



Crescent Montessori School  
276 East Napa Street  
Sonoma, CA 94576  
707.996.2456  
www.crescentmontessorischool.com  
The Crescent Chronicle  
Volume 1, Issue 4, Mar/Apr 2009

## CALENDAR

### APRIL:

<b>Wednesday, April 1</b>	School Tour, New Families
<b>Thursday, April 2</b>	Senior Trip, Cline Mission Tour
<b>Thursday, April 9</b>	Annual Easter Egg Hunt Minimum Day/Spring Break begins
<b>Monday, April 20</b>	Classes Resume
<b>Wednesday, April 22</b>	School Tour

*paper moon* FESTIVAL | 2009  
AT CORNERSTONE GARDENS

**Crescent Montessori School**

**MAY 16**  
6PM - 10PM  
CORNERSTONE  
SONOMA

Keep your calendar and your dance card clear and join us for a sparkling evening filled with fun festivities, laughter, dancing, auction entertainment, great food and wine—all under the umbrellas of a very important cause!

FOR INFORMATION ON TICKETS, CONTACT CRESCENT MONTESSORI SCHOOL  
CRESCENTMONTESSORISCHOOL.COM 707.996.2456

# The Crescent Chronicle

Crescent Montessori School Newsletter

## In This Issue:

Primary and Elementary Class News

Recap of Recent Events

Calendar

Tour Dates



Volume 1 Issue 4

March/April

2009

## The Creative Classroom

By Karin Niehoff

Our school is a community of creative individuals. Crescent Montessori is a rich and diverse place. Over the past few months I have had the pleasure of meeting with parents and staff to consider how to add enrichment opportunities for our students that would support their innate creativity. Our challenge was to find a way to maintain the uninterrupted blocks of time that characterize our school day. Out of the challenge came much more than enrichment programs. While we are still engaged in the process at this time, what has emerged is a working model for our growing and expanding school.

The process was typical for us. We came to the table with our ideas, not the creative ones at first but the ideas motivated by getting the job done. The value at this point for me was the intention and desire of everyone involved to want more for our students. We looked at preferences, we looked at the schedule, and we considered guest artists. We mined our creativity. We narrowed the process down to two things: what is our point of departure and what are the expected outcomes? It began with value for each individual child's innate creative potential. It's not as if we weren't doing this already but we needed to be reminded that this is the point of departure. The outcome? Do we want creativity for art's sake or creativity for life's sake? We chose the latter.

Creativity, is often narrowly defined as having to do with art; visual art in particular. Sir Ken Robinson in his book, *The Element*, defines creativity as the capacity to have original ideas that have value, adding that, creativity comes about more often than not through the interaction of different ways of seeing things. These ideas go straight to the core of our program development. What began as enrichment programs in music and art and theater has developed into The Creative Classroom. It begins with the teacher's acknowledgment of the immense and diverse potential of the students. It has the expansive quality that matches the unlimited imagination of the elementary student. The Creative Classroom encompasses all the disciplines from art to zoology. Developing a Creative Classroom doesn't come at the expense of academic curriculum, instead, it is enriched. As we continue the process, I invite parents to participate. Let me know you're interested and I'll include you at the next meeting. I look forward to continuing our work together.

*Next on the horizon:* The Outdoor Classroom.



## A LOOK BACK AT SCHOOL EVENTS

**February and March have been busy, busy, busy!** Elementary students enjoyed a classroom presentation from Julie McGee and the **Fawn Wildlife Rescue**. The group came in from lunch on **January 28th** and our classroom had been transformed into a wildlife museum. Julie gave an excellent description of all the animals lovingly preserved to reflect their natural state. This class was part of the Wildlife defenders workshop that the seniors had enjoyed for the past five weeks. Cathy Neff commented on the ease at which the mixed age group of children from kindergarten to fourth grade participated in the discussion and questions and answers. The benefits of the multi age group are evident when we step outside our usual routine and we get a chance to see the students interact in a new situation. I appreciated Cathy's observation for that reason.

**On January 29th and 30th** we hosted our annual **Montessori Parent** event. Parents visited during the school day and had a chance to see the world of the classrooms from their child's perspective.

**Saturday, February 7th** brought parents, children and staff to the school on Saturday

for our first annual **Pancake Breakfast**. What a feast it was, made to order pancakes served with all the fixings. There were happy morning smiles all around the tables.

Rain didn't dampen the spirits of the senior group as they headed out to the **Montini Preserve** for a hike with Elly Seely from the Sonoma Ecology Center on **February 11th**. We had the entire 140 acres to ourselves since the area has not been open to the public yet. We had every kind of weather except snow. It is a beautiful open space and all have something to look forward to when it opens publicly in a few months.

**The Valentine's Day Tea on the 13th** was the best ever. Elementary students prepared the Tea Room and the Primary children made the decorations. All enjoyed tea.

