



Center News

Directors Notes

Dear Parents and other interested adults!

It seems like we're finally getting to the victory lap against the Covid 19 pandemic. While it has been a horrific battle, I am most impressed by the attitude of the children as they have rather calmly accepted wearing masks, received lessons from something new called "Zoom," been restricted by not sharing anything with anyone for fear of germs, and tried their best to keep a social distance from friends and teachers (whatever that means, it sounds impossible to me).

Unexpected changes for children are somewhat unnerving. For you see, children get security from continuity, dependable schedules, and repeating routines in their everyday lives. So, to suddenly have their schedules turned upside down and to lose traditional rituals, makes children and even adults uncomfortable. And yet as we reflect on last year, we find that our students have rolled with the punches and have let so many changes into their lives for the sake of all of us.

I don't take this lightly. Rather, I revere the willingness of our students to accept our now misplaced rituals and to lose markers in their lives which would have previously calmed them and helped them enter new routines at school.

With widespread use of the vaccines, we can all, as a country not just as one little community Montessori school, begin to contemplate normalcy for ourselves and our children. We are eager for all of our students and staff to return to in school lessons and to eliminate remote learning.

I can remember when I was young teacher, the idea of computer education was important. There was even talk of computers taking over the whole educational model. However, that did not happen, and I don't think it will happen. For no matter how enticing the computer games are to children, for one's education there is nothing that can replace a real live teacher interacting with the children as only human beings can.

Enjoy your Spring Break with your family. We look forward to seeing you for the last quarter of this school year.

Janice Mattina
Founding Head

Center Montessori News

The Nest Teacher: Ms. Rosa Assistant: Ms. Ashley

"Since he must develop himself through his movements, through the work of his hands he has need of objects with which he can work that provide motivation for his activity."

- Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood

Maria Montessori stated, the first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult. The concept of an education centered upon the care of the living being alters all previous ideas. Resting no longer on a curriculum, or a timetable, education must conform to the facts of human life.

The Montessori environment at every level is a beautiful experience. One finds freedom, respect, beauty, and order. The young child knows and understands a great deal. They are full of knowledge and curiosity. Children under the age of 6 must take knowledge by themselves from the environment. This is why a prepared, neat and clean environment is so important. The young child is very much in the stage of the absorbent mind. They want to do it for themselves, so they watch the adults around them and imitate them. The teacher is also considered to be an object of learning in the environment, and as such, we take great strains to model peace, care, discipline, resolve conflict, and the proper way to do things.

It always saddens me when I speak to someone, and I tell them what I do, then in turn, they reference daycare. The Montessori way is nothing that can be compared to a day-care setting. This is when I get excited to share how important The Montessori Philosophy is!

It is hard to believe we are almost at the end of our school year. As we approach this time of the year, it is incredible how much your children have grown from our first day in class until now, experiencing the Montessori curriculum along the way.



Ellis, Legacy, and Amaré working peacefully in our classroom.



Ellis, Ethan, Zachary, and Santiago are enjoying the sand-box during play-ground time.



The children are playing drums during music time with Miss Alicia.



Children during playground time.

Center Montessori News

Primary 1

Teacher: Ms. Saleha

Assistant: Ms. Amy

Spring is in the air and the children are working very hard at developing and refining a number of skills. From polishing and scrubbing to handwriting, reading, tackling multi-digit math operations and problem solving, we are busy and progressing. Around this time of the school year, the older children start developing noticeable signs of growth into the second phase of development. From their physical aptitudes to their intellectual thirst, they are starting to show readiness to move up to the elementary classroom.

The ones who appeared so young or were new to the group at the beginning are now capable, independent and fully immersed members of our Primary 1 community. It truly is a gift to witness the growth of your children throughout these early formative years!

As we continue offering your children the numerous activities and experiences found in our classroom, I would like to share with you some ways you can support your child's Montessori learning within the home environment. What follows are some suggestions that complement the education your child gets in our primary environment that I consider helpful for us working together for the benefit of the child.

Avoid Getting Montessori Materials

To the surprise of many parents, there is no need to purchase Montessori didactic materials or specific educational toys, shows or apps that abound commercially. Our primary classrooms are carefully prepared environments designed specifically for the developmental needs of 2½ to 6-year old children. The teachers have spent rigorous hours of training to understand the purpose and functions of the didactic materials, observing children carefully and studying the theory underlying why we do the things we do. It would take the dedicated parent a lot of time and energy to replicate a classroom environment and even with the best of intentions, it will not be the same for the simple reason that home serves a different function.

