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Maria Montessori Charter Academy

MMCA PTA Newsletter
November 2008

Dear MMCA Families,

It's hard to believe we are almost 1/3 of the way through the school year – particularly when it feels like we are still just ‘moving in.’ I have several items that I wanted to give you a ‘heads up’ to:

- After School Club Coordinators / Volunteers: Our Governing Board is currently working on finishing up the new Board Policies related to facilities use and rules relating to extra-curricular after school activities at school. Once these policies are finished, I am going to begin
- *Continued on Page 2*

NOTICE! Tonight's Parent's Night Out ***CANCELLED***

Unfortunately we have to cancel the Parents' Night Out for this Friday, November 14th. We just didn't have enough participants this time around. We hope to see you on December 12th.

- DC Trip Coordinators

Portrait Make-up Day

Tuesday, November 18 is portrait make-up day. If your child did not have their portrait taken or did not receive a portrait, please use the attached form and have your child bring it on Tuesday. If you are not happy with your child's portrait please send the portrait package back on Tuesday for the retake (they will not be able to retake without them!).

Fieldtrip Drivers: Reminder

We need the following information on file for each parent that is driving on a fieldtrip:

- Copy of Drivers License
- Copy of Auto Insurance
- Signed “Agreement to Transport Students” Form
- DMV driving record print out

If you have not turned in your paperwork, you will not be able to drive other students.

Attendance Line

REMINDER: To report your student's absence, call our school's main phone line (630-1510). If one of our staff answers the phone, ask to be transferred to the attendance line (or extension 302). If the automated system answers the phone, it will direct you to the attendance line. **Please call in to report your student's absence by 10:00am on the day of their absence!**

Before / After Care Statements

MMCA Bef/After Care Parents – We are still having significant issues with our accounting software. We will be sending home statements for October on Monday, with an explanatory letter. With the delay, payments will not be due until the **1st of December**. We apologize for this inconvenience, and up to have it rectified with the software company soon.

Update from Mr. B continued from Page 1

Recruiting Parent Volunteers for some different after school, age appropriate activities extra-curricular activities for our kids. For our initial couple of new clubs, I am thinking along the lines of music (ex., piano, drums, violin, etc.), sports clubs (ex., basketball), and activity clubs (ex. Chess club). These clubs could involve participation fees, and there could be age restrictions depending on the nature of the activity. If you as a parent are interested in leading a potential After School club, please e-mail me at brent@mmcharter.org. I see this is as a small first step that eventually I would like to build into 'bigger' things.

• MMCA, the RUSD School Board and WSCA

Over the past couple weeks, I have received several dozen calls / emails related to our relationship with school district, who people should vote for on the school board, and for what our position is on the charter high school. First off, while I very much have strong opinions on these issues, as the leader of the school, I do not believe it is appropriate for me to express my beliefs on these issues to you. With regards to the proposed charter high school, to use an analogy, my official position is that we at MMCA are "Switzerland", because we have interactions and relationships with both parties, and could be impacted in several ways (including financially) no matter which way this issue is ultimately resolved. I would encourage you as parents to do your own independent research on this issue, and if interested, ask lots of questions of the parties involved.

• State budget update

As you've read in the newspaper, the state is basically bankrupt. We have been told to expect mid-year budget cuts, though we don't know yet how much or in which areas. We are currently in a fairly strong financially position, so we should be able to absorb any of the cuts that have currently been proposed. That said, this is a very fluent situation, so I'd encourage you to keep apprised of it, as it may ultimately effect us in ways currently unforeseen.

• Volunteering

MMCA parent, WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP! Across the board, in all of our classrooms, I am noticing significantly fewer volunteers, whether in the classroom, on the playground, at PTA, etc. This is a bit disconcerting since we have more kids at our

school than we've ever had. Particularly in current times, while I know your time is precious, a few minutes helping out at school can make a whole of difference for us here at school. To our volunteer 'regulars,' THANK YOU for your efforts!

• Technology Update

Thanks to a big group of wonderful parents, we have active audio-video in our classrooms! We had 12 families attend Saturday's event. They rolled up their sleeves and ran cables, programmed computers, labeled key AV components, and hooked up ELMOS, DVD players, overhead projectors, and AV input devices. Now, every classroom can use their overhead projector to show DVD's, or demonstrate tasks from a teacher computer or the ELMO. We have a state of the art facility now!

We want to thank the wonderful parent volunteers, tech committee, and PTA for coming out for our children! This is a school that NEEDS parent help. When you give your time, you benefit our children.

There is still more programming to do- if you are willing to help your children's computer lab please email techhelp@mmcharter.org.

