

Gateway Montessori Newsletter

October 2009



Upcoming Events:

- October 9: Bowers Farm Field Trip
- October 13: Red Cross Presentation "Let's Get Ready" for the Primary Students
- October 15: Parent Education/Curriculum Night, 7pm
- October 26: **SCHOOL CLOSED; ALL PROGRAMS CLOSED - Professional Development Day**
- October 30: Primary classrooms, Halloween Parade (weather permitting)
- November 5: Parent Teacher Conferences, 3-8pm
- November 6: **School Closed; Infant Care and Toddler/Primary Daycare available* (Holiday rates apply)** Parent Teacher Conferences, 8:30-1:00pm
- November 16: School Pictures
- November 19: Thanksgiving Feast, 6pm
- November 25: **School closes at 11:30am; Infant Care and Toddler/Primary Daycare available after 11:30am. *(Holiday rates apply)**
- November 26-27: **School Closed; ALL PROGRAMS CLOSED**

Important Reminders:

- ✓ We do not allow students, parents, or staff to bring any peanut, tree nut or nut related product into school.
- ✓ The weather is getting colder; please remember to check your child(s) extra clothes basket and make sure that it is stocked with weather appropriate clothing!
- ✓ Please turn in all of your paperwork from the beginning of the year (Emergency Cards, Health Appraisal Forms, E-mail request, Photographic Release, and Snack and Sunscreen Permission Slip).

News from the Office:

Welcome to the 2009-2010 School Year! This is the first official newsletter of the year, and this is where you will receive a lot of your specific classroom information about the month that just passed, as well as the coming month. I will distribute newsletters every other month, via email, with a hard copy posted on the bulletin board, outside of Ms. Michelle and Ms. Irene's room. Newsletters do not replace Gateway Updates sent via e-mail; they go into detail about what is happening in your child's classroom. I will also write a short blurb from the office, about what is happening that affects the entire school, with reminders of dates and upcoming events.

Due to multiple inquires, we will be selling t-shirts, sweatshirts, and tote bags within the next month or so that display the Gateway logo, in a variety of different colors. The shirts will come in either long or short sleeves, the sweatshirts will come in either crew neck or hoodie style, and the tote bags will come as close to the same quality of those sold in previous sales, as possible. Please look for information to follow.

The Gateway Staff has requested that we produce a cookbook with recipes from families and staff members, alike. This was done several years ago, and was apparently a big hit for holiday gift giving. You should have received an email on Monday, explaining the process of recipe submission, online. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask, as I am looking forward to the end product and making all of the delicious recipes throughout the years.

Calendar Correction: The calendar that was sent out in August with the emergency cards, health appraisal forms, etc. had an asterisk next to the school picture dates, stating that they were subject to change. The reason was because I had not firmed up the company, or the dates that they would be available, but since have and wanted you to know that the date is **Monday, November 16th**. We will be using the company, Images 4 Kids, a division of Portraits for Life, LLC in which they specialize in daycare/preschool photography so the crew is very comfortable working with children under the age of 6. They are very patient with the children and work very hard to get the highest quality portraits for parents. They make sure that every child has their hair combed, face wiped, shoes tied, etc. The proofs are delivered within 10-14 days, in which you will have about one week to make a decision and place your order. You may do so by either turning your order into the office, or by ordering online using their own secure password. Pictures will be delivered approximately 2 weeks following the order turn in date.

We are in the process of putting together a fundraiser at Noodles & Company Restaurant, in Troy, located on Crooks Road, just north of Big Beaver, sometime within the next couple of months. Several times a month Noodles partners with local charitable organizations to raise money to support their groups; they take on the cost of designing and printing flyers for our school to distribute to advertise the benefit, and then donate 25% of sales from any person bringing the flyer back on the agreed night. More details to follow.

The front playground has officially broken ground! The concrete has been removed to make way for a new pathway, lined by flower gardens, vegetable gardens, green grass, and a sand pit. With everyone's fingers crossed, we'll have it done by the time your children are entering college. I'll keep you posted, as to whether or not, planting is still a smart thing to do, and if by chance we can still fit it in this season, we'll get right to it the second they give us the go ahead.

I hope that you are enjoying either being back at Gateway or starting new; regardless, we are happy that you are here. Take care, and enjoy your October!

