



Montessori Moments

WINTER 2023

Administrative News

We wrapped up 2022 with many exciting activities and memorable moments. In November, grades 1-6 visited York college to see students perform "A Christmas Carol". In addition, the first ever "WOW" store was implemented to promote positive student behavior. Students were given the opportunity to buy amazing prizes using their earned WOW dollars. They could also purchase classroom rewards. We will have another store in the spring. Students are encouraged to keep displaying good behavior to earn more fun prizes and awards. Also in November, GMCS won an architectural excellence award. We are so pleased to announce that DIGSAU, the architectural firm that designed our beautiful new school, was recently awarded two awards for the design of our school! The first was a Merit Award Built Category, through AIA Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Chapter American Institute of Architects) and the other a Merit Award Built Category, through AIA Philadelphia (Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects). The Pennsylvania award ceremony was held virtually, and the Philadelphia ceremony was held in person, at The Fillmore. Dr. Pleso was invited to accept the award alongside the DIGSAU architects. These awards are chosen through a blind review. The judges do not know the name of the architect firm, or the name and location of the building/business being judged. In addition, the judges are from out of state. It was an exciting event for all. In December, students from all grade levels participated in a spectacular holiday concert. They certainly brought holiday cheer, singing loud for all to hear. Also in December, students enjoyed a fabulous holiday shop, organized by Heather Laughman and Nicole Wilt. They were able to purchase gifts for family members and friends. So, that brings us to a brand-new year. At GMCS, we are excited for what is in store...January is the first page of a new chapter. Believe that this year is the most fantastic year, and it will be.

Respectfully,

Faye Pleso, MEd, PhD & Tammy Hogan, M.Ed., Ph.D.



REMINDERS:

- **NO SCHOOL**
GMCS will be closed on February 17th & 20th in observance of Presidents' Day.
- **EARLY DISMISSAL @ 12pm**
March 3rd & March 17th

Save the Date:

- **Fundraiser - Gertrude Hawk Chocolates**
Orders due by March 6th
- **Kindergarten Open House**
Please have enrollment forms completed by March 31st
- **Parents Night Out/Dubbs Karate**
Saturday, February 25th
- **Read Across America Spirit Week**
February 27th - March 3rd
- **Ag Literacy Week**
March 13th-17th
- **Re-enrollment Forms**
Re-enrollment forms need to be completed and returned to the front office by March 31st. Forms need to be completed and turned in by the due date to secure your spot for the 2023/2024 school year.
- **Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences**
March 27th-31st
Please mark your calendars. More information will be sent about conferences from your teacher.
- **Talent Show**
March 31st

Please contact the office with any questions.

Classroom Updates

Kindergarten

Mrs. Fleurant & Ms. Harmon - Our Kindergarteners have experienced some exciting activities during Quarter Two. The Mobile Agricultural Lab visited our school and taught us about how vegetables grow, how to make a pizza and the role farms play in providing food to the community. We also enjoyed doing winter themed activities throughout the month!

Let's have a great start to the New Year! Our Kindergarteners are showing responsibility and habits of lifelong learning as they challenge themselves with new works in the classroom. In Eureka Math, we have wrapped up a unit of study focusing on measurement and weight. We will be continuing our studies on the attributes of numbers, using the terms "more than" "less than" and "are there enough" as we compare sets. Coming up we will be working on addition using number bonds. In Language, we have learned many new sight words and are applying our knowledge of words and phonics to reading and writing stories. At home, practice rhyming by saying a word and allowing your child to come up with a word that rhymes.

Please ensure that your child comes to school prepared for outside recess in winter weather. Warm winter jackets, hats, and gloves are a must. If your child wears boots to school, we recommend sending sneakers in their backpack for inside use.

1st & 2nd

Mrs. Lansford, Mrs. Needham, Miss Stowman - Second quarter in first and second grade has brought with it opportunities to have fun while learning!

We are continuing to work on meeting classroom expectations by doing our best work, whispering in class, raising our hands when we have a question, and controlling our bodies.

A highlight of the quarter was our annual trip to the theater to see A Christmas Carol. This year the students enjoyed watching the play at York College. The students also enjoyed a visit from the Ag Lab where we learned about the role agriculture plays in making candy bars.

In first grade math, we learned about place value to 20, adding & subtracting to 20, and measurement. In second grade math, we learned about place value to 1,000, adding & subtracting to 1,000, and using mental math strategies.

During ELA, we have been reading many interesting books and practicing strategies to help improve our reading comprehension such as making predictions and asking questions. In grammar, we learned about different parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. In writing, we have been concentrating on various types of writing in each class.

