

A publication of Sedona Charter School
K-8 Tuition-free Montessori School

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Back to School Night
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Letter From the President

academic excellence ... personal growth ... small school environment

Roadrunner report

music notes >>>

Curry Music Camp



Five of our orchestra members attended Curry Summer Music Camp at NAU in July. Musicians from all over the US attend Curry Music Camp and all audition on the first day for placement in ensembles and the orchestra. To give you an idea of how our strings students compare to others in the nation, their incoming audition results were amazing.

- Emma Wight—1st violin—Concert Master
- Serra Kaseoru—1st violin—5th chair
- Kanita Olsen—2nd violin—1st chair
- Zoe Griffey—viola—3rd chair
- Riley Whittaker—awarded a solo (Riley participated in the Choral Program at camp)

Kristina attended the closing concert and it was very impressive. Afterwards as she talked with her colleagues at NAU and camp music instructors, they specifically praised our students for being “particularly on task, well prepared and engaged in learning.” Since these are very well respected professors, this is a HUGE compliment! Well done students, you make us proud.

Students and parents, please take a look at your August school calendar. Advanced orchestra rehearsals will begin Monday, August 22 and beginning orchestra will start rehearsing Wednesday morning, August 24.

Two First Days of School!

We’re doing something new this year when it comes to the first day of school, so everyone PAY ATTENTION! Middle School students (grades 7-8) will have their first day on Monday, August 8th. Lower and Upper Elementary students (grades 1-6) will start on Wednesday, August 10th. We aren’t trying to confuse anyone, we just need to ensure your students have the correct number of instructional hours required by the State of Arizona.

As a result, we’ve scheduled Back to School Night right in the middle. The key to a good morning is to prepare the night before! And what better way than to attend our Back to School Night on Tuesday, August 9th beginning at 5:30 pm. We promise to have you on your way by 7 pm so that all our Lower and Upper Elementary students can get plenty of rest before their first day of school on Wednesday.

Whether you are new to the school or you’ve been around for many years, please take advantage of this great opportunity to see the world your child

inhabits every day, walk in his/her footsteps, and meet the teachers and staff.

We are excited to welcome Harry Buedel to the UE classroom, joining Miss Lisa, Miss Maija, Mr. Bill and Miss Jacquie. Harry has over 20 years of teaching experience from preschool through 9th grade and comes to us as a certified Montessori teacher. While he loves to teach all subjects, Harry spent 14 years teaching math and science. We are very fortunate we chose Harry and that Harry chose us.



Back to School Night is an important time to reconnect, chat with teachers and staff and welcome new families to Sedona Charter School. It’s also your opportunity to tie up any loose ends with office paperwork, pay your fees (or set up payment plans) and connect with others for carpooling or play dates. Don’t miss it!

SEE YOU THERE!



Committed to Lifelong Learning

Because our teachers strive to implement new concepts and ideas learned in their continuing pursuit of education, we finished another productive and unified year. And that's not just our opinion, it's yours as well. We value the input we receive from students and teachers via the annual online surveys and welcome this avenue for you to voice your opinions!

Reviewing the surveys was gratifying, as the parents of our students seem to realize and respect the teachers' efforts, interests and abilities and the effect they have on the children's education and experiences. The majority of parents (94%) were pleased with the quality of education offered. Many thanks to all of you who took time to participate in the survey.

Based on your input, our core academic programs--Language Arts, Mathematics, and Cultural Subjects--continue to be strong and well regarded, as is the Suzuki

Strings Program. This year we added a drama workshop and more art activities. We will continue to improve and expand our core programs with the expectation of academic rigor and excellence as we constantly improve our Montessori classroom.

School is, of course, not simply academic growth, but also includes individual, social and emotional growth. In the "Greatest Lessons Learned," parents recognized many of the same character attributes that we try to model and teach: responsibility, self-confidence, persistence, compassion and the Golden Rule. As usual, we encourage parental involvement in many ways and 52% recognized that we were "relentless!"

