

Covered Bridge Chronicle

October 2011

The Spirit of CBA



Dear Parents,

I am so excited for Fall to begin. This is my favorite, favorite time of year, made only better by the fact that I now associate it with my sweet daughter's birth. Fall has always been a time for community in my family. We gather with friends to be outdoors, watch football, go hiking and camping, and celebrate many holidays. I imagine you all have your Fall traditions, as well.

This Fall, CBA will be working to expand its positive impact on our community. We will be taking on two community service endeavors: Trick or Treat for Unicef, as well as participating in the Bert Show's Big Thank-You. This radio show is leading an effort to get one thank-you letter for each member of the U.S. military stationed overseas for the Thanksgiving holiday. They need approximately 400,000 letters. We will be doing our part to help encourage and support the men and women who are working overseas away from their families this Thanksgiving. Trick or Treat for UNICEF will allow us to raise money for human relief efforts going on all around the world. This is a great opportunity to talk with your children about small ways to make a difference for those around them without sacrificing the fun of Halloween and all that candy.

Please take a look at the enclosed story about one family's philanthropic efforts. Remember, our children aren't usually born with innate empathy or understanding of their own privileges. It is up to us to help them understand that what we have is a blessing, and to whom much is given, much is expected.

I am so enjoying your children every day, and have also enjoyed getting to know many of you. Thank you so much to those parents that I have already seen around school volunteering!

Kind Regards,

Ms. Kate Garrett

Director

Getting Kids to Give: Lynda's Story

Like many parents, Lynda wanted to instill in her kids a desire to perform good deeds in the community — and beyond. Moved by the malaria crisis in Africa, Lynda discussed it with her family, and her daughter, then in kindergarten, was inspired to take action. Together, the mother-and-daughter team educated scores of kids about malaria and raised thousands of dollars to buy bed nets to help stop the spread of the disease.

"Mom, that's not right! We need to send some nets to Africa right away!" This was the response of my 5-year-old daughter after I told her that bed nets prevent malaria and save lives in Africa.

I'd been watching a TV program on malaria, and I couldn't get it out of my mind. Most devastating to me was that 3,000 children per day are dying from the disease, which is preventable and curable. While malaria has been eliminated in parts of Asia, Europe, and America, in Africa, where there is widespread poverty and underdeveloped health care, the disease continues to spread. One thing that can prevent the disease from spreading is giving families bed nets that have been treated with insecticide to sleep under.

It haunted me and I knew I had to respond. The next morning, at breakfast, I shared what I'd learned with my husband and my kids, Katherine, then 5, and Joseph, 2. I explained that a little mosquito bite is a terrible problem in Africa and that sleeping under a special net helps stop the mosquito. Katherine quickly understood and wanted to help. She suggested we do a lemonade stand, which we'd done to help raise money for Hurricane Katrina victims. But I told her that we might need something a little bigger.

We talk about global issues at home and in church, so the topic of suffering and death was not new to her and I was not afraid to talk to her about it. I truly believe that Katherine was so committed to this mission because she saw how important it was to me. She understood how sad it made me when I thought of the children in Africa who were dying from this preventable disease.

A Place to Start

After months of research online and at my local library, I was led to the United Nations Foundation, an organization that distributes bed nets in Africa. A wonderful working relationship began, and with their support Katherine and I decided to start fundraising at our local church. We introduced One Bed Net At A Time during services throughout the 2006 Labor Day weekend. We were both a little nervous doing the presentation. But together we explained how in Africa, mosquitoes can kill by transmitting malaria. We explained that every 30 seconds a child dies from this illness. I emphasized malaria's intimate connection with poverty. Katherine stated that malaria can be prevented by sleeping under a bed net, which costs \$10. She inspired the congregation.

Katherine and I went on to talk to the children at Sunday school. We displayed actual bed nets, performed a skit, and used a diorama, which Katherine and I had made with the help of her little brother, to demonstrate to the kids how the nets prevent malaria. We then had the kids make bookmarks covered in netting to take home so they could share the message with others. I knew if we could teach the children four words — Africa, mosquitoes, malaria, and bed nets — then they would understand and want to help ...and they most certainly did!

That fall, Katherine and I made our One Bed Net At A Time presentation to many others. We spoke in front of groups at our local library, gym, pre-school, elementary school, neighboring churches, three local newspapers, a Girl Scout Troop, and a home schooling co-operative. As the holiday season approached, kids from both the church and community decorated homemade gift certificates, allowing gift-givers to purchase bed nets in someone's honor. These were a **huge** hit and over 600 were sold! Katherine, Joseph, and her friends had fun decorating the gift certificates. By October 2007, we raised over \$25,000 to buy bed nets, which have saved thousands of lives in Africa.