We are looking forward to next quarter and are excited to see what it will bring!

3rd & 4th

Mrs. Bechtel, Ms. Dohler & Mrs. Roush - The Grade 3/4 teachers and assistants would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy 2023! We cannot believe that we are halfway there! January 31st was our 100th day of school!

We are very proud of how our third graders have settled in and know our routine and expectations! On the other hand, we are very sad to know that our amazing fourth graders, whom we are super proud of too, will soon be leaving us and moving on to 5th grade. We want to thank all of our students for being respectful, hardworking, role models. We would also like to thank our parents for all their support and involvement during the

first half of our school year. We appreciate our students and our parents. A BIG THANK YOU to all!

ELA (Ms. Dohler): Happy New Year everyone! Welcome to 2023! A new year brings new opportunities to grow and try new things! We have been working hard in ELA class practicing our grammar skills, developing critical thinking and reasoning skills, expanding our vocabulary, and improving our fluency and reading comprehension. Students have been practicing their fluency and monitoring their reading aloud with partners in small groups. We are excited to continue using the Reading A-Z program, ECRI (Enhanced Core Reading Instruction), Flyleaf reading series, and working on learning the multiple roles of participating in literature circles. In grammar, we have been working hard identifying nouns (common and proper, singular and plural) as well as working on creating contractions just to name a few! I am continued to be impressed with the development of all the students' reading and writing skills and am immensely proud of them all!

Another big moment for our ELA class this year was the re-introduction of spelling course work. We have jumped in full force with our spelling program through Zaner-Bloser! Students have been eager to learn new patterns each week and be able to improve their spelling skills more each week! The students have been applying these patterns to sorting words, finding word meanings of larger words, working with analogies, making inferences, and using context clues as well as connecting our spelling to our writing. I am astounded with how well our students have been able to easily adapt and pick up with spelling and work diligently to improve their skills. We look forward to the New Year and all the wonderful reading opportunities it will bring us!

Math (Mrs. Roush): Math class continues to be an active and engaging place to be! Students have been expressing lots of interest in math concepts and how those concepts relate to the real world. Moreover, many of my math students have been proactively asking for more challenging work. This makes my heart super happy! Everyday I notice just how much more students are developing into awesome mathematicians!

Third graders began this quarter exploring measurements - liquids, weights, and lengths. We made connections to items at home and how we can utilize measurements in everyday life. For instance, many students shared their experiences in the kitchen when measuring food items. Using real scales to weigh items was quite entertaining! Our next adventure began with the Iditarod. Hmm, you may be thinking how did we integrate math with a dog race? We worked with elapsed time and determined the time it took "mushers" to go from one checkpoint to another during the time of their race. This is a very important time concept that we will continue to focus on throughout the remainder of the year. Third graders now understand that time is continuous and how time relates to the number line. Ask your child how the face of a clock resembles the number line! Estimating and rounding was another concept we learned. Third graders comprehended that estimating comes in handy when shopping at the grocery store! Our most recent math exploration was a deeper understanding of how multiplication and division relate to one another. We solidified our understanding of multiplication and division with our skip-counting strategy. The next feat that third graders will encounter is applying what we have learned with multi-step word problems, and incorporating number bonds to solve multiplication and division problems.

Fourth graders have been working diligently this last quarter. We began with area and perimeter. This was an enjoyable learning experience as we measured gardens and pools! Well, not real ones. The formulas that we learned will continue to be applied throughout the year. The place value concept was used on a deeper level as we introduced regrouping and solving equations. We solved more multi-step word problems with the area model strategy, while also understanding how multiplication and the area model compliment one another. Finally, fourth graders are in the process of solving multiplication problems with the standard

Classroom Updates

algorithm. This is something that we will be continuing to work on with more repetition! Practice makes perfect! The next step with multiplication will be to challenge my fourth graders with answers that have remainders! I am very pleased with my students' perseverance so far this year. Mostly, I am super proud of how they have been able to collaborate so well with one another. They are always willing to help each other, and this is what Montessori is truly about, working together and being grateful for one another.

Science/Social Studies (Mrs. Bechtel): In Science & Social Studies and Writing, our students have been diligently working. I absolutely love their curiosity and engagement when they are in class. We began this quarter with our Embryology Unit. The students loved learning about our 18 eggs that were brought to us from the PA 4-H and Penn State. The students learned the process, the terminology, and the life cycle of a chick. We candled the eggs and were very excited to observe the chicks' growth. We eagerly waited, which was super challenging to do, for Day 21 - Hatch Day! Unfortunately, none of the chicks hatched. There were a lot of tears shed. I explained the life cycle and how this is nature and Science. We learned that these types of heartbreaking events happen and we had to now take the necessary steps to move forward. I contacted the 4-H and our representative came. I had to answer several questions and then Penn State researched and investigated the situation. The students were reminded of the Scientific Method and made connections. We concluded, after all the evidence was presented, that we had a faulty incubator. The good news is that we will receive another batch in April. The students are thrilled that they will have the opportunity to try again. We are hoping to see chicks hatch so that we can take care of the chicks until they are fit and ready to be adopted.

