

January/February 2007

*Desert Montessori School/ 983-8212
1130 Calle Largo
Santa Fe, NM 87501*

January Birthdays:



Please be very careful traveling on Old Taos Highway and at our corner on Calle Largo!

SCHOOL CLOSED 1/15/07 For MLK Day; 2/19/07 For President's Day

February Birthdays:



It is a very slippery slope and several areas of one-way lane only! There is no rush at either time of day, so please take your time. Even SUVs and trucks are not necessarily trustworthy on ice, so please slow down! **REMINDER: We do not follow the public school policies.** A message will be on our machine **by 7:15 in the morning if there is a delay or closure.** Of course, if you prefer not to drive your child on inclement winter days, that is your prerogative. Just call to let us know your child will be absent or late.

THANK YOU to all who gave so generously to our holiday food and gift drive in December for a needy family of six. They were very appreciative of our generosity and had to use a pick-up truck to take it all home! The gifts were so thoughtful. We're sure the children's eyes were very big during their celebration. The children will be able to return to school with lots of warm clothing, boots, hats, coats, and mittens – thanks to you!

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CONGRATULATIONS to the Dennis family (Caroline, Joshua, and big sister Chloe) on the December 15th birthday of Jamison. We hope to see him in person soon.

CONGRATULATIONS as well to Jennifer and Joshua Torres on the birth of their son, Uko. Big brothers are Addison and Devan West.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Schenandoah-Stanford family (Cindy, Stephen, and Sadie) on the birth of baby sister Casey. We know Sadie is a terrific big sister!

THANK YOU to all the families who purchased wreaths and centerpieces before Winter break for the Holidays. The school netted \$800.00 for this fundraiser. Thank you to Lucia, Jennifer, Lorie, and Caitlin for organizing the orders and distribution of these fragrant and beautiful evergreens!

If you are considering another school for your child for next year, please do not talk with him or her about it until your decision is made. Change is really confusing to young children. Even our fourth and fifth graders can be upset by the prospect of change from something familiar to someplace different, whether this is a school move or a geographical move. Children who have so much information tend to discount our presence in their lives and feel we have no authority with them. Suddenly the rules to which they've been so well versed, are no longer applicable to them. Please do not let your child be the one from whom we hear about a change. It is important for you, the parent, to inform our staff of your thinking/plans.



PS1: Kate and Christina

Happy New Year! It certainly does feel good to be back at school and back in schedule-mode. The children have all settled back into the routine very nicely and have been very enthusiastic about our new lessons as well as playing outside in the wonderful deep snow everyday at recess! Thank you so much for bringing in warm and waterproof clothing and outerwear for your children. They've been having an excellent time making snow angels, snowballs, and "ice-skating" on the upper playground.

This month AJ Kurth and Camille Kreuger have moved up to Dahlia and Lisa's classroom, and we warmly welcomed Mathias LeBrun to join our class.

"My Mommy will be mad at me." Those are words we hear if some children get mucky in the snow/mud. We do go outside every day and some of that play is on the lower playground where it is mucky! We reassure the children by simply saying, "It's o.k. That's why washing machines were invented!"

We will be talking about "Homes and Habitats", and discussing the many different places and ways in which people and animals build their homes. We'll also be cooking on Tuesdays and working on some art project surprises.

Welcome back!

PS2 Dahlia and Lisa



I hope that everyone enjoyed their winter break and holidays. I am very grateful for the kindness and thoughtfulness shown to me by the families of the children in my classroom. I feel very well appreciated. Thank you all.

The new year has brought with it quite a few changes to the PS2 classroom. We welcome both Anderson (A.J.) Kurth and Camille Kruger who have moved from Kate and Christina's class this month. I find these two are both well prepared and eager to learn. We have also moved Isiah and soon will move Quinn into Tracey and Autumn's PS3 class. It's a good thing we get to see them on the playground! Sadly, in addition, my oh so wonderful and helpful assistant Lisa has decided to stop her work here as soon as we find a suitable replacement. I am so grateful for her great care and attentiveness with the children and her ever-present support of me. It's been a pleasure working with her.

This year, I have decided to try a new approach to the overall themes for the remainder of the year. We will be studying the various animal classes (mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians) including some basic geography instead of the other way around. We are studying continents and oceans and learning the names of the continents. It's fulfilling to see how this time of year is always such a productive learning time. There's a lot going on.

We will be taking a field trip next week to the Children's Museum and will continue to have a lot of art, music and cooking enrichment.

Happy New Year and Lots of Learning to All! -- Dahlia Cummings

PS3 Tracey and Autumn

Welcome back, we hope everyone had a great holiday. We would also like to welcome Isiah Lovato, Jasper Rasmuson-Flint, and very soon Quinn Jonas to our class.

The children are very happy to be back in school. We are starting the year off by adding works like the hundreds board and copying and counting patterns. We are also working really hard on addition with teen numbers and into twenties. Also, the children are pushing forward with the Bob Books, we are beginning to introduce blended sounds.

We are still working hard on all the maps. We have been enjoying naming the countries along with the continents. This month we will continue our study of South America and the rainforest. Anything you have to share would be great. Cont.



On Tuesday, January 16th we will have Gilda Montoya come in and teach us about recycling.

Finally, we were overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity. We also want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, trust, and sharing the gift of your children with us! With heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for the New Year!

