

staff >>>

Lower Elementary: Bob and Terri Wentsch, Katarina Houser, Amy Tedrick, Dolores Biermann, Ana Hansen
Upper Elementary: Suzi Ashley, Maija Alanen, Harry Buedel, Tim Smith, Jacquie Randall
Middle School: Lauren Rondeau, Niel Pableo, Dee Calhoun
Orchestral Strings: Kristina Beachell
Administration: Alice Madar, Lauren Hendler, Jannette Villalobos-Gil
Title I: Ana Hansen, Deborah Williams
Special Education: Lucy Schwill



looking ahead >>>

May 2018

Classroom Happenings
Ask A Teacher
Field Trips
Graduation
An Evening with Strings



other activities to a minimum and ensure school takes priority over practices, appointments and trips.

5. Start Their Day Right – Enforce a tech curfew 30 minutes before bedtime and make sure kids get to bed on time. Make a good breakfast and try to make the morning go as smoothly as possible each test day. Research has shown that a good source of energy, like eggs and whole grain toast, or oatmeal packed with fruit and nuts helps children stay alert and focused all morning.

Remembers parents, your kids can read you like a book. If your week is calm, theirs will be also. Your reaction to testing can greatly impact your children. Give them a positive send-off each morning and reinforce that they have the needed skills. Be their biggest cheerleader and encourage them to relax and pace themselves. Let's make April a great month for checking academic achievement at Sedona Charter School.

April 2018 >>>

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K-8 Tuition-free Montessori School

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Why Strings? Part Two



Nearly everyone enjoys music, whether by listening, singing, or playing an instrument. But despite this almost universal interest, few schools emphasize the many benefits that music education brings. Our Strings Program can and does enrich students' lives and education. Here are four more reasons why music education is so important, and how it offers benefits even beyond itself.

4. Increased coordination: Students who practice musical instruments improve their hand-eye coordination. Just like playing sports, children develop fine motor skills when playing musical instruments.

5. A sense of achievement: Learning to play pieces of music on any instrument is a challenging, but achievable goal. Students who master even the smallest goal in music feel proud of their achievement and are encouraged to work harder and achieve even more.

6. Kids stay engaged in school: Music helps keep kids interested and engaged in school. Research shows that student musicians are more likely to do well in other subjects, complete high school and go on to college.

7. Emotional development: Music students are more emotionally developed, with empathy towards other cultures. They also tend to have higher self-esteem and are better at coping with anxiety.



Experience MMUN NYC 2018

Fourteen of our students recently ventured to New York City to participate in Montessori Model United Nations. They joined 1,600 Montessori students from around the world writing resolutions to solve world problems. Our delegates worked hard all year learning about their adopted country, Slovakia, the function of the United Nations, researching committee topics, writing two position papers, and preparing speeches. They experienced executive/life skills like: appropriate decorum in meetings, time management, punctuality, money management, public speaking, organization/preparedness and debating/compromise. Students shared this life-changing experience with family and friends on March 29th.

The first session was an amazing experience for our delegates. The delegates were actively engaged in discussions with their bloc member states formulating their first topic resolution of the week. "I learned teamwork because we got 20 to 30 kids together into a group to solve worldwide problems. I also learned to speak in front of people without panic attacks." -Zane

"I learned that it's more fun to make a motion than just sit there, and that it is fun getting to communicate with people from all over the world. I also learned that I like to talk a lot." -Riley

Delegates completed their last

committee session on Friday. Our students practiced good decorum and were complimented by many of the committee chairs. Hunter White was chosen in his committee to speak at the United Nations closing meeting on Saturday as the delegates met to take the final vote on their draft resolutions. Congratulations, Hunter, this was an extraordinary honor.

Here are some comments overheard by students:

- "I thought it wouldn't be this interesting; I'm learning so much!"
- "It has really made me aware of walking in someone else's shoes; it was eye-opening."
- "You can always learn something new from other people."

Highlights from the trip included a night creating their own cultural event. Students learned how to purchase their own tickets for an adventure via subway to China Town. They enjoyed listening to and sang along with a saxophone busker and explored China Town where they ate an amazing meal at a restaurant that was recommended by a local.

Saturday's schedule allowed students to attend a Broadway musical – a must for every trip to New York City! Thank you students for representing SCS well!



around campus >>>

Preparing for AzMerit Testing

Spring has arrived and it's time for our academic checkup. Just as doctors check height and weight, teachers and parents use tests to check how students are performing in reading, writing and math. We realize no one likes tests, and we certainly know that they are only one way of assessing what your child knows in terms of academics. However, the AzMerit standardized test can be one effective tools to support your child's academic development. It measures where your child is on the track of academic knowledge and if he/she needs to spend additional time learning a particular topic.

Remember, AzMerit and other standardized tests are not the finish line. They simply serve as check points along the educational journey. With very few exceptions, testing results should be used to determine areas of strength and weakness so students can monitor and adjust.

We know that taking tests can be stressful and students can experience every emotion from panic to apathy. That's why this is one time of the year, where you as a parent

NEED TO GET INVOLVED! It's important your children are mentally and physically prepared, and here are 5 simple ways to help your kids get ready.