After finishing our Embryology Unit we moved on to Thanksgiving and Christmas. We switched gears from Science to Social Studies. We discussed the Native Americans and the Pilgrims and the Mayflower. Students created a bead bracelet that actually told the story of the First Thanksgiving. After returning from Thanksgiving break, the Christmas tree was put up in my room and we began the exploration of our Christmas Around the World Unit. The students were given passports and we were ready to travel.

We spent a day in the USA and then we were off to explore. Our first stop was Ireland, then Kenya, off to Egypt, and finally Costa Rica. The students enjoyed learning about the different cultures, listening to the language, and making ornaments that represented each country. After the holiday break, students turned their second quarter State T-Shirt Project in and are now presenting to their classmates. These projects are AWESOME! I love the creativity and the effort that I am observing! I am very proud of each and every student for their effort and hard work!

Moving forward this quarter, we are preparing for our Science Fair, which will be held this year on March 16th. Students will be using the Scientific Method to perform an experiment. Information came home on January 23.

We will also begin our Solar System/Planets Unit this coming quarter. The students are super excited to explore outer space and study the stars. As always, grade 3/4 students are busy scientists learning, discovering, and exploring!

5th & 6th

Mrs. Gulden, Ms. Rodgers & Mrs. Sauter - Quarter two has come and gone! Check out what we've done this quarter:

ELA: In ELA, we have continued to work through our novels. We will be wrapping up our Percy Jackson novel shortly. Our other two groups finished their novels and moved on to their new novels: Esperanza Rising and The One and Only Ivan. We will continue with these two novels for the

third quarter. Our friends reading The Lightning Thief will move into their nonfiction book for the year.

We have also begun our new spelling program. This quarter we've been working together through the new activities and next quarter you will begin seeing spelling grades.

Math: In the second quarter, 5th grade focussed on multiplication. They practiced their basic facts, multiplied multi-digit numbers (up to three digits in the multiplier), multiplied by powers of 10, and even multiplied with decimals. Currently we are working through the skill of division. Students are learning how to divide by powers of 10, estimate quotients, and divide with multi-digit divisors. In the third quarter we will focus heavily on fractions.

The 6th graders learned about multiplying and dividing fractions. This skill was very involved as students learned how to draw out visual models and relate them to the standard algorithm. Students also reviewed multi-digit decimal operations, long division, and statistical analysis (mean, median, mode, and range, and how to create a box and whisker plot). In quarter three, students will learn about number theory and move into learning about positive and negative numbers.

Science/S.S.: In Science we wrapped up our space unit and then transitioned into social studies. We have been working on maps. We covered skills such as map keys, compass rose, and reading and understanding maps. We are now moving through the various landforms seen around the world. After completing maps, we will return to our science studies.

We also had the opportunity to go on three different field trips: The Christmas Carol, The Lancaster Science Factory and North Museum, and The PA Farm Show. It's been a great quarter!

MUSIC NOTES

Hello everyone! I want to thank everyone for coming out for our Winter Concerts. I think they were very successful and the students did an amazing job! I am really proud of the work they have done since September.



During the 2nd quarter, each class worked on their songs for the winter concerts. They also got to watch parts of The Nutcracker in December. When we returned to school from break, the students continued to venture on. Kindergarten started to learn about Long and Short Sounds and how different each sound makes. 1/2 Grade started to learn about the Instrument Families and which instrument belonged in each family. 3-6 Grade started to learn about music from other countries. They learned about the culture, where the country is located, listened to their national anthem, and learned about the different instruments they created/played. The countries they learned about were India and Mexico.

I can't wait to continue to teach the wonders of music! Have a musical day everyone! - Mr. Swiger

ART

It's hard to believe that we've already completed the second semester of the school year! The time seems to fly by especially fast while creating in the art room! One more successful fundraiser is in the books for this school year. We raised an astounding \$661.95 for the art program! These funds will be used to purchase supplies for future projects. Thank you to everyone who was able to make a purchase during the ordering windows. Your support is greatly appreciated!