Foster Independence

Young children have a natural inclination to do things on their own and parents can foster this by involving them in the family's daily life activities. Once you

find ways to involve your child in food preparation, dishwashing, recycling, sorting silverware, polishing surfaces, sweeping, mopping, gardening, setting the table, making the bed, and sorting laundry and folding, you will notice that he takes pride in being part of this. They are also very much capable of taking care of themselves. It may take longer for them to brush their hair and put on their clothes, socks or shoes, and will surely take a lot of practice and patience from the adult to coach them as they learn to effectively brush their teeth, wipe their bottoms, blow their noses, and wash their hair, but the end result is well worth it. As your child gains more independence, she will feel capable and empowered.

Encourage Concentration

In her writings, Maria Montessori often mentioned the powerful effect concentration plays in self-formation and skill building. When a child is absorbed in a cycle of activity, one should abstain from interrupting him as it is through concentration that he finds satisfaction in learning. Often times, well-meaning adults rush by making comments or lending a hand to the child, breaking the child's concentration. Other times, the distraction comes from the background TV noise or other electronic devices our modern time homes host. When parents become aware of this, they can encourage concentration by taking the time to observe their child engage fully in an activity and reducing the sources of distractions and sensory stimulations in the home environment.

Nurture Social/Emotional development

As human beings, we are all built to connect with each other and this is particularly crucial for children in their first plane of development (birth to 6). There is no educational toy or interactive app that can replace the interaction one has with their child. Connecting with the child through daily special time, storytelling, reading books, playing together, engaging in conversation, modeling appropriate behavior and problem solving, establishing routines, acknowledging feelings, expressing affection and caring for self and others, are great ways parents can nurture their child's social and emotional development at home.

Have a wonderful Spring Break with your child.

Center Montessori News

Primary 2

Teacher: Ms. Crystal
Assistant: Ms. Tammy

With the arrival of spring so many insects, blossoms and smells are being discovered across campus. Some of the creatures spotted are inch worms, lady bugs and butterflies. We are loving the blooming jasmine surrounding our playground and our herb garden is looking and smelling lovely!

This is the time of year we get to dive deep into my favorite area of the curriculum, cultural! Within this area we have biology. Biology is a natural science which studies living organisms. It has two distinct disciplines, the study of animal life which is called zoology and the study of plant life known as botany.

Since it is spring, we focus on life cycles, naming parts of animals, parts of plants, and the names of the animals and plants as we take our nature walks! The child encounters biology through spontaneous exploration of the environment.



Here are just a few topics covered in the areas of zoology and botany in the classroom.

Animal families

Learning names specific to the animals used in the activity and learning their collective names such as cow, calf, bull and cattle, as well as encouraging conversation initiated by the child on the topic.

Aims:

To make the child aware of families of farmyard animals

To extend the child's knowledge of the natural environment

To extend the child's powers of observation

To expand the child's vocabulary



Matching and pairing objects to cards/cards to cards

Through these lessons, the child learns to identify the similar features and to name animals or plants in the picture. The variety of the activities is endless!

Zoology: Our areas of study include insects, spiders, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, mammals.

Botany: We learn about and examine the parts of trees, flowers, bushes, vegetables, and fruits through simple pairing exercises. We prepare the child for future exercises in the classification of animal and plant kingdoms.

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Aims:

- To expand the child's vocabulary
- To further refine the child's power of observation
- To extend visual memory



Terminology cards

We focus on the matching and pairing of images, but this time the focus is on one specific animal/plant and the features which make it unique by highlighting the specific features of that species.

Aims:

- To make the child aware of the component parts of different animals or plants to increase the child's powers of observation
- To introduce the child to the function of these different parts
- To increase the child's vocabulary
- To prepare the child for the study of biology



Life cycles

These are studied to give children a better understanding of plant and animal life and prepare them for classification of animals and plants. Through this activity the child becomes familiar with the progression of life. Life cycles are suitable for introduction to younger children because they can be introduced through first hand experiences such as watching chicks hatch in an incubator, planting broad beans or seeing the metamorphoses of a butterfly using butterfly eggs.

Center Montessori News

Aims

- To make the child aware of the life cycles of the many diverse types of living creatures.
- To discuss subjects such as migration, hibernation, pollination, etc.
- To continue to make the child aware that living creatures are interconnected and that life is a never-ending cycle, even though individuals die.
- To supply more practice at observation skills needed for any matching activities.
- To extend the child's vocabulary.