E1 Elisabeth and Stephanie

If your child arrives at school any time after 8:35 he or she misses work time. With a start time of 8:30, Desert Montessori begins at a later hour than any other elementary school in town. We maintain this later start to accommodate preschoolers and families driving in from Eldorado.

However, in order to have enough work time during the day and still enjoy a nice recess as well as specialty teachers and read aloud time we must begin **NO LATER than 8:35**. This means that children need to be here at or before 8:30 so that they have time to hang up coats and put away their lunches and other belongings. Late arrivals disrupt the class and force your child to walk into a situation where he or she does not know what is happening or being discussed. This may cause anxiety in some children or may cause other children to "check out" because they don't feel part of what is going on. He or she will also miss important writing or word problem time or a turn to prepare snack.

We cannot stress enough the importance of timely arrival. It is difficult to enforce because we do not want to penalize children for something that is often not their fault. If late arrival *is* because of your child's behavior in the morning, please let us know so we can work out some consequences at school such as sitting in the front hall until our morning circle has concluded to try to help you with your mornings.

Welcome to our three new wonderful classmates: Selma, Amy, and Hunter. They have joined our group so quickly it is as if they have been here for months.

We have begun the new year with an emphasis on writing and geography. Each morning we begin the day with journal time. Stephanie is encouraging more thoughtful, less perfunctory responses to the writing prompts and it is a pleasure to hear the results. During work cycle the first graders have picture writing prompts to continue the development of their written expression.

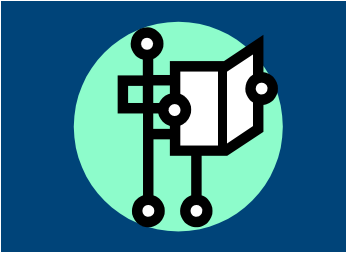
Second and third graders are beginning daily editing challenges to review capitalization, punctuation, and basic spelling and to promote careful attention.

In geography the first and second graders are studying continents. Third graders have each chosen a country to research and are busy taking notes for a written report. The first graders have made beautiful maps and will research the animals and main regions on their continents. Second graders are researching many aspects of their continents from population, countries within the continent, location on the globe, animals and bodies of water to making flag booklets and picture books. All the children are learning to use Atlases. The second and third graders are also using books from the library and encyclopedias.

From winter break to spring break is traditionally an intense work time and often a time of big academic leaps. Keeping things fun while building confidence and a variety of skills, we have drama with Rebekah Kanter on Wednesdays. Many third graders are reading the BGF with Bobbie on Mondays and Wednesdays. Art, music, and skiing continue to be part of our weekly schedule.

Thank you to everyone who is making a real effort to arrive on time in the morning. Please keep it up!

The projects have been wonderful this month and have included designs for new ski patrol and firefighter suits (Isabel and Bucky), collage poetry (Oscar), a Shel Silverstein poster (Brogan), a pattern photograph book (Connor), and a price comparison at three different grocery stores (Sam). We can't wait to see the rest. Thank you, parents for helping to get the report in on time.



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**"Education that
works...for a
lifetime"**

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.desertmontessorischool.com

E2 Jocelin and Megan

Welcome back! Everyone seems rested and eager to learn. We started this semester with an in-class assignment to write our New Year's resolutions. We reviewed the writing process during our Writer's Workshop time. We are focusing on concise and clear compositions. We are also slowing down the revising and editing stages with introducing peer and teacher conferences. The final drafts are almost complete, and published pieces should be on display soon – Come in and read them!

Many of the children are excited to begin their next Writer's Workshop assignment, a persuasive essay on homework or gender based classes. The children will learn the techniques to write an opinion piece with focus on the importance of an introduction with a great lead, body with supportive evidence, and conclusion that summarizes ideas and leaves the reader with an idea to ponder. I can't wait to read these assignments!

Literature circle has begun! The groups of five are reading: *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, and *Maniac Magee*. During our literature circle meetings, each child assumes the role of director, illustrator, connector, questioner, or reporter. Each role has specific duties to lead the group into elaborate discussions. We are thrilled to begin our exhilarating adventure through literature!

For the next six weeks we will focus on parts of speech. We will be working with innovative materials and worksheets to gain this knowledge.

In mathematics we are reviewing essential vocabulary words and concepts. For example, multiples, factors, integers, prime number, composite numbers, opposites, etc. Everyone is doing a fantastic job taking notes and completing their work! Divisibility and multi-digit multiplication will be introduced and reviewed. We will continue to focus on problem solving and word problems.

We have completed our timeline of life display. Children are now presenting their sculptures and research. This proved to be a wonderful way to learn about evolution of plants and animals, time periods, climate change, and classification.

Our social science/history concentration is the Coming of Early Man. We will study the beginning of early man to Modern man. We will study DNA, fundamental needs of man, and migration of peoples. We are going to the Mountain Center Monday, January 29th more details to follow.

Lately, we have noticed an increase of late arrivals. As you know school starts at 8:30. When students arrive late they miss essential information or lessons. Recently, the class computed how much time is missed when class begins 15 minutes late- 8.5 days /almost 2 weeks of school. If class begins half an hour late it is 17 days of missed class time – an average month is figured at 20 school days a month! It is imperative that during our 4-day schedule (during ski season) that we get as much time as we can for lessons and this good habit should translate throughout our school year. **Please be on time or even a little early. It is vital to your child's success and education.**