I could not have asked for a better partner than my daughter. As parents, we need to lead by example. We can only hope our children will follow in our footsteps, and if they do, the power of one little child **can** bring about amazing change.

Unbeknownst to us, at the same time, others were thinking along the same lines. *Sports Illustrated* columnist Rick Reilly was asking his readers to buy bed nets to help stop the spread of malaria, and the incredible response had prompted the formation of Nothing But Nets, a global fundraising campaign to fund nets that prevent malaria in Africa. The UN foundation helped link our two groups and they invited us to help kick off the official campaign.

On January 4, 2007, Katherine's sixth birthday, our family traveled to New York City to kick off the campaign. Katherine and I were honored for our fundraising efforts. Katherine, surrounded by TV cameras and a studio audience, used her diorama of an African hut and family to explain how a net saves a person's life. Many in the crowd were wiping tears from their eyes. I am humbled by Katherine's understanding of and commitment to this mission and have learned from her to **never** underestimate a child's abilities.

Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD

Date reviewed: September 2010

Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

Upper Elementary News

Dear Parents,

Upper Elementary is off to a great start! Class committees run our class with Ms. Mary as our guide (with veto power of course). Our committees include fitness, planning, newsletter, house-keeping, and peace. We have meetings each Monday and Wednesday where we vote on class activities and make plans for field trips, Fun Friday, and all committee activities. Here is a report from each of our committees:

The Fitness Committee plans and implements yoga twice per week and relay races for Fun Friday. The Newsletter Committee makes outlines of class news and helps to write the monthly newsletter and other parent communication. The big news is the addition of our newest pet, Oliver the bunny. Oliver is litter box trained and hops around to visit students as they work. Students take turns babysitting Oliver on the weekends! The House Keeping Committee keeps track of all the classroom chores on the computer and rotates jobs on a weekly basis. The Peace Committee helps encourage others to do well and stay focused. They devised a peace chart to motivate the class to complete all tasks so that extra recess is earned for Fun Friday. All students are on the Planning Committee. Plans are underway for a campout and a fundraiser for our Tybee Island biological camp in the spring. We have our first class field trip to the Funk Heritage Center to see the Georgia Timeline on Thursday, October 13, 2011.

Upper elementary is collecting codes from Dannon Danimal's yogurt for the Dannon Danimal's Rally for Recess in hopes of winning playground prizes that could include a playground makeover! If you enjoy Danimal's, save the codes! The second exciting project is Disney's Friends for Change contest that encourages school children to devise a community awareness project. Be on the lookout for this project to unfold in the months to come.

Upper Elementary would like to thank all the parents who have signed up for the PTO and attended the Come See What I can Do Day! Also, thanks for all the yummy snack; parent readers and spelling quiz givers. We have the best parents!

Make sure to visit our class website: www.covered.grouppfusion.net

Thanks,
Ms. Mary Gilbert
Upper Elementary Class



The Lower Elementary Lowdown

Dear Parents,

Last month we began discussing some of the differences between a Montessori Primary classroom and a Montessori Elementary classroom. We would like to continue our discussion with you again this month as the children are now very much demonstrating these characteristics. We can't wait for everyone to join us in the classroom later this month so that you can witness these wonderful concepts yourself!

In the Primary classroom, your child was best able to concentrate when working parallel to his peers, each with his/her own activity. Elementary children, however, are at a different stage of development and have a strong drive to be social and to collaborate. For this reason, most of the lessons and follow-up projects in elementary are done in pairs or groups of children. Each day, your child practices the social skills necessary to plan and carry out his/her projects: delegation and division of labor, sharing resources, making group decisions, taking responsibility for actions, and celebrating the success of peers. Conflict is not uncommon, but the motivation to resolve it comes from the children and their engagement with their projects. The Montessori teacher models and supports constructive and respectful problem solving. Learning how to work well with the different personalities and characteristics of other children in the classroom community is a significant life lesson with practical applications in the "real world" of high school, college, and the professional workplace of the future.

The classroom itself is designed to nurture imagination and reason.

Elementary age students are naturally curious and have a strong internal drive to discover how our world works. They may ask, "How does a fish breathe under water?" "What number comes after a trillion?" "What causes a volcano to erupt?" Instead of simply giving them the correct answers, Montessori elementary teachers ask the right questions; they tell stories to inspire the children's imagination and tantalize them to explore on their own to find out more: about volcanoes and dinosaurs and Monet and gladiators and poppies and skateboards and butter churning and cheetahs and – there is no limit! Driven by their passions, the children are open to the input from the teacher that refines their reading, writing, reasoning, and research skills. Designing our elementary program around the children's natural cognitive abilities means that our focus is less on the facts and concepts we teach and more on what the children learn and how they learn it. We are anxious to see just where the children's curiosity leads us in our studies this year!



