## **School Talk**

## **October 12, 2018**

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**PROGRAM NEWS**

**Parent-Teacher Conferences take place on Thursday, October 25th – Friday, October 26th.** Your child’s teacher will be scheduling a fall conference with you soon. Please keep an eye open for the sign up. We encourage all parents to attend a conference so we can work together in creating the best educational experience for your child. Translators will be provided if requested. Thursday will be an early release day. Friday there will be no school for students.

**Hispanic Heritage Celebration at Drew** The Creative Arts Team along with the 4th and 5th graders will honor Hispanic culture with a program on **October 25** at 9:45 am. The program will be short in length and appropriate for all of our students. We are focusing on 4 countries in Central America (El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala), the major countries that many of our students come from. All are invited to attend. Please feel free to come dressed to add to the festivities.

**Banking comes back to Drew!** The Arlington Community Federal Credit Union (<https://www.arlingtoncu.org/>) will be coming to Drew on October 25, and then every Thursday throughout the year so children can do some banking! Just $5 to open a savings account. The “bank” opens at 8AM.

**Gifted Services Information Night, October 29** Do you know the process APS follows for identifying gifted children? Do you know what happens once your child is identified? Do you know the role of the gifted resource teacher? All these questions will be answered at the Gifted Services Information night! 6PM in the Drew library. Contact Kristina Farrell, Drew’s gifted resource teacher (for both programs) with any questions at kristina.farrell@apsva.us

**Reminder:** **Middle School Information Night, October 22nd, 7PM-9PM at Washington-Lee HS.** Parents and families of students entering middle school in the fall of 2019 will hear an overview about APS middle schools, school options, application deadlines and procedures, school information sessions, available resources, and more. Parents of students new to APS are encouraged to attend as well to learn more about APS middle schools. Immediately following the opening session, attendees will be able to meet the various middle school principals and program administrators to learn more information about each school and the programs they offer. In addition, families will have the opportunity to meet the principal of the New Middle School at the Stratford Site, learn more about its instructional program, and how to participate in the process to select the school colors, mascot, and more

**TEACHERS CORNER**

**Monarch Celebration!** The Primary Montessori classes will be celebrating the Monarch butterflies arrival to their sanctuaries on October 31st. Students will make crafts and tell stories and do other fun activities. Ms. Ross’ Upper Elementary class will also be celebrating by reading books, acting out stories and skits and then going down to help the Primary classes with their celebration. Primary & Ms. Ross’ parents – keep an eye out for an e-mail asking for volunteers and supply donations.

**Tweeting Teachers** Do you have Twitter? Follow our Montessori teachers!

Principal Catharina Genove @csgenove (<https://twitter.com/CSGenove>)

ITC Joel Gildea @mrgildea33 (<https://twitter.com/mrgildea33>)

Primary Montessori teacher Ms. Kalkus @apsdrewkalkus (<https://twitter.com/apsdrewkalkus>)

Primary Montessori teacher Ms. Mendolia @apsdrewmendolia (https://twitter.com/APSDrewMendolia)

Music teacher Amie Shakespeare @amiesflowers (<https://twitter.com/amiesflowers>)

**LIBRARIAN’S CORNER**

October is an exciting month at the library!

Next week, students in 2nd through 5th grade will be **learning how to access e-books** from the library via their iPads. All students should make sure to have their iPads with them, fully charged, on their library day.

Then later in the month, **author Jerry Pallotta will be coming to Drew on October 22 and 23 to visit!** Mr. Pallotta is an award-winning author of children's alphabet books and imaginative fiction. He combines interesting facts, detailed research, humor, and realistic illustrations that mesmerize children everywhere. A dynamic speaker, Jerry frequently visits elementary schools and libraries across the country to encourage children by teaching them how to create their own alphabet books. He also gives lectures at universities and conferences to promote reading and writing.

Jerry's books appeal to children of all ages because of the beautiful illustrations, witty text, and accurate descriptions found in all his work.

Visit Jerry Pallotta’s website at www.alphabetman.com

**PTA NEWS**

**The Reflections competition is going strong!** We are currently accepting entries for the [Reflections Art Competition](https://www.vapta.org/arts-and-education/reflections). This competition is open to all students in grades Pre K-5 and entries are being accepted under 6 categories - visual arts, photography, dance, music, literature, film production. All entries are due on or before October 31 in the school library. Please read all instructions and download entry form here: <https://acmpta.com/programs>

**We have 3 courses in Enrichment at jeopardy of being canceled**: Coding on Mondays, Karate & Decorating Sweets (Grades 2-5) on Tuesdays. Spread the word to your fellow parents about signing up! They can sign up here: https://acmpta.com/enrichment

**UPCOMING DATES:**

* Wednesday, October 17: Montessori Naming Committee – Meeting #2, 6:30PM in the Montessori Cottage
* Wednesday, October 17: PTA General Meeting, 7PM at Clarendon United Methodist Church
* Monday, October 22: Middle school information night. 7PM, Washington-Lee High School
* Monday, October 22 & 23: Author Jerry Pallotta visits Drew
* Thursday, October 25: Hispanic Celebration at Drew, 9:45AM
* Thursday, October 25: Early release/Parent-Teacher Conferences
* Friday, October 26: No school for children; Parent-Teacher Conferences

**LINKS**

* Arlington Montessori Program on APS: <https://drew.apsva.us/the-montessori-program/>
* Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
* Engage with APS https://www.apsva.us/engage/
* Lunch Menus: https://apsva.nutrislice.com/menus-eula-splash
* Arlington Montessori PTA: <https://acmpta.com/>.