In addition to a bit of needed rejuvenation, summer provides teachers the time and opportunity to improve their craft and skills, as well as prepare for the new school year. Katarina spent time with her newborn son and worked on projects based on her recently

completed Montessori training. Amy Tedrick, who will be joining us full-time next year, attended a week-long introduction to all things Montessori. Terri and I attended the National Conference on Singapore Math Strategies. (Many aspects of the Common Core math curriculum were derived from Singapore Math.) We also attended the ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) conference so that we can offer our students the best benefits of technology in the 21st century. The idea of lifelong learning is indeed alive and well! Through additional classes and training we are able to develop and improve our teaching techniques, classroom, and the education offered to your children.

Once again, thank you for your participation in our class and school! Onward!

—Bob

Parents Speak, We Listen

Results from the UE parent satisfaction survey were overwhelmingly positive and it was reassuring to know that you think we have improved in every area. Our parents spoke and they wanted to see greater accomplishments in visual arts, drama, dance and classroom music and we did our best to deliver! It is evident from the comments that parents are also proud to have their children attend the Upper Elementary classroom at Sedona Charter School because of the quality of the teachers including Miss Kristina and Miss Lucy.

We value your input and have worked hard this year to improve supervision at school and on field trips as well as provide more health related lessons including one meeting with MATForce for our 6th grade students. We are happy to report that our feedback on report cards and communication moved into the excellent category and we hope to keep it that way for years to come! Our teachers worked hard to plan and provide a more structured PE, Spanish and overall curriculum plan, especially in math. As we are convinced of the importance of arts integration, I want to pinpoint our accomplishments in that area this past school year.

Visual Arts: Through our weekly Artist in the Classroom lessons, nearly half of our students spent as much time receiving

instruction from a qualified art teacher as they would have in a traditional school that offers art. Fourth years received 90 minutes a week for 20 weeks through the Arts & Gardens for Humanity program. Visual arts included clay sculpting, drawing and painting. Our students always have access to art materials in the classroom and are encouraged to dive in!

Dance: We would like to continue to expand in this area. We organized a peace dance about once per month last year and our goal is to provide more professional instruction in this area. We hope to have more Artist in the Classroom visits for dance, tying ethnic dancing into our peace lessons. Arts & Gardens for Humanity provided a large unit on dance for the fourth years.

Dramatic Arts: Nichole Garrison taught two 9-week drama electives for the majority of our students. Our amazing play involved a lot of rehearsal and dramatic arts lessons, and Nichole was the main teacher in this area. She has a wonderful professional resume both in classroom teaching and especially acting instruction.

As we read these incredible survey results, we realize there is always room to grow. We value your concerns and want to meet your expectations for your child's

education. Please don't wait until survey time to voice your opinion. We are always available to schedule meetings with parents. We can provide written rationales for each curricular area (including PE) and make them available to any interested parent. I want to encourage you all to attend our back to school night on August 9th so that we can address any lingering concerns.

Our student surveys were equally informative and affirming. The students took the survey seriously. They do love their teachers, and they also feel challenged to an appropriate level! This is very exciting for us as teachers.

The one result I am proudest of as the new Principal Educator in this classroom is the great rating in communication and helping everyone stay informed. As a parent myself communication from school to home (at any age) is key! From home to school is also super and we were privileged to work with a group of parents who were always open and forthcoming.

Some quick goals for the new school year

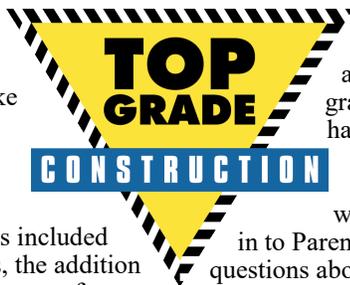
- Excel Math tied even more to Montessori Materials
- More singing during class time
- Focused instruction on time management- we will be using planners
- Four teachers instead of three will address class size issues
- More nutrition lessons
- More after school sports

What's Your TOP Grade?

