbank Center for the Arts, Santa Rosa "**Posada Navidena**"

I have Debbie, Courtney, Vanessa, and Mary for drivers for this trip.

January 2017: Date and time TBD: Lake Sonoma Fish Hatchery I have mailed our request and am waiting to hear from them. Let me know if you would like to drive.



I enjoyed seeing all of you at student-led conferences. If you did not yet have one with your child, please schedule one with me right away. As always, please contact me with questions or feedback.

## Fundraising Reminders

Original Works packets were sent home the last week of October. Please mark your orders and return them to school by November 2nd so that your orders will arrive before the Winter Break.

Equal Exchange order forms were also sent home. Those orders are due to the school on November 16th...again, so we can get your orders to you before the Winter Break.

**Keep selling those raffle tickets!** We'd like families to turn in their tickets and money by December 1st. The Roots and Shoots dinner and auction with the raffle drawing will be April 1st.

The school has spent a LOT of money on site improvements, and our savings is just about gone. So we really need a good R&S event this year! Thank you.

## Social-Emotional Learning

By Sara Esserman Melville, Teacher

Emotions can overwhelm us, but by naming our feelings we can better communicate with each other and create community together. This past month we spent time sharing how we look while expressing various emotions and giving our emotions names. We talked about asking each other how we feel and recognizing body language in others that represents different feelings. We giggled, narrowed our eyes, pouted, and crossed our arms. We were happy, angry, sad, and proud. Please work with your student by practicing to name feelings they are having. It helps to begin a conversation and work through emotions.

Thank you for sharing your children with us and being a part of our community.

# Jr. Elementary 3 Class News

By Anthony Esserman Melville Guide

The Golden Dragons have been busy with our research on rocks and minerals as well as our individual study of countries in Asia. We started the month of October with a big fieldtrip on October 6<sup>th</sup> which was also Ellis' Birthday! We drove to Larkspur,



took the Ferry across the bay, and then walked over to the Exploratorium. It was a beautiful and warm day. We got a special treat when the *Blue Angels*, the flight demonstration squadron, appeared overhead. Apparently they were warming up for a special event happening on the weekend. It was quite a sight! So much learning happens at these big fieldtrips that I can't cover in the classroom. Thank you to all who helped make it happen.

There will be no fieldtrips in November and December but there are two big



fieldtrips following in January. Our focus in November will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Great Lessons: The Story of Language and The Story of Numbers. Also in November we will be having Interim Assessments of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. There will be some days when students will be in other junior elementary classrooms while students are testing. The first day of testing will be Wednesday November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Lastly, please remember that we have "Deep Cleaning Day" on the last Friday of the month. The next one is November 18<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:00pm. We could really use more parent and guardian support on these days. We also have our Pasta fundraiser every Monday morning and anyone that wants to come in to assist is welcome and encouraged. Remember that if you ever have any questions or concerns, please call or text me right away at: 707 228 9274. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to work with your amazing children. It really is a gift.

## Taste of the World

by Sara Esserman Melville

Our first annual Taste of the World was a success!

Ukiah went on a grand tour this past Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, at the first annual international celebration Taste of the World community event sponsored by Tree of Life Montessori Charter School and held at the Alex Thomas Plaza.



Spiros Gyros supplied tastes of dolmades and baklava. Oco Time offered inari. Instilling Goodness and Developing Virtue

Schools from the Buddhist Temple ran a Karma Kitchen with apple juice and vegan brownies.

There were several free crafts for kids. The Tree of Life School offered a craft booth for making paper dolls with traditional Ecuadorian clothes, temporary flag tattoos, and flag

making. At the Girl Scouts booth, children were able to make paper beads and bead bracelets. Ukiah Aikido's booth was having a raffle for free classes. Asia Sikkila offered African fashions and household accessories from her store Awanya that is located at W. Standley Street.



The stage was alive with activity. Amazing presentations were performed and lessons were taught

from many international groups. Ukiah Aikido presented their Japanese martial art and gave a short introductory lesson to 6 eager children. Brazilian drumming was presented by Dandha Da Hora from Sambada. She then taught a few Brazilian dances to all who wanted to join, assisted by Carmen Day who teaches Bra-



zilian dance at Mendocino Ballet on Fridays 7-8:30. Higher Ground from SPACE, led by Amanda Rosenberg, performed remarkable dance routines flawlessly. Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art, was showcased by



Capoeira Yokayo. They then taught all willing participants several moves. Asia Sikkila taught fun and ener-

getic African dance. An entertaining Jamaican folk concert was given by I-Taweh. For one song he invited a few children to join him. Students from Instilling Goodness and Developing Virtue Schools from the Buddhist Temple taught about their instruments and entertained with their music. Fun and good food was had by all who attended.

Plans are already in the works for next year. Anyone interested in participating please email [saramelville@pacific.net](mailto:saramelville@pacific.net).

# Sr. Elementary News

by Angela Reglin, Guide

Da Milkshakes have been shaking things up this month. In addition to the earth quake drill, some of us **have felt like we've been standing** on shaky ground, but all of us are finding our center. In a Montessori



classroom, the entrusted adults are facilitating a learning process. While products are an important tool to assess learning, observing the learning process is a valuable component.

**Seeing the sparkle in a child's eye** as they discover new meaning in something that was once familiar cannot be evaluated on a piece of paper. With many of the science, geography, cultural, and math materials, I am able to see the sparks and delight as meaningful learning happens. In Language, students need to physically practice reading and writing. Often writing is not taught in isolation but it is taught in ways students can connect through



other parts of the curriculum. When we learned about the universe and had captured the wow factor of its immensity, we learned about the six traits of writing, and writing as a process. However, students need to experience the full circle of that process to truly understand it. To date, I have had four students complete this full process.

