



A Monthly Look Into the Montessori School of Columbia
Montessori Matters

Upcoming Events

- **December 12** - 5K Field Trip, Jack Frost Ballet
- **December 21 to January 5** - Winter Break, No School
- **January 13** - 5k Field Trip: Love, Peace, and Hip Hop
- **January 24** - Re-enrollment Contracts distributed

Development News

Magnolia, Palmetto and Upper Elementary classrooms have all received Hydroponic towers and have begun growing a variety of herbs and leafy greens. They are learning about growing healthy food, mixing nutrient solutions, and adjusting the pH of a solution. Soon, Primary will receive tabletop hydroponic systems, too. We will be installing grow lights and growing plants hydroponically in mason jars.



The funding for this project was provided by the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services through their Champions of the Environment grant and by a mini-grant from Richland Soil and Water Conservation District. Thank you to SCDES and RSWCD!

The 2024-2025 Annual Fund is underway! Please make a donation that is meaningful to you to support educational opportunities for MSC students. We love to have all families participate in the Annual Fund, which is critical in bridging the gap between tuition revenue and the true cost of a Montessori education. You can donate by scanning the MSC Venmo QR Code or by delivering cash or check to the MSC office. All donations are tax deductible.



Upper Elementary

by Milan Greene and Jo Heckman Minett

This month, we have been covering a lot in U.S. History and Civics/Government, from the Revolutionary War, the Constitution, to the Middle Passage. Our current historical fiction read aloud, *The Kidnapped Prince*, is also set during this period and lines up exactly with what we are studying in our history curriculum. *The Kidnapped Prince* is the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano. Olaudah, who was originally from Benin, was kidnaped at an early age and forced into servitude. The autobiography follows his travels from England, the U.S., and the West Indies. Olaudah's biography was originally published in 1789, and we highly recommend it!

This Grandparents Day, which will take place in the spring, we will be adding something new. A Telenovela! A telenovela is a Spanish soap opera, and ours will be written and acted out by the Upper Elementary students. The Upper Elementary students are excited about the performance!

On Friday, December 20, we will have our annual Upper Elementary classroom potluck, where students bring their favorite recipes from the holidays. As we feast on these items, which we prepare at home, we will also get to wear pajamas, bring in pillows or blankets, watch movies, and play board games!

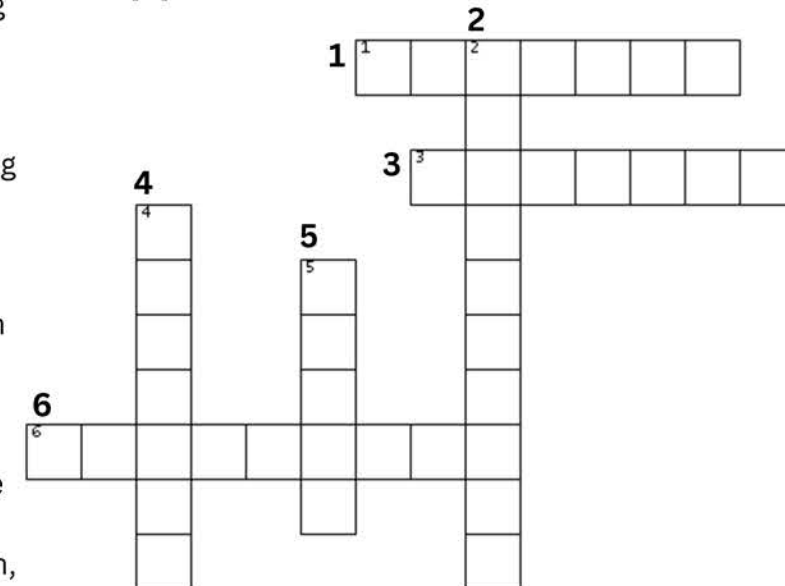
ACROSS

1. An annual tradition where Upper El students bring and share food with friends before Winter Break
3. The first name of "The Kidnapped Prince" whose biography is being studied in Upper El
6. The type of Spanish lessons given in Primary during the morning work cycle

