
Montessori Monitor



Fall 2003 Issue

Grow Up at MMS

Millhopper Montessori School signs on with FUTUREKIDS Cutting Edge Technology Program

Starting this school year, we are excited to announce that our Kindergarten through the eighth grade students have started to use the FUTUREKIDS technology program. We have noted below frequently asked questions about FUTUREKIDS - if you would like to observe a class in action, please contact Amilda in the front office for more information.

What is FUTUREKIDS?

FUTUREKIDS is the world's leading and largest provider of computer literacy training for children and adults. To date, FUTUREKIDS has operations in over 70 countries and provides computer literacy training in over 2,000 locations worldwide.

What are FUTUREKIDS' Educational Principles?

FUTUREKIDS Educational Principles:

- *Make Learning Fun
- *Let Students Learn by Doing
- *Provide Opportunities for Creative Expression
- *Provide An Emotionally Safe Learning Environment
- *Encourage Cooperative Learning
- *Make Learning Relevant
- *Implement Authentic Assessment
- *Provide Individualized Instruction
- *Teach Students Individual Learning Styles
- *Teach to the "Educable Moment"

How is FUTUREKIDS helping our children learn?

Futurekids' success results from a unique teaching philosophy: students of all ages learn best in an interactive, creative environment that enables them to explore, challenge and discover. Our students, regardless of the learning environment, receive hands-on instruction at the computer and are grouped into small classes to ensure a high level of personalized attention. FUTUREKIDS also helps children learn by making technology relevant to people's everyday lives. Integrated, theme-based projects require students to use higher analytical thinking skills as well as the full range of the computer's capability.

What is the curriculum taught at FUTUREKIDS classes?

Our Pre-K through 8 technology curriculum incorporates hundreds of objectives, relating to ten technology areas: Applied technology, databases, desktop publishing, graphics, multimedia, operating systems, programming, spreadsheets, telecommunications, and word-processing. Our 9-12 Technology Essentials curriculum covers all the same topics but with a school-to-work focus. Technology Essentials also contains more advanced graphics,

FUTUREKIDS, Cont.

telecommunications, and programming units. All units include project-based activities that feature job-related scenarios. We also offer adult education to train business professionals and other adults on how to use the computer in the workplace and at home.

We have a computer at home. Is the curriculum compatible with our system?

Yes. FUTUREKIDS' curriculum focuses in ten basic technology areas: Applied technology, databases, desktop publishing, graphics, multimedia, operating systems, programming, spreadsheets, telecommunications, and word-processing. By mastering those skills, your children will be able to operate most computer systems and applications.

Who is teaching our kids? Where are these teachers being trained?

FUTUREKIDS teachers are part of a growing network of highly trained technology instructors. They are regular classroom teachers who undergo a training process called Professional Development to become a FUTUREKIDS teacher.

Ms. Alina Dragne, who is now our Technology Teacher, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology, a Masters degree in Public Administration and a Masters in Computer Science from the Polytechnics University of Bucharest. Her experience with students range from middle to the college level and she is an expert, respectively, in hardware and software. She has the ability to foster an atmosphere of having fun while you learn. Her resourcefulness, creativity, optimal skills, and love for children exploring the ever-changing world of technology make her a perfect fit for this position.

How big is FUTUREKIDS and when did it start?

FUTUREKIDS was founded in 1983 with the express purpose of equipping children with the basic computer skills needed to excel in school and in the workplace. In 1989, after testing and refining our Computer Mastery Program, FUTUREKIDS began the process of creating a worldwide network of computer Learning Centers. FUTUREKIDS School Technology Solutions arose from the demand for comprehensive technology programs from public and private schools throughout the world. As these institutions turned to private industry for technical guidance, FUTUREKIDS assumed a leading role in defining educational standards for technology instruction within schools.

Where can I read more about FUTUREKIDS?

Check our public relations forum area on this site to read the latest press releases and media coverage on FUTUREKIDS. You can also visit our corporate headquarters' web site at <http://www.futurekids.com>

Class Notes!

Ms. Crystal Sorrow's Class (Ages 2, 3, & 4)

The school year began with a two-week unit on farm animals. We began with a simple unit since a majority of the time was spent adjusting the students to the classroom. With a small veteran population returning there were many lessons to cover involving Grace and Courtesy. As August progressed, and the morning sadness lessened for the new students, lessons grew more complex. As September began we were being greeted with smiles.

In September we began our unit on the human body. During the unit we covered the senses, the skeletal system, the organs, and nutrition. During the senses study we completed several multi-sensorial experiments and projects.

Class Notes!

Ms. Crystal Sorrow's Class (Ages 2, 3, & 4), cont.

During the rest of September we made painted skeletons, had a wonderful presentation by a radiologist, viewed a fish with its organs for a more concrete grasp of what organs are, used a human model with removable organs, practiced putting stuffed organs on our body apron, and completed a nutrition project with the help of a class parent. The students also had their bodies traced and they decorated their body tracings. The students were most fascinated with the liver in our many discussions of organs. This was fascinating since people would assume that the heart or lungs would be more interesting to the students. The liver however captured their interest and imagination. We also had matching works, stethoscopes, pouring work, and science works that incorporated elements of the human body and nutrition.

On Thursday, September 18th we had our Class Family Picnic. The students and parents enjoyed lunch together on our playground. The children loved having their families visit them at school. We appreciated the wonderful attendance. All of our students had a family member come for lunch. It was a special day for everyone. The Parent Teacher Collaboration meeting was also held in September. It was a nice evening for parents to introduce themselves and ask any questions they might have had concerning the class or school.

We enjoyed our first of many visits to media time with Ms. Martha in the school library. Ms. Martha complemented the students on their abilities to sit quietly and listen attentively. We also enjoyed some pleasant music lessons with Ms. Vicky. We are currently working on beats and rests.

October has been a really exciting month where we have been learning about carpentry tools and working with some of the tools in class. We are also enjoying preparing for Halloween festivities.

Class Notes!

Ms. Jackie Johnson's Class (Ages 3, 4, & 5)

What a great beginning! The children have adjusted wonderfully to the classroom. They have learned the ground rules and routines of the classroom, are being respectful to one another (most of the time!), and are choosing fulfilling work. Even those children who were initially wary are now comfortable in the classroom and have made new friends.

The children have had a number of beginning Montessori lessons on how to use various materials in the classroom, and on sensorial vocabulary (naming colors, physical dimensions and the names of geometric solids e.g., sphere, square based pyramid, cylinder). Early geography lessons have included landforms such as lake and island, directional terms-left, right, north, south, east, and west, and the earth as composed of land, air and water. We also studied the concept of location and its subset relationship (a house is in a neighborhood, which is in a city, which is in a county...eventually leading to the universe). This is illustrated with nesting cups and song.