Along with all this fun, during March the children have been busy spring cleaning the classroom. As part of the Montessori curriculum the children are introduced to caring for the environment both inside and out. Some of the lessons introduced were dusting and scrubbing our tables and chairs. Our classroom is looking amazing!

Our artist of the month is Pablo Picasso. We hope you loved your nature themed Picasso inspired faces!! Thank you for sending in so many treasures found on your family nature walks.

Our composer of the month is Antonio Lucio Vivaldi, an Italian Baroque composer, virtuoso violinist, teacher, and cleric. Born in Venice, he is recognized as one of the greatest Baroque composers, and his influence during his lifetime was widespread across Europe. He was born on March 4, 1678, in Venice, Italy and died July 28, 1741, in Vienna, Austria

Please join me in welcoming Kalai and Family to our P2 Classroom!



****If you have not met with me for your child's parent/teacher conference, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I am excited to share the children's progress.**

Center Montessori News

Primary 3 Teacher: Ms. Betty Assistant: Ms. Yenisis

Peace Education is a major component of the Montessori classroom. The directress and older students in the Montessori environment model peaceful and respectful behavior and serve as Peace Education is a major component of the Montessori classroom. The teacher and older students in the Montessori environment model peaceful and respectful behavior and serve as role models for younger children and they are taught the importance of how to resolve conflicts peacefully. The lessons presented in this area promote independence, respect and awareness of how to maintain friendships.

When conflicts occur, we encourage the Primary children to walk to the peace corner or peace table to resolve the problem using the "Peace Rose." This white silky rose is used by the students to take turns sharing their feelings and resolving their differences. The child holding the rose will have the opportunity to express his/her feeling to the other child after a conflict or disagreement happened, and together they will find a solution to their disagreement. Finally, both children hold the rose together and say, "we declare peace." Some activities that are included in our peace curriculum are yoga poses and books and activities on how to care for oneself.

This month we have been studying the life and work of the French contemporary painter and sculptor, François Morellet. The children chose one of his paintings and we recreated one of Morallet's works of art. We allow the children to be creative and encourage them to express themselves through artwork; they can develop ideas and express emotions with artistic activities that are full of processes that can nurture their souls. Our children love to paint and this is a perfect activity for the children to strength their eye and

hand coordination, concentration, and order.

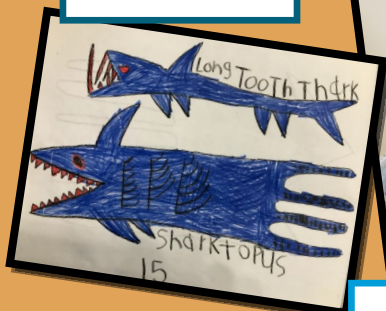
Our children love to be part of science experiments and projects. Each week a new experiment is presented to them. They love to guess what will happened before the experiment, and they share their conclusions with their peers once the experiment has ended. Activities like this nurture the child's intellect and their curiosity, help them expand their vocabulary and help them acquire new ways to ask questions and not to be afraid to make mistakes.

Each morning the children participate in a reading section, and even though some of them are on different levels, they still join the reading group. This is where we can observe one aspect of the Montessori Method taking place. The oldest students learn how to be patient with the younger children as they are learning new sounds and new words, without telling the answer, and the younger students learn how to be quiet as the older students concentrate to read. On occasion the older students read and write their sentences, then create a small booklet and politely offer to read it to a younger friend.

As the year passes by, we continue to make activities that allow us to strengthen our community. For Valentine's Day, the children baked friendship cookies and made a long friendship chain that we hung in our classroom. Each child used paper to draw or write a message of kindness to our friends. Once all the children had finished, we stapled the paper pieces together, creating a chain for our classroom. Our next activity as a community will be planting seeds in our EarthBoxes. The children will be in charge of watering and taking care of the seeds. Each child will have a role and will be responsible for a part of the process, according to their age and capability.

Have a wonderful Spring Break!

Toby P. art work



Alec, Meher and Eadon teading books at the quiet corner.

Alec S. reading a book at the quiet corner.



Christian presenting his art work inspired by Francois Morellet.

Center Montessori News

Elementary 1

Teachers: Ms. Rachel & Ms. Giannina

Assistant: Ms. Melanie

A fabulous time was had by all as we enjoyed our first field trip this morning to kick off spring break! It's difficult to believe that we are marking one year since the beginning of the pandemic. Last year when we said goodbye to your children for spring break, we were of course unaware that it would be our last goodbye in person for the school year, as well as our last hug for many months. During this time of uncertainty and uncharted territory, we did what we have always done as Montessorians; we problem solved and found creative ways in which to meet the needs of your children as we strive to educate the child – the whole child. For us, this means not only providing academic rigor to meet the child's intellectual needs, but also finding new ways to meet the child's emotional and social needs while keeping them safe and healthy during the pandemic.