DOWN

2. A Spanish soap opera, one of which will be written by Upper El in Spanish class, performed, and recorded for viewing at Grandparents and Special Friends Day in the Spring
4. A special clothing type that Upper El students are invited to wear on the last day before break
5. The kind of dance that Upper El learned last month, as noted in the Spanish newsletter blurb

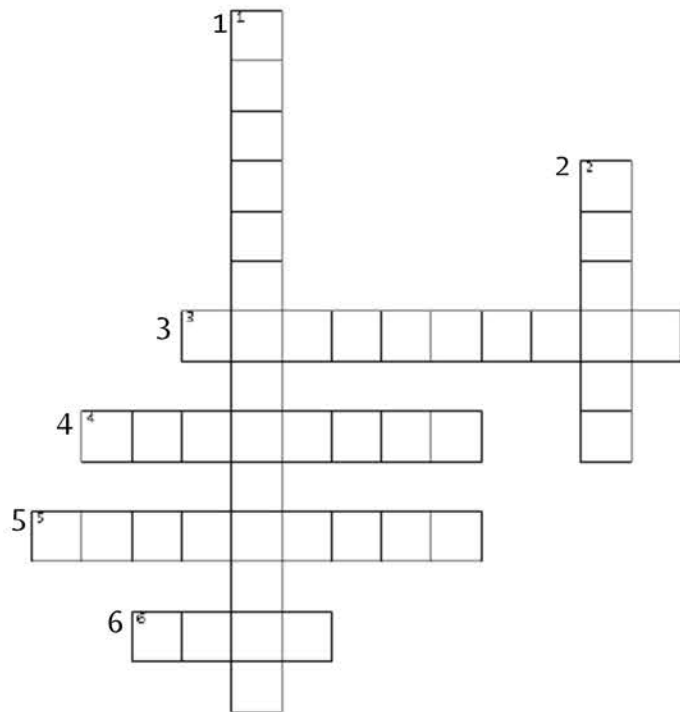
Upper El & Enrichment Puzzle



Enrichments



Primary Puzzle



Continued on next page...

ACROSS

3. The skill of calming and grounding that Primary 3 practices each day
4. The food that Primary 2 has been learning about in stories and rhymes
5. The ballet that Primary 5K will see in December at the Koger Center
6. Something that Ms. Corey and Ms. Tristin hope to experience with students at school this winter

DOWN

1. The recipe Primary 1 made from the book "A Fine Dessert"
2. The continent that Primary 2 is currently studying

Enrichments continued...

Spanish News

As the semester is coming to an end, we are excited to share all the progress made with language learning! At the primary level, children are expanding the ways they can express themselves in conversational Spanish through Grace and Courtesy lessons at circle time and through immersive lessons given during the morning work cycle. 5K students have learned the Spanish alphabet and their sounds, as well as their numbers through 100! Lower Elementary have mastered singular/plural and masculine/feminine noun identification, adjective placement and agreement, and are diving into definite and indefinite articles all while continuing to expand their personal vocabularies with their lexicons. Since learning how to Salsa dance last month, Upper Elementary have moved into present tense verb conjugation, and begun writing the script for the filming of a telenovela to be shown at Grandparents Day in the spring semester. Don't worry--there will be subtitles!



Primary 3

Dear MSC familias,

I hope this chilly December finds you feeling full and fulfilled after Fall Break. The children were eager to get back to work after their short departure from routine, but I would be amiss to imply that there is not a heightened sense of attention to the festivities that this month brings us, including classroom birthdays and a 5K field trip to the ballet! In the Children's House, there is an ebb and flow of pressing into challenging works while also taking time to celebrate and enjoy the wonderment that December brings. Many children are working with equations in math, and I am excited by the emerging young readers we now have. Ms. Tristin and I have encouraged the children to read to each other, and the peer support has been lovely to observe.