Ms. Lisa

News from Ms. Neelam and Ms. Renee's class:

We would like to welcome both our returning families as well as our new families to the 2009-2010 year here at Gateway. We have had a very smooth start to the new school year as we say good-bye to summer and transition into fall.

During the first week of school, we made a list of classroom ground rules, which the children agreed to follow. Some of them include pushing in a chair before leaving a table, walking slowly in the classroom, using inside voices, and using kind words to one another. Following these rules will help the classroom to run smoothly, and be a peaceful place to work.

Practical Life has been a focal point of the classroom for many of our students. The children have been busy pouring and spooning beans, stringing beads, tonging objects, and twisting caps on various sized containers. The work the children do in Practical Life will promote order, coordination, concentration, and ultimately, independence. We have been assessing each of the students in all areas of the classroom, including Math and Language. This will help us to determine their capabilities, and to focus on areas that might need some nurturing.

What's coming up in October?

During this month, we will be looking forward to our annual field trip to Bower's Farm. In the classroom, we will be discussing animals on the farm, and we will have some exciting work on our shelves to coincide with this theme.

We will also be discussing the seasons, focusing on autumn. We will be picking up leaves on nature walks and using them for a raking work in Practical Life.

Thanks,
Ms. Neelam and Ms. Renee

News from Ms. Michelle and Ms. Irene's class:

Ms. Michelle & Ms. Irene began the 2009/2010 school year by welcoming the following new students to our classroom: Sophia Elizabeth, Angelo, Morgan, Andrew, Asher, and Siena. Our returning students, Alex, Anthony, Brooke, Sophia, Max, and David quickly made our new friends feel comfortable in our classroom environment. Everyone enjoyed seeing Clover (our gerbil), Pumpkin and Helicopter (our finches) again. We welcomed and named our new red beta fish: Apple.

Our students have been busy working with Practical Life, Sensorial, Math and Language works. The younger children are learning the important lessons of respect, concentration, and independence. New to our classroom is our "publishing wall" where our young emergent writers can display their amazing works. Additionally, we will be cooking every other Friday. This is a valuable lesson for the children on many levels as it incorporates math, language, refinement of movement and independence.

We introduced food-prep with a lesson in cream cheese spread on bagels - the children enjoy this work very much! They feel so confident preparing their own food and washing their dishes afterwards!

We look forward to our annual field trip to Bowers Farm in October as well as many wonderful fall activities. Pumpkins will be featured in many lessons including pumpkin washing, hammering, carving, and seed counting and roasting. We will discover the joys of window washing, flour sifting, pickle slicing, and soap peeling.

We realize mornings can be a hectic time for everyone, however, we ask you to be cognizant of the fact that our classroom begins promptly at 8:30. When the classroom door is closed, please be respectful of the children working and send your child into the room quietly. Thank you, in advance! We truly appreciate your cooperation.

Thanks,
Ms. Michelle and Ms. Irene

News from the Toddler Community 1:

Welcome Back!

It has been a great start to this new school year. We have eight returning children from both the Infant and Toddler Communities, and three children who are siblings of current and past Gateway students. We have watched as Olivia, Drew, and Lauren have come to pick up their brother and sisters and we are happy that they are "officially" a part of the Toddler Community.

In the fall, it is customary that we start our year off learning about farm animals and vegetables, as we get ready for our farm trip. We are also matching, sorting, and naming all kinds of colors, while also counting everything we see.

Throughout October, we will match, paint, and sort fall leaves; we will touch, taste, smell, and eat all different kinds of vegetables; we will also roll, cut, and carve pumpkins and introduce gourds into our environment. The gourds, in time, will dry out and become rattles.

Halloween is a fun time for children and adults alike, but can be overwhelming for Toddlers who see everything as concrete, and have not been able to yet see the abstractness in things. It is because of this that the Toddler Community does not participate in the Halloween parade or party or any sort. We do have our own Halloween fun, but we keep it calm and low-keyed (NO COSTUMES, PLEASE). It will make for a much happier day for your child.

Some reminders:

- We go for a walk in the woods, every Friday from 9:30-11:30, weather permitting. Please make sure your child has good walking shoes. Wood chips and small sticks get caught in sandals and croc's, not to mention as the weather gets cooler, the grass can still be wet with dew and cold on exposed feet.

- Our playground is surrounded by concrete and is chilly in the mornings (even on warm days). Please send a coat with your child or leave one at school (name on it, please!)

