“The environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct his own experiences.” ~Dr. Maria Montessori

Classroom Updates

Pre-K & K In Primary, we have been working hard to develop strong friendships and good work habits. Children have learned how to follow classroom routines and choose and complete Montessori activities in order to practice their lessons independently. Whole group and individualized lessons in language and math have focused largely on letter sounds, sight words, counting, and reading numbers and working with place value to 20. Students who showed readiness to proceed have worked with sounding out words, counting to 100, and early addition. Our students were especially excited for our special Apple Day, when family volunteers visited to teach our classes about apple trees and orchards. Each child sampled a variety of apples and helped the class make apple sauce.

1st & 2nd Our first and second graders have been working hard this quarter. We have been busy learning our daily routines, expectations, making new friends, reviewing old skills, and learning and practicing new skills. In addition to learning, we have had the pleasure of having a visit from General Grant, had the opportunity to visit the fire department, and have worked on some great projects to decorate our hallway bulletin boards.

Math - Our first quarter started out with us reviewing some basic number relationships before moving on to addition. Our addition unit had us practicing basic addition, double digit, and triple digit addition with and without regrouping. While practicing these skills we were able to use the addition strip board, addition tables, the small bead frame, golden beads, and the stamp game. Recently, we began our subtraction study. Please take a few minutes each night to review basic addition and subtraction facts with your children.

Reading – First grade students have been able to read and discuss pieces of literature in the genre of fantasy. We have explored what a key detail is and how to identify them, what is a sentence, and words using the short vowels sounds a and i. Our essential questions have focused on schools and what it is like where we live.

Second grade friends have been able to read and discuss the genre of fantasy as well. We have discussed key details, what makes a sentence a sentence, four type of sentences, and how do friends depend on each other.

Science and History/Geography are areas of independent study. Students have been able to explore North America and our biology and plant life cycle activities.
**3rd & 4th** The students have been introduced to many types of genres, including; literature (fiction), realistic fiction, narrative non-fiction, informational text (nonfiction), expository, biographies, fantasy, and folktales.

The students have also been acquainted with reader’s theatre and enjoy practicing reading with expression and performing for their classmates.

This quarter we have reviewed and built upon adding and subtracting skills with regrouping, place value, and word problem strategies. The fourth graders are now beginning their multiplication unit.

Along with daily curriculum, Montessori works have been introduced and reviewed for all subjects.

Our reading program does a wonderful job incorporating social studies and science topics. So far the students have read and learned about natural disasters, inventions, landmarks and memorials. The students have also learned about many historical/cultural figures. Along with learning through reading, we have introduced students to biology concepts and works on the United States.

This month the students really enjoyed getting out into the community and learning the workings of a fire house. We are looking forward to doing more activities in the community as the school year goes on.

**5th & 6th** Upper Elementary’s Living Wax Museum was a huge success! The students, and families who attended, really enjoyed learning about a variety of historical figures that were represented through the presentations. We look forward to completing even more fun and creative projects in the near future. Be sure to look for the guidelines on our Market Day project to come out at the beginning of December, with a due date set in early January.

We are also looking forward to our field trip to the Majestic Theater to view the Totem Pole Playhouse’s rendition of *A Christmas Carol*. This field trip will take place on Friday, December 11th, 2015. Please keep in mind, it is still considered a regular school day. For those students not planning on attending the field trip, there will be a planned activity. We are also looking into planning another trip to the Pennsylvania Farm Show in January. More details to follow!

**Spanish**

Announcing the hiring of the Spanish teacher coming soon!

**Music**

*Singing in the New School Year!*

The GMCS music program has been thriving so far this year. We began the year by fundraising for a school xylophone, school rhythm sticks, bean bags, egg shakers, a parachute, and a school set of ukuleles. All of these materials have been put to good use in the classrooms!

Our ensembles have kicked off the school year hard at work. The third through sixth grade chorus has been learning different songs in languages ranging from English to Hebrew to Zulu. Fourth through sixth grade students have begun instrumental lessons on flute and clarinet. We were able to have a terrific folk music singer come in and perform for the whole school, and we have a brass quintet coming to perform for the school at the beginning of November. Check out the classrooms below to get more updates!

**Primary:** Students in the primary classroom are singing songs, playing games, moving to music with scarves, bean bags, and parachutes.

