



# STARMAKER NEWSLINE

February 2012

## Florence Freeman, MBA, President/CEO

### Dates to Remember

- 1 Tuition Due
- 3 Morning classes only- Afternoon Daycare Program
- 14 Valentine's Day Celebrations
- 15 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School Celebrations
- 17<sup>th</sup> CENTER CLOSED at 12pm
- 20 CENTER CLOSED-President's Day
- 29 Leap Year Celebrations



### IMPORTANT INFO:

We are participating in the Box Tops for Education; please refer to page 11 for info.

The weather is quickly changing, please refer to School Reach to stay informed about delays or closings.

### Celebrating Our History and Culture

February is a month of celebrations and we have a number of them infused in our curriculum this month: Valentine's Day, Presidents Day, 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, and leap year celebrations. Your children will learn a lot about our culture and history during this month and how these celebrations build community.

Valentine's Day celebrates love and nurture, which is especially important in children's lives, helping them to develop into secure, self-confident, and loving adolescents and adults. The expression of love is an important ingredient in everyone's life but can make significant long-term positive effects on a child's life.

Presidents Day celebrations help children understand our history and learn about the most important government official in the US and how they have made a difference in everyone's lives. Learning about our history and culture helps us take action in the present and strategically plan for the future.

The 100<sup>th</sup> day of school celebrations tells us all that the school year is over half gone! But most importantly, it helps the children understand mathematical concepts of time and counting. This is a fantastic opportunity to develop artful projects that help them understand the concept of time.

The leap year celebrations also teach the children about the concept of time. Since leap years occur every four years, children learn the significance of February 29, which only occurs every four years. Those with birthdays on February 29 can only experience a birthday celebration on that date every four years! Unfortunately, we do not have anyone on campus, whose birthday falls on February 29<sup>th</sup>!

Celebrations play an important role in our lives and provide an opportunity to strengthen our relationships in new and exciting ways – different from our normal routine. Celebrating is an effective way to anchor our efforts in positive emotions and serves as a motivating factor for our children and staff. Join us as we celebrate all that February has to offer!

Happy February!

Ms. Florence

## Lynn Ennis, Director

### Montessori at Home

When new parents express an interest in joining our school, there is now a 3-step process for enrollment that we have put into place. First the prospective parents set up a time to tour our center. If they are interested and would like to join us they are next asked to give us an hour of their time. The first half hour is spent observing in a Primary (3 – 5 year old) classroom. Even if the parents are expecting and looking for a spot in the Infant room, it is still a requirement. The reason behind this is to help parents understand that Starmaker is a school not a daycare and also for them to experience a Montessori classroom in action by observing children working during the morning work cycle. The second half hour is used to give new parents an introduction to the Montessori philosophy. I encourage a conversation about their child's development and how, if it is not already in place, parents can get on the same page by incorporating the Montessori philosophy at home.

If you are wondering how you could use Montessori at home in your parenting, here are a few suggestions for using Montessori philosophy and values with your child.

Find respectful ways to redirect your child. For example, use description to direct attention and invite action; "The car is muddy and you can help to scrub the wheels." Be positive and tell them what they can do, rather than what they can't; "You can help me with dinner or draw Grandma a picture."

Observe your child. Observation is a tool used by Montessori teachers to understand a child and their needs. Take some time out from your busy life to step back and observe your child. It may help you to understand why they behave the way they do, what they are interested in, what they do well, what they are struggling with and how you can support them.

Offer your child the opportunity to contribute to your family. Independence is one of the greatest drives for a growing child. Children enjoy making a contribution to family life. Trust your child and give them opportunities to help. Children can contribute to cleaning up their room, meal preparation, setting the table, dressing themselves, organizing their toys, gardening, washing the car, planning menus and much more. Make it fun and show your appreciation for their efforts.

Involve your child in family decisions. Let them be part of the team. Find ways to involve your children in making decisions appropriate to your family. If your child is younger, they could help decide what to have for dinner or whether to go to the park or the beach.

Give your child the gift of time. Give your child the time to concentrate and focus without distractions. Give your child the time and quiet space to think and daydream. Try not put your child in front of a TV or computer screen for long periods of time.