As many of you know, one way we maintain a sense of grounding in our classroom is by meditating for three minutes each day before lunch. This month, in particular, I am very grateful for this ritual. As the world around us moves fast and schedules get shaken up like a snow globe, we still have these three minutes. Over the last few years, I've had parents share how their children bring this practice home and even take it on trips! It brings me joy and an appreciation for the importance of taking time to sit in stillness. Dr. Montessori spoke about the spiritual wellbeing of the child, and as Montessorians, we recognize that, like their intellect, the child's spirit is also developing. The ability to find and maintain inner peace is a gift. During this season of awe and excitement (sometimes confused with excess and restlessness), I want to encourage you that your child knows how to find inner peace. It is my hope that they can share that peace with you over the holidays as they've shared it with us at school. I also really hope that if winter remains as cold as December's start, Columbia will see some snow, and on a personal note, to experience snow while at school with the children would be the most magical dream come true!!!

"This is the treasure we need today- helping the child become independent of us and make his way by himself and receiving in return his gifts of hope and light."

Dr. Montessori



Primary 2

Season greetings to you all!

I hope you are staying warm and cozy as you enjoy the beautiful cold weather. The children were introduced to many wonderful lessons last month. Parts of the leaf, leaf scavenger hunt, and leaf rubbings were some, and making their own food was their favorite. This month, we are learning about nursery rhymes and rhyming words. One of the children asked about porridge. We heard about porridge in the *Three Little Bears*, and in the nursery rhyme, "peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold". On **Friday, December 20**, we will have "Porridge and Pajama Day". We will make porridge in the classroom and will serve diced apples, raisins, toast, turkey sausage, and apple cider for lunch that day. You don't need to send a lunch for your child unless you know your child will not eat the foods we will be serving that day. We will continue our study on Europe. The children love the flag- and map-making lessons of Europe. The 5K really enjoyed making mini Plymouth environments.

There are many things going on this month. Show and Tell is every Friday and remains inside your child's bag until time for sharing. On **Thursday, December 12**, the 5K will be going to the ballet. Ms. Nora will be here with Ms. Janeta during the field trip. **December 23 through January 3**, we will be out of school for Winter Break. I hope you all have a great break enjoying time with your family and friends. Truly, this is the most wonderful time of the year. As the season has changed, *please make sure* the clothes you send to school (at least two full sets) are weather-appropriate. If soiled clothes come home, please send clean ones the next day to help us avoid having to call you to bring them in the case of an accident.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's educational journey. We enjoy working with your family!

Respectfully,

Ms. Tonisha and Ms. Janeta



Primary 1

The month of November was full of love and learning in our Primary community. We were privileged to experience a visit from Terminix with samples of insects from around the world. They taught us about their importance in our ecosystem and sparked keen interest among our students. Another highlight of November came when we read *A Fine Dessert* by Emily Jenkins, which follows the same dish, Blackberry Fool, through four centuries of gathering ingredients, preparing, and sharing the dish with others. In celebration of all that we are thankful for, we shared the dish as a class at lunch before going on Fall Break.

We are very excited for the Kindergarten field trip to the Koger Center for a performance of *Jack Frost*. We have been focusing on the visible changes in our environment as the temperature and season shift to colder days and nights. If you have not yet done so, I would urge you to update your child's changes of clothes (in the classroom and in Building D). While many in our class are excited for Winter Break, we are continuing to explore new works in the classroom. I hope you all have a wonderful and meaningful break, and I look forward to seeing you all in the new year!

Thank you all for your continued support,

Ms. Sunshine

"The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn."