Laura Preszler
MMCA PTA VP

• Parking Lot Reminder

Parents, PLEASE remember **safe** driving habits within our parking lot w/ the kids. Patience, patience, patience!

• Lunch, Snack & Food policies

Recently, I have had several discussions with parents about food and what's ok / not ok to be eating for snack, lunch, etc. First off, our general policy (which is listed on our website), encourages wholesome, nutritional food. We do not allow items like candy, gum or soda. I acknowledge that some of the items our kids receive via the RUSD hot lunch program do not necessarily fit within the spirit of our policy, and where appropriate, we have relaxed our rules a bit.

Second, I want to emphasize the "grace and courtesy" aspect of our lunchtime, which is the idea of kids using restaurant manners, having multiple cloth napkins (one to be used as a placemat), etc. If you have any questions about our Lunch Policies, please feel free to contact Mr. Baldonade at rbaldonade@mmcharter.org.

PTA Announcement

Terry Ammirati, MMCA PTA President
Laura Preszler, MMCA PTA VP

Movie Nights

As part of our community building efforts, PTA is offering monthly movie nights. This is an opportunity to gather in a safe and family atmosphere to view classic kid-friendly movies at a very low cost. Proceeds for these movie nights go to send our 8th graders to Washington DC in June. Cost is \$1.50 per person, \$5.00 for a family of four and we have concession sales of popcorn, drinks, and at times, some surprises. Movies are in the multi-purpose room and you can either use chairs (we can provide) or bring blankets/sleeping bags to lie down. The movie screen projection and sound is of very high quality! Here are the next 3 movie nights to plan:

- November 21st-Kung Fu Panda (special early release premiere for our school from HP!)
- December 5th-Home Alone
- January 9th-Grease (with sing-along and dress up)

Important Save the Dates

There are many events scheduled over the year that promote community building and are fundraising opportunities for our school. Please mark the following dates and consider participating in these fun events:

- Dec 13-Breakfast with Santa
 - Pancake Breakfast
 - Activities for the Family
 - Raffle
 - Visit with Santa
- Dec 19-Christmas Lights Tour in Rocklin
- Feb 27-MMCA Black and White Ball Charity Event
- Apr 18-Family Sock Hop
- Apr 24-26-Family Whale Watching Trip
- May 15-The Next MMCA Idol Talent Show

Details of these events will be published when it gets closer to these dates. Watch for flyers, Yahoo blasts, posters and newsletter articles. We are striving to build our MMCA family ties. Come join us!

Grocery Cards Are In!

Do you shop at Bel Air, Savemart, FoodMaxx, or Lucky stores? MMCA PTA now has grocery cards available that pay back 3%. If you shop at these markets please pick up cards in the office.

ICE CREAM PARTY.....CLASS CONTEST.....WHO WILL WIN THE ICE CREAM?

Which class will win the ICE CREAM PARTY? The class with the most NEW PTA members by December 15th will win an ice cream party. All it takes is one minute and \$10 to help your kid's class win. Forms for PTA membership are in the office or online at www.mmcharter.org at the PTA store. Both parents can sign up. Get involved. The PTA needs you!

Purple Room Update

Purple Room

Upcoming Events:

Nov. 19th- Maidu Center

Nov. 20th- Friendship Stew

Nov. 21st- Art Docent

We have reached the half way mark until the 100th day of school!!! Can you believe it? Time flies. Our class has found its groove and have been busy at work learning about various jobs in the classroom, writing in journals, working on addition and working on our letters and numbers.

We have been lucky enough to take a few wonderful fieldtrips to Safetyville and Bishop Pumpkin Patch. We had so much fun. Not only have we gone on field trips, but they have also come to us. We had the Maidu center come to us and teach us about Native Americans, and we had Placer Nature come and visit us to teach us about recycling. Our children have really had some wonderful experiences and it is only the beginning of the school year.

We are looking forward to the holiday season. We celebrated Cultural Day in October and learned about American Icons and people within our community. We are excited to begin learning about people around the world.

Language Arts: We are working on sounds and blending sounds. We are working in our journals daily. We have also been practicing our writing skill through writing Thank you notes to people who have visited our class.

Math: We are working on learning our numbers, addition, and multiplication, as well as days of the week, months of the year and patterning.

Science: We have our worm farm and are busy watching them grow. We have also learned about the lifecycle of a pumpkin as well as the parts of an eagle.

Cultural: We are learning about North America and the people and animals who live there.

Thank you to all of the parents who have been volunteering, you help to make our classroom run so smooth. We would also like to thank all of the parents for donating supplies for our class celebrations. We couldn't do it without you. We have a wonderful group of children and are really enjoying this year. We hope you have a wonderful holiday season.