Our unit studies this month included seeds and plant growth. We learned about different types of seeds, focusing particularly on fruit and beans. We did a lot with apples and apple tasting, and cut open a lot of different fruit to observe their seeds. We sprouted dried beans, and replanted the bean plants once they developed. We also dissected dried beans (each child has his or her own bean to dissect) and made books illustrating the concepts, testa, cotyledon, and embryo.

Music is an important part of our class's curriculum. In addition to music instruction by Ms. Vicki, we do music and movement, and practice many musical and rhythmic techniques with our bodies and other musical instruments. We will be making musical instruments on a monthly basis. We have made two different types of shakers. The first was

Class Notes!

Ms. Jackie Johnson's Class (Ages 3, 4, & 5), Cont.

more decorative. With the second, we focused on the sound quality experimenting with different objects to make different sounding shakers.

We also are studying different musical styles. This month we studied two composers of classical music: Mozart and Beethoven.

We have food preparation every Wednesday afternoon. We've made apple trees, ants on a log, and "summer pops". Art projects comprise an important part of our remaining afternoons. We've made art with fruit, seeds, bubble wrap, pastels and glue, paint, sponges and more. We hope you enjoyed our art displayed gallery style during our parent night.

We have just begun our mammal unit. We will be having a host of mammals visiting our class, and will be studying the properties that define this group.

Our class is made great by our volunteers (at-home and in-class), and by our parents who contribute to our classroom projects and food preparation. Thanks to all of our parents for their help. We are pleased to announce our regular in-class volunteers for the year are Patricia Kemp, Isabelle Springer, Sarah Schroeder, and Irma Alvarez.

Class Notes!

Ms. Alexandra Venier's Class (Ages 3, 4, & 5)

This school year started out somewhat turbulently but it seems to have calmed down and everything is falling into place. As you know, we lost our assistant teacher Ms. Katura, and Azalea Torres moved next door into Ms. Karen's class. In exchange, we gained Ms. Ann and Grace Wiglesworth. We are very happy to have them both. The children have been progressing nicely and are getting used to the classroom routine.

During the first couple weeks of the school year we worked on ground rules and grace and courtesy lessons. For example, we have been discussing and practicing how to take turns to talk, why and how we sit on the line during circle time, how to carry work rugs and trays, and many more. We also talked about feelings and emotions, helping each other, being patient with our friends, and understanding that we are ALL "friends".

In September we started our Unit Studies on the Beach, the Oceans and Florida. We began by talking about seashells, animals that live in shells, and sea stars. The children were then introduced to a lesson on living and non-living objects, and vertebrates and invertebrates. Eventually, they learned about fish, how fish breathe, and the different parts of a fish. Thanks to Ms. Karen we were able to see, feel and measure an Alaskan salmon. We also studied seahorses, porcupine fish, cowfish, and even saw a baby shark and a live catfish! The children have also been singing various fish songs; one of our favorites is "Ichthyology".

Next, we moved to ocean mammals, specifically whales and dolphins. We talked about how whales and dolphins have to come to the surface and use their blowholes to breathe. The children used different materials to distinguish between fish and mammals (objects and cards). We also talked about the different kinds of whales and sang the song "Baby Beluga."

For geography, we worked on directions – North, South, East and West. We read the book "Me on the Map" and talked about the concepts of house, street, town, county, state, country, continent, earth and universe. To make these more understandable and fun, we used nesting cups to represent how each relates to one another, and we then sang the song, "We All Live Together." The children had their first lessons on landforms - learning about lakes, islands, peninsulas and gulfs. We concentrated on the peninsula we live on, Florida. Towards the end of September, Jack May's dad, Brian, a

Class Notes!

Ms. Alexandra Venier's Class (Ages 3, 4, & 5, cont.)

cartographer, came in and gave an excellent presentation on the topography of Florida. We thank him for his time; it was very interesting and of tremendous value.

Regarding Florida, we also learned about the metropolitan areas and located them on the peninsula. We learned facts about our state, such as the state animal, the state flower, and we talked in more detail about the manatee and the alligator. The children made "alligator eyes" (with crackers, peanut butter, bananas and raisins) and Ms. Paula Webb assisted the children. Thanks for the help! The children were told the story of Johnny Appleseed and we celebrated Johnny Appleseed's birthday on September 26th, with an apple pie that the children made themselves with the help of Ms. Elisabeth Schuppe. We appreciate her excellent pie making skills.

We have also worked on various ocean themed art projects such as: push pinning shells, sand painting a sea star; creating a sea star necklace, rainbow fish (with tissue paper), and sponge painting a baby beluga onto our finger painted seaweed. We would like to give A Big Thank You to all the parents who volunteered to help with our art projects!

The September theme for show 'n' tell was numbers. We sang various number songs such as: The Number March, On the Count of Five, Five Little Fish, and The Cool Number Count in German. Sticking with the ocean theme, we started to make our own Sandpaper Numbers.

We read various books regarding our unit study. Several parents have been volunteering to read to small groups on Tuesday afternoons. Thank you for your time. We enjoy having you. I would also like to thank all the wonderful parents who have cut laminates or brought in items we needed for the classroom. Thank you for all your support!

We would also like to congratulate the Brandt family on their new baby girl, Nicole Jennine. She was born on Thursday, September 18th. Thank you to Ben, who shared a picture of his precious little sister with us.

In October we are going to learn about Body Parts, the Five Senses, Bones and Teeth. We will also have Halloween festivities as well on Friday, October 31st.

Class Notes!

Ms. Elizabeth Hamilton's Class (Ages 4.5, 5, & 6)

It is hard to believe that 9 weeks of school have already gone by! The children have settled in nicely and have become quite acclimated to their new environment! They should all be very proud of themselves! Our special classes: PE (K), Computer Technology (K), Media (Library for all), Music (all) with Ms. Vicki and Ms. Tina have all started and are being enjoyed by everyone!

We would like to thank everyone for all the contributions thus far and for those parents who have taken the time out of their busy schedules to help out in the classroom!

After several weeks of evaluating and assessing the children's developmental and academic growth, more individualized, small group lessons have now begun. Our lesson schedule is as follows: Monday and Thursday - Language (includes reading); Tuesday - Handwriting, Wednesday and Friday - Math. Cultural, Fine Art Activities and Unit Study Activities are usually done in the afternoon. Some of the activities presently being worked on are: Math: bead stair; 1 to 1 correspondence; number rods, odd and even work; linear counting; fine motor (small muscle) control; snake game; numeral and quantity recognition (1-10, teen numbers and place value - units, tens, hundreds and thousands); and all four operations of math. Language: Sandpaper Letters for both writing, letter and sound recognition; push pinning for proper pencil grip and to increase concentration and fine motor skill; first and last name

Class Notes!