**First & Second:** First and second grade students are composing their own rhythms, performing songs with BoomWhackcers, and creating and building their own recycled instruments.
**Third & Fourth:** Third and fourth grade students became musical notes by composing their own melodies on musical staffs on the floor. They began learning recorders, and travelled in the classroom to the island of Bali in Indonesia to learn about gamelan music and the culture of Bali. These students are also engaging in a field trip to Gettysburg College where they will learn gamelan from a Balinese teacher, and will get to play all the instruments of the ensemble!

**Fifth & Sixth:** Fifth and sixth grade students started the year by engaging in a musical identity project where they picked their favorite song to present to their classmates. The class discussed why certain music is important to us, and discovered that many classmates listened to some of the same music! The class then began learning about the concepts of melody and harmony, and began learning how to play the ukulele.

We are excited for a great rest of the fall semester in music!

**Physical Education & Health**

Over the past marking period in PE, students in lower elementary have been working on mastering tag games as well as different locomotor patterns using a variety of games. Students in upper elementary have been continuing to improve upon their soccer skills as well as offensive and defensive strategies in a game known as speedball. Over the course of the next marking period, grades Pre-K through 2nd will be learning about throwing and catching fundamentals through an assortment of games designed to practice these skills. Towards the end of the marking period, we will move on to parachute games which is always a favorite among students. Grades 3rd through 6th will be moving on to kickball and variations that promote kicking and catching skills as well as cardiovascular endurance. Later on in the marking period, they will be moving on to flying disc skills and games associated with these skills such as disc golf. In 3rd through 6th grade health, students will be finishing up their unit on the body systems and move on to topics such as the 5 senses and nutrition. I am greatly looking forward to the upcoming months in PE and health and I can’t wait to share the exciting new activities with our students here at GMCS!

**The Counselor’s Corner**

Greetings from the counselor’s corner! The school year is off to a fast start, it is hard to believe that it is November already! Classroom guidance lessons for the beginning of the year have focused on meeting the school counselor, being Bucket Fillers, and bullying prevention. Our school will be beginning Bucket Filler Bingo. Our friends will have the opportunity to earn an extra special whole school recess, by continuing to be the awesome Bucket Fillers that they are; showing kindness to everyone, and lending a helping hand when it’s needed. The first round of small groups is just finishing up, and invitations for the next round have been sent home. These small groups will continue throughout the year, so if you signed your student(s) up and they have not yet received an invitation, not to worry it will be coming. I want to say a special thank you to my intern Alē Heller for her help this semester. Alē will be leaving us in early December, when her college semester ends. We will miss having her as part of the GMCS family, but wish her the best of luck as she continues on her journey to becoming a school counselor!
Board Briefings

Welcome, Ms. Pleso!

The Board was thrilled to welcome our new CEO, Faye Pleso, to GMCS over the summer. She has been a wonderful addition to our school and we want to thank her for getting this academic year off to such a great start!

New Building

For months, Ms. Pleso and the GMCS Building Committee have been working diligently with our architect, business manager, realtor and civil engineer to identify a property for GMCS. While we still have a lot of work to do before this will be official, we are moving forward with plans to relocate to 888 Coleman Road, the site of the former Cornerstone Church at the intersection of Coleman Road and PA 394. With more than fourteen acres and an existing building, this location provides plenty of space for GMCS to grow and thrive!

Charter Renewal

In case you missed our summer announcement, we’re happy to share that the Gettysburg Area School District renewed our charter on June 15, 2015. GMCS continues to flourish, and we are excited by the many possibilities for growth and expansion that the next five years will bring.

Board Meetings

GMCS Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public. Meetings this fall will be held on Thursday, October 29; November 19; and December 17, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the school.

Clearances for Volunteers

All volunteers and chaperones need to have 2 up-to-date clearances on file with the school. These clearances are Child Abuse History and PA State Police Criminal Record Check (ePatch). All volunteers need to update their clearances every 5 years.

Parents and guardians are encouraged and welcomed to volunteer and be chaperones once the 2 clearances are acquired. If you are interested in pursuing these clearances, an information sheet can be picked up in the office or found on our website.

Not getting our emails?