Last year was our second year in the Middle School classroom, (Jenn and Tim) and gave us a chance to make many improvements to the program based on our experiences and your feedback during the first year. Some of these changes included a shift in curriculum models, the addition of a work management log system for students (which improved students' ability to plan for the week and track their own progress), the implementation of student chosen workshop classes every week, and the addition of regular classes in current events.

We're looking forward to improving our Middle School program even more this year. To kick off the new year right and get everyone off to the best possible start, we plan to schedule goal setting conferences for each family during the first week of August. This will improve the goal setting process for students, creating clear expectations from the very start which can then be reflected on weekly. Students will constantly be challenging themselves to grow academically, socially, and personally, at a level appropriate for each child. Conferences later in the year will involve not only the student self-reflection on goals and work habits, but also a portfolio of work to be presented to parents.

We realize from your parental feedback that we need to make ParentVue a top priority right out of the gate. Although



information on student progress is continuously available through our online grading system, some parents had difficulty finding the information they were trying to access. Early conferences will give parents a chance to log in to ParentVue accounts and ask questions about where to find information they need in order to monitor student progress throughout the year.

In addition to academic grades this year, we are adding a TOP (timeliness, organization and preparedness) grade. This grade will be based on things like being prepared for class, turning in work on time, and keeping papers organized across subject areas, rather than having these problems reflected in math and reading grades. Middle School is a very important time to master good work habits before moving on to high school. With these tools, parents and students are better equipped to monitor student progress and set appropriate goals for maintaining good work habits.

In response to student survey feedback, interest in workshops is at the top of the list -- particularly ones in art and writing, and we are adding more of both. To create more ways for students to be involved in school governance, we will have a "Student Council" this year for those students who wish to participate. These opportunities will add new and exciting opportunities for students who require more challenges to excel. We're looking forward to an amazing school year!

Letter from the President

Hello everyone:

Welcome all of you to the beginning of the 2016/17 school year. The Principal Educators shared with the Governing Council their plans for this year. The time, effort and expertise shown by each of them demonstrates the high quality of education that we have come to expect from the SCS community. I know that as you read their contributions to this newsletter you too will catch their excitement as they share with you what they have planned.

One of the things that sets this community apart is the continuing optimism and excitement we all feel. Each one of us is enthusiastically looking forward to the opportunities we will have to contribute to the education and growth of each of our students. In fact, the success of Sedona Charter School depends upon this positive approach to education. Students and parents who look at their education in this same positive way will find that they too are part of this process.

Each of us has an essential role to play. The Montessori approach to education looks at the student as a director of his or her education, not just as someone who passively receives instruction. To give our students a greater role in the direction of their school, we are planning to develop a student council.

In the same way, the involvement of all of our parents is crucial to our success. There are many ways for parents to contribute. One of the things that parents can do right now is to find out where their special talents and expertise can support education at SCS. The more you demonstrate your own positive attitude by becoming part of the process, the stronger our community will become.

Thank you in advance.

Maureen Nealon, President
Sedona Charter School
Governing Council



ask a teacher >>>

Q: Why learn to play the violin?

A: While the study of any musical instrument is very important to a child's complete education, I've often been asked, "Why Strings?" Here are just a few of the many reasons ...

- Strings are the only family of instruments that come in sizes. Playing any instrument requires physicality, and stringed instruments can be adapted without placing any physical burden on a growing child.
- The music skills acquired through string playing contribute greatly toward students' overall development. No family of instruments is more demanding for mastering pitch discrimination and auditory perception at the same time students are coordinating large and fine motor skills with the independent movement of limbs.
- Teamwork is of utmost importance. Few disciplines require so much dependency on the accuracy of individual participants to produce a joyful, satisfying result.
- In today's technological society, the dehumanization of the individual is concerning. Participating in a strings program, or in any music program, contributes to the student's overall development through expressive, personal, creative outlets as well as interaction with other players and cultures.