Spend time with your child. Use every opportunity you have in your busy life to talk and listen to them. Spend time talking and listening when you are driving places in your car. Involve your child in exploring the world. Enjoy the opportunity to rediscover the world through your children and grandchildren!

## Educational Program

### Good Handwriting Impacts School Grades

By: Natalya Cisneros

A new study from the Florida International University found how well children learn to write has a significant impact on their academic performance later. Researchers analyzed information from three thousand Miami-Dade public school students. They looked at projects from pre-school and the second grade.

Laura Dinehart who is an assistant professor of Florida International University's College of Education stated: "We found that kids who had higher scores on the fine motor writing test in pre -K had better grades and better Stanford Achievement Test scores in second grade both in reading and math."

Pre-K students with good grades in writing had B averages in second grade math and reading. Pre-K students who did poorly had C averages. Professor Dinehart stated: "We think that kid that have greater attention skills could also have greater writing skill because they are able to focus and they are able to copy."

Maria Montessori was a great advocate of teaching writing before reading. Within the Montessori curriculum there is an order in which handwriting lessons progress. As soon as the child is ready to start putting a pencil to paper, Montessori pre-school handwriting lessons begin on lined paper. The Montessori curriculum has a large variety of pre-writing lessons such as sandpaper letters and numbers, chalkboard writing, pen and finger tracing, etc. There are numerous activities that prepare the child's hand for writing. Initial activities are found in the Practical Life and Art areas. Montessori pre-school handwriting lessons progress from large motor to fine motor skills. The child also moves from unlined to lined paper.

Preparation for good handwriting starts at home as well. While performing lessons or eating lunch your child should sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor and spine straight—not leaning. The child's hair should not be an obstacle. Your child should use a tripod grip known by the students as the "three finger" grip when holding a spoon, brush, pencil, marker or crayon.

Primary One students kindly agreed to demonstrate correct and incorrect postures while writing and eating.




---

"The education of the hand is especially important, because the hand is the expressive instrument of the human intelligence; it is the organ of the mind."

Maria Montessori

---

## Infant 1- Ms. Jeannette & Ms. Keonna

We would like to welcome Miles to our class. Jack will be moving over to Infant 2 so this isn't goodbye but just have fun with Ms. Brandy and Ms. Ashley.



During the month of January, we had to change our sensory snow play to a cool whip snow play since we didn't get any snow yet. We will do it whenever we get some snow. The infants like feeling the cool whip and listening to the crushing of the paper.

In February, we will be learning about Groundhogs, Valentines/Love, 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School and President's Day. We will be introducing eating utensils to the infants so when they start on food they will adjust better to the feel of the spoon. We will also be working on sitting up with support and rolling over.

We will be closing at noon on Friday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> for training and be closed on Monday, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> for President's Day.



## Infant 2 – Ms. Ashley & Ms. Brandy

We would like to welcome Daria and Jack to our classroom. We would also like to say goodbye to Grace. We hope you have fun with Ms. Karin and Ms. Ebony.

During the month of January, we learned about winter and snow. Unfortunately, we did not get much snow, so we could not do the planned activities. We practiced grasping objects.

In February, we will be doing a variety of things to celebrate President's Day, Valentine's Day, and the 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School. We will be introducing and practicing our large motor skills, such as sitting up, crawling and walking.



## Infant 3- Ms. Karin, & Ms. Ebony



In January we talked about Winter, Snow and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The children enjoyed coloring, painting and a variety of art projects. Our practical life lessons included dressing boards and pouring. We continued our daily lessons of motor skills, language and practical life. We are very excited to have Grace join our classroom; it is always so much fun making new friends!

In February we will continue our Winter theme. We will also include Valentine's Day, President's Day, Groundhog Day, and 100<sup>th</sup> day of school. We will have a Valentine's Day Celebration on the 14<sup>th</sup>. We will be making a group project for 100<sup>th</sup> day. Further details about both will be coming home soon. We will explore various painting techniques and continue working on our pre-writing skills. Our daily lessons will continue to focus on Sign Language, Language, Math, Motor Skills and Practical Life.

Thank you for the snack donations to our classroom. If anyone has old hand towels or bath towels they are willing to donate, please let me know. We are trying to have more bibs made for the classroom.