If you would like to receive emails from the school and are currently not getting them please email or call Mrs. Rogers at 717.334.1120 or dani@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org

Our Mission

The Gettysburg Montessori Charter School (GMCS) offers an innovative, standards based education which embodies the theories of Dr. Maria Montessori by supporting a child-centered learning environment. Our school uses a holistic curriculum based on the Montessori educational philosophy to promote a lifelong love of learning to achieve the Pennsylvania State Academic Standards.
The Principal’s Piece

This first quarter of the 2015/2016 school year has gone by so fast. Our students have been busy playing and learning and many classes have already gone on a few field trips. They are now used to eating breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria and seem to be enjoying that social time. The best parts of my day are when I get to visit them at breakfast, lunch, or at recess. I am also pleased that I am getting to know more of our parents as well. I have met many of you during arrival and dismissal times or through our coffee gatherings. I am looking forward to seeing many of you through volunteer opportunities as well.

Our Charter School Level Planning Team recently completed our school plan. The team consisted of 6 teacher representatives, 2 educational specialists, 2 administrative representatives, 2 parents of children attending our school, 2 local business representatives, and 2 community representatives. Our goals focus on increasing student achievement, informing others of the Montessori philosophy and incorporating it into the PA Core Standards, and blending traditional education system with Montessori.

Blending a public charter school with the Montessori philosophy is challenging but we can do it. Since we use public funds we must adhere to the regulations of the Federal and State governments. However, our teachers are experts in differentiating instruction and that is the main “ingredient” in the Montessori philosophy. We just need to make some adjustments.

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails”. William Arthur Ward

Faye Pleso, Principal

Who Do I talk to about what?

Mrs. Rogers—dani@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org—Handles lunch orders, absences & school communications.

Mrs. Gugliette—gettysburgmontessori@gmail.com—Handles bussing & Principal’s admin

Ms. Pleso—fayepleso@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org—Manages school & staff, curriculum.

Miss Love—sara@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org—Guidance Counselor

Mrs. Black—becky@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org—Special Education coordinator

Board—board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org—Governance of school and management of CEO/Principal
Head Lice 101
(Source: Lice Lessons - National Association of School Nurses)

Head lice are a common community problem. An estimated 6 to 12 million infestations occur each year in the US, most commonly among children ages 3 to 11 years old. An adult louse is about the size of a sesame seed; baby lice, called nymphs, are smaller. Nits are the tiny tear-drop shaped lice eggs. A mother louse attaches a nit to the hair shaft, very close to the scalp. Like everyone else, head lice prefer a clean head; it is easier for mama louse to glue her nit to a clean hair shaft than a dirty one.

Head lice are not dangerous and do not transmit disease, however they spread easily under the right conditions, ie. slumber parties and camping trips. Head lice move by crawling and cannot jump or fly, so they are spread by direct head-to-head contact. The spread of head lice in a school setting is unlikely, unless hats, scarves, and hairbrushes that are infested are shared.

The signs and symptoms of infestation may include a feeling of tickling or itching of the scalp, irritability and difficulty sleeping, or infected sores on the head from continued scratching. Remember head lice feed on human blood and then deposit their fecal matter on their hosts head.

Tackling head lice is absolutely labor intensive, however if we work together between home, school, and your doctor if necessary, it is not impossible to eradicate this pest. Feel free to contact the health room if you have any questions. I hope you have found this information helpful as the coats and hats come out for the winter months. Have an awesome November!

To Read GASD’s Head Lice policy please go to http://www.gettysburgmontessoricharter.org/gasd-board-policy-209a-pediculosis-head-lice.html

Reminders:

November 5th 1/2 for students, dismissal time is 12noon. Those in the Bermudian Springs School District must provide afternoon transportation. Fairfield Area School District must pick up at the High School. All others will be transported as normal at 12 noon.

November 6 no school for students
November 25-30 no school for students
December 23-January 1 no school for students
September: T-shirt sales and Car Magnets. Unfortunately we did not have enough sales to do a print run for our September t-shirts, we are hoping to do another sale later in the school year. Car magnets are on sale in the school office for $5.00 until supplies run out.

October: Here are some photos of our Scare Crow Making!

Sweat Shirt sales are online October 21-November 14, 2015 https://www.booster.com/gettysburg-montessori-charter-school-spirit-wear. Sweat shirts can be delivered straight to your doorstep or to the school. All orders should be ready for delivery by December 2, 2015.

Small Hands now through Dec 31, 2015
Yankee Candle October 28-November 6, 2015

November: Food Drive November 2-20,2015

December: Clothing Drive December 1-18, 2015
Book Fair New Date December 4-11, 2015