I am requesting to be on your team and work together to create a meaningful learning experiences for your child.



Students have been figuring out their balance in time management and maintaining friendships. They have been taking risks and becoming independent thinkers.

# Thank You

-To Tony and Stacy R. for working on the playground wall, lines, & gate

-To Joe, Ian, JanLaree, and Sean for painting the JR. EL. 1 classroom before the rain

-To Vanessa M. for taking on the Original Works and Equal Exchange Fundraiser

-To ALL the Book Fair volunteers

-To Sara for being chief organizer for Taste of the World

## Student Council

By Roman and Celeste

Our last spirit day was Pajama/ Reading Day. People got to wear their pajamas all day and read under the table in the afternoon.

For International Day we made maps and flags. When we visited the other continent classrooms we did folk dancing and games from other countries. Some people wore costumes, and we had lots of different food for lunch.

At the Halloween Party there was a dance floor, face painting, bean bag games, and a maze. People wore Halloween costumes and had fun. Thank you to the parents for setting that up for us.

Game Day is going to be our next spirit day for November. On Game Day, people can play card games or board games. They can bring games from home to share at school with their friends. This will be on Thursday, November 17th.

Finally, before Thanksgiving Break, we will have our Progressive Feast. Each class will make some food for **the feast, and we'll go to other classes** to eat their food. Afterwards, **we'll have a thankfulness ceremony.**

## 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  
Website: 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 JanLaree De Julius, Business Mgr

Hello Tree of Life families. We have **entered Attendance Period 3..... Already!**

Communication: We have a number of families we are unable to contact via email, phone, and One Call Now due to the fact that contact information has changed or a voice mail box has not been set up. We must be able to contact you in the event of an emergency, **child's illness, and to keep you informed about events and relay important reminders at the school.** If you have recently changed your contact information PLEASE notify the office so that we may update our records. Please listen to voice messages, read the newsletter and bulletins that are sent out; they contain important information.

Attendance: Please call the office before 9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be tardy or absent. Remember that if your child is tardy you, (a parent/guardian), must come into the office and sign her/him in. Please remember **that if you write in "late" or "tardy" as the reason, that is not an excusable reason by State law for being late to school and your child will be reported to the State as tardy. This becomes part of your child's official school record. Coming to school on time benefits your child's education!**

Independent Study Packets: We cannot stress the importance of returning

**your child's Independent Study Packet.** If you signed for an Independent Study packet and have yet to return it, please return it as soon as possible. Our 2nd attendance reporting period ended on October 14th and attendance must be reported to the State accurately. Please return completed packets to the office. Phone calls will be going out to student parents/guardians who have overdue packets as a reminder to turn them in. We cannot **report your child as "present" if the packet hasn't been submitted. This directly affects our school's funding and your child's absence/truancy record.** If you requested a packet, are unsure, or need a replacement, please contact the office. Joaquin will be helping with this process by making calls to homes in the evenings.

Child Care: My sincere apologies for the delay in getting the August/September statements/invoices out. There have been so many projects and reports to process that I have yet to finalize them. I am hoping to finish them up by Friday, 10/28 and get them out to you. If you have signed up for our Child Care program, please ensure that you have dropped off your deposit and registration/supply fee **payment if you haven't already done so.** If you have a past due balance from last year, please note that your balance must be clear in order for your family to participate this year. Please come to the office if you have any questions or need to discuss payment options.

Original Art Works: Packets were sent home earlier this week; completed order forms and payments must be **returned to your child's Guide by November 2nd** in order for processing and to have everything back in time for the holidays.

Equal Exchange: Another fundraiser and opportunity to get a jump on your holiday gift giving is Equal Exchange. Order form brochures have been sent home and orders are due to your **child's Guide by November 16th.**

Roots and Shoots: Please keep selling those raffle tickets! Our first requested deadline for turning in monies or unsold tickets is rapidly approaching (December 1st). We still have a number of raffle ticket packets ready to **pick up if you haven't done so already,** or if you are a prolific seller, please come get more. All monies raised will help to facilitate the event and all profits directly support our school. We are asking the help of all of our families to make this a successful event. If you **haven't received a ticket packet,** please stop in and pick one up. If you are a prolific seller, please come get more! We value your assistance in ensuring we have a successful fundraising event.

The office hours are 7:30am - 4:00pm, phone 462-0913, fax 462-0914. As always, should you have any questions or need any assistance please do not hesitate to contact me. I am here to assist in any way possible.

2016

# November Tree of Life

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	01 No School; Staff Training Day	02 Dismissal at 1:30; No After School Care; 5:30-7 NVC Workshop for Parents	03 Sr. El. Ft Ross Trip; Original Works orders due	04 Sr. El. Ft Ross Trip	05
06	07	08 VOTE	09	10	11 Veterans Day; No School	12
13	14	15	16 Equal Exchange orders due	17 Game Day Spirit Day; Board Cabinet Meeting 4:30	18 Progressive Feast	19
20	21 No School; Thanksgiving Break	22 No School; Thanksgiving Break	23 No School; Thanksgiving Break	24 No School; Thanksgiving Break	25 No School; Thanksgiving Break	26
27	28	29	30	01	02	03
04	05	Notes: Lunch fundraiser cost is \$3 Menu: Monday-pasta; Tuesday-burrito; Wednesday-chili/soup/stew; Thursday-sandwich; Friday-casserole Bank Day is every Wednesday at 9 AM Winter Party will be Dec. 20; Winter Break begins Dec. 22				