As the weather turns colder, please check your child's cubby for weather appropriate clothing. Please take a few minutes to review the health policy as well. Also, if your child is on medication, please let us know what type of medication and what they are being treated for. This allows us to watch for any side effects and further symptoms.



## Toddlers- Ms. Karen, & Ms. Amanda, Ms. Mary

In January we started out the New Year with touching on Healthy Snacks and Proper Hygiene. We have not seen any snow so far, but we have read many books and done several art projects. Other subjects we explored were bear hibernation, colors and counting. The children have been enjoying their mat lessons and learning more sign language.

We said good-bye to Max who has moved onto the pre-primary class with Ms. Tuana. He will be missed a lot, but will continue to grow with his new class. We also welcomed Ms. Megan to the Toddler room, and said good bye to Ms. Katilyn who has moved to the Primary One classroom. We like to thank Ms. Willmore for afternoon snack donations and stickers. Thanks also to Ms. Stephanie who brings in Healthy Snack on Mondays for the children to share at snack time. Just a quick reminder to send your child dressed appropriately for the cold weather as we plan to go outside everyday. Also, in an effort to save the environment we have started a compost bin located by the garden outside our building.

February will be just as exciting!!! We welcome Sydney to the Toddler side!!! This year is a Leap Year so we will be discussing this with the children. We will also review Dental Hygiene, Five Senses, Valentine's Day and Transportation. February 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day and we will be providing a class list for those of you who would like to exchange cards. We welcome any snack donations for our Valentine's Day celebration and will provide details about this celebration very soon.



## Pre-Primary 1 - Ms. Tuana & Ms. Tynisha

Good-bye January, hello February. Well, we said good-bye to 2 of our friends. Hunter E has moved to the PP2 environment and Luke O transitioned to the P2 environment. We wish them well as they grow in their new environments. A great big welcome to Max H from your friends in PP2.

January brought us a fresh start. We talked about various climates and the materials used to make homes there. We experimented with homemade snow, "thanks to the Singleton family", worked on our zipping and hammering skills and introduced the phonics c,g,h,i and r. In addition our class talked about New Years resolutions. Many in the class said they share with friends. "HOW AMAZING"!

This month we will continue with "c,g,h,i and r" phonics, create beautiful art with Valentine's, President's, Groundhog's, Dental Awareness and "we are all special" themes. We will also learn about Black History Month.



## Pre-Primary 2 - Ms. Megan & Ms. Laura

Hello, Winter! It is here and Pre-Primary II is watching out for all of nature's changes. The children are really paying attention to the trees. We have noticed that the leaves have fallen and that the sun is hiding. Everyday we have to answer questions and remind them of the new season. It is a lot of fun! We were also able to explore the seven continents and learn that there are people all around the world. We also learned that everyone is different and "Different is O.K.". We would like to thank our parents who helped with our 7 Continent Feast. The children loved it! In February, we are going to learn about our Five Senses. We encourage our parents to come in and volunteer to do activities with our class. In February, we will celebrate Valentines Day and 100<sup>TH</sup> Day of School. We will be sending out information closer to those dates regarding the classroom celebration. We also want to thank all of our parents for helping to enforce their child's independence by letting them walk in to the classroom alone. They are doing Awesome! We want to remind all parents about being a peanut-free school and checking cubbies for extra clothes.



## Primary 1- Ms. Natalya & Ms. Angelique

Dear Primary One Parents and Students,



The month of January is named after the Roman god of new beginnings. It is shown with two faces. One is looking back to the past and the other is looking forward to the future. Our little friends had an interesting discussion about their plans for the New Year. They talked about new beginnings for themselves such as:

"I will help my mom cook dinner."

"I am going to grow-up and be a pleasant girl."

"I will feed my dogs and take Christmas stuff."



The students like to listen to a story about how the children in Russia and Ukraine celebrate the Old New Year on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January and how St. Nicholas secretly placed candies in the shoes of those who behaved nicely. Our little friends were excited to find candies in their shoes. It did not take them long to figure out it was Ms. Natasha and not St. Nicholas who put the candy in their shoes.

Our little friends had a good time with Miss Rebecca for two weeks and could not wait for Miss Angelique to return. They often asked why Miss Angelique was having such a long "lunch" break. They were missing her very much.