In the beginning of the second quarter, **Kindergarten** learned about an

artist named Paul Klee. He was an artist who used basic shapes when creating his whimsical artwork. Students were asked to create fall trees by using red, orange, and yellow pieces of construction paper cut into circles and triangles. They also used brown squares. With the squares, students build tree trunks and with the triangles and circles students added leaves to their trees. After that, we discussed patterns and how to make a pattern. Students used pastels to color in their mittens with patterns. Then, they cut them out and glued them onto blue or purple construction paper. Finally, they used white oil pastels to add snowflakes in the background. We just began exploring color theory and have learned about color mixing. I read the book *Mouse Paint* and we looked at a color wheel to help understand which primary colors make secondary colors. Students had firsthand experience in making secondary colors by mixing red, yellow, and blue on a large piece of paper with the help of their table mates. Next, students will be learning about warm and cool colors and where we can use colors to tell temperature.

First and second grade began the second quarter by learning about Sioux Native Americans. We discussed what their lives were like in the past and how some of their traditions continue today. We also looked at photos of their colorful pottery. Then, students used colorful modeling clay to build coil pots. Some students even chose to attach handles or make lids for their pots! For the next lesson, we discussed collages and how they are made. Students were then tasked with cutting out pieces of green, white and brown pieces from magazines. After that, students used those magazine pieces to build pine trees in the snow by gluing them onto blue construction paper. For the background, students punched out white circles with hole punchers and glued them on. These beautiful trees are on display in the hallway! We just learned about Chinese New Year and how it's celebrated differently than the way we celebrate in the United States. Students will be making paper plate fans and using red, black and gold paint to decorate them.

Third and fourth grade began the quarter by learning about artist Wayne Thiebaud who was famous for his dessert art. Students drew pictures of fall desserts like pie or cake and used oil pastels to color them in. Before winter break, we learned about the Navajo Native Americans and their gorgeous woven blankets. For the project, students chose a piece of 12x18 construction paper and they cut strips into them. Currently, students are using additional strips of paper to weave into their blanket. Next, they will draw patterns on them and then use yarn to attach at the end for tassels.

Fifth and sixth grade started off the quarter by finishing their Vincent van Gogh inspired pumpkin patches. After that, students learned about adding shadows to their drawings. Together, we practiced various shading techniques and using them when drawing. Next, we discussed still life art and made paper viewfinders. Students learned that viewfinders help artists focus on their subject by erasing background clutter and they practiced using them around the classroom. After that, students drew objects like coffee mugs and giant foam dice that were placed in the middle of their tables. Lastly, students used the shading techniques that they learned about to help their objects come to life! We just began learning about one point perspective. We looked at photos that showed one point perspective and students were asked to find the horizon line, where the ground meets the sky, and a vanishing point, which is an invisible dot where objects seem to disappear. Students are learning how to draw letters and numbers in one point perspective. For the final project, students will be drawing words in perspective.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Happy New Year Everyone! I hope you all had a great holiday season and are kicking off a happy and healthy new year. This year so far in health class, my third through sixth grade students are starting to learn about how our environment affects our health and what steps we can take to improve our health and environment either inside or outside of



our homes. Kindergarten through second grade are learning about each of the four seasons, appropriate clothing they should be wearing during each season, and why sunscreen is so important to wear during exposure to sun for extended periods of time during our summer months. Looking ahead into the new year, students will be learning about the heart and how we can keep our hearts healthy. We will be completing heart healthy activities and will start raising money for the American Heart Association. In gym class, we are starting a scooter unit for Kindergarten through second grade by learning scooter safety, ways we can move our bodies with the scooter, and completing fun scooter games. We will also start a unit on using the parachute and will complete fun activities with that as well. For students third through sixth grade, students also completed scooter activities and will be moving onto learning basic floor hockey skills, learning how to pass the hockey puck with partners, being able to shoot a hockey puck, and end the unit with different floor hockey games and activities.

I look forward to all the fun we are going to have during the next couple of months in Wellness class. I hope you all have a great start to the new year!

LIBRARY

Hello families, It's hard to believe we are halfway through the school year already! We've read a lot of great books together and covered a lot of topics in the library. I've shared books with all grade bands on the themes of Veteran's Day, World Kindness Day and American Indian Heritage Month. We've also explored the library by reading Biographies, identifying Story Elements and practicing finding non-fiction books with the Dewey Decimal System. This marking period our Author Spotlight for Kindergarten was Jan Brett, 1st and 2nd grade was Kevin Henkes, 3rd and 4th was Katherine Applegate, and 5th and 6th was Dav Pilkey. Happy Reading!



Thank you, and happy reading!
-Emily Windover, Librarian

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education Updates and Information:

Speech and Language:

I'm Afraid My Child Has a Speech-Language Disorder: What Do I Do?