Purple Room

Diane Bryant and Jolyn Martin

Yellow Room Yak

Yellow Room Yak

November

Pumpkins and Skeletons and Bats... oh my!

We took a scientific approach in discovering these topics last month and discovered that the children were fascinated with learning many of the interesting facts these subjects had to offer. The children have been busy completing booklets, cooking, and math activities to help enhance the learning in the classroom. They have discovered interesting facts to share. For example, we have 206 bones in our skeleton, apples and pumpkins are both fruits, and there are many different types of bats. The children have been learning about nocturnal animals, vertebrates and invertebrates. We have also been learning about our American Icons and our Community Helpers. The presentations and lessons continue in all areas of the classroom as the children increase their love for knowledge. Yes, this has been a fun filled month, filled with two field trips and one photo shoot for our class picture. Special thanks for the Cultural Day celebration organized by Kelly Beltz.

The children have learned about the seven continents of the world and now we begin to look more closely at individual land masses. Our first stop is top the continent of North America. On Wednesday, November 12th, the Maidu Cultural Center will come to our classroom for a presentation on the local Native Americans. Then, we go on a fieldtrip to the Maidu Center for extended presentations on **November 21st**. We **will** need transportation (please have all parent driving papers in) and all permission slips signed.

We will be celebrating our Thanksgiving "**Friendship Stew**" on Thursday **November 20th**. The children will be preparing the entire meal and festivities for this joyful day. . .a Montessori moment for all. (More details about the fest to follow)

The parent volunteers have been awesome! We have enjoyed the many parents coming into the classroom and lending an extra hand. This has allowed us to do more with the children which has created a more in-depth learning environment. (A win, win for all of us.) **We would like to recognize:**

- Heather Ches, our Yellow Room Mom, for all help and organizing parent volunteers
- Brook Lee and Desiree Kumpf for being our chef assistants who encourage children to try new foods.
- Stephanie DeDannon for providing our class with library books.
- Grandma Mickey who arrives twice a week for one on one handwriting lessons.
- Lisa Stephenson for organizing our weekly white envelopes.
- Our regular weekly classroom helpers: Lisa Jung, Brenda Allen, Danielle Johnson, Heather Ches, Laura Faudree, Debra Douppnik, Kate Gilliland, Shelby Armstrong, Rachel Foster, Pat Garcia

Enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving Break with loved ones! We do not have school Monday, November 24th through Friday, November 28th.

We have a lot to be thankful for.

Julia Bass and Karye Bulloch

Blue Room Update

October was another successful month. We really enjoyed going to Apple Hill. The students learned a lot about how apples are harvested and the many things that could be made from apples. We enjoyed hearing the students' oral reports on their famous person. November's project will be about giving to others who are less fortunate.

In math the students are all working at their own pace. We have students ranging from basic math skills to advance. Students are working on one of the following Static Addition, Dynamic Addition, Static Subtraction, Dynamic Subtraction, Static Multiplication, or Dynamic Multiplication. All of the students are doing geometry and fractions. The students seem to really enjoy doing math jobs.

One of the things we are working on in reading groups is fluency. Parents can help by having your child read to you nightly. We have also been focusing on comprehension. Parents, you should be asking questions after your child is finished reading. You could start with lower level questions such as setting, characters, and the problem. Then try some higher level questioning using predicting and connecting it to your child's life. Have your child site reasons from the book that helped them produce his answer.

This month the 2nd graders have been learning about the community and how the community plays an important roll in everything we buy and have. They will also be learning about their ancestors and they will do a family tree. The 3rd graders are concentrating on landforms. The students have completed a geographical dictionary.

Both the 2nd and 3rd graders have been exposed to a lot of science this last month. The 2nd graders have been studying the Earth. They focused on the different layers of the earth's crust. In the coming months, the 2nd graders will be learning about life cycles and habitats. The 3rd graders have completed Earth and space lessons. The students were really excited about learning how to use a microscope. They have had many opportunities to look at various cells and living organisms under the microscope. We were fortunate to find a living habitat from the pond collections in the jars. This was our introduction to habitats. Come in and see!

We look forward to another busy month. We have decided to go to the Fish Hatchery only once because of the lack of salmon. The trip is now planned for December 9. We will first go to Hometown Buffet for an early lunch to practice grace and courtesy. Then we will go to the Fish Hatchery for a guided tour. If you don't have your field trip driver information in the office and want to drive, please turn that in as soon as possible. Please mark your calendar. There has also been a change in our Monthly Projects. We are going to adopt a family for Christmas. We will be having a tree in the classroom for the students to choose an ornament with a gift wish written on it. The school will also be doing a coat drive of new and gently used coats. Please keep this in mind before throwing out any old coats.