During the Month of January we began learning the Land Unit. We talked about gravity. It was amazing how quickly my little scientists turned the story about gravity into a play.

We also learned how to keep ourselves healthy in cold weather. And my little athletes had great fun during our forest walks and enjoyed outside exercise. We continued learning about the world's biomes and traveled to the north and south poles. My little friends were curious to find out that the word arctic comes from the Greek word for bear and refers to the two constellations in the northern night sky – Ursa Major (great bear) and Ursa Minor (little bear).



The month of February will have many events but **Montessori Week** is a very important event for us. Please plan to come and observe your child's morning session and afternoon kindergarten session during the month of February. The sign up list and announcement will be on the Parent's Message Board.



Dear parents, when you bring your child in the morning let him walk to the classroom by himself. It is very important that the students start the morning session without parental interruption. Please do not enter the classroom in the morning. If you need to talk to the teacher, please leave a message in the front office and we will contact you. Our class starts at 8:30 a.m.; please bring your child to school on time.

We are very thankful to Ms. Patricia Manuel for making math lessons for our students.

## Primary 2- Ms. Erin & Ms. Rachel

Tut tut, where is the snow?! Our children are anxiously waiting! In the meantime, we have had ice cube races, painted with ice cubes, and learned about the different properties water can take on! We had a fun January together as we celebrated Nate and Zachary's birthday, as well as Dr. King's birthday! We read a variety of children's books about diversity, equality, and recognizing our differences as strengths- a definite shift in awareness of each other was noticeable and it was fun to demonstrate this lesson with the brown and white egg "eggs"periment! ☺ Addison's Mom will be coming in our classroom this month to show us another science experiment on solids, liquids, and gases!

Speaking of gases, it's a good thing we learned about water vapor because this will help us understand THE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE!! Choo-choo! We are very excited to begin learning about trains this month as we learn about different modes of transportation! We will not have very much time because this is the busiest month of the year, but we will learn as much as we can through books, puzzles, and parts of lessons! If you have any train experience, pictures, or knowledge, please come in to share with us!

This month is also full of history and science lessons. We will learn about shadows on Groundhog Day and we will learn about Lincoln and Washington as we celebrate President's Day! The children love all of these subjects! We also will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school and you may have the opportunity to help them create and share their project!

Please keep an eye on the school calendar and be sure to sync your home calendars- it's a busy month! Our children continue to chug along with their sounds work, beginning reading, books, math skills, and writing lessons! As always, this is an ongoing focus in our classroom and everyday there is a beautiful bright light bulb going off somewhere! PLEASE send your child to school on COLD days with a hat, mittens, and winter coat if you would like them to go outside with us. We have been staying on top of the winter "bug" as best as possible so please continue to encourage good hygiene, hand-washing, and nose blowing as much as we do! Thank you for all of your support!!! Happy February!



Alaina and Robert mastered The Hundreds Board even numbers.



Alaina mastered The Hundreds Board odd numbers.

## Primary 2 Ice Cube Painting



Jason was proud of his "Swirly World" creation.

## Primary 2 "Eggs"periments



This lesson taught us that even though we are different on the outside, we are the same on the inside. The children were surprised!

Primary 3 students  
throughout the day.



## Primary 3- Ms. Allison, Ms. Sarah and Ms. Emily

The beginning of 2012 has been exciting and busy in our classroom! We have spent the month reviewing lessons from the beginning of the year, as well as being introduced to new lessons and concepts. The students have worked very hard to learn about Martin Luther King Jr., and other important people that had influences on civil rights.

We have also begun to talk about the north and south poles, the Arctic and Antarctica, and the people and animals that live in these colder places.

The biggest transition our class has gone through this month is saying goodbye to Miss Sarah. We are so happy for her and wish her all the best as she moves on to complete her student teaching. We will miss her very much, but we are also excited to have a familiar face take her place as the classroom's fulltime assistant. Miss Emily has had a lot of experience with this class, and has helped to make for a smooth transition during Miss Sarah's departure.

February looks to bring a lot of exciting things as we prepare to celebrate Valentine's Day, 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, President's Day, and Leap Year! We will also continue with our letter/sound of the week and introducing a new letter sound each Friday. February's letters will be D, O, F, and K.