Don't panic – professionals called speech-language pathologists (SLPs) work in schools and can help your child.

Talk to your classroom teacher and share your concerns. Ask about your child's communication within the classroom environment.

Ask what the process for getting a speech language screening is in your child's school?

If your child has been referred for a speech-language evaluation and you are in agreement, make sure you sign the documents to begin the evaluation process. Contribute to the evaluation process by sharing your thoughts on your child's speech-language abilities. Participate in meetings about the evaluation and, if your child qualifies for services, the Individualized Education Planning (IEP) meeting.

My Child Has Qualified for Speech-Language Services – Now What?

An IEP meeting will discuss your child's present levels of performance and goals for the future. If you don't understand something during the meeting, be sure to ask questions. Your SLP will probably give you ideas about how to help your child at home. If not, be sure to ask. Keep track of your child's progress by reading their progress reports from the SLP and

asking questions.

Keep talking to your child. Have conversations during dinner, when riding in the car, while playing at the park, etc.

Types of Speech and Language Disorders

- **Articulation Disorders:** difficulty producing speech sounds, such as substituting /w/ for /r/
- **Fluency Disorders:** disruption in the flow of speech, such as stuttering
- **Expressive Language Disorders:** difficulty expressing needs, ideas, or information to others
- **Receptive Language Disorders:** difficulty following directions or understanding what others say
- **Pragmatic Communication Disorders:** difficulty with the social aspects of language, such as eye contact, facial expression, turn-taking, topic maintenance, etc.
- **Voice Disorders:** difficulty with respiration, phonation, or resonance resulting in atypical vocalizations (breathy voice, hoarse voice, etc.)

More questions? Visit:

<https://www.pattan.net/Disabilities/Speech-Language-1/For-Families> for more information.

Our processes for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services include, but are not limited to, school-wide benchmark assessments, Multi System of Tiered Support (MTSS) including Response to Intervention (RTI) for reading and math, Speech and Language screenings, Occupational Therapy screenings, Physical Therapy screenings, teacher referrals, and parent requests. Gettysburg Montessori Charter School currently provides itinerant and supplemental level services to all IDEA eligible students, which may include but is not limited to Learning Support services, Vision Services, Speech and Language services, Occupational Therapy services, Physical Therapy services and Deaf and Hard of Hearing services. Brochures reviewing the student identification process, the parents request for an evaluation process and additional topics are available to all parents and guardians in the entryway of the school. For further information, feel free to contact our Special Education Coordinator, Rebeka Black, at becky@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

Mckinney Vento Act:

Homelessness is not only living on the streets. If you are living in a shelter, motel, camper or doubling up with someone, you are considered homeless. We are here to help! Please reach out to us!

RTI

Response to Intervention (RTI) Does the winter weather get you down? For parents with little ones, winter days can feel like an eternity. Cold temperatures, snow days, weather hazards, the dreaded cold and flu season, and the onset of cabin fever can lead to a frustrating loop of, "I'm bored" and "What are we going to do NOW?" However, it IS possible to keep your kids healthy and happy this winter season without losing all your marbles. A good way to spend quality time with your children is to read together. Make sometime each evening to read and to talk about the books you read. Reading a longer chapter book or children's novel out loud to your child could also be a way that you read together. You will enjoy being together and discovering good stories. Additionally, another way to spend quality time together with your children is to tell stories from your own childhood. You can ask relatives and friends to share their own stories as well. Storytelling helps children become better readers. Family stories are also an important part of your child's heritage. For more ideas on how to keep your child reading through the winter, go to www.colorincolorado.org/article/winter-vacation-10-reading-ideas-parents

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Greetings GMCS families, I hope everyone enjoyed their winter break. I can't believe we are at the end of January already. Since we have come back from the winter break, we have covered several topics in Guidance class. We started the new year by discussing smart goals. In third through sixth grades, we followed that up by discussing personal beliefs. Those discussions allowed the students to explore and list their personal values and morals. We also discussed how we should consider our values and morals when making decisions. I will be discussing this with the younger students as well.

Parent volunteers will begin teaching their Junior Achievement classroom lessons over the next few weeks. A special thank you to our parents that have volunteered to teach those lessons. I do my best to provide opportunities for our students to have career exploration and obtain artifacts for their career folder. This will be one of those artifacts that will go into their folders.

Speaking of career artifacts, we will be holding our annual "Career Day" on May 12th from 9 AM to 2PM. We have expanded the time to allow the K-2 Students to attend as well. We still have plenty of room for anyone that would like to come in and provide information to our students about your career. Please email me if you are interested. My email address is aspack@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org

