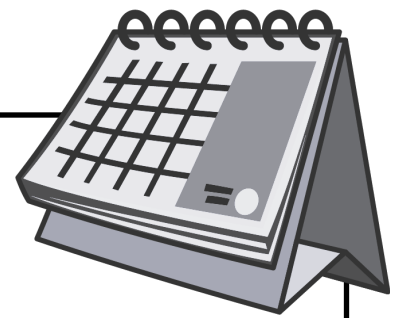


May



Upcoming Events

MAY

- **Tonight** - Vision Event –6:30 PM - 8PM - Hampton Campus –

We would love for you to be a part of forming what HRIMS looks like in the future! Please join our board, our staff, and our larger community to share your ideas and input on what would make our schools even more valuable to the Hampton Roads Community and our students. This event is for adults only. Our staff will be participating in the event so we will be unable to offer childcare.

- May 20 - Staff Professional Day- School Closed for Students
- May 30 - Memorial Day - No School

June

- June 2 – Progress Reports Sent Home
- Jun 3 - Last day of School—Half Day all Students
- June 13 - Summer Session 1 Begins
- June 27– Summer Session 2 Begins

HEAD OF SCHOOL

It is amazing to see how fast this school year has gone by. As May begins, we look not only to the culmination of this year, but to the opportunities and vision we have been presented with throughout the year and how those will shape our HRI Montessori future!

This school year, like the one before it, began with both uncertainties and possibilities, along with the excitement of how we continue to grow and adapt. Our community continues to grow in size and diversity, in programs and community partnerships, in staff members and leadership, and in our ability to respond to challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

We have had three priorities since June of 2020: Ensuring our students could attend school in person in a covid-safe environment that allowed for our students to be part of an emotionally safe community and continue their quest for academic excellence. We have been fortunate that our classrooms have been able to remain open thanks to the diligent efforts of all our staff and the policies and procedures that have been put in place by our leadership to ensure that our students could receive in person education.

While our students continued their educational journey, our community did not just manage through the pandemic. It continued on its strategic journey to become a leader in the community, to increase diversity, and to offer a Montessori education to more families. We have created partnerships with area businesses, the city and school district of Hampton, other private schools, educational support businesses, and local groups. We have been able to offer financial assistance to families participating in the Military's Childcare Aware program for all branches, including DoD and Coast Guard, as well as through the Virginia Subsidy Program, with increased participation each year. We have become a scholarship organization for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program and have had our own families help to support others by donating to this program for our elementary students. We have opened a second campus, allowing our enrollment to extend beyond the physical limits of our Newport News campus as well as offering a Montessori education that is more accessible to those living in Hampton and Yorktown. We have pursued grant opportunities to enable these to happen without placing the financial burden on our own families.

But we are not resting on our accomplishments. There is so much more we have to offer our students. We will be opening additional classrooms next year, as we continue construction on the Hampton campus to allow our Montessori education to flourish. We will be adding to our administrative team in order to best meet the needs of our growing schools and HRI Montessori community.

But we know that we can do more for our students, our families, our staff, and our greater community. What that looks like, we hope you will help us envision. We are excited that Brennan Smith will be with us on Wednesday night to lead our vision night meeting. Brennan is the co-founder of Inspired Action Network, working with organizations across the US on leadership and strategic planning. Brennan is also a former HRI Board Member and parent, familiar not only with Montessori, but with our community as well.

I hope you will be able to join us as we form our Vision of HRI Montessori in the year 2032! I look forward to the next month of school as we finish this school year and look to the excitement of what opportunities lie ahead for our students and our community.

Michelle

TODDLERS

Tantrums are a pretty normal part of life with children from 1 to 5 years. Your child is learning that things don't always go their way. This is a difficult concept for a toddler to understand and can be frustrating to them. As parents, you are helping them learn how to deal with these big emotions. While a child is having these emotions, and displaying them in a physical manner, it can be upsetting for a parent and frustrating for them as well. It's hard to realize that your child is actually asking for your help at this time. They are overwhelmed by the situation and are looking to you for your support and guidance on how to calm down and work through these emotions.