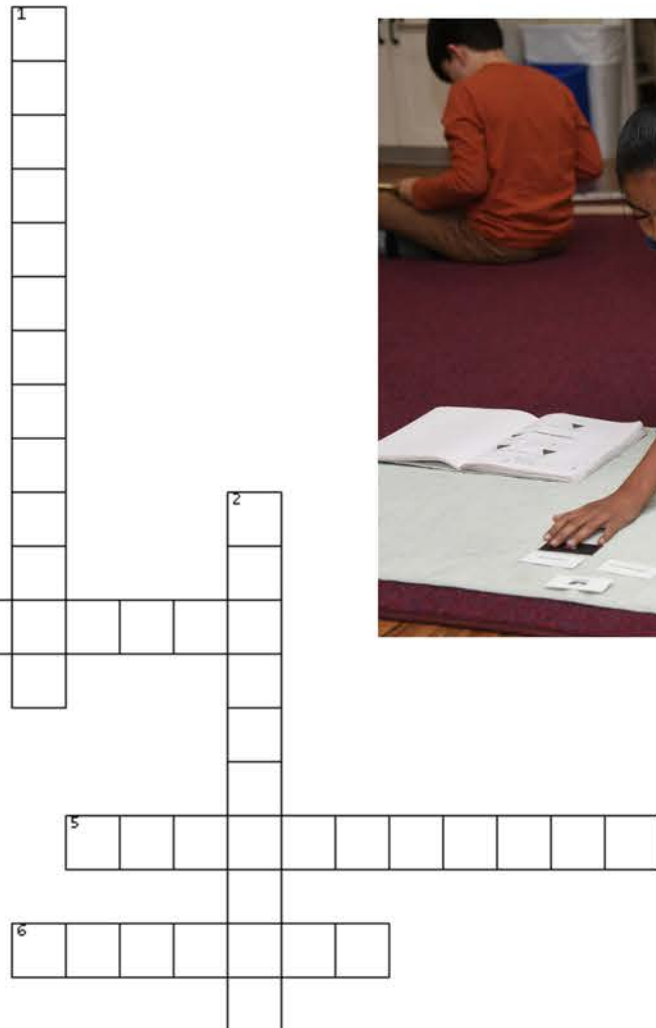
Dr. Maria Montessori



Lower Elementary Puzzle

ACROSS

4. The Age of the Dinosaurs, which was just presented in Palmetto Class
5. The last era in the Timeline of Life, which Magnolia is looking forward to completing
6. The items that are passed around when learning about different periods in the Timeline of Life, as noted in Magnolia's newsletter blurb



DOWN

1. The story Palmetto just completed reading aloud
2. The type of gardening the students have implemented in class after Mr. Michael Drennan earned the school a grant
3. Time that includes the Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian, Carboniferous, and Permian periods

Magnolia

This month, the Magnolia classroom has been traveling through the *TimeLine of Life*, part of Dr. Montessori's Second Great Lesson. For each period on the timeline, we have a lesson, read a book on the period, and pass around some fossils. We have discussed the changes in the tectonic plates and climate and the evolving plant and animal life. Students have been introduced to a host of interesting creatures. We have covered the Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian, Carboniferous, and Permian periods in the Paleozoic Era. We have started the Mesozoic with the Triassic and Jurassic periods. We are looking forward to finishing the timeline with the Cenozoic Era.



Palmetto

In the Palmetto Class, we have recently become farmers! Thanks to a grant from SCDES and coordination by Mr. Michael Drennan, we have been working to establish our own hydroponic vegetable garden in the classroom. We will be growing leafy greens and herbs to start, and we've already been adding to our understanding of plant growth, including measuring and adjusting pH levels to help our plants thrive. We are looking forward to observing and caring for our plants, and eventually eating them!

We are continuing with our study of life on Earth and recently introduced the Jurassic Period, the Age of the Dinosaurs. Along with the various plant and animal life forms that would have been found during the period, we are exploring how Earth's climate and geography would have changed from previous times. As we've learned about different life forms found in earlier periods, we have taken time to introduce modern invertebrate relatives, including mollusks, sea sponges, and arthropods such as insects, arachnids, and crustaceans.

We wrapped up our read-aloud study of *Charlotte's Web* and changed genres to start a study of autobiography. The book *26 Fairmount Avenue* is the first volume in a series by children's book author and illustrator Tomie dePaola. Set in the 1930s and 1940s, this series of biographies also provides a good introduction to some of the important events in American history of the 20th century. Our afternoon read-alouds and cultural lessons often provide a springboard for writing workshops that encourage the children to practice putting their own ideas and responses on paper. During the upcoming winter break, we encourage students to read and write something every day. This does not need to be lengthy or complicated. Just a few sentences each day, maybe in the form of a journal of holiday activities or a response to what we are reading, will help ensure that students keep their literacy skills sharp during our time away from school.

Best wishes to all families for peaceful and enjoyable holidays!

“Doubtless the fact that the child learns by himself, that he can overcome so many difficulties by himself, gives him an inner satisfaction that enhances his sense of personal dignity.”