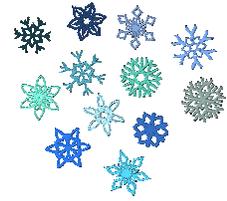




CHMS Newsletter

Winter 2018-2019



Wow! The holidays are here already!! How exciting to have our Christmas tree up and the cold weather greeting us as we go outside to play!!

This will be a transformative winter with the refurbishing work taking place in the school over the holiday break. We will be “spiffed up” with new paint on the walls and a new library and other furniture in the foyer. We do appreciate your patience during “The Flood of 2018.” It will all be a distant memory soon!

Have a safe winter, snow may be around the corner!!!

CALENDAR



Fri, Dec 7	Pizza lunch
Thu, Dec 20	Holiday Program (11:00-12:30) Staff Meeting (School Closes 1:00)
Dec 21 - Jan 4	Winter Break (School Closed)
Fri, Jan 11	Pizza Lunch
Wed, Jan 16	Parent Education – The Importance of the Montessori Kindergarten Year (5:30-6:30)
Fri, Jan 18	Staff Meeting (School Closes 1:00)
Mon, Jan 21	Martin Luther King Day (School Closed)
Fri, Jan 25	Teacher In-service Day (School Closed)
Fri, Feb 8	Pizza Lunch
Thu, Feb 14	Valentines Day
Fri, Feb 15	Parent Day and Pot Luck Lunch (9:00-12:30) Staff Meeting (School Closes 1:00)
Mon, Feb 18	Presidents’ Day (School Closed)

CHILD ACTIVITIES



Time to learn about:

December: North America, Central America, birds, cool colors, Vincent van Gogh

January: Asia, birds, complementary colors, Henri Matisse

February: Asia, mammals, complementary colors, Hokusai

Specials Info: Music and Spanish continue through the winter months. Nature Activities take place

inside or outside, weather permitting, and include nature-themed crafts, books, and games.

Local Outreach: Our Christmas tree is up and decorated, but needs something under it! We will be collecting hats and mittens to take to the county supervisor's office for distribution to those in need. If you would like to participate, you may buy new hats, mittens, and scarves, or recycle clean, gently used hats, mittens, scarves, and coats. Please have your child bring the items into the classroom for us to discuss and share with everyone, and then we will place them under the tree. Thank you for your generosity and helping to teach the children how to care for others. Thank you to Arup Ganguli for taking our collection to the drop-off spot!



Kindergarten Field Trips: Each year the kindergarteners take three field trips. Some of the dates are still to be determined, and we will let you know when they are finalized. We rent a school bus so there is plenty of room for parents to attend. The bus ride is probably close to the top of the list of "best part of the day!"

Recycling Field Trip: The kindergarteners will be going to the Montgomery County Recycling Center for this educational look at the inner workings of a recycling sorting facility. It's a rather noisy affair, but definitely worth it. You'll never think about your recyclables the same way again! This is a short excursion; the tour takes about an hour and then we head back to school for lunch. After every field trip there is always some debate between parents and children over going back to school or going home. For this field trip, we encourage you to allow your child to complete the school day as planned as we will have a writing activity in the afternoon. Please make sure your child knows what to expect upon our return to school. Tears are never a good way to end a field trip! We will provide a lot more details when the date draws near.

Charlotte's Web Field Trip: The "Charlotte's Web" performance will be at the George Mason University Center for the Arts in Fairfax on May 21st at 10:30am. This will be our ninth time viewing this fun show and we are looking forward to sharing the experience with the children. We will read the book in the weeks prior to the field trip so that everyone can follow along with the show. There will be a story writing activity in the afternoon after this trip. We have pre-purchased tickets and have enough for one parent per child. If you are interested in both parents attending, please let us know. We sometimes have a couple extra tickets that we can give out on a first-come, first-served basis. Likewise, if you are unable to attend, please let us know so that we can give your ticket to someone else. More details to follow as we get closer to the date, but for now, Kindergarten parents, put it on your calendar!



