

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

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## Dream Come True

Upon reflection, this school year has been one of many exciting happenings in the Strings Department. Most notably: the completion of the newly built music classroom. After many years of planning, fundraising and constructing, the dream finally came to fruition.

Special thanks to all the people involved! Your commitment and hard work have opened opportunities and made a world of difference to our students. Having a spacious, functional, clean and comfortable environment has made teaching and learning music even more fun, productive and rewarding. To make our classroom fully functional for daily school instruction, as well as special events like school plays and special assemblies, we are still in desperate need of a sound system. As we look to the new school year, we will continue our work to raise funds to supply the equipment needed to fully complete our classroom.

In the meantime, we continued to push and challenge ourselves to raise the bar of our musical abilities which culminated in two successful and large-scale collaborative concerts, as well as several smaller community performances. With the exciting Carnegie Hall performance on the horizon, as well as many other special performances, we encourage you to keep your children playing their instruments and actively listening to music over the summer months.



## All Star Line-Up

In Hollywood they say casting is everything. We think the same holds true for schools, because when our staff and teachers are great, SCS is an excellent place for students to learn and grow. We are proud to announce our All-Star Line-up for next school year.

Katarina Houser continues as Lower Elementary Principal Educator. Returning teachers Amy Tedrick and Amy Alexander are joined by their newest team member Haley Seiber. Haley comes to us from Florida, where she has been working in a Lower Elementary Montessori classroom for the past two years.

In addition, Stephanie Schmid and Dolores Biermann return in their roles of reading with children, administrative duties and loving students.

Suzi Ashley remains Principal Educator for Grades 4-6 with Maija Alanen returning and Laurie Altringer moving from our Middle School classroom to Upper Elementary. Arizona native Lucy Hill will be UE's newest team member. Lucy believes that Montessori education cultivates mature, open-minded, empathetic individuals who are blessed with a lifelong love of learning. She is a recent graduate of NAU and excited to return to Sedona, the place of her birth. When not in the classroom, Lucy enjoys spending time with family, yoga, vegan cooking and baking, hiking, reading, painting, and traveling.

In the spirit of preparing future teachers, Heidi Nila, an education student at NAU, will be student teaching in the UE classroom as well. Mackenzie Pace will also be back part-time and Jacquie Randall

returns as classroom assistant, helping both teachers and students.

Jacki Rice has already started as our new Middle School Principal Educator. She brings 16 years' experience teaching all subjects in grades 6-8 including developing a theater program at her last school. She and her husband moved to AZ to be closer to her adult children. Jacki loves to dance, read, hike, swim, garden and walk her dog.

Kaitlin Sublette will also be joining the Middle School team next year. She comes to us from Illinois, where she is certified to teach grades K-8, with specialized endorsements in Art, Theater, English Language, Social Studies, and Math! Kaitlin has a special talent for bringing a creative twist to her lessons.

Tim Smith (UE-2018) will be returning full-time, teaching all our students. He will lead PE classes in Grades 1-6, teach Spanish in UE, develop and lead our after-school sports, and teach math in Middle School.

To complete our Middle School team, Ana Hansen will continue teaching Social Studies. Ana has done so much to create a positive, peaceful school climate and was recently recognized for her work by our local Rotary Club as SCS 2019 teacher of the year. Kudos to Ana!

Rounding out our All-star Line-up are returning teachers and administrative staff who work hard to ensure each child has a deep, well-rounded educational experience: Kristina Beachell, Bob Wentsch, Lucy Schwill, Cynthia Tyler, Jannette Villalobos-Gil, Stephanie Knight and Alice Madar.

Watch our August issue for more information on our newest team members.

# Did You Know?

There are breakable, fragile objects in every Montessori classroom.



When you enter a Montessori classroom, there are many items that are breakable and fragile, and they are accessible to everyone. Rather than teaching children to avoid breakable items, we invite them to treat items with care and respect. You may find students arranging flowers in a glass vase or pouring from a porcelain pitcher.

At SCS, our strings program reinforces this concept and takes it to a new level. Students from kindergarten on are taught to value and honor their instruments with a respect and care unparalleled by others.

Each young student is given the opportunity to "earn" his/her instrument mastering exercises (away from the fiddle and bow) before they can even touch the real thing. By the time instruments are assigned, students are excited because they have already proven their responsibility. As a result, they are fiercely proud of the instrument and ready to care for it properly.

Overall, our Montessori classrooms are set apart in their calming and inviting nature for students to learn and explore.

# Bridging Ceremony

In Lower Elementary the end of the year went swimmingly! As we continued to prepare for our Bridging Ceremony, we spoke to the children about helping us "put the classroom to sleep" and asked students who have shown responsibility, leadership, grit, good work ethic and organizational skills to help organize cards, boxes and classroom work. Others assisted in packing up the library in our ongoing quest to better our classroom environment and prepare our room for the new carpet being installed in early June. The students had a blast helping us organize the classroom and many students were asking to do even more work.

We concluded our academic year with our Bridging Ceremony on Thursday evening, May 23rd. This ceremony honors all students in the class and all three grades participate. Our third years are specially recognized and celebrated as they are bridging from Lower Elementary to Upper Elementary.

The evening began with a beautiful song entitled *Light a Candle for Peace* as students displayed their sign language skills by

signing the lyrics while they sang. Several of our third year students demonstrated their rhythm skills by drumming and some even had solos.

The entire class participated in traditional circular folk dancing and sang the school song *Hey Friend*. Those moving on to the Upper Elementary classroom next year recited their memorized speeches reminiscing about their time in Lower Elementary and their anticipation of a new classroom with new opportunities. We concluded the program by singing the traditional LE song entitled *Movin' Right Along*.

Overall students loved sharing what they had been practicing and learning with their parents and friends. They were extremely proud to host their ceremony in our new Performing Arts Classroom.

We are looking forward to a wonderful new school year as we greet new and returning students and welcome back our new third-year leaders.

Onward!

# Rain, Hail, Snow - Oh My!

Reflecting on our school year, we have many things for which to be thankful including our amazing group of UE students. A hearty congratulations to our fourth years on their AIMS

Science test scores. A whopping 80% of our students met all the standards, with 46% exceeding them. Way to go fourth years.

Year-end trips are always a highlight for Upper Elementary

students, and this year did not disappoint!

Our fourth and fifth years had the wonderful opportunity to attend Tonto Creek Camp for their rite of passage trip, exploring pond and stream ecology. They compared water samples and examined plants and animals.

After dark, they observed the night sky and learned about black holes, constellations, and light years.

Working together as a

team to accomplish a goal, the students built STEAM machines, making objects move using momentum and actions.



Our sixth years showed incredible flexibility and fortitude as a low-pressure system settled over Zion National Park for our Big Trip. Even the unusually cold and wet conditions couldn't damper our spirits as everyone remained upbeat and

positive, despite rivers and waterfalls pouring into our tents. Our first hike (and gateway to the famed Narrows hike) treated us to magical waterfalls newly burst into being, a rare event in the arid climate of Utah. Our group also conquered the infamous

Angel's Landing, a truly grueling hike with rewards of spectacular views and vistas. Every child made it to



our turn around point, Scouts Lookout, and everyone felt extremely proud of the victory.

Students also channeled their inner cowboy/cowgirl and completed a memorable three-hour ride across the Utah landscape, an experience they will never forget. We couldn't be any prouder of the resilience and positivity of this year's group of intrepid campers.



Back on campus, parent and student surveys brought great feedback and food for thought as we approach summer. Some student comments from were; "Every day is something new, I love what we are learning here;" and "The work can be hard, but our teachers motivate us to move forward."

We were touched and inspired with these words, many so wise beyond their years. Parents are pleased with academic progress and our UE teaching team. Using your feedback, we are planning a great new year including exciting field trips with easier transportation. Enjoy your summer and don't forget to read, read, read!



# Team-Building Adventures

It's hard to believe we've completed yet another school year at SCS. The students had a memorable year filled with a plethora of laughs, a few tears, and a couple of exasperated groans accompanied by a smattering of eye rolls. This is Middle School after all!

To celebrate the eighth-years' rite of passage to high school, Lauren and two parent chaperones escorted them to a life-changing adventure on Catalina Island. To celebrate the seventh years' accomplishments, Laurie and Ana planned a week of adventures throughout the Verde Valley and Northern Arizona.

## Catalina Island

Our students were hosted by Mountain and Sea Adventures, an organization specializing in "imparting a deep personal appreciation for marine biology and environmental science." Our lead instructor, nicknamed Thresher (after the shark) was incredible, and the students gravitated to him immediately.

From the moment we stepped onto the ferry, the excitement swelled in anticipation of all the fantastic opportunities provided: snorkeling in the cold Pacific, kayaking over waves and swells, hiking up hills to beautiful panoramas, making new friends, learning about the ocean's varied sea life, and even sleeping in wall tents.

Our week was filled with excited chatter as

students shared their many experiences. The days included informative lessons which were enhanced by journal writing and fun, experiential learning. In addition, students enjoyed an evening of night snorkeling and kayaking, viewing bioluminescent plankton.



Eighth years returned with a new outlook on the world garnered from their experience on the island. It was a successful and productive trip that prepared them for high school and life ahead.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Excursions

We had an adventurous week in the

Verde Valley including stops at Mormon's Crossing in Cornville to see the waterfalls, enjoying wet Beaver Creek and bowling at the local casino. To wrap up the week, we lodged at Spring Valley Cabin and Bunkhouse (near Williams). We have a great bunch of students who enjoyed a harmonious, team-building week for everyone.



## year end fun >>>



# Letter from the President



Hello everybody,

On behalf of the Governing Council I would like to thank our teachers, staff, parents and students for a wonderful school year.

As summer vacation is upon us and the students (as well as teachers) are enjoying a much-needed break, it is important to note that a significant amount of knowledge is lost during the summer break for students who do not perform academic activities in their time away from school. A 2015 study reveals that 70% of primary school teachers recommend voluntary summer reading programs to counteract the academic decline. Sedona Public Library has a fantastic summer reading program for kids that runs through July 23<sup>rd</sup>. For the families on the go, there are a number of websites that can be accessed from computers and I-pads. <https://www.funbrain.com/> and <https://www.coolmath4kids.com/> are some sites that have plenty of free educational reading and math games for kids K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. [Kids.nationalgeographic.com](https://kids.nationalgeographic.com) is an excellent science website. It's very interactive and has some cool videos for students to enjoy. In addition, parents of K-5 students might want to check out <https://www.turtlediary.com/> — a website developed by parents to help you find suitable online academic activities at grade level.

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we are looking for dedicated parents to join our Governing Council. This is a great way to get your volunteer hours and have input in the direction and activities of our school. For those interested, please contact Alice Madar at the school office for more information.

On behalf of the Governing Council I would like to wish you all a happy, fun-filled