Sincerely,
Lower Elementary Class



Ms. Maggie's Message

Dear Parents,

I came across this article a few weeks ago and found it very enlightening. I hope you do too!

Learning How to Focus on Focus: In an age of information overload, simply paying attention is the hardest thing

By JONAH LEHRER

For most of human history, the progress of knowledge was constrained by a shortage of information. Books were expensive and rare, libraries were reserved for elite scholars and communication was extremely slow. Mail moved at the speed of horses. Now, of course, we live in the age of Google and Amazon Prime, a time when nearly everything ever written can be accessed within seconds or delivered within days. Facts are cheap and easy; the cellphone has become an infinite library. So what's holding us back? Why does this surfeit of information so often feel overwhelming instead of enlightening? The answer returns us to the stubborn limitations of the human mind, especially when it comes to the ability to focus properly. As the psychologist Herbert Simon famously declared, "A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention." But it doesn't have to be this way; the mind isn't quite as constrained as we've assumed. Though our attention will always be a scarce resource, easily steamrolled by the world's abundant distractions, it's possible to improve our focus, to become better at dealing with the excess of information. The key is strengthening what psychologists call "executive function," a collection of cognitive skills that allow us to exert control over our thoughts and impulses. When we resist the allure of a sweet treat, or do homework instead of watch television, or concentrate for hours on a difficult problem, we are relying on these lofty mental talents. What we want to do in the moment, and what we want to want, are often very different things. Executive function helps to narrow the gap. Researchers have found that varying personal levels of executive function have a profound impact on nearly every aspect of life. Consider a recent study led by Avshalom Caspi and Terrie Moffit of Duke University that tracked 1,037 children born in Dunedin, New Zealand. The researchers gave the kids a barrage of mental tests and then kept meticulous records of their behavior as they matured into teenagers and adults. Children who could better regulate their impulses and attention were four times less likely to have a criminal record, three times less likely to be addicted to drugs and half as likely to become single parents. In many instances, the ability to utilize executive control was more predictive of adult outcomes than either IQ scores or socioeconomic status. But here's the good news: Executive function can be significantly improved, especially if interventions begin at an early age. In the current issue of *Science*, Adele Diamond, a neuroscientist at the University of British Columbia, reviews the activities that can reliably boost these essential mental skills. The list is surprisingly varied, revolving around activities that are both engaging and challenging, such as computer exercises involving short-term memory, tae-kwon-do, yoga and difficult board games. Dr. Diamond also notes that certain school curricula, such as Montessori and Tools for the Mind, have also been shown to consistently increase executive function. Yet, despite this impressive evidence, most schools do virtually nothing to develop executive function. Even worse, education departments are slashing the very activities, such as physical exercise and the arts that boost executive function among the broadest range of students. We've also failed to develop metrics that can assess these skills. Though in kindergarten we often attempt to track aspects of executive function—the report card of a 5-year-old is filled with ratings about the ability to focus and stay on task—these categories vanish for the rest of a student's academic career, replaced by an obsession with academic subject matter. We worry about the periodic table instead of persistence, spelling instead of self-control. That's almost certainly a mistake. Given the age in which we live, it makes no sense to obsess over the memorization of facts that can be looked up on a smartphone. It's not enough to drill kids in arithmetic and hope that they develop delayed gratification by accident. We need to teach the skills of executive function directly and creatively. If we want our children to succeed in the age of information, we need to give them the mental tools that matter. The world has changed. The mind can't stay the same.

Published in the Wall Street Journal; Sept 3, 2011



Primary Happenings II

Happy October! Usually in the monthly newsletter, I try and update you on what our class is talking about each month. However, this month I hope to answer a question I hear often from parents. You, like I am with my own son, want to know what "new" lesson your child did today. I came across this article from Montessori Print Shop about the importance of repetition. I was reminded that this is a major part of the Montessori Method. I hope you enjoy the article as much as I did!

Allow Time For Repetition

"We often equate repetition with a person who is mentally slow. If someone requires multiple repetitions to remember something, we think they are not as smart as someone who gets it right away. This assumption does not apply with young children. When a young child repeats an activity, they are opening brain nerve connections and building brain architecture." John Bowman Montessori At Home! and Montessori Minute

Repetition is one of the basic human tendencies that Maria Montessori observed from the very beginning of her work with children. Repetition is what allows humans to learn and strive towards mastery and independence. When children are not allowed to repeat activities, the connections within the mind and between the mind and body are not made. It is through repetition that children make connections, discover their own errors, learn how to correct them, and master a skill. If adults do not allow children to make connections and discover their own errors (and insist on pointing them out or making the corrections for them), children will eventually lose interest and begin to see errors in a negative light. When the prepared environment and materials provide feedback so that the children learn from their errors (and not from the adult), they become internally driven to repeat the exercises until they master them.