Thank you,
Blue Room Teachers

Red Room Update

Red Room Newsletter Notes

WOW!! We were very busy in October. The Harvest Festival was a fun filled day. The Red Room had two booths thanks to Mr. Cooper. The Trebuchet and Gladiator Robots. Thanks to all the parents who helped make this a special day. Our trip to Apple Hill was a lot of fun. The hayride at High Hill Ranch was the highlight of the day. Thanks to all the parents who drove. Inventor/Innovator day was a huge success. We started our day with a parade. We joined the Purple and Yellow rooms and walked out to Wildcat Blvd. We walked to the corner, crossed the street and came back – all in the rain. We ended the parade in the gymnasium with a sing along. We sang patriotic songs and a few Halloween tunes. Our children came dressed as Jane Goodall, George Lucas, Ruth Wakefield, Henry Ford, Galileo, and Thomas Jefferson as well as other notable Inventors and Innovators. After the presentations we enjoyed the Disney movie *The Shaggy D.A.*

We started the Art Docent program with Mrs. Mitsuda. The children created beautiful water color art that expressed their feelings.

In the afternoons we have been reading a wonderful book called, “Understood Betsy.” Ask your children for more details. We attended a school assembly for Ribbon Cutting. The children got a kick out of the giant scissors they used.

We start the amaryllis study next week. We will measure and chart its growth. The children love this study. One year the amaryllis grew 21 inches. Unfortunately, we will not be able to raise salmon eggs this year due to unfavorable weather conditions. We will, however, study their lifecycle and visit the Nimbus Fish Hatchery on Friday, November 21st for an unguided tour of the hatchery and the nature walk area.

On Montessori: Practical Life builds skills that children use in everyday life. These skills include not only physical ability but also a sense of order and completion. The children have weekly classroom responsibilities which include: table washing, messenger, line leader, shoe monitor, paper passer outers, historian, librarian, backpack monitor, and beat the clock stampers. Ask your child to explain the duties of our various practical life jobs.

Upcoming events: Hometown Buffett and *The Louvre*. More information to follow.

We are looking forward to a very exciting November and December!!

Aqua Room Update

ATTENTION ALL AQUA ROOM PARENTS

By Maddie and Riley

Our new year has started out great! We've had lots of fun things going on during the year so we would like to share them with you!

We've started our book reports and our cultural reports. Don't forget our Europe reports are due November 21.

We've gone on two field trips so far. Our first field trip was the Peak Adventure Ropes Course and we had a blast. We climbed, our parents climbed, and even Miss Glass climbed! Our most recent field trip was an in-class field trip; our Walk Through Time Presentation. We all had fun. For the 4th graders play was "Walk Through California," and for the 5th graders, our play was "Walk Through the American Revolution." We had a good time during the field trips.

Another thing we've started is Yellow Room Buddies. We can't call them "Kindergarten Buddies", 'cause they're Kindergarten and 1st graders. We all love having yellow buddies and spending time with them. So far we've read stories to them and done some crafts with them.

We are going to begin student council and anyone over 5th grade can run. Aqua room and Coral room are going to have two class representatives, but only 5th graders can run!

We started crocheting with Chris Orr and Dina Miller. We send out a special thank you for coming here every Friday and giving the kids who've finished their work a chance to learn how to crochet cute creatures!

Thank you for all your support through the last couple months.

Coral Room Update

It's hard to believe that we are sending out report cards next week! Where did the time go? We have been so busy learning about fractions, volcanoes, the American Revolution, California's geography, and how to use the 6-traits in our writing that the month of November has crept up on us.

October was a busy month preparing for the Walk Through Time presentations. It was amazing seeing all of the parents that came to watch. We love parent participation! The students did a fantastic job and learned so much more than they would have from reading a chapter in a Social Studies book. We have also been spending time learning about the Earth's surface, volcanoes, the water cycle, and so much more in science. In math, we've been busy working on our place value, factors and multiples and fractions. Yikes! It is very important that your child knows their multiplication facts "snap fast" to help them continue on in math! They should be practicing their math facts at home nightly, in the car and preferably in their sleep!