It can be possible to avoid tantrums before your child loses control. Here are some ideas to ward off tantrums when you see the first signs that your child is getting upset.

1. Be Prepared
2. Label Their Feelings (give them the vocabulary to express what they are feeling)
3. Redirected Them (help them focus on something else)
4. Get Down on Their Level (be sure to use a soft voice when your face is close to theirs)
5. If They Are Struggling Ask If They Need Help (questioning rather than telling)
6. Give Them A Choice (would they like a hug or to sit by themselves for a minute, or others of the kind)
7. Establish Routines (not knowing what is going to happen next can be frightening and overwhelming to children)

Even with some of these in place, an upset child's reaction or behavior can escalate to a full-blown tantrum. Sometimes they want to be in control or their language is limited. They can be tired, hungry, or overstimulated. They can throw themselves on the floor, push us away, or try to hit us.

It is important to know that it is not a reflection of your parenting and you should not be embarrassed about it. When we react to the behavior, it will get worse. Staying calm is important and focusing on the behavior. It can be useful to note things that cause your child's tantrums. Over scheduling can be common, a new baby, moving to a new house, or certain other children or visitors may trigger them.

It's okay for your child to have a tantrum. You can acknowledge their displeasure at what is going on. And help them to do the thing that they don't like. When we back down and give in to them, you will find they shout even louder next time, as we have shown them that the behavior will get them what they want or will soothe them. It can be



difficult to parent during these, but it is important to follow through by teaching them how to handle their emotions. Your hard work will pay off in the long term. They will learn that when you say no, you mean no; and when you say yes, you mean it too.

Look for ways that can support your child's efforts to calm down. Each child responds differently and needs different support.



CHILDREN'S HOUSE

We began this year together and we have again arrived in a season created for insects. Repetition is one of the foundations of learning in the Montessori classroom. To understand deeply we must come back to a work repeatedly. Each time we return we build upon the knowledge that we gained the last time we worked upon the work.

What about those two seasons of insects? At the beginning of this year most of the children did not like bugs. They were creatures to be stomped upon, screamed at, kept at a distance, and reviled. What a missed connection of wonder for our children! My friends were disconnected from their environment. Human beings cannot live without insects. Our Earth needs insects to sustain itself and its inhabitants. One of our works as Montessori guides is to guide the children in connecting to their environment.

Since the beginning of this academic year, we have continuously included different insect works and books in our children's house. The children all wanted to work on the spider tonging work. (So much so that they worked on their peace conversations as well.) They love insect books, plant books, and Earth books. They played life cycle and three part games with praying mantis, ladybugs, earthworms, and ant figures. They spotted bugs and were invited to observe them. Each time they observed an insect, they would ask me



why the insect was here. Each time, I gave the same answer, "Insects are a part of our community." The extended day children and I walked a lost insect out of school in order to release it into the grass. In the photograph the extended day children are cooperatively moving the organic soil that they placed over the seeds, which they planted to attract bees and butterflies to HRIMS.

In this second season of insects, the children ask me each day when the praying mantis eggs will arrive, so that they may watch the eggs hatch. They remind one another to be careful with the insects that they spot. On the day before Earth day, they reminded me that we need to take care of our insects, because insects are members of our community and provide all inhabitants of Earth with food. It is essential for the health of a child and the health of our Earth that the two are connected. As Dr. Montessori wrote in The Discovery of the Child, "Let the children be free; encourage them; let them run outside when it is raining; let them remove their shoes when they find a puddle of water; and when the grass of the meadows is damp with dew, let them run on it and trample it with bare feet; let them rest peacefully when a tree invites them to sleep beneath its shade; let them shout and laugh when the sun wakes them as it wakes every living creature."