Ms. Elizabeth Hamilton's Class (Ages 4.5, 5, & 6), Cont.

writing; picture to beginning sound and to whole name; rhyming; and long vowel and phonogram lessons (K).

Reading Groups have been established and Reading Folders have begun going home. Weekly Poem Writing and Journal Writing (K) as well as Reading Workbooks (K) have also begun; these activities take place during class instruction time. When appropriate, work plans will be initiated for the Kindergartners.

Unit Studies: We continue to study plants (vegetables, fruits and flowers) during our Botany study. The children were amused to learn of some "vegetable riddles"! We will soon be learning the parts of a leaf, tree and flower. The children thoroughly enjoyed planting some vegetable plants and flower seeds with Ms. Jacqueline Baltunis (Takoda's mom) and are anxiously awaiting to see what will happen!

Geography Unit Study: Italy - is being enjoyed by all. The children have learned some language spoken in Italy, listened to an old folk tale, learned about some traditions were excited about being able to share it with their parents at our Parents' Night, Tuesday, October 14th at 5:00 p.m.

We have begun "Kitchen Chemistry" in the classroom. This very popular event takes place every Wednesday morning! The first two "lessons" covered "how to make and enjoy a homemade Carrot Cake with real Cream Cheese Frosting! and "Banana Bread"! Both "lessons" were loved by most and the children are anxious about up and coming "Kitchen Chemistry" lessons. These "lessons" will follow the Unit(s) we are currently studying. This week's lesson will be, "Homemade Apple Pie" in honor of Johnny Appleseed.

In the area of Practical Life, the children have enjoyed learning how to sew and recently have begun working on two rug hooking projects that will soon be on display in the classroom! These activities have many purposes: the children increase their fine motor skills, increase their attention span, and learn the importance of beginning and completing a task! All of these skills are necessary in order to go onto the "bigger" academic work in the classroom.

The children have really grown in the past few weeks and we hope that you have seen the growth at home as well. During this Sensitive Period, 0-6, they absorb everything about their everyday world that we take the time to show them. They copy every movement and speak the words of the adults around them. What an exciting opportunity for us to teach!

We need to remember to be patient and carefully break tasks into simple steps. We allow the child to make mistakes and encourage them to try again. It is in this manner, that the child learns to "think" and learn. Repetition is essential for learning at this stage. With consistency, patience, and nurturing guidance, the child is allowed to see himself as capable and lovable.

We are looking forward to an exciting year! Thank you for your continued support!

P.S. "Baby Bear", a new "student" this year, really enjoys spending time with the students and their families from our classroom!

Class Notes!

Ms. Karen Ramey's Class (Ages 4.5, 5, & 6)

We have had a great beginning to our school year! Ms. Sharon and I are very excited about the school year! We have a wonderful group of children and look forward to working with them. The children seem to have adjusted well to the classroom routines and expectations and are doing very well with settling into a routine.

Class Notes!

Ms. Karen Ramey's Class (Ages 4.5, 5, & 6), Cont.

During the first two weeks, we spent time learning about each other and getting to know each other better. We learned basic information about each other, things we are good at, what makes us happy or scared, and what is special about each of us, etc. We discussed ways we can make others feel good about themselves, as well as ways we can be a good friend and show others we care by being kind and speaking to our friends in a positive way. We also learned about ways we can resolve conflict and we discussed what it means to be respectful and how important it is to display good manners.

Thus far, the children have been introduced to many lessons in the areas of practical life and sensorial and we will expand the lessons in the academic areas as the children are ready. We spend a lot of time in class emphasizing the process and sequence of the work and the importance of being able to do the work independently.

We have been learning about and reviewing (for some) maps and globes and lessons on the continents. We have also been learning about land and water forms. Our first big unit of study was the ocean and the children thoroughly enjoyed this topic. We began by making a list of some of the things we already know about oceans. We have read several books and have learned some ocean songs. We learned about the four main oceans and their locations. We learned that Earth is called the "water planet" because about 71% of the Earth's surface is made up of water. I introduced the parts of the fish to the children. I brought in my King Salmon for the children to label the parts and it was a big hit! In addition, we are learning about the author Marcus Pfister. He writes the Rainbow Fish stories. We have also had some parents coming in to volunteer, and we appreciate your time and efforts. The children worked hard on an ocean mural with Ms. Trish (Austin P.'s mom) - it looks fantastic! Ms. Anita (Soren's mom) and Ms. Erin (Bryan's mom) have come in to help the children with some ocean crafts, and Mr. Jim (James' dad) has come in to read some ocean stories, as well as other books. Thank you all! We also have others who will be volunteering in the coming weeks. Throughout September and most of October, we have continued our ocean unit. We will be learning about what a Marine Biologist does, the various sealife of the ocean, (specifically whales and dolphins), participating in water science experiments, and learning about other various concepts about the ocean. As we move toward the beginning of November we will be learning about the bones of our body. Thank you to all parents for a great start to the school year. I appreciate your efforts and your support.

Class Notes!

Ms. Pat Newman's Class (1st & 2nd Grade)

The fantastic first graders have successfully made the leap from kindergarten to elementary and are flourishing in surprising ways! Not only are they more confident about themselves and their work, but they are becoming more articulate in their group presentations. We just completed personal timelines. It was interesting to see how the children have grown from wrinkly babes-in-arms to bubbly six and seven-olds.

During October we are doing a study on bats and leaf shapes, plus lots of multiplication and geometry. Grammar is on our drawing boards in language. A big thank you to all the parents for their help during Spirit Week. We may not have been the most synchronized cheerleaders on the field, but we were certainly the cutest! I'm looking forward to a great fall and the start of a wonderful holiday season.

Class Notes!

Mr. Richard Aslanian's Class (2nd & 3rd Grade)

Our year started off with quite a bang, the Big Bang! In Geography we have had discussions and lessons based on the scientific theories of the beginning of the universe and our solar system. This led us to a look at the layers of the earth and how the seasons change based on the earth's position to the sun. We have seen how the Earth had one giant super-continent, Pangea, and one large ocean called Panthalassa. Next came the movements of the plates and the creation of a map naming all of the major plates that cover the surface of our planet.

In science, we have discussed the external parts of the fish and the internal body functions. We are excited about making a book about these body functions and are finishing it up with a research project on a particular fish of choice.

Each member of the class has been practicing their home address for Social Studies and we all are learning about different types of neighborhoods and communities. It is interesting to see how many different places the members of our class are from.

Other cultural lessons have included learning about Latin culture for Hispanic Heritage Month, food preparation lessons, grace and courtesy, and practical life exercises.