If you have any questions or concerns about this new chapter in your child's life, please let us know. We will be happy to set up a conference either in person, or by phone.

Thanks,
Kristi, Jen, and Peggy

News from the Toddler Community 2:

What a great start to a new school year! The children have transitioned well into our wonderful new Toddler 2 class. How fun it was watching them walk in the first week and start working with all the new materials. We have pictures on our window please stop by and check them out!

In September, we will be working on the rules of our classroom such as putting our lessons away for our next friend, using our walking feet and our inside voice. We also have been getting use to setting our own place settings at the snack table and washing our dishes when we are finished.

I have introduced our hand-washing lesson. The sound of the water pouring into the bowl and the feel of the soap in their hands and the wonderful feel of the water make this one of their favorite lessons. In October we will be washing pumpkins!

We have been working with farm animals getting ready to go the Farm. We enjoy matching the animals to real pictures and reading about all these wonderful animals.

In October we will learn about autumn and all the wonderful things it brings! One of which is seeing the leaves change color when we go on our weekly walks.

Thanks,
Ms. Tracey and Ms. Colleen

News from the Infant Room:

All the children are back and the hallways are buzzing! Welcome to all our families! What a wonderful way to start the new school year.

I would like to welcome Sienna to our infant community; Sienna is a delight and we are excited to have her.

My, how the boys are growing! Ethan will be celebrating his 1st birthday in October. Julius is busy crawling around the room. Ben and Eli are close behind sitting up so straight.

The children are really enjoying going outside and playing with their friends. They also are enjoying their time with Ms. Yolanda in Spanish and listening to Ms. Gretchen's wonderful voice in Music.

Thanks,
Ms. Tracey, Ms. Jan, Ms. April, Ms. Diana, Ms. Colleen, and Ms. Anastasia

News from Ms. Irene in Aftercare:

The Aftercare program is a natural extension of the Montessori classroom's philosophy, providing a familiar and comfortable environment for the children. The program begins at 2:45 with circle time and a story. In the first few weeks of school, the children were particularly amused by the following titles: "Otto Goes to School", "Froggy Goes to School", and "I Don't Want to Go to School". (Please don't be concerned about the last title. By the end of the story Simon the Rabbit enjoys school so much that he doesn't want to leave!) In selecting books, I understand that a good laugh makes circle time more enjoyable - whether a child has been working hard on lessons since 8:30 a.m., or has just woken up from a two-hour nap!

After story time, the children serve themselves snack and wash their dishes. They then choose from a variety of activities that are available including Montessori teaching materials, puzzles, art materials (coloring leaves for our big tree and play dough), building toys (Lego's and Brio train tracks), and the ever-popular dress-up clothes, which naturally lead to dramatic play! Ms. Sue and Ms. Dena are with the children until the end of the day, and they've been enjoying the outdoors as much as weather permits.

As we look toward October, we will begin to focus more on the fall season (leaves, apples, and pumpkins). Other October topics will include farm animals and Halloween, of course!

As a reminder to all Aftercare parents, PLEASE SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT EVERY DAY. This is a State Licensing Requirement. The sign-out sheet will always be on top right side of the shelves nearest the Aftercare room door. Thank you for adhering to this important policy!

Thanks,
Ms. Irene, Ms. Sue, and Ms. Dena

Music News from Ms. Gretchen:

After a busy and eventful summer, I am so happy to be back at Gateway having music classes with the children. I continued teaching private lessons to my piano, guitar, and voice students, spent time with my new niece, Sienna Lynn Gough (Ms. Renee's first baby), and completed and released my album of original songs entitled "Strong Ashes."

As you may already be aware, music classes for the Primary students have taken on a slightly different format from previous years. In order to provide the children with fewer interruptions, each classroom will have music once a week, with the younger and older children each having a 40-minute music class. This has resulted in much smaller class size, and so far the children are responding positively, with more individual attention, better concentration, and fewer behavioral disruptions.

In addition to singing songs, dancing, and playing musical games, this month we have been learning some fundamentals of ear training. We use xylophones with metal and wooden keys, and play "Name That Tune," as well as identifying stepping tones vs. skipping tones, and scales vs. chords.

I am looking forward to the rest of a wonderful school year with the kids!

Thank you,
Ms. Gretchen