We would like to say thank you to the Guldi Family for the Usborne book, and the Montessori language lesson for our class. In addition, thank you to the Paz Family for the Usborne book and the Peters Family for the BOB book set and Montessori sensorial mats for our knob less cylinder lesson. Thank you all for helping to improve our classroom with important resources. We all appreciate every little bit of help!



## Elementary- Ms. Stephanie

### Our Road to Reading

Elementary Parents,

Our learning is never complete. As adults we have come to realize that we will continue to collect new information each day that will add to our overwhelming supply of background knowledge. This information is collected in many forms. We may read the newspaper, hold a conversation with a specialist in the field, or read an article about a newly released study. The students in this classroom have only begun this journey. They need to obtain the many important skills for collecting, classifying, and saving information within their growing mind. Connections and pathways are being made on a daily basis and much be fostered through early literacy skills. Whether your child is in Kindergarten, the Third Grade, or anywhere in between, this flow of language acquisition applies to the reading curriculum that I would like to share with parents. The more you know about how your child learns the better prepared you are to foster this development outside of the classroom.



Classroom based instruction follows this structured approach:

1. Phonemic Awareness
  - Separating the sounds within a word without connection to written letters
2. Phonics
  - This is where letter are introduced. Students learn the sounds each letter makes individually, as well as when they are paired together. Digraphs and blends would fall into this category. Spelling lists with common patterns begin to increase a child's phonics understanding.
3. Fluency
  - This is so much more than reading aloud. A child who is fluent in language has achieved accuracy, automaticity, rate, expressiveness, and the ability to move forward to construct meaning.
4. Vocabulary
  - This can be taught directly, or indirectly. Children at this age internalize about 5 new words from an appropriately selected book just by hearing them in context. With a more direct approach to pointing out new words and making connections, students can hold 12 new words from one selection. This is an amazing speed!
5. Comprehension
  - We don't want our children to merely understand the meaning of the book. We want them to be successful in:
    - a) Making connections
    - b) Making predictions
    - c) Visualizing text
    - d) Summarizing important information
    - e) Understanding the main point



As your child progresses through the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of their current school year, take note of where their understanding of each topic appears to be.

Does my child know beginning sounds?

Does my child recognize spelling patterns and use them to help pronounce new words?

Does my child change voices for each new character?

Can my child identify words that he does not know?

Can my child pick out 5 main points of the story while leaving out unnecessary information?

The most important thing you can do as a parent is to model these behaviors. We commonly think of mathematics as the area where we "show our work." However, if we want our children to mimic our language acquisition skills, we must teach them about our thinking. Tell them why you pause, add enthusiasm, or whisper. Explain how you could infer the meaning of a new word through the context of the page (pictures or text).

As always, the most important thing is to increase your child's exposure to a variety of materials, and *have fun!*

## Planet Green Recycling Program

Remember to keep your eye out for the Planet Green Recycling box! We will be participating in this program year round. Participating in this program helps both the environment and the school.

Please remember that in addition to recycling ink cartridges and cell phones, the Planet Green Program also allows you to purchase ink cartridges from their website! When you purchase ink cartridges from Planet Green, Starmaker will receive a portion of the proceeds. If you would like to support us by purchasing your ink cartridges from Planet Green, please visit:

[www.planetgreenrecycle.com/starmakerschool](http://www.planetgreenrecycle.com/starmakerschool)



## Box Tops for Education

We participate in the Box Tops for Education Program every year. This year, we have been doing exceptionally well! Let's strive to exceed that goal. We would like to thank all of those who have and continue to bring in box tops.

If you haven't participated in this program before, it is so easy to do! All you have to do is bring in the box tops from participating products. The collection basket can be found on the bookshelf located in the multi-purpose room. Additional information about this program can be found at [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com).



## Yankee Candle Fundraiser

Yankee Candle will be our upcoming Spring school fundraiser. More information will be made available very soon.

<http://www.yankeecandlefundraising.com/>



## Student Birthdays

Alejandro Paz	Feb 8
Maximus Elliott	Feb 12
Dana Vereen	Feb 15

### FEBRUARY 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

### MARCH 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## Teacher Birthdays

Danielle Cousineau	Feb 1
Stephanie Grable	Feb 6
Tynisha Mason	Feb 21