On the first day of class the students were sorted into the four houses: Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw. The students will earn points for their respective houses by being polite, showing respect, following instructions and being a good citizen school wide. During the course of our studies we also have fun question and answer games that will allow the houses to work together to earn points. The house with the most points at the end of the year will earn an ice-cream party and a certificate that will hang in the classroom for years to come. Congratulations to Hufflepuff house for winning the House Points Championship last year.

We would like to thank all of the families for participating in our Spirit Week. We really had a great time and are very proud of our accomplishments and how much we were able to help others. We look forward to this year, striving to be the best we can be.

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to:

Lori Schiele

Linda Kopkowski

Jessica Calderon

for all of their help in the classroom.

Class Notes!

Ms. Christina Miller's Class (4th, 5th & 6th Grade)

The fourth grade students in Christina Miller's Florida History class have been busy learning about Florida's early native people.

We have had two visits from the Museum of Natural History's outreach program, [Inquiry Boxes: Museum on the move](#).

These boxes were packed full of artifacts and replicas of items and activities that were used by the people of early Northern and Southern Florida.

Class Notes!

Ms. Christina Miller's Class (4th, 5th & 6th Grade), cont.

We (4th & 5th graders) went to Morningside Nature center for the Native American Life in Early Florida program. Here we visited a simulated Timucuan living compound and experienced something of the way of life of Timucua-speaking peoples of pre-contact Northern Florida. The lessons were broken into four sections:

The Kitchen section examined the food preparation/ garden "paha" (work hut) where they worked with Timucuan tools, by gardening, grinding corn and acorns into meal and learned how to start fires before matches.

The Hunting /Gathering Walk took the students through the woods where they discussed what items were collected and why. They learned the names of and how to identify specific plants on which the Timucuan relied.

Crafts were explored at the Chief's hut (Holata Paha) where the students learned about Timucuan games, crafts, clothing, and other aspects of their material culture. They learned how animal skins were preserved and how the Native Americans used all the parts of the animal and what they used them for. On October 9th, the fourth grade students concluded their unit on Early Native Americans of Florida with a guided tour at the Museum of Natural History.

Class Notes!

Ms. Sherilyn Farris' Class (7th & 8th Grade)

"We're Off!"

The year is well underway and I'm happy with the progress of my middle school students. The first half of the quarter has flown by and our ROPES trip was an exciting adventure. Leading up to ROPES the group worked on team building exercises and the fundamentals of ROPES commands.

Putting Their Best Foot Forward!

The class has finished a unit on themes in World Geography, including various landforms found on Earth. They have put their knowledge to use through the creation of the stickiest island on the planet, Podiatry Island. These islands are, oddly enough, shaped like the student's feet. Not only did they have to create the island, they also had to come up with names for their islands' landforms. Some of the landform names are very creative, and somewhat gross! But that's what makes Podiatry Island so unique!

Last, But Certainly Not Least!!

Once again Spirit Week was a great success and even though the middle school came in fourth place, I'd like to thank the students who showed a lot of school pride through the different theme days, the class poster, and the class cheer. Thank you. I'm proud of what you have done! I look forward to what we can accomplish next year!

MMS would like to thank the parents who volunteer at the school - we appreciate your time!!!!!!

Bits & Pieces

Emerald Recycling Program

Parents, thank you for continuing to bring in your empty ink jet cartridges. We just received \$27.00 for the last box of cartridges that we sent in.

Book-It!

Our MMS students will be diligently reading again this year to meet their reading goals each month. It is all part of a program sponsored by Pizza Hut called Book-It! Book-It! is a reading incentive program to encourage children to read more throughout the school year. You can encourage your child by helping him/her keep track of their reading each day and by reading with them in the evenings. It's great family time for everyone and will help your child at the same time. Please call Martha Horter with any questions.

Yearbooks

Yearbooks are now on sale for \$20. We are very proud of our yearly annuals produced by the Middle School students. The books are a wonderful keepsake for years to come. Each class is featured with individual pictures, group pictures and candid pictures which capture the highlights of the year. They are beautiful hard-cover books with glossy pages, professionally published by Lifetouch publishing company. Be sure to order early as the price will increase to \$27 later in the year. Also, don't forget to reserve your spot for parent messages for your child(ren). Charges range from \$15-\$50. Please see Martha Horter with any questions.

MAKE IT COUNT FOR KIDS!

Schoolpop makes it easy for you to help MMS raise money. With hundreds of stores, catalog, and on-line merchants, a robust Magazine Mall, and the Schoolpop Visa[®] Credit Card, it's simple to shop Schoolpop and make your everyday shopping count for our kids!

Bits & Pieces, cont.

Here's How You Can Help.

Select the way that works best for you, or do all three – *Shop for Kids*, *Charge It for Kids*, or *Subscribe for Kids*!

Shop for Kids!

Make your on-line purchases count! Register your e-mail address with Schoolpop and start each on-line purchase at www.schoolpop.com where you can select from hundreds of brand-name merchants.

Make your store & catalog purchases count! Register your credit and ATM/debit cards with Schoolpop and use them to shop at participating Schoolpop stores and catalogs.

Charge It for Kids!

Sign up for a Schoolpop Visa® Credit Card and 1% of EVERY purchase you make ANYWHERE will be rebated to our organization. Apply on-line at www.schoolpop.com/credit card or ask our organization's fundraising coordinator for a Schoolpop Visa® Credit Card Application.

Special Bonus! When you register your new Schoolpop Visa® Credit Card with Schoolpop and make your first purchase, we will receive a \$20 bonus!

Subscribe for Kids!

Subscribe to your favorite magazines at substantial savings at the Schoolpop Magazine Mall, and 40% of the subscription price will be rebated to our organization. Remember,

magazines make great gifts for friends and family! Visit www.schoolpop.com/magazinemall today!

Register Today!

Please take a moment to register with Schoolpop and help us meet our fundraising goals! Register on-line at www.schoolpop.com/register, or mail or fax in a completed registration form. To apply for the Schoolpop Visa® Credit Card, visit www.schoolpop.com/credit card.

Once you are registered, please remember to shop Schoolpop for your everyday shopping. Every dollar you spend helps us earn money towards our fundraising goals!

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Kathleen Teal and Irma Alvarez

for using Schoolpop.com to do their shopping!!!

Bits & Pieces, cont.

Campbell Soup Company

A **HUGE thank you goes out to Kevin Sheehan** from Publix #435 for donating his two 5,000 point certificates to our school. Mr. Kevin (Emily's father) is the Grocery Manager at the Hunters Crossing Publix. Mr. Kevin designed and built the "Stamp out Hunger" Campbell's Soup display in which he won first place.