- 1. Reduce Stress** – Keep your stress level down and your children will follow your example. Explain that testing is just another normal day, and all you ask is that your child do his/her best.
- 2. Talk to the Teacher** – Don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher for ways to help at home. Teachers are an excellence resource for details about the skills your children have been working on during the year and what support you can give at home to help prepare for testing.
- 3. Practice At Home** – Ask your child how to solve a math story problem or have them explain the details of the book they're reading. Online resources are also available for practicing AzMerit test taking.
- 4. Keep Track of Test Days** – Watch the school calendar and classroom e-mails so you know what days your child has testing. Keep



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our mission... Our Montessori school challenges each child to achieve excellence through an individualized program, which includes a schoolwide musical strings program. We inspire a passion for learning, instill a sense of personal responsibility, and cultivate a respect for the environment and involvement in the community.

lower elementary >>>

Test Your Green Thumb

We are excited to participate in the Bonnie Plants 3rd Grade Cabbage Program, a unique and innovative program that exposes children to agriculture and demonstrates, through hands-on experience, where food comes from.

Bonnie Plants began this program in 1996 with a mission to inspire a love of vegetable gardening in young students and get the next generation "hooked on gardening!" By 2002 elementary schools were participating in the program nationwide.



Each of our third-year students was sent home with a cabbage seedling in the hopes they would adopt the green being and help it grow to its full potential. We encourage students and parents who are caring for their young cabbages to visit the Bonnie Cabbage website at bonniecabbageprogram.com for resources and information to help their plants thrive. If nurtured and cared for, kids can cultivate and grow giant cabbages sometimes as large as a basketball.

Why a cabbage? Most kids won't eat them. Yeah, we know, but Bonnie Plants is all about giving back to gardeners across our nation. If you purchase vegetable seedlings at Home Depot or other local nurseries, you will see the Bonnie Plants name on the tag. Since cabbages were the first profitable crop they sold in 1918, they have developed this variety that is known for producing giant, over-sized heads. This makes the growing process even more exciting for kids.



Bonnie Cabbages sponsors a growing contest granting a \$1,000 to one green thumb gardener in each state for submitting photos and measurements of the largest cabbage. See their website for more details.

In addition to watering, feeding and caring for their green beings, students will be measuring, observing and recording data on their plant's progress as part of our math and science curriculum. This is a wonderful way to engage children's interest in agriculture and show them how academic subjects apply to real life.

Happy Growing!

montessori >>>

Did You Know?

On Monday, April 16th, the students of Sedona Charter School will celebrate Earth Day 2018. Michelle Losse from the International Raptor and Falconry Center will give a 45-minute presentation on raptors and the way students can help raptors in their everyday lives. She will also bring along many of her raptor friends for the students to experience. The school-wide event will begin at 1:15 pm. In addition, Upper Elementary students and Middle School students will build American kestrel nest boxes. We are asking parents to donate tools such as hammers and screwdrivers for the projects. Please contact Suzi, Lauren, or Ana if you would like to donate your time to help build nests. Happy Earth Day!



Congratulations to our spelling bee champion, Lazor Lanson and our spelling bee finalist, Serenity McFarland! Both Middle School students showed great persistence and performed well. We were privileged to have Sandy Moriarty, Sedona's Mayor, as the honorary spelling bee judge. Here is a list of the rest of our stellar participants from Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary: Alina R., Fernando Q., Maya E-M., Mathew D., Max S., Jenna D., Lucy S., Skyla B., Josiah A., and Riley W. All participants did a terrific job!

upper elementary >>>

Are Field Trips Educational?

This past month, the Upper Elementary classroom became a hotbed of debate over the topic "Is there an educational value to field trips, why or why not?" Each student chose a position and defended his/her viewpoint to the rest of the class. Since we take so many diverse fieldtrips through the year, we were bound to have a wide variety of student responses with interesting evidence to back up students' viewpoints. This is just one example of what a persuasive essay prompt looks like from the Arizona Merit Writing Test, which UE students will be taking on April 3rd.



Everyone has been working hard to prepare for AzMerit, confident they can do their best making teachers and parents proud! We have been reviewing and practicing all steps of the writing process, including research, graphic organizers, drafting, peer editing, revising and publishing. More importantly, we are stressing the importance of making sure students have details to back up their opinions.



Throughout the year we have studied and practiced all types of composition with the goal that writing will become a joyful, creative and personal experience for each child. The more students are able to connect to their writing and express their thought processes, the less it becomes a chore or just another assignment. Because our students are growing to enjoy writing, we are confident they will shine on this year's test. We have had the pleasure of hearing so many imaginative, ingenious and delightful stories this year, that members of our teaching team have said more than once, "You should become an author!"

As we begin preparing for the end of year "Big Camping Trip," we hold out hope that some great stories will emerge from the experience. Perhaps we will even read about them in future novels!

middle school >>>

MEEP MEEP! Regionals First Place!

"Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program that engages students in their learning by allowing their knowledge and ideas to come to life in an exciting, productive environment. Participants build self-confidence, develop life skills, create new friendships, and are able to recognize and explore their true potential. OotM proves that students can have fun while they learn."

www.odysseyofthemind.com

According to the Odyssey of the Mind website, teams select a long-term problem from a list of six, develop a solution entirely on their own and practice spontaneous problem solving. Teams solving the same long-term problem compete within divisions that are determined by grade level and student age. The first level of competition is usually within a region of their state. Teams that place in that tournament are invited to compete at the state level. These championship teams are then invited to participate in the annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, where they compete with teams from countries around the world.

Under the tutelage of volunteer parent Cathy Ransom, our five Middle-School OMer (the name given to Odyssey of the Mind participants) decided to not only solve their chosen problem but excel at doing so at warp speed. The team, which consists of Miranda J., Nick F., Berenika G., Serenity M., and Paris V., spent several months creating a solution to **Performance Problem 5: A Stellar Hangout**.



"In the outreaches of the universe, there is an Intergalactic Hangout where all sorts of creatures from different worlds stop, eat, refuel, and relax. Teams will create a humorous performance centered on this science fiction hangout that includes original creatures, foods, and a search for space treasure."

The SCS OMer created a clever skit that included aliens (not to mention a

puppet who communicates only through variations of "MEEP. MEEP."), a live musical performance, as well as puns and homages to classic science fiction. The judges and audience were dazzled by their performance which earned them First Place at the Northern Arizona Regionals!

Sedona Charter School OMer are now perfecting their performance in preparation for the Arizona state tournament which will be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018 at Canyon del Oro High School in Tucson. When our talented team places at State, they will be invited to compete at Worlds at Iowa State University, May 23-26, 2018. Mark your calendars, because this team is outta this world!

ask a teacher >>>

Q: Why is our school so unique?

A: I have been thinking lately about our school and its many dimensions, phases, learning curves and cast of characters. As our Montessori studies tell us, the present is the result of our ancestors' visions, dreams and hard work. To find out who some of these "ancestors" were (are) you might read some of the plaques mounted around campus, including looking at our current staff who keep us growing and thriving.

SCS started with people who had a vision, for creating a school on their own terms rather than a typical school board or investors group. Our structure is unique in that teachers serve as part of the Governing Council. We have no principal or head teacher. Rather, the Operations Team is responsible for daily operations. This team is composed of our three Principal Educators and the Director of Finance and Administration.

Each classroom is led by a Principal Educator passing skills and knowledge to developing teachers, creating a variety of teacher personalities from whom students learn. The expression "two heads are better than one," pops to mind. Our classrooms offer unique environments for learning that are multi-aged, dynamic and individualized.

The dynamic begun by our ancestors continues. Present day parents and staff build on this legacy as demonstrated by our future performing arts classroom and perhaps a few tiny houses providing affordable housing for staff.

People in our school create this uniqueness! Please appreciate their efforts and consider joining them. Sedona Charter School ... a unique creature indeed! — Bob Wentsch



Letter from the President



Spring: When your nose does more running than you do.

—Anonymous

Hello everybody,

Spring has sprung and so have allergies! Your children are most likely exhibiting the symptoms of red, itchy, watery eyes, runny and sneezing nose and in some cases cough. While over the counter antihistamines are useful at relieving allergy symptoms, I'd like to share some natural ways that are just as effective.

Most allergists tell people to stay indoors when pollen counts are up. While this advice does work, it's not very realistic with kids. For those of us who love the outdoors, here are some alternatives to consider:

1. Daily hair washing before bed. Many people don't realize that hair is a pollen magnet. If you don't wash out the pollen, it will stick to your pillow. The same applies to changing clothes when you come in from outdoors.
2. Hydration and humid air. Children need to drink lots of water during allergy season. Also, running a humidifier can significantly decrease symptoms not only for allergies but also from asthma.
3. Saltwater irrigation of the nose and sinuses is very helpful. When nose is clogged, irrigation with salt water can provide instant relief. Because neti pots can be difficult for kids to use, consider a bottled sinus rinse like Neilmed or others.
4. If itchy and watery eyes are a problem, a cool compress will help reduce itching and soreness.
5. Here are just a few of the many foods that can help fight allergy symptoms. Honey should be taken prior to allergy season. If using honey, make sure it is in raw form and local to reflect the pollen in your area. Vitamin C has been shown to be very effective at managing allergies in several studies. Fruits and vegetables high in vitamin C include, kiwi, peppers, papaya, kale and of course citrus fruits. Bromelain present in pineapples is another natural ingredient that has been shown to be effective for fighting allergies. Foods rich in Omega 3 fatty acids can also help reduce inflammation. Flax seed, chia seeds and fish are just some examples of foods rich in Omega 3. Lastly, rosmarinic acid found in several herbs such as basil, mint, rosemary and sage has been shown to help allergies as well.

For most of us, dealing with allergy symptoms is a way of life. Consider these natural alternatives for reducing and/or effectively managing yours.

Respectfully yours,

Steven Paley, President
Sedona Charter School
Governing Council