**On February 18th** we enjoyed a trip to hear the **Santa Rosa Youth Symphony**. We joined students from many other schools of all different grades and ages. The presentation of music and the orchestra was interesting, educational and accessible to all thanks to the direction of the conductor.

We celebrated **Arbor Day in California on March 11th**. Our group walked to the plaza

for a tree planting ceremony. Belen Bortello, 4th grade, gave a report on the Strawberry Tree, the species we planted that day.

**Pi Day, March 14** was celebrated on the 13th at our school. The seniors had a chance to pie their teacher, yours truly. It's a right of passage for all elementary teachers everywhere.



Most recently, Students hosted the **Spectacular Science & Math Fair on March 19th**. Parents visited and interacted with all of the elementary students who had a chance to present their projects and classroom experiments. Thanks to all the visitors who helped make the fair a success.

## WEBSITE NEWS

**Log on to the CMS website:**

**www.CrescentMontessoriSchool.com** We have a new look and have updated the pages. Let me know what you think!

The calendar is up to date and will be updated periodically. If you have 15 minutes, **listen to the video talk by Sir Ken Robinson** as he speaks on education and creativity. I heard him speak in Santa Rosa last month and I wished at the time that the parents at our school could have heard his talk. Now you can! He injects lots of humor into his talk which is the mark of a good speaker. The content though, is serious and your happy mood will help you take it in. Enlightening. - *Karin Niehoff*



## PRIMARY CLASS

By Pam Higi

This school year is passing so quickly! We have already met for our second parent/teacher conference. Thank you for taking the time to meet. It is so valuable.

Nature puts on quite a show for us with the season of Spring. The persimmon tree outside our classroom window has leaf buds! Our outside garden is happy and growing. The carrots have shown their tops. The purple lettuce is leafy and the artichoke is getting larger.

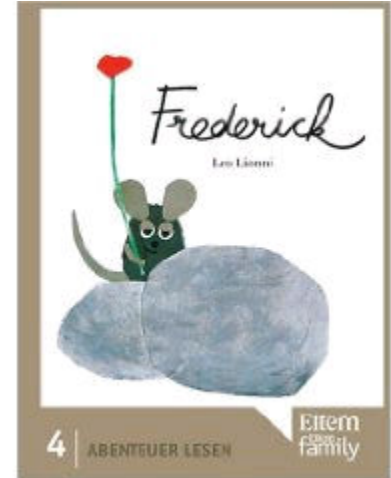
Inside the classroom the children have observed the daffodil, (now with nine blooms) hyacinth (which the children says smells "soooo good") and the purple tulip (with three blossoms and a great specimen for identifying both the stamen and pistil). The fourth vase has more tulips. These bulbs were a bit slower than the rest. The petals seem to have a star shape (so say the children) and we have just discovered

these flowers are most likely going to be red. The children are busy both inside and outside the classroom with their activities.

**Book Review:** Enough can not be said of the value of reading with your child. The time spent together along with the rich language enrichment and the wisdom of the stories that are passed along has great value.

**Author Leo Lionni** was born in Holland and taught himself to draw by copying the work of the masters in Amsterdam's museums. Recently we read one of his beautiful books, Frederick. It is a story of a mouse named Frederick whom is both a dreamer and a poet. When all the other field mice ran out of food, they came to Frederick to ask him what supplies he had. He had the memory of colors, sun rays and words. His supplies sustained the other mice. The

children enjoy this fable; still relevant today through the eyes of a mouse.



## THANK YOU!

### EVENTS:

**Pancake Breakfast:** Rob and Marie McElroy who shopped and arrived early to set up and head up the event. Thanks also to Greg McCaw, Jeff Plotts, Peter Berkley, Gardner, Patricia Serota, Mary Padilla, Rigo Turcios, Kerry Bentz, Laura Juhasz and the CMS staff.

### Field Trips:

**Drivers and Chaperones** to the Santa Rosa Youth Symphony Concert:

Susie Gallo coordinator, Dulce Silvi, Zanita Zody, Stacy Fucile, Rob McElroy, Patricia Serota, Yoli Holman and Alex Cole.

**Montini Preserve trip:** Susie Gallo and Charlotte Hart

### CONTRIBUTIONS:

Laura Juhasz and Janet McLaughlin (friend of CMS) for school credit purchases from Montessori Services.

Gloria Reiter for the binoculars.

Tiffany Masciorini for the photo fundraiser

John Kelly for the help with the fundraiser blog

The Fahmi family for the wonderful book on India

**Baking Bread:** Thanks to Zanita Zody for coming in to bake bread with the Elementary group on February 27th. Zanita has a great recipe. The bread was delicious.

Each student had a small loaf to take home and share with their family. Thank you Zanita. Let's do this again!