Lego League

MMS and Eastside High School's Rampage Robotics Team are once again participating in the FIRST LEGO League. This is an opportunity for all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students to engage in hands-on robotics design and authentic scientific research. After 8 intense weeks, the FLL season culminates at high-energy, sports-like tournaments. FLL is a worldwide program for children created in a partnership between FIRST and the LEGO company. This year's challenge is MISSION MARS in which the challenge is to "visit" the Red Planet and explore the Martian landscape with visions of colonization. The team meets on Wednesdays from 3:30-5:00. Join us!!!!

Middle School/Schlotzsky's Deli Lunch Business

The Middle School is in the fourth year of its business of offering lunch on Fridays. It has been very successful and enjoyed by both the staff and eligible classes. We raised over \$740.00 last year. The money went to various class projects and the student's end of the year trip.

The Friday lunch business is a partnership between Millhopper Montessori Middle School and Schlotzsky's Deli. Order forms go home on Monday and must be turned in by Wednesday. Please use one order form per order.

The middle school students and I are excited about this business, as it will integrate abstract mathematics with real life situations. Too often students learn mathematics without understanding its application. This business will both further their economics skills as well as give parents a break from making lunch on Fridays! Thanks for your participation.

The Great Pumpkin

Elementary and middle school students and families are invited to enter the second annual Pumpkin Carving Contest on Friday, October 31st. Students are to buy a pumpkin and carve it at home, then bring it to school for judging. The pumpkins will be judged in three categories: most creative, most funny, most scary.

Pumpkin entries must be brought in on Thursday, October 30th. Judging will take place on Friday, October 31st.

Bits & Pieces, cont.

MMS Drive Thru

The Drive-Thru is working smoothly with a minimum of delays. We strongly encourage you to use the Drive-Thru for the safety of all children. Please pull your car up to the edge of the overhang so parents can walk behind your car.

If parking on the grass, please turn your car motor off as the heat might cause a grass fire.

Please use extreme caution when exiting the school onto NW 39 Ave. If heading West on 39th Ave you might consider turning right out of the school lot then making a U-turn at the first street cut out.

Drive slowly and use extreme caution in the school parking lot for everyone's safety.

Toy Drive Being Held Until Tuesday, November 24th.

There are many children in our society that do not have the chance to celebrate a wonderful Christmas because their parents cannot afford presents. The Middle School students and the Junior League of Gainesville want to make sure that this is not the case for the underprivileged children of Gainesville. The middle school class is accepting donations of new and gently used toys. The toys do not have to be wrapped. You can bring your donated items to the middle school classroom. The Toy Drive will be held until Tuesday November 25th. All your support is greatly appreciated!!!

SPIRIT WEEK 2003!

The energy of the week was amazing and school spirit was rampant! September 15-19, the first - eighth grade students, and their families participated in the second annual Spirit Week and Jamboree Potluck dinner. Each day had a different theme such as: Hawaiian Day, Sports Day, Patriotic Day and School Colors Day. The effort and creativity that each child showed was terrific!! In addition, each class contributed cans of food as well as money to try to successfully complete the longest spirit chain for their class. The canned goods collected were donated to Gainesville Harvest and they are very appreciative of our efforts. The money will be donated to a local non-profit agency in Gainesville as a community outreach for our school. We raised over \$600!!! The students will decide on the recipient of the money. Spirit Week culminated with our annual Jamboree Potluck dinner attended by over 80% of the families. The food was great and school spirit was everywhere. Thank you to all the teachers, parents, and students for helping with this event. In addition, each class composed their own school cheer and constructed a class poster. These creative masterpieces are still in display in the classrooms!

Points were awarded for all aspects of spirit week including: best dressed, cans/money collected, class cheer, Jamboree attendance, and best poster. The class with the most points at the end of the week was awarded with the Spirit Stick to keep in their classroom for the remainder of the year. It will be passed on next year to.....? Here are the results of the week:

First Place: Ms. Tina's Class- 3400 points

First Place Spirit Chain- 565

Third Place Jamboree Participation

First Place Poster Contest

Second Place: Mr. Richard's class- 3000 points

Second Place Spirit Chain- 520

First Place Jamboree Participation-

First Place Cheer Contest

Third Place: Ms. Pat's Class- 2400 points

Third Place Spirit Chain - 272

Second Place Jamboree Participation

Fourth Place: Ms. Sherilyn's Class- 1600 points

Fourth Place Spirit Chain- 189

Fourth Place Jamboree Participation

GREAT JOB, EVERYONE!!!

P.E. AT MMS

By Coach Chris Wirth

Welcome to PSE 2003 – A Wellness Odyssey. ☺ Many of you are already quite familiar that this year there will be a larger emphasis on communicating some of the social results of involvement in physical activity. Many of these skills the students have already been learning so curriculum changes will be limited. It is important that we develop all aspects of wellness: physical, emotional, and social, as all three are interrelated and will contribute to living a healthy life-style. Thus far in the year students from all classes have explored activities in which their senses were limited. Students have been asked to perform cooperation tasks without the use of sound as well as explore the environment without the use of sight. (I assure you the greatest of safety measures have been put in place in before mentioned activities.) We have also put in place a daily feedback opportunity where students offer encouragement and point out positive, specific, and constructive comments to classmates. All students have done a great job of sharing and it's been wonderful to observe their improved efforts towards fair play.

We have begun our first sport education unit with the 7th and 8th graders with a fairly new sport: Stx Ball. It is a similar game to lacrosse but with a larger emphasis on moving to open space and passing. With many of the students having been involved with sport education last year things have moved quite smoothly and our pre-season play is already underway.

The 4th-6th grade groups are also starting to develop teams for Stx Ball as well and they have responded wonderfully to the increased expectations for them to develop team cohesiveness and identify group strengths and weakness to meet the needs of all members of the team. I am excited about the potential of this group in the next couple years, as they continue to use and improve their sport education leagues.

All of the younger classes, with exception to the kindergarten class, have also done some throwing and catching with the Stx Ball equipment. I am so happy to have had most of these students last year - it is wonderful to be able to start where we left off. The students have not missed a beat, be very proud!

The kindergarten classes have already worked on personal space and have many locomotor movements already down! (e.g. skipping, sliding, galloping, etc.) We have already been able to progress towards underhand throwing and moving to the ball! Encourage them to continue to explore movements and ask them to explain how to do them so they can increase their cognitive developments as well. ☺

We are moving along at a steady pace and I know we will surpass last years' expectations by leaps and bounds. Parents, please continue to be active with your child outside of class, as the more involvement will help their bodies to begin to recognize movement patterns.

One last note, it is a goal of the school to be drinking more water this year and I, as well as the lead teachers, have encouraged students to bring water bottles to school. The students are working very hard and it is necessary for them to learn to stay hydrated, as it will allow future benefits such as increased metabolism, proper weight management, and reduction of risk for some cancers.

Thanks to everyone for all of your continued support. Have a healthy and happy fall and as always, show me your smiles!