This year, we were excited to be given opportunities to embrace our outdoor work spaces and to expand our curriculum to actually include our beautiful outdoor environments as lessons themselves. The Montessori Botany Curriculum is a beautiful component of the Montessori Method and the children delighted in these outdoor lessons in the Florida sunshine. We studied the Plant Kingdom in depth, including ferns, conifers, mosses, and flowering plants. Many of our students can now enthusiastically identify every plant species on campus! We also planted a butterfly garden, which now has produced caterpillars and butterflies. The children continue to delight in our discoveries and observations in that special place.

The understanding that the pandemic caused uncertainty and anxiety for the children led us to also offer many lessons aimed at taking care of our hearts and our minds. The children meditate every morning and have a special meditation Monday mornings based on a famous work of art. Following that Monday meditation, the children created art inspired by that mindful looking. With paintings, drawings, and colorful collages, the children were allowed to be children. Yoga has always been an important part of our curriculum and this year, it proved even more poignant and precious. We breathe, calm our minds and our bodies, and find our own peace.

Throughout these times, we have come to understand what we have always known: when children feel safe and loved, when they are able to grow their hearts, then in the process, they grow their brains. Spring is in the air and we are growing amazing things here!

We wish you all a safe and healthy spring break, mindful that we are all in this together to keep our school community healthy. We look forward to welcoming

everyone back on Tuesday, March 23. We will have Teacher Work Day on Monday, March 22 with conference times available for anyone who would like to meet with us.

Be safe and be well. Thank you!

Center Montessori News

Elementary 2

Teachers: Ms. Jayne & Ms. Erica

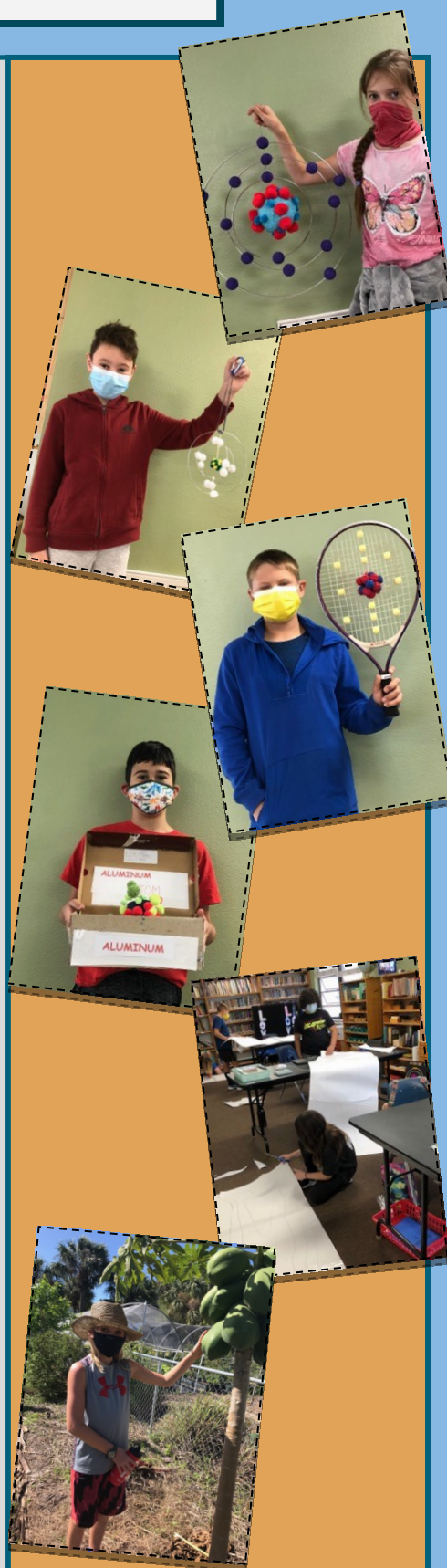
Dr. Maria Montessori believed that it was important for a child's education that he or she make connections within the curriculum rather than to study each "subject" individually. She recognized that history and science tell a part of the same story. She called this story the Cosmic Curriculum. In this way students are offered a context for all of their learning. Thus, we start our learning about chemistry with the story of the Big Bang in E1. Soon after there is a lesson on the life and death of a star in which all of the elements come into being as part of the reaction of a supernova, and the study of chemistry begins.

