



Classroom News

Is it? Can it be? Is that the end of the school year I see shining ahead? It is! It is the end of the school year! I am really not at all excited. Not at all. I think some of your children may be, though. The children who are graduating are talking amongst themselves about how it will be next year and seem confident on the whole. In order to ensure that their confidence is not misplaced, Pauline and I are busily steering them towards work which will help build the necessary skills. "What do you think would be helpful for you to work on in order to be ready for first grade?" I ask wandering souls. We have also recently begun limiting the time spent outdoors by third-year students. We are keeping them in until 11:00 and this is working well. The older children can turn their energy from wondering how quickly we will let them go out (sometimes we delay them and have them work on this or that before heading to the great outdoors) to really dedicating themselves to the work indoors. Meanwhile, the younger children, who really seem to be better at finding purposeful work outside, have

the school yard to themselves. It is quieter out there and there is less chance of being run over by a 6-year-old! After nearly two years of experimenting with the free flow in and out of doors, Pauline and I are convinced that the younger children often concentrate on their gravel raking and window washing and they make great gains in their social skills while searching for worms

in small groups. They seem to garner enormous gains from their time in our beautiful, natural environment. The older kids' time out there seems to be primarily social, which is good, but also something they can work on indoors while preparing themselves academically for first grade. Outdoors, they are not as contemplative nor as focused as their younger classmates. I am so glad that we have conducted this experiment and I feel secure in the knowledge that we have found a good balance between connecting with nature and preparing for the future.

And speaking of the outdoors, Leslie has been planting up a storm with the kids and all sorts of things are starting to sprout and take root! It is so exciting to see little shoots coming up from the soil where once there nothing! Because we are studying Gabon,



Bayla excited to be at Children's Open House!



Hugo & Jake working with the Africa map



a West African coastal country, we have in our activity shed a gourd shaker for the children to play as well as a thumb piano which is from Africa. We are also sanding and polishing a huge gourd. It is not ideal to lump all African countries together and say, "This is African." Each country has its own culture and identity, we know. However, we must make do and use the tools, instruments and artifacts that we do possess to bring some flavor to our current study of Gabon. Unfortunately, we just don't HAVE anything from Gabon!

I was pleased to learn that Gabon is one of Africa's success stories. It has a history of stable government since liberation from France in 1960 and has had only 3 presidents. Gabon is rich in petroleum and foreign investors. The government has created many national parks and preserved much of its tropical forests, which cover the majority of the country. This wisdom will surely contribute much to its fiduciary as well as natural riches, for tourism will benefit Gabon greatly. Pygmies once lived in Gabon, but have now been absorbed into the general population. They still hunt and gather and trade in neighboring countries, though, and we will learn a little bit about them as well as other tribes and ethnicities. The children are loving the tribal mask collage that Leslie has created as well as other art activities that


use the colors of the Gabonese flag (yellow, blue and green) as well as the red, green and black that represents Africa as a whole. We have some very nice books from the library which are about Africa in general. Many are factual, but some tell fictional, but reality-based stories of village life. We have some lovely books about iconic African animals. The kids loved the one about hippos that I read today. We will read a lot about animals in this unit.

French is the official language of Gabon. Pauline, Leslie and I all know just enough French to be wildly enthusiastic and often inaccurate! We are constantly correcting each other and learning as we go. I think it's a good model for the kids. We are doing the calendar and weather report in French and we use Celsius to report the temperature. We are singing a few French songs and a few in various African dialects. We are counting in French, learning the names of colors and making as much French conversation as possible with the phrases and courtesies that we know. We had an observer this week who was a French citizen. Boy, did that dry up the French among the staff members! All French speaking came to a grinding halt! We're shy.


It was pretty funny how many of the children could not stop bowing after our study of Japan came to an end. The memory of



our muscles is so strong! We just started shaking hands again, though, and I think substituting one physical action for another is helpful. I missed the handshaking tradition and the worst of cold and flu season is over (knock wood.) We have emphasized to the children how important it will be for them to wash their hands well before and after school now that we are touching palms on a twice-daily basis. We practiced our hand-washing routine at group, but I know it is easy to give it little more than a lick and a promise when no adults are supervising!