Drama, Speech & Debate Corner!

By Chris Wirth

Greetings all! Here is a warm welcome from a familiar voice in an unfamiliar place. We felt it was only fitting to have the PSE instructor do some “acting” and teach drama, and speech and debate. However, we have been VERY fortunate to have Sue Hatch (who has assisted in the past with the school productions!) come and help present a lot of wonderful activities to the 6th, 7th, & 8th graders. The students have really begun to use their imaginations and as a result have created various scenes, explored their own movements, expressions, and really went in-depth telling stories by using all five senses. If you would like to get involved at home take an everyday object and have your child give it a personality or use descriptive words to explain an object with regards to the five senses (touch, taste, smell, hearing, sight).

The students seem to be more motivated to participate as the weeks progress and many have contributed great ideas to use in class, keep them coming everyone!!! We are all having a blast and this will ensure that this years’ play will be a big success. ☺

We will also begin a speech/debate portion of the class as well to help develop presentation skills. Students will participate in a variety of build-up activities for this such as reading to the younger students (something they could begin getting involved with younger siblings at home) and progress to researching a given topic to debate with a team or as an individual.

Millhopper Montessori is literally full of characters this fall and we are adding a whole new meaning to having fun on Fridays!

Until next time, keep those imaginations soaring and creative juices roaring!

Elementary/Middle School Art Corner

By Lynn Morales

First through Third Grade

Get Real? Not Yet!

Since elementary school students are just beginning to discover the world of art, it is important to expose them to many different styles and forms of art. We started the year with a look at an abstract painting. Students compared and contrasted “Composition VIII” by Vassily Kandinsky with “Infanta Margarita” by Diego Velasquez.” We discussed the way each artist used shape, space and color, and the students commented that both artists made interesting use of the elements of art and the principles of design.

In this first lesson, I had the students choose a variety of shapes and colors to create their own abstract work of art. They creatively experimented with the shapes until they achieved a composition they were pleased with. When everyone was finished we compared and contrasted our own compositions, using positive “art speak.”

All Grades

Picture This!

In this lesson I read “Little Red Riding Hood” from Molly Bang’s “Picture This” (2000). At first the students suppressed giggles, because Little Red was “just a red triangle” and the forest was “just a bunch of black rectangles.” However at the end of the story, the students began to realize how even simple shapes and colors can tell stories and spark emotions. Each class was given a different message or emotion to convey, using the techniques we learned from reading Molly Bang’s story.

Elementary/Middle School Art Corner, cont.

Fourth through Eighth Grades

Pablo Picasso Inspired Images

I started this lesson by asking the students what they already knew about Picasso. The 4-6th grades remembered his "Blue Period," and the 7-8th grades recalled his painting "Guernica." I briefly reviewed important details of Picasso's life, and then focused the discussion on Cubism. Students were asked to create a collage inspired by Cubism and write about the experience in their art journal. In response to Picasso's style of painting, Julia Ellis wrote, "I really like the way Picasso uses lots of different colors and shapes." After discussing different elements of cubism, Julia wrote that she showed multiple perspectives in the same image by giving her dolphin "... an extra eye, fin and nose."

MUSIC NOTES

Hello everybody, Yes indeed, We'll make some music. My name is Vicki and doing music is what I love.

As the year progresses we will build patterns or blocks. There are melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic patterns. Most of the music we will learn in class are learning pieces but we will, through the patterning process, be able to learn performance pieces at a much faster rate.

My goal for Music at MMS is to teach your children to sing solfege, (the international language of music) play rhythm instruments, learn to read notation and recognize musical patterns, and encourage them to bring instruments from home that they are learning to share them in class and performances, e.i. flute, guitar, drums, saxophone and violin, to name a few. Those taking piano lessons will also assist me during class with the keyboard. We're also learning about composers and their part in the history of music.

What you can do as parents to help with this process is to encourage your children to listen and sing music. The most fun will be when we start to sing harmonically. To assist in this process singing tunes like "Row, row, row your boat" and "Are you sleeping, Brother John" will be a big plus. These are canons or more commonly known as rounds. Rhythmically, by now, most of your children have brought home the "Basic 7" as I call them. Please help you child listen to music and see if they recognize or hear these rhythmic patterns.

Last, but only until the next news letter, I would like to Thank you for giving me the great opportunity to teach your children MUSIC!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Technology Corner

By Alina Dragne

Welcome to the Technology Class, where the computers have so many stories to tell and students discover so many challenges.

This class is encouraging the students to make discoveries, and to learn a new world mostly by themselves.

We have worked on many projects; in fact each weekly lesson brings a new project and a new story.

The students from Kindergarten through 3rd grade:

The children have used colors and patterns to complete a diagram of a computer at our first meeting. They learned

Technology Corner, cont.

to use the different software tools to express their graphics skills drawing a maze and then a technology robot, named Troybot.

Later on they moved to learn a new software where they had to find the Troybot in his own home; with that occasion they created their own stories about the robot and they learned how to do a complete project, beginning with the cover page.

The children also practiced another piece of software; in fact this program was an experimental one. They learned by trial and error, encouraged by the teacher to explore the program and to learn about all the capabilities of it. They practiced with a "Weather Machine" and now they can predict the weather and do a professional presentation of the weather conditions; they also learned about animals in their habitat and they created their own books with stories about animals; they built their own inventions in the "Workshop" and they even created their first movies using a film projector.

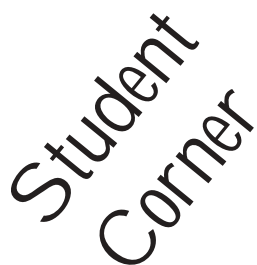
The student from 4th grade through 8th grade are more advanced:

Using an editor (Microsoft World) the students learned how to express themselves and how to make complete projects; the young inventors project requires them to submit a packet, so first they designed an Invitation Letter for a special Invention and Technology Convention. Then they took a break for a virtual field trip, projected by them.

They moved back to their invention project and learned a lot from the capabilities of the software doing a project about the History of Writing Tools. They learned how to find specific information on the internet and how to use that information in their work; they learned how to cite the sources of information. Using the "office assistant" the children have become proficient in finding answers to questions. They continued their work on preparing an itinerary for their trip and they were able to design a very nice project, that proved that they know how to communicate with the computer.

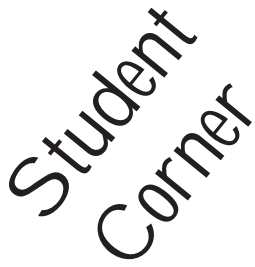

All the students are now familiar with the computer, with the different files/folders and different storage devices and they can find files/folders, open, save and print documents.

Students are very fast at caching the different things that the computer has to offer but there are a lot more stories to come and to be discovered in the virtual world.