November doesn't seem to have that many teaching days, but we sure have those days packed! The 4th graders went on a field trip today to ExplorIt Science Center in Davis to enhance their knowledge about their body's blueprint and then had an inquiry lab about things that are falling and floating. November 19th is when our Caldecott Medal Winner Book Report is due. We are excited to see some getting turned in early. On Friday, November 21, we are celebrating our Asia Cultural Day. Each student has been assigned a topic and country to research. We are looking forward to the fabulous presentations. Lastly, report cards will be mailed out on November 21st. If you have any questions about the report card, please send us an email or give us a call.

During the month of November we also passed out a school fundraiser on flowers. This is an excellent opportunity for your 5th grader to raise funds for Sly Park. All other students are helping raise fund to send our 8th graders to DC and help PTA pay for fascinating things for the school! These flower fundraisers are due December 1. Be sure to ask your relatives during Thanksgiving!

December is also a busy month. We will begin our science study of Halley's Comet, to prepare us for our January field trip to the Challenger Space Mission. Be prepared to have your children transform into astronauts! December 12th will be our South America Cultural Day. Information will be posted on our website soon. December 17th will be when our December Poetry book report is due. Lastly, December 19th is when we will have our Winter Celebration and Book exchange. More information will come home in the following weeks for all of these activities.

Our class will be adopting a family this holiday season to provide a cheerful holiday for this family. We will be sending more information out soon. It's an optional participation, but we'd like to do what we can to help a family in the greater Sacramento area have a cheerful holiday season. We also plan on having the Coats for Kids drive here at school. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Gobble, Gobble!
Mrs. Boothby & Mrs. Garber

Orange Room Update

Orange Room Newsletter:

November Independent Project: Volcano Model

Students are working on creating a cross-section of a volcano and labeling its parts. They will also discuss how the volcano was created.

The project is due November 19th. Parents are welcome to watch the volcano erupt and listen to the presentations between 11:30-2:30pm on the due date.

Expository Writing Assignment: Fractured Fairy Tale

Students have chosen a fairy tale that they would like to rewrite by changing one important element. This assignment is due December 5th.

December 3, 2008 Field Trip

We will be going to the 'B' Street Theater to see the play, A Christmas Carol. We will need drivers for this field trip, so please let Mrs. Cohodes or Mrs. Jennings know if you are available.

History

Students ended their unit on Ancient Egypt and are now learning about Ancient Rome. Please be aware that students will be bringing home a project and materials list for this unit and any help is appreciated.

Science

Students just finished learning about Earthquakes and are now working on a Volcano unit.

Any questions should be directed to Mrs. Jennings or Mrs. Cohodes.
ejennings@mmcharter.org or jcohodes@mmcharter.org

Green Room Update

Dear Parents,

Happy Thanksgiving! It seems impossible that we are already about to send home report cards for the first trimester and celebrate Thanksgiving, but the time is indeed here. Report cards will be mailed out November 21st!

We have had some amazing events in the past month. Cultural day was both fun and informative with a group of characters spanning millennia. The reports were well written and presented, the costumes were amazingly realistic and creative, and the food was educational too! Have you ever tried hard tack? It is what soldiers ate during the Civil War. The class decided that a soldier's life was hard!

The elections passed with minimal drama in the class. Students debated amongst themselves and kept it peaceful. We took a class vote on Tuesday and compared our results to the national and state results. There was some cheering and some booing and some boohooing, but we were proud of their ability to set aside their differences and work together in peace!

Our 8th graders ran the concessions at Trunk or Treat and earned some money towards their D.C. trip. If you missed Trunk or Treat, you missed out! The kids who came had a great time and the parents were able to relax too! Our next fundraiser is the Parent's Night Out scheduled for November 14th. This is a great opportunity for our 8th graders to earn their trip and for parents to either have a date night or get started on some early Christmas shopping!

Once again we will be preparing a Thanksgiving feast in class and serving the meal to our families. Please set aside Friday, November 21st at 11:30AM to join us for a Thanksgiving meal. Our room mom will be coordinating with every family as to who will be providing which ingredients to our meal.

We were scheduled to go to the Mondavi Center this month for a field trip, but have been told that the performance is no longer available. We are looking for an alternative field trip and will let you know as soon as we have it lined up!

Please keep the following dates in mind:

Nov. 10-11	In Service Day/Veteran's Day	4 day weekend!
Nov. 14	Parent's Night Out (fundraiser)	
Nov. 17	Board of Directors Meeting (Formerly Charter Council)	
	PTA Meeting	
Nov. 21	November Projects Due: Mathematicians Report	
	Green Room Feast	
	Movie Night (concessions fundraiser)	
	Report Cards Mailed	
Nov. 24-28	Thanksgiving Break	
December 8	Board of Directors Meeting	

Thanks,
Mr. Brouillard and Mrs. Crouch

