



Westside Montessori School March 2012 Newsletter



Dear WMS Parents,

March is quickly approaching. We are looking forward to seeing signs of spring blooming in the gardens. This will be a short school month but a busy one. We have the Space Centre field trip, St. Patrick's Day to celebrate and Spring Break to look forward to as well.

The Valentine's celebration at school was such a wonderful event! The children and teachers enjoyed the much anticipated snack exchange. Thank you for helping make our Valentine's Celebration such a heartfelt occasion! The children were thrilled to deliver their specially made snacks to a friend or teacher. They beamed when they heard their friends' sentiments in the hearts they took home. It was magical day for everyone.

Spring Break

The school will be closed from March 19th to 30th for Spring Break. The last day of classes will be Thursday, March 15th, the day of our St. Patrick's Day Celebration. There will still be Enrichment Classes on Friday, March 16th with a field trip to see *Frog and Toad*. School will re-open again on Monday, April 2nd, 2012.

March Theme: Earth



Our Space focus this month is on the planet Earth. Students will learn interesting facts such as even when sitting still, they are continuing to move through space with the rotations of the Earth. They will also explore the elements of land, water and air through circle time discussions and hands-on activities. Our Earth study will help us prepare for Earth Day celebration in April.

Field Trip-HR MacMillan Space Centre

This year's focus of the Solar System takes us to an exciting field trip to the Space Centre on March 5th. This trip is divided into two parts.

The first is a Planetarium Show called, '*In My Backyard with Fred Penner*.' It features renowned Canadian children's entertainer Fred Penner exploring the changes that take place in his backyard and in the sky over the course of a year. Program content includes the seasons, day and night, the planets, and constellations. Words to the songs in the show are in Fred Penner's *What a Day* album specifically the songs, *In My Backyard* and *What Do You See When You Look at the Moon?*

The second part of the visit is a Hands-on Workshop called, '*Suiting Up for Space Travel*'. Through felt board discussion and props, this program prepares budding astronauts for the strange environment of space. The children will even get to try astronaut ice cream!



The Space Centre limits the number of adults in attendance. We can have 3 parents per class. We will take volunteers on a first-come-first served basis. Please let the teachers know if you would like to attend. Forms will be distributed on February 21st and are due on Monday, February 27th.

Please note that we will not be going to the Children's Festival as a school this year. Most of the shows for our age groups are half an hour long, so we decided against attending. Families interested in going can find more information on the website:

www.childrensfestival.ca



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♣ St Patrick's Day Party: March 15th ♣

We celebrate this day each year with a small party, St. Patrick's Day crafts, Irish dancing and stories. A party snack sign-up list will be posted on Monday, March 12th for the party on the 15th. **Children can come to school dressed in green.** Hopefully, the Leprechauns will pay us another mysterious visit this year. They always seem to cause such havoc in the classrooms; we are yet to spot them!

Introducing some new class pets ...

The children had a very diplomatic time choosing names for the new class pets. A white chinchilla moved in with Koal in the 1st Floor Classroom. He is called, Snö (pictured). It was quite an experience for the children to see the two chinchillas integrate and get to know each other. It took a few days for them to bond, but now they're best buds! The 2nd Floor Class has a beautiful new baby chinchilla (also white) who they are yet to name. When the children saw her, a few exclaimed, "Snö had a baby!!!"



We also have two new Beta fishes named Cooper and Shark. The children enjoy observing and feeding them.

March Music and Artist

This month we will focus on the music of Ireland and may even learn a few Irish jigs!

Our Artist Appreciation focus will be German painter **Gehard Richter**. The children will explore smear painting, his specialty.

"Art is the highest form of hope."
~ Gehard Richter

Punxsutawney Parker

You may have heard about our unique **Groundhog Day** event. On February 2nd, the classes went out to the playground and observed Parker, the hamster, and whether or not they could see his shadow. It was unanimous that there was in fact - no shadow! As such, Parker is predicting an early spring. To celebrate, the classes decided to rename him, **Punxsutawney Parker**, after the original groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil!



Open House 2012

We had a phenomenal turnout at our Open House last month with an overwhelming 230 applicants for September 2012.

A very special thank you to our Open House volunteers: **Gayle Tan** (Nicholas's Mom), **Monica Gunn** (Adam's Mom) and **Christina Seccombe** (Abbey's Mom) as well as **Hannah Barnes** and her Mom, **Sheila Barnes** and **Sophie Sherkat** and her Dad, **Reza Sherkat**. They provided wonderful insight for prospective parents as to their children's experiences at WMS.



Montessori and Reggio Emilia

Both **Montessori** and **Reggio Emilia** are approaches to education that view children as active authors of their own development, influenced by natural, dynamic, self-righting forces within themselves, opening the way toward growth and learning. In July through September there will be an exhibit in Vancouver that recounts experiences from infant-toddler centres, preschools and primary schools in the city of Reggio Emilia, Italy.



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As Montessori teachers, we are thrilled to have the chance to expand our understanding of this pedagogical approach that can only enhance our own classrooms. We are attending a 'Wonder of Learning - the Hundred Languages of Children' event this month and a series of Reggio workshops.



Mark Your Calendars ... March 2012

Mon, March 5 th	Field Trip to HR MacMillan Space Centre (forms due February 27 th)
Thurs, March 15 th	St. Patrick's Day Celebration
Mon, March 19 th to Fri, March 30 th	Spring Break (no classes)

April 2012

Mon, April 2 nd	First Day of Spring Term
Thurs, April 5 th	Scholastic Due
Fri, April 6 th	Good Friday (school closed)
Mon. April 9 th	Easter Monday (school closed)
Mon, April 16 th - 19 th	Observation Week
Mon, Apr 23 rd	Progress Reports
Tues, April 24 th	P/T Conferences
Wed, April 25 th	Field Trip: <i>'The Very Hungry Caterpillar & Other Eric Carle Favourites'</i>
Thurs, April 26 th	P/T Conferences

May 2012

Thurs, May 3 rd	Scholastic Due
Thurs, May 10 th	Mother's Day Tea (last hour of class)
Mon, May 21 st	Victoria Day (school closed)
Thurs, May 24 th	Children's Evening AM Classes: 5 - 6 pm PM Classes: 6 - 7 pm
Thurs, May 31 st	Scholastic Due Summer Birthdays Party

June 2012

Fri, June 8 th	Last Day of Friday Enrichment Classes
Thurs, June 14 th	Father's Day Coffee (first hour of class - regular day follows)
Fri, June 15 th	K-Enrichment Graduation 9:30 - 10:30 am School Picnic at <i>Quilchena Park</i> , 11:30 am - 2 pm
Mon, June 18 th - Tues, June 19 th	Scholastic Book Fair (two days)
Mon, June 18 th	Pyjama Day
Tues, June 19 th	Last Day of School
Wed, June 20 th	New Children's Visit Day
July 2 nd - Aug 16 th	Summer Camp