A square box containing the text "Student Corner" written diagonally from the bottom-left to the top-right.

Here are two student's accounts of the Safety Patrol trip to Washington D.C.

D.C. altogether was fun but some wasn't. The trip on the bus to and from D.C. was boring. The whole trip was a rush. I really enjoyed the Smithsonian and the Pentagon Mall. The guard change was pretty cool, too. My feet hurt a lot though. I also had to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner in a time limit. I was hungry almost the whole time. I got to see army statues. I don't think the White House is as fantastic as I thought it would be. Most of the memorials were war memorials. The Supreme Court was neat and the Capitol building was huge."



Student Corner

“The Washington trip was one of the best things I ever did. It was extremely fun! The ride to and from Washington was long but pretty fun. The hotel rooms were really fun. Every night we would have pillow fights and I would fall and wedge myself between the wall and the bed. Some of the coolest things were Arlington Cemetery, Air and Space Museum, and the Pentagon City Mall. I wish I could do it again.”

Senior & Middle School Science Corner

By Susan Tierney

4th and 5th Grade Science

So far this inquisitive group has discussed how we can tell an organism is living; the differences between animal and plant cells; how tissues, organs, and systems work together to make up our bodies; how scientists classify organisms; and the types and characteristics of the five taxonomic kingdoms. They have enthusiastically participated in activities that have assisted them in learning these topics and I anticipate more group activities as we continue to discuss animal and plant classification.

6th grade Science

My 6th grade group has quickly shown themselves to be bright and ready for challenges beyond the textbook. We have looked through microscopes at various organisms; learned about magnification, cells, and the cell theory; compared the magnification effects that water and oil have on newsprint; and have just started discussing the different functions of parts of the animal cell. We recently had a lively discussion about the possibilities of cross-breeding a large dog with a very small dog, during which the group proved itself to be eager for scientific discussion and full of creative ideas! Look for more in-depth laboratory activities and a possible research project for this scientifically-minded bunch.

7th and 8th Grade Science

My Middle School students have moved quickly through the first chapter of the textbook and have proven themselves to be eager learners. We have delved into the cell theory; cell structures; chemical compounds within the cells; and learned about diffusion and osmosis. In the near future, I anticipate engaging this animated group in weekly discussions about current events relevant to science and to provide opportunities for them to debate and develop public speaking skills.

Spanish Corner!

By Erin Sorel

Early Childhood and Kindergarten Spanish

As the school year begins, the children in the Early Childhood and Kindergarten classes are diving right in to Spanish learning. We have learned basic greetings, and continue to practice our “Hello song”. The children have had a great time playing guessing games to help us learn our parts of the body. We have also begun talking about Mexican culture, and learned all about piñatas – what they’re used for, and how to make them, fill them, and best of all - open them!

Spanish Corner, cont!

Elementary and Middle School Spanish

I am so pleased that students at the elementary level have already shown great enthusiasm in their Spanish classes. All of the classes have reviewed basic greetings. In the lower grades, we have used guessing and matching games to learn about topics such as parts of the body, colors and numbers. In particular, Mr. Richard's class has done a super job learning their numbers all the way up to 100! Students in the higher elementary grades have studied similar topics, while also including the alphabet. Children in the sixth grade Spanish class have learned all about ancient Mayan culture. We have shared ideas and perceptions about the religion, daily life, and decline of the Maya, as well as expressed our concepts of Mayan culture in murals which we presented and explained to each other in class.

The middle school class has worked hard to complete the first unit of their textbook, Bienvenidos. They extensively reviewed greetings, numbers, telling time, the seasons, the days of the week, and the months of the year in Spanish. Students have done a great job putting together sentences to form meaningful communication. Soon we will prepare to depart somewhat from the textbook in order to contemplate several topics that the students themselves have expressed an interest in. I believe this will be an excellent opportunity to allow them to guide and shape their own learning, as well as to gain more interest in learning foreign languages.

Studio Updates!

Imaginative Movement with Ms. Crystal

Imaginative Movement has started off wonderfully. Each class begins with a warming stretching period in which we use some traditional stretches as well as yoga stretches such as dog tilt, howling cat, down dog, and mountain pose. In the first few classes we have focused on the exploration of rhythm. The first week we explored rhythm through African percussion music paired with rhythm instruments. The students were allowed to select instruments to use and exchange. We also used our bodies as percussion instruments and experimented with the sounds that resonate from different areas of the body being used as instruments. During week two, we worked with some music the students were already familiar with in recreating the way animals move and the rhythms their body movements might match. We discussed the concept that music that matches birds' movements has a very different sound than music that coordinates with elephant' movements. We experimented with moving in ways the emulated a variety of underwater and African animals. We also practice group movement during each class and controlled movements during each class. Group movement can be challenging in regards to the dynamics of moving together in a consistent manner. If one student overcompensates or exaggerates his or her body's movement it effects the movement of the entire group. We also began in September to practice leaps and the balletic first position. Each class ends with cooling stretches and water. It is so encouraging to hear the positive comments coming from the students as they move and learn more about their bodies. They are learning they really are able to accomplish much of what intimidates them. They are beginning to compliment and encourage each other and while occasionally copying each other they are forever adapting the movements to their own bodies and senses of style.

Cooking Class with Ms. Crystal

The Cooking classes have been going very well. The students in the more advanced class (Grades 1-4) have been quickly creating their way through their favorite foods. So far the oldest group has been inventive with smoothie recipes, mastered their own healthy pizzas, have baked cookies, and planned and executed the preparation of a variety of pasta. The students are really embracing the class. They have been so excited about the entire process it is difficult to contain their enthusiasm to one small kitchen. The students have worked well together, and we have struck a balance between independence (choosing one's own pizza toppings) and teamwork (each student measuring and adding an ingredient or two to the batter). Although some ingredients seem more popular than other (chocolate

Studio Updates, cont.!

Cooking Class with Ms. Crystal, cont.

chips for instance), the students have been wonderful about sharing the privileges and responsibilities of cooking. In the other two cooking classes the students have been exploring foods that contain some familiar ingredients intertwined some new ingredients. In creating mango mousse the children were comforted by the familiarity of cool whip and graham crackers while being intrigued and challenged by the less familiar mango and lime. A hope of mine in these classes is that the students learn that what you think you don't like may change when you actually prepare it and taste it yourself. The students are enraptured with each step in the process. The process at these young ages is actually more exciting and inviting than the final product. This allows interest and abilities to flourish. The student, for instance, may not enjoy the final product, but if they enjoyed grating cheese, juicing a lime or an orange, touching the dough and manipulating it into shapes, or spreading an ingredient then they have a sense of accomplishment. This "I did it" attitude is what this studio seeks to encourage and expand upon. So far, I think we are off to a phenomenal start!