**A MONTESSORI MOMENT**

**Halloween is coming.** While many other APS programs may have Halloween celebrations with parades of costumes, Montessori will not. Instead, we will celebrate Fall activities, such as our Monarch butterfly celebration, instead. It isn’t that Montessori is anti-Halloween, it’s that Montessori is pro-realism in play. This week’s article focuses on real vs. imaginary play and its role in the Montessori philosophy and will, hopefully, give you some insight as to why we do not celebrate a traditional Halloween here in our program.

**Real vs. Imaginary Play for Montessori Children**

*by Jane M. Jacobs, M.A., Montessori Educational Consultant at Montessori Services.*

"[The young child] cannot distinguish well between the real and the imaginary, between things that are possible and things that are merely 'made up'." —Maria Montessori, Times Education Supplement, 1919

The young child believes what he sees, hears, and experiences. The young child cannot distinguish between what's real and/or make-believe. Remember, everything - virtually *everything* - is new and amazing to children. Observing and discovering nature is fantastic enough for a child under the age of six. Watch him explore his surroundings. You need not seek out the extraordinary or make up fantastic stories to entertain little children.

We want to provide the best foundation possible for our children as their brains are developing. Children readily believe what we tell them, so it is important to be aware that they only learn to conceptualize after the age of six or seven. Before this time, it is not possible for them to distinguish between what's real or imaginary.

**Real vs Make-Believe**

When Maria Montessori opened her first school in 1907, she supplied it with dolls and toys and entertained the children with fairy tales. In one instance, she observed children leaving the story time to watch a worm crawling in the garden. In another, she noticed the children preferred to serve refreshments to a visitor rather than play in the doll corner.

Montessori discovered that children, as imitators, love to do what adults do - not just pretend to be doing those things. Her observations inspired the creation of the Practical Life activities, such as slicing bananas, polishing silver, cleaning windows, and pouring water or juice. Montessori brought reality into the classroom and grounded all the activities with furniture and equipment sized to suit children. She observed that children develop their intelligence, creativity, and imaginations by hands-on experience.

A child's "natural" fantasy play is based on what they know. If you watch children under the age of seven, their play is very imaginative. You'll probably observe them recreating a scenario from everyday experiences - taking on the roles of real-life characters with whom they have come into contact. Whether they are "playing house," or "going to work" or becoming a "doctor, teacher, or trash collector," they are enacting what they have learned or observed in their daily life.

**Using the Imagination as They Grow**

Recognizing that children need a firm footing in reality, Montessori waited until the elementary school years to introduce myths, fables, and fairy tales. These stories present ideas not necessarily based on the child's reality. Montessori's Five Great Lessons are stories that introduce children to the cosmos and the history of Earth. More than just learning facts, stories encourage a child's curiosity and imagination. In *To Educate the Human Potential*, Maria Montessori says, "By offering the child the story of the universe, we give him something a thousand times more wonderful and mysterious to grasp with his imagination, in a cosmic drama no fable can rival."

**What Children Need**

Young children enjoy books and stories based on real life and the things they know. They love to hear about other children doing things they recognize and can relate to. They also learn to understand the world - expand their intelligence - when concepts are presented in a clear, realistic, and precise form. Fantasy to a child under six is confusing, because it is not part of their concrete experience.

For example, a young child may be told stories about elephants, bears, and unicorns. Some of these live in the real world and can be seen at the zoo, but others are make-believe. "Can we go to the zoo to visit the unicorns?" one little girl asked her father. How do you explain this to a three-year-old who has seen books about unicorns as well as those about elephants? Which one is real and which is not?

Story telling about real children doing everyday things helps ground young children with a sense of security and self-assurance. A child may not be able to tell the difference between the big bad wolf and a real wolf. Even when an adult tries to explain rationally, the lesson in the story may be understood in part, but the big bad wolf will still be real!

**Keep It Real**

Keep it real to help children make sense of the world around them. With your guidance, they will discover what's important to know, and eventually will be able to distinguish between reality and fantasy. The world is fantastic just as it is.

*"Imagination relies on a solid foundation of real-life experiences, accompanied by ample opportunity for exploration and experimentation - this includes exploration and experimentation through pretending or imagining alternative outcomes."* —Sarah Werner Andrews, *"The Development of Imagination and the Role of Pretend Play", 27th International Montessori Congress*

*Jane M. Jacobs is a trained primary Montessori directress and also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She has taught children aged 2 to 7 years in Montessori schools, Headstart, and also in a preschool for children with developmental challenges. In her counseling practice, she helps individuals, couples, and families.*