Repetition and mastery of skills creates a positive outlook within children and increases the likelihood of them being intrinsically motivated to learn for life.

"It is well to cultivate a friendly feeling towards error, to treat it as a companion inseparable from our lives, as something having a purpose, which it truly has."

-Maria Montessori,
The Absorbent Mind



Extra Curricular News



The Artist's Hand

Why is Art important? The child in the Montessori classroom possesses a need to be capable, creative, independent, and confident. He requires the skills necessary to imagine his own solutions to problems that confront him. The freedom to create from one's imagination facilitates the child in his quest for independence, while simultaneously nurturing his exploration for understanding of himself and the world in which he lives. Montessori addresses the importance of the child having such freedom to learn and grow stating, "The child has his own laws of growth, and if we want to help him grow, we must follow him instead of imposing ourselves on him." (Education for a New World, Maria Montessori, page 59).

Art plays an important part in an educational curriculum by helping with the development of hand coordination, concentration and creative independence. Lessons are taught to provide students with the skills necessary to explore, imagine and create art pieces. It is critical that the child is able to create with his own hands that which he envisions in his mind. Imagination at work. In my opinion, these skills will help solve many of society's issues. The ability to dream big, think outside the box and create solutions.

The exploration of art should also be explored for the sake of art itself, being such an integral part of our society, although not always recognized. Often, the only relics remaining of past civilizations provide a window into the past. Art plays a role in socialization as the students examine how history or society may play an important role in art. Conversely, we also learn how one particular artist may have deeply affected the world of art, history and society. Lessons in aesthetics of art and art criticism are given for the children to discuss what they see, feel, prefer, in addition to the reasons for such choices. This plants the seeds for intelligent art appreciation and informed dialogue.

Take the time to look at art and design with your children. It is all around us. Ask them to identify lines, shape, color and texture in everyday objects. Create a family tradition of exploring art museums, many offer special family programming. Help your child to develop their unique vision by nurturing their imagination.

-Sincerely,

Ms. Shannon Mulkey

Art Instructor

Music & Movement

Dear Parents,

October brings the wonderful fall weather. Our music classes will celebrate the changes of the season, work occupations & Native American Sounds. We will continue to explore syncopated rhythms and incorporate environmental sounds to create our own band. Did you see the new yoga poses we have learned? We have incorporated multi-poses and partner posing.

Namaste...



-Ms. Debbie
Music Instructor

Fun with Athletics

The students are diving into a new area of mental processing by participating in activities which make participants think, process, and react using numbers, word association, and geography. We have turned ordinary games of tag, kickball, and soccer, into a challenging model of independent active thinking in a group setting. Students are being taught how to view process, multitask, communicate, and listen all while doing a physical activity.



Sincerely,

Mr. "Z"

Physical Ed. Ins.



Tuesday, October 11, 2011 – Individual student picture day. All students are required to take a picture. Uniform is optional.

Tuesday, October 18, 2011 – PTO Meeting at CBA, 6:30 PM. Please register for childcare.

Tuesday, October 18, 2011 – Parent /Teacher conferences with Ms. Maggie. If your child is enrolled in Ms. Maggie’s class please sign up for a conference in the office.

Wednesday, October 19, 2011 – Parent/Teacher conferences with Ms. Shannon. If your child is enrolled in Ms. Shannon’s class, please sign up for a conference as soon as possible. Signup sheet is located directly outside of classroom.

Week of October 17th – Scholastic Book Fair! Our annual book fair will be held on the campus of Covered Bridge Academy during the week of 10/17/11 daily from 3:15 to 6 PM.

Tuesday, October 25th, 2011 – Lower Elementary conferences with Ms. Aimee. If your child is enrolled in Ms. Aimee’s class, please sign up for a conference to discuss your child’s academic progress.

Wednesday, October 26th, 2011 – Upper Elementary conferences with Ms. Mary. If your child is enrolled in Ms. Mary’s class, please sign up for a conference to discuss your child’s academic progress.

Week of October 24th – Spirit Week! Stay tuned for more information!

Saturday, October 29th, 2011 – Fall Festival. The CBA/CBMS Annual Fall Festival will be on Saturday, October 29, 2011 on the campus of CBMS from 2 to 4 PM. Parking will be available on the campus of Russell Elementary School, located directly across the street from CBMS.

Friday, October 28th, 2011 – Out of uniform day for all students. No costumes or negative message clothing. All students must wear school appropriate shoes.