As this is the last article I will write this school year, I wish to thank you all for your dedication and contributions to our school. Your help and support is absolutely vital to the functioning and very existence of Philomath Montessori School. It is impossible to think of how this school would operate without your efforts. You are wonderful parents. Your children are blessed. As child-rearing and society in general seems to get so off track, as children are pumped full of video games and artificial ingredients, as parents bend their heads over their smart phones instead of their kids, I know we are the lucky ones. Our kids are listened to, offered wholesome activities and real, nourishing foods. You really should see the beautiful and colorful produce our kids bring in their lunches. It is gorgeous! I know I work every day with some of the most conscientious people in existence, not just our parents, but our staff, too. You inspire me to be better in every way and I thank you sincerely! I wish you all a glorious and carefree summer with your kids! Best regards,
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Newsline

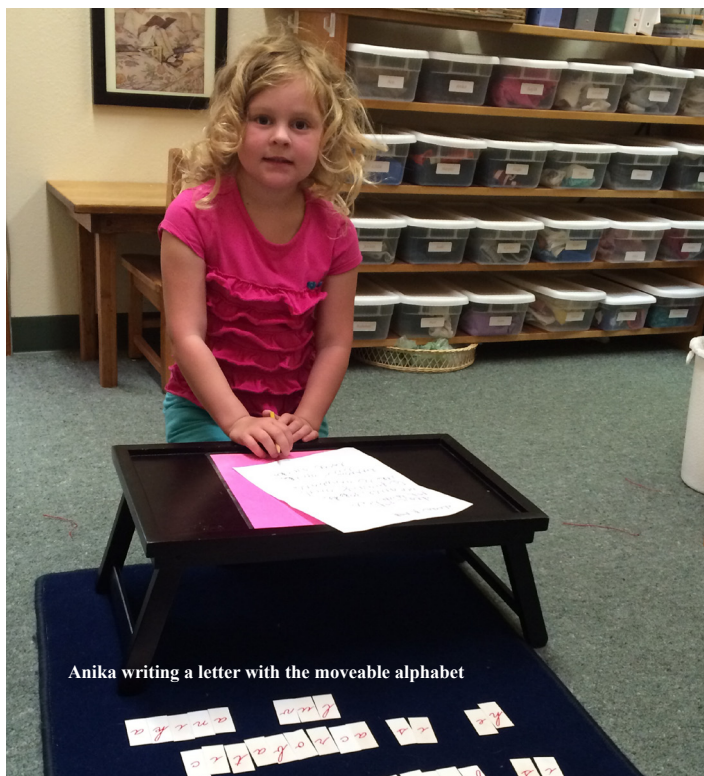
- Please join us for our **End-of-the-Year Potluck on Saturday, June 7 from 5pm to 6:30pm** in our school yard. If the weather is inclement, we will meet at Mary's River Park (just south of the Philomath Library on 11th). This year please be sure to be on hand for our first annual farewell and flyaway ritual! It will begin at 6:15.
- If you would like to keep your current year-round job for the 2014-2015 school year, please let us know soon.
- Our **last day of school is Thursday, June 12**. No full day or extended care.
- Please be sure to mark **Saturday, August 23 (9am – noon)** on your calendar – our **Parent Work Day**. We will need you!! 

*Leaving for the summer?
Leave worry free!!
Our Services include:
House sitting, pet sitting,
yard and garden maintenance.*

*Staying home but need
some extra hands?
We also offer childcare
and house cleaning/
organization.*


*Please call Naomi Cohen
and Maria Cortes at
541-760-9072.*

Have a great summer!



Anika writing a letter with the moveable alphabet

Art Class

After studying color combining by making color wheels and tops, we went on to do tie dyed t-shirts, a vibrant example of the overlay of dyes on fabric. Collaged mother's day cards were made and mailed out to appreciate their mothers. We then worked on acrylic paintings on large foam core pieces incorporating some printmaking. Blueprint or sun prints were made by placing plants and objects on treated paper inside and then taking the papers outside into the sun to watch the development of the images. These were mounted on their decorated borders for their blueprint papers. We are moving into felting , first over soap and then making felted containers. As the school year quickly comes to an end, the children will take home the journals they have worked on through the year on Fridays, with pages to continue on during the summer as well.  *Jennifer Smith*



Art Class tie-dye!



Sun Prints with Frames



Acrylics on foam core