National Gallery of Art Field Trip: All year long the children look forward to the National Gallery of Art field trip as we study a variety of artists and enjoy learning about their styles of painting. We are very excited to stroll through the gallery and see many of the paintings, sculptures, and cut-outs we have studied. We eat lunch at the gallery and then return to school before 2:30. We do not write our story until the next day so you may plan to take your child after this trip.

Valentine's Day: Valentine's Day always sneaks up on us, so here is a little info just in case you see cards in the store after the holidays that your child wants to buy. If you are struck by creative genius and have a wonderful, crafty idea for cards that he or she can make, it's not too early to start planning. Each class does a separate celebration, so each child should bring enough Valentine cards to share with their class. If you want to attach a little something, but don't want to distribute candy, a sticker, tattoo, or pencil would be a good



substitute. Please don't feel like you have to add anything at all!

A few guidelines to keep in mind: Please be sure to have enough Valentines for all of the children in your child's class. We will let you know how many that is by email when the date gets closer. Valentines can be brought in anytime in February before the 14th and deposited in the large basket that will be next to the bookshelf outside the Sunshine Room door. Please write your child's name somewhere on the outside of the bag or box. **Please do not write individual names on the valentines as this slows the process tremendously.** A little card with your child's name on it would be perfectly perfect!



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Holiday Program: We are looking forward to a fun, holiday music program this year! The children have been having a lot of fun in music class this year and we are excited to showcase their hard work. The program begins at 11:00am on Thursday, December 20th. You can arrive as early as 10:30 to find a place to sit. It will last approximately 40 minutes, and will be followed by light refreshments downstairs. School will close at 1:00pm for our staff meeting and remain closed for Winter Break through January 4th. If you are available to help set up or take down chairs or if you have a hot water heater / dispenser for hot chocolate or hot cider that you are willing to share in the name of festive fun, please talk to Cinthia.



Parent Day and Lunch: Parent Day is one of our favorite activities here at Children's House, so mark your calendars for February 15th! Parents are invited to join their child for a morning of work time, circle time, and play time. You've probably wondered what your child does all day; this is your chance to find out! The morning will start around 9:00, but feel free to arrive whenever is most convenient. Your child will show you his or her favorite work and maybe even give you a lesson. After circle time we'll head outside for playtime and then it'll be time for a pot-luck lunch. Come prepared to sit on the floor and bring your inner child. It's time for you to go back to school! School will close at 1:00 that day for a staff meeting.

Camping Update: After much consideration, we have decided that the 2019 Family Camping Trip will be the last one for CHMS. We have *loved* sharing this event with our families for the past ELEVEN years — building family memories that will last a lifetime — but it is time to wrap up this chapter and make space for new activities, new adventures, and new memories for our school! We know that this will disappoint many of you who have participated in the past and looked forward to future weekends in the woods, but we hope you can understand that when you serve a community of young families, as we do, there is never a “good time” to end something that people have come to expect. It is our hope that our camping trips have had a positive impact on you and your family, that you have an increased appreciation for the outdoors, and that you will continue to explore our national parks and choose to “unplug” as a family from time to time.



So... we have ONE more chance for an AMAZING weekend together! We are still waiting to hear from Prince William Forest Park about our cabin camp assignment for our trip, planned for May 24-26. We will keep you posted and let you know about upcoming opportunities to volunteer as we get closer to the date. Let's make this our BEST camping trip ever!

PARENT ACTIVITIES

Parent Education: CHMS Kindergarten - Join us on Wednesday, January 16 from 5:30 to 6:30 to learn about our Montessori Kindergarten Program. The kindergarten year is the culmination of two years of hard work, growth, and development. This is a critical year, as children are leaving the first plane of development (birth to age six) and moving on to the second (six to twelve). Allowing a child to complete the cycle they have begun here with us is an essential part of cementing the educational foundation we have been building together. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend, regardless of your child's age. Babysitting will be provided for \$10 per child. Pizza will be available for everyone. The signup sheet will be up in early January. Please let us know if you will be coming. We hope to see you there!



Progress Reports: The next progress reports will be coming your way in late January. As always, however, we are here to answer any questions or concerns that come up between reports and scheduled conferences.