ELEMENTARY

April is full of new beginnings. Our children came back from spring break, ready to work. We continue to work with botany materials, introducing and expanding on nature and the outdoor environment. Students focused on the parts of a seed and how seeds move, spread, or are transported away from their parent plant. After starting their seeds in the classroom, children were also excited to see their plants growing in the flower beds in Newport News. We are excited that, thanks to Ms. Lindsey, we just received a grant to have garden boxes installed at the Hampton campus!



We have been introducing lessons to review which is allowing them to revisit materials around the classroom and expand on their knowledge using them. Continent lessons were reviewed using puzzle maps to reinforce the names of countries and borders. This helps them put a picture to both historical and current events happening around the world, allowing them to see the relationships between countries, as well as spatial awareness. The proximity to water and other physical features also allows them context when they discuss transportation, types of shelter, and more. In addition, the pegged puzzle pieces and tracing process continue to refine a child's fine motor control helping to improve handwriting. Another topic that is often revisited throughout the year is zoology. Children enjoy creating labeled diagrams of animals. They research and learn about the animal's characteristics, diet, life cycle, habitat, and more.

The fifth and final great lesson about the beginning of numbers has been a huge success. The lesson tells how ancient people kept track of items, time, distance, etc., during a time when there were no standardized units for people to compare things. This was especially helpful when making a purchase at a market because trade was considered the first form of currency. You may have seen some splendid artwork being sent home of numerals from the drawings of the Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, Chinese, and Romans.

Elementary children are always curious about the world around them and they enjoy listening to stories. They show great interest during the morning community session, coming up with interesting ideas and problem-solving. During this second plane of development, children begin to look outside of themselves. They need to hear stories of greatness and goodness and moral values. The mind of the elementary child concerns itself with building a conscience, that inner sense of what is right and wrong. With this in mind, Earth Day has always been a fascinating topic to discuss because our children are conscientious young students who are aware of the world they live in. They want to help our planet and like to bring up many innovative ideas on how to do this. One important issue discussed was the amount of paper we use in our classroom, and they all agreed we should recycle paper for drawings and paintings. They were also concerned about trash on sidewalks and playgrounds and everyone wanted to help pick up litter in their everyday lives.



We have beautiful caring young Montessori children who want to make a difference in the world.

UPPER ELEMENTARY

April Showers Bring May Flowers

April has been an extremely busy month in the Upper Elementary Classroom. The children have been doing literary works and novel studies with Ms. Meg. They have continued to work on and expand on different reading elements which we have then applied to their writings to make them more descriptive and informative.

The students have been studying different Ancient Civilizations, which has resulted in many student-led discussions, research projects, and investigations. We revisited the History of Language and History of Numbers, two of Maria Montessori's Great Lessons, as we studied Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and very soon Ancient China. We have also looked at how things such as architecture and technologies developed during these times are still present in today's world.



In our Virginia Studies we have been learning about the American Revolution and the role in which Virginia played in the development, duration, and end of the war. The students have been reflecting on documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, and the meaning and cause for their creation. We have been working on numerous timelines to show the succession of war and the importance in the creation of the United States of America. With the students living in such a historical geographic area it has been amazing to see how they are pulling their real life experiences and connecting them with things that occurred so long ago.



We look forward to spring and are enjoying the fresh air and beauty of nature. This has been the perfect time for the students to really focus on their botany studies. From learning how to differentiate vascular and nonvascular plants, to telling whether a plant is a monocotyledon or a dicotyledon, the students are looking at plants in a whole new light. I sincerely apologize if there is any destruction of your flower beds or plants as the children are eager to pull out the plants to further investigate.

I would lastly like to take a moment to reflect on our last month of school and the amazing individuals in the Upper Elementary classroom. It has been a pleasure to work with your children this year. They are resilient, loving, inquisitive young adults. They are eager to learn and thrive to know more. The amount of growth these children have undergone the past 8 months is immeasurable. These children are going to do amazing things. A quote by Sean Junkins sums it up all too well for me when he states, "So often you find the students you're trying to inspire are the ones that end up inspiring you".