All of this justification aside, when I am asked, "Why Strings?" I think the proper answer is simply, "because humanity benefits from its study."



staff >>>

Lower Elementary: Bob and Terri Wentsch, Katarina Houser, Amy Tedrick, Dolores Biermann

Upper Elementary: Lisa Hirsch, Bill Baker, Maija Alanen, Harry Buedel, Jacquie Randall

Middle School: Jenn Jordan, Tim Marsh

Administration: Alice Madar, Katie Austin, Noelle Reeves

Title I and Strings: Teri Lechowski, Kristina Beachell

Special Education: Lucy Schwill



looking ahead >>>

September 2016

Classroom Updates

Fall Field Trips

Alumni Highlights

Fundraising Opportunities



contact us at 928-204-6464
www.sedonacharterschool.com

165 Kachina Drive
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our mission... *Our Montessori school challenges each child to achieve excellence through an individualized 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.*

alumni news >>>

Creativity In Public Health

Victoria Somerville attended Sedona Charter School from grade 1 through grade 8, graduating in 2005. "I think my favorite teacher was Bob Wentsch—he was strict and gave us a good understanding of the value of boundaries. That's where we began learning about time management, and that skill has been so important to me, especially as I got into high school and college," she says. Victoria also enjoyed Upper Elementary teacher Deborah Williams: "She was so creative, and gave everything a fun spin."

She enjoyed the strong friendships she developed at SCS and maintains to this day. Because of the individualized learning here, she and her friends constantly challenged each other to do more, to do better. By the time she completed our Middle School program, she says, "I had such a hunger for education."

After graduating from Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy (F.A.L.A.), she went to work for the American Red Cross through the AmeriCorps program helping communities get prepared for disasters, such

as earthquakes and fires. There, Victoria learned about the power of, and the need for, a public health education. She completed a B.A. in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD in 2014, and a Master's of Public Health, with an emphasis in Communication and Marketing, from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. in 2016. One of her notable accomplishments was to be inducted into the highly selective Delta Omega Honorary Society of Public Health — an organization that has included two U.S. Surgeon Generals and one U.S. President.

During her intensive college years, Victoria found that she missed having a creative outlet. Now she has found a way to blend creativity and public health education: Working for the George Washington University and Media Rez, Inc. on the development of a motion and voice-activated video game for young adults in recovery for drug addiction. The program is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Participants play a video game that reinforces refusal skills and healthy living messages, and they receive follow-up



Victoria Somerville

support using technologies such as text messaging.

"I am really enjoying using new technologies to relate health messages in new and interesting ways," says Victoria. "In the future I would want to work for a university or a hospital—or maybe become a television script writer specializing in health issues."

Her advice: "Embrace uncertainty because life is uncertain. Nothing is permanent—good or bad. Taking risks, even if they don't work out, can provide you with great insight and helps you to hone in on what you truly want."



Sedona Charter School

AUGUST 2016



Keeping parents informed

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 Back to School <i>Are You Ready?</i>						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1st Day of School MS (Grades 7-8) 	1st Day of School LE & UE (Grades 1-6) 	5:30 pm Back to School Night 			Ropes Course MS Field Trip 	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			6 pm LE Parent Ed Mtg 			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
3:30 pm Advanced Orchestra 	HOT LUNCH STARTS 3:30 pm Advanced Orchestra 	School Pictures 	7:30 am Beginning Orchestra 		Vision Screenings	
28	29	30	31	Hearing Screenings <i>Looking Ahead:</i> September 5—No School—Labor Day September 7—Early Release Day Aug 30-Sept 2 — MS Field Trip to Camp Colley September 14—Grail Theatre Performance September 21—Peace Assembly		
3:30 pm Advanced Orchestra 	7:30 am Beginning Orchestra 	Maria Montessori's Birthday 	MS FIELD TRIP			