With this contextual foundation, students begin the study of chemistry in E2. Here we review the context in which all matter is created and then go deep into the subatomic parts of the atom, reflecting once again on the role of subatomic particles in the creation of the universe. As part of this study each student chose an element, with an atomic number less than 22, and created a 2-D rendering of the electron orbitals in Google Classroom. Students then used the 2-D picture as a map to make a 3-D model at home. Pictured are a number of projects created by our talented class. We also studied the history of the organization of the periodic table of the elements. In this way, we begin to understand the why's and how's of the groups and periods that make up the table's structure. In a continued study of the elements, we reviewed the states of matter. In E1, students do a dance of the molecules emulating the frenzy of molecules as a gas. E2 students learn about plasma and Bose-Einstein condensates. Chemical reactions and even examining chemical equations will be part of our future study late in the quarter.

E2 students have enjoyed gardening in this lovely spring weather as well, planting tiny Boston red lettuce starts along with romaine lettuces. As part of their gardening experience, we took our first field trip of the year to a farm near our school. The farm serves a dual purpose, teaching veterans and visitors about best practices in organic farming, like grouping edibles with native plants. Students had an opportunity to explore the extensive nursery as well as visit the permaculture sites on the property.

Our gardening program also supports our study of early civilizations and the dawn of agriculture. As students cultivate the land, they are emulating the tasks of our ancestors as they began to make discoveries in the planting of crops. This quarter we are studying the ancient Mesopotamians, the Hittites, and the ancient Egyptians in preparation for our ancient Greek study next year.

All these connections in curriculum were devised to inspire each child. In Maria Montessori's words, "Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core."



Center Montessori News

Level 3 6th Grade

Teacher: Ms. Deana

Our third work cycle involved toothpick bridges! Each year the students have lessons on types of bridges, compression and tension, and bridge research. In the afternoons, they worked on building a toothpick bridge. They had to follow very specific guidelines regarding weight, height, length, and width. At the end of February, they participated in the annual toothpick bridge competition that is open to students in Sarasota and Manatee counties held by local engineers. We were excited to learn that some of our students placed in the top three winners.

One of our math lessons during this work cycle included tessellations. This is an ancient Roman form of tiling that produces beautiful patterns. Today, it is also seen as a pattern that repeats and fits together without overlapping. Our class also created big polyhedral models out of cardboard. Coordinate graphing was a fun lesson for our class to work on. They learned about the origin, x-axis, y-axis, and different quadrants. They used these skills to plot points on a graph to create pictures. They also practiced this skill by playing Battleship. Our focus for geometry was angles. The students learned how to use a protractor to measure angles.

We read a short story from Junior Great Books. It was a science fiction story written by Ray Bradbury in 1950. It was about how technology is not always a good thing. It provided discussion between our students about how their phones and televisions affect their lives. We also read the novel *Iqbal*. This is a true story about a young boy trapped in the carpet making industry in Pakistan. The students enjoyed reading about this remarkable boy that worked hard and gave his life trying to help other children trapped in modern slavery.

We were fortunate to have the book fair this year. Our students were instrumental in our success! They helped move the book cases out in the mornings and in at the end of the day. They helped organize the book shelves and run the cash register. They helped the younger students write their wish lists and find their books. It is always a great experience for our students to practice some practical life skills.

We started something new this work cycle- STEAM challenges. Each week, the students are given a challenge that relates to science, technology, engineering, art, or math. The students have partners or work on their own. Some of our challenges have included seeing how long of a paper chain they can make out of a single piece of paper, building the tallest structure using only straws and two feet of tape, building a boat out of aluminum foil and seeing how many pennies it can hold before it sinks, and trying to build the tallest structure out of twelve index cards. For Valentine's Day, they created structures using gummy hearts and toothpicks. These activities are fun, and really encourage the students to think outside the box!



Center Montessori News

Level 3 7th & 8th Grade
Teachers: Ms. Robin & Ms. Beronica

Modeling Style and Poetry in Middle School Writing

Modeling the writing of established authors is part of our approach to developing students' ranges of expression in their own writing. Our goal is not to force particular styles on our students, but to encourage them to experiment with a variety of writing styles and to broaden their own written expression.