Chess Club

We are very excited about a new year of chess club! We are 21 members strong, from 1st through 6th grade. This is so exciting, and we have a very energetic club. As we did last year, we meet on Tuesday afternoons, and are joined by Coach Robert Sinn from the Alachua County Scholastic Chess Association. It is really wonderful to have lots of returning players, and I know this is going to be a great opportunity for players to improve their games. We also have some new players this year as well, and I know everyone will learn from playing each other. We also have a really great group of parents, and I am really excited by – and exceedingly grateful for – all of their support.

An exciting opportunity happens each year for students in Alachua County to participate in county-wide chess tournaments. They are run by the Alachua County Scholastic Chess Association and are held at St. Patrick's on Sunday afternoons from 1-5. The dates are: 10/26, 11/16, 12/14, 1/25 and 2/22. I have more information if anyone is interested. We are trying to get some of the players in chess club to play in the tournament, but kids don't have to be in chess club to play. They do need to know the names of the pieces, how they move and capture and they need to understand check and checkmate. If anyone is interested, please give me a call (Lise, 335-4001).

I think that this is going to be a great year for Chess at MMS! We have a great chess club, enthusiastic parents, and a wonderful coach! I'll keep you posted...

Art Appreciation

The Art Studio is off to a great start! Our first class focused on abstract art. Utilizing only multi-colored squares to compose their ideas, the children created everything from giraffes to robots. I am so happy about their enthusiasm and I am really looking forward to next Tuesday when we will cover pointillism.

MMS Math in the Spotlight

PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

Mathematics and Geometry

The early preparation of the mathematical mind follows a natural and definite pattern. This, according to Montessori, is not by means of direct lessons. At first the knowledge is absorbed subconsciously until the memory traces in the subconscious (engrams) have built and organized the concepts. The important goals of the Montessori mathematics curriculum are that each student be taught at exactly the level on which he or she is performing, and that students will be both willing and able to work on their own. There are important differences between the Montessori math curriculum and other manipulative approaches. These differences are the depth and complexity of the manipulative materials, Montessori's concept of abstraction vs. memorization, and the materials are tools for the child, not teaching aids for the teacher. The goal is for the children to learn by discovery through experience and repetition.

The early childhood mathematics curriculum overlaps the sensorial curriculum and both can begin as early as the children's concentration is developed. The scope and sequence begins at the most basic of concepts, fixed quantities for one-to-one correspondence and expands far into elementary level concepts. According to the Sunshine State Standards, our early childhood preschool and kindergarten curriculum parallels goals set for elementary students as high as third grade.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Mathematics and Geometry

In first through sixth grade, the students have work plans that the teachers create for the different ability and grade level groups in their class. Some of these activities require the use of Montessori manipulative materials and some are work sheets that the teachers either create or copy from printed resources. The work plans are checked by the teachers and assistants. The students are required to make corrections. The students are given the opportunity of getting one-on-one assistance from the teachers and may also work with their peers or independently. In grades fourth through eighth, the senior elementary students and the middle school students have formal math instruction in small ability-level groups. These groups occur at the same daily time block allowing for the integrity of developmental placement and a wider breadth of math levels to be offered. The fourth through sixth grade elementary instructional time is forty minutes and the seventh and eighth is much longer. The two classes are divided into five to six groups of six to twelve students. The students are placed in the groups by means of placement tests at the beginning of each school year. The lowest level offered is a fourth/fifth grade Saxon Math grouping using the Saxon 54 text. The levels progress through Saxon 65, Saxon 76, Saxon 87, Pre Algebra UCSMP and Algebra 1 UCSMP (*University of Chicago School Mathematics Project*).

The fourth, fifth and sixth grade students use math manipulatives for algebra, cubing, square root, and integers when needed. The students are not drawn in some way to the materials as much as when they were younger due to preferring to solve mathematical problems with algorithms. The middle school students do not use manipulatives for mathematics.

The students can choose to come to study hall in the afternoon to receive additional help.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Mathematics

The senior elementary and middle school students have formal math instruction in small ability-level groups. These groups occur at the same daily time block allowing for the integrity of developmental placement and a wider breadth of math levels to be offered. The two classes are divided into groups of six to twelve students. The students are placed in the appropriate math group by means of placement tests at the beginning of each school year. The lowest

MMS Math in the Spotlight, cont.

level offered is a fifth/sixth grade Saxon Math grouping using the Saxon 65 text. The levels progress through Saxon 76, Saxon 87, Pre Algebra, and Algebra I.

Computative Mathematics

This math course uses the Saxon 65, 76, and 87 textbooks. This text utilizes basic computational math skills.

Pre-Algebra

This math course uses the University of Chicago Math Book Transitions. This text utilizes real life experiences as well as computers and calculators to provide critical thinking and problem solving skills. Students take quizzes for feedback and master comprehensive tests with at least 85% accuracy.

Algebra I

This math course uses the University of Chicago Math Book Algebra I. This text utilizes real life experiences as well as computers and calculators to provide critical thinking and problem solving skills. Students take quizzes for feedback and master comprehensive tests with at least 85% accuracy.

Middle School ROPES Course

During the month of October, the students of Millhopper Montessori Middle School spent three exciting days at Camp McConnell taking part in ROPES training. ROPES training presents students with situations that require them to share their knowledge and experiences creatively with each other while trying to solve and overcome a variety of problems and obstacles. The ROPES course is divided into two groups of activities- low elements and high elements. The goal of these first elements is for the entire group to participate and succeed. To accomplish this, they must cultivate a sense of trust and respect for each other. The high elements are individual challenges that are made much easier by the feeling of solidarity that is developed by completing the low elements.

The low elements start with simple activities such as cooperative games, which require all the members of the group to participate if they are to succeed. And, it climaxes with the Trust Fall. Elements such as the trust fall, team wall, and spider's web help nurture the sense of unity that will be essential in completing the more difficult tasks ahead of them. Facing these challenges, a student is asked to make decisions as to what will not only best serve themselves, but what will also help the whole group succeed.

The motto of the high elements is "challenge by choice." When students are asked whether they want to climb the thirty foot Cargo Net or to leap off the twenty-five foot Pamper Pole, they are expected to appraise the risk. The intention is to move the students out of their "comfort zone" in a manner that is healthy and safe. The group support system

that had its beginning with the low elements is now strong enough to support not only those who are willing to attempt the climbs, but also those that decide they do not want to participate.

Although ROPES training is a lot of fun, it isn't just playing games. It's learning that one can do what one previously couldn't. It is learning that problems are there to be met and solved. Not necessarily by oneself, but often with the help and cooperation of others. It is learning to find strength in others as well as in oneself. It is also learning to assess and understand risks, both physical and emotional, and being able to make decisions with the support, but not the pressure, of the group.