Ways to Volunteer: Please check the bulletin board at the beginning of each month to find out the ways you can be involved in school activities. You can come in to listen to the older children practice their reading, help with chairs for the holiday program, straighten the library books, etc. There are lots of ways to contribute!

FROM THE OFFICE

Winter Backpack Check: As we get closer to the really cold weather being here for good, it's time to check your child's backpack for appropriate clothing. Long sleeved shirts, pants or leggings, socks, and underwear are must-haves. It's also a (VERY) good idea to keep a sweater or sweatshirt in there for days when an extra layer will come in handy. Children need to have mittens or gloves, a hat, and a warm coat at school EVERY DAY. We may not make them wear everything every day, but it's nice to have the option. If you can, consider leaving a spare pair at school. And, please, LABEL, LABEL, LABEL.



Lip Balm: Cold weather brings chapped lips. You are welcome to send in a tube of lip balm with your child for him or her to keep in their classroom. Tubes need to be labeled with their name and will be kept in a basket in the classroom where the children can access them, while a teacher monitors the activity. Plain (non-sparkly or crazy scented) lip balm is preferred. If you think it might cause a distraction, you're probably right. Lip balm MUST be kept in the classroom basket designated for that purpose. Please DO NOT leave it in your child's backpack or cubby.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: The children have learned a lot this year about the importance of the three Rs (we also add a fourth R—Respect) and about taking care of the earth. Please help us reinforce the Reuse/Reduce concepts by using as few plastic bags and disposable wrappers as possible when packing lunches. Reusable containers send a strong message: we care about the earth! Also, help us stay in compliance with state regulations that require each container and utensil be labeled with the child's name. Initials on the bottom are fine.

Summer School: We will again be offering a summer program, similar to last summer. Here are the details: • We will take a 2 week break after the regular school year ends and then have 6 weeks of programming, beginning the week of July 1, and ending on August 9. • For staffing reasons we will accept only 20 children per week, on a first-come-first served basis. • We will have a different theme each day, such as “water day” or “cooking.” The Montessori materials will also be available, of course. • You will be able to sign up for a week at a time to accommodate your vacation plans. More information will be forthcoming in the spring. We hope you will support us and bring your children to CHMS for “Summer fun!”



Emergency Closings and Notifications: As a general rule, we follow Fairfax County Public Schools with regards to closings and delays. There have been instances, however, when we have deviated from this policy because we felt a closing or delay was unwarranted, given our needs and circumstances. We will still continue to follow FCPS’s lead with regards to closures, especially in the beginning of an weather incident, so expect the following, unless we specify otherwise:

If Fairfax County Public Schools are closed: we will be closed

If FCPS have a delayed opening (1 or 2 hours): we will open at 10:00am

If FCPS close early: we will close at 1:00 PM

If FCPS cancel after-school activities: we will close at 3:00



Check the Fairfax County Public Schools website (fcps.edu) on mornings when the weather is iffy. We will always post our plan on the front page of our website, www.chmsreston.com, and change the phone message for the day. Our goal is to make coming to, and going from, school as safe as possible.

Staff Training: Our annual in-service and staff development day is on Friday, January 25. School will be closed that day as the teachers take the opportunity to meet in their teaching teams, prepare the curriculum for the remaining half of the school year, and participate in a training workshop and staff meeting.

Each staff member is required to attain 16 hours of professional training each year. We typically accomplish this through in-house training, weekend seminars, and online classes, but this year we are lucky enough to be able to attend the annual American Montessori Society conference, as it is being held in Washington D.C. We are excited for the opportunity to learn from some of the leading minds in Montessori education and to spend time connecting with our colleagues from around the country. In order for our full staff to take advantage of this training opportunity, CHMS will be closed on Friday, March 22. We appreciate your understanding as we complete this important state licensing requirement AND refill our Montessori cups!

Re-registration and records check: Planning for the new school year will begin in February. We will send home a contract for what we think you need, but it can always be changed if you let Cinthia know your needs. The contract is returned with a \$50 reapplication fee and a \$250 re-enrollment fee. Our annual records check will be conducted at the same time. Please help us get your child's files in order by completing any missing forms as soon as possible.