How do we do this? One of the activities 7th and 8th grade students do on a weekly basis are "apprentice sentences" (or sometimes short apprentice pieces of several sentences or a paragraph). Given a sentence from an established author, the students break down the structure of the piece they're modeling, and analyze it both grammatically and stylistically. They then choose their own topic, and write a piece using the general form of the original. At the end of the week, students share their apprentice sentences during language time, and positive feedback is given. To make the apprentice sentence exercise clearer to the reader, here is a specific example:

This is the assigned apprentice sentence the students were using as a model:

"Gigi Boudakian's hands there, were the most beautiful, the softest, the warmest. Gigi Boudakian's eyes there, were the softest, the warmest, the brownest; the feeling spread, my chest filling, overfilling, overflowing, the mad electrical sense rising up into my throat, sinking down into my stomach, down, down, Gigi Boudakian, doing nothing more than touching my hand with her hand."

—Chris Lynch, Inexcusable

Here is one student's piece, modeled on the above:

*My cat's paws are the furriest, the softest, the orangest.
My cat's fur is the orangest, the softest, the warmest.
The sadness shrunk, leaving, fleeing, escaping,
The happy feeling spreading into my heart, into my brain, up, up.
Lotus, doing nothing but sitting near me.*

- Austin C

You can see how the student has modeled the author's use of repetition in the first two lines, as well as much of the phrasing in the last three lines.

This last cycle we studied different forms of poetry: haiku, sonnets, odes, and sestinas. Before writing a particular type of poetry, the students had a general lesson on the form, and also spent time reading then responding in writing to well-known poems of that style.

Center Montessori News

Level 3 7th & 8th Grade Teachers: Ms. Robin & Ms. Beronica

In the two pieces below, students took style clues from the odes of Pablo Neruda when writing their own odes. The odes themselves are about common everyday items, similar to the subjects of Pablo Neruda's odes:

Ode to My Mask

Oh mask,
You are so beautiful
You help me oh so much
I can't explain
You fit just right
With your elastic straps
You get me through this awful outbreak
We've been friends for awhile
You are always there for me
I love that we bond so well
It's like you're an extension of my body
Cloth and elastic
Beauty and grace
Love and hate
Oh I just can't wait
to let you go.

-Ellie M.



Ode to My Blanket

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Blanket | Never distracted |
| Fluffy exterior | Always waiting |
| Warming softness | Never bored |
| The patterns | Never impatient |
| The touch | Never faltering |
| The happiness | It is a light in the dark |
| It keeps me safe | A friend |
| At night | A calm, |
| When | A hope, |
| The beasts come | A dream, |
| The safety it gives | An ocean, |
| Promises new hope | A puppy, |
| Hope for success, | A happiness |
| For clarity, | He is my blanket. |
| For strength, | |
| For light, | |
| And for the love | |
| The softness is sun | |
| It warms me | |
| It calms me | |
| As though nothing bad will | |
| happen | |
| Like the face of a puppy | |
| Lifting me up when I am | |
| down | |
| Giving me a smile | |
| When nothing is good | |
| Giving me strength | |
| to power through | |
| Challenges. | |
| It is like an ocean | |
| Never ending | |
| Always coming | |
| Lying in wait | |
| For me to come home. | |
| Waiting to save me | |
| From any darkness that | |
| could come | |
| It waits | |

Center Montessori News

Level 3 7th & 8th Grade

Teachers: Ms. Robin & Ms. Beronica

The most challenging form we worked on was the Shakespearean sonnet, and the most challenging aspect of the sonnet was writing in iambic pentameter. It took a great deal of practice for our students to write mere sentences in iambic pentameter, much less a 14-line sonnet! In addition to reading Shakespearean sonnets, we also listened to some hip-hop that naturally uses iambic pentameter, to get a sense of the meter. When writing their sonnets, students were encouraged, but not required, to use the meter in several or more lines of their sonnets.

Sonnet by Diver

Everyone watches movies and shows
And nobody ever looks up from their phone
Instead of talking we just look down
Not even noticing what's going on around
And with this virus we now have an excuse
To stay at home and maybe take a snooze
But usually we just stare at a TV
And now our home is the best place to be
The saddest thing about our every day
Is that the virus will soon go away
But when it does, we'll just be stuck
Glued to screens and still out of touch
Instead of riding bikes with friends
We'll act as though it didn't really come to an end

It's possible to merely read material and get ideas for writing. But the actual process of modeling is an experiential process, more structured to push the students into widening their horizons. You might wonder if we've used a similar approach to expository writing, and the answer is "yes," for writing personal persuasive essays. But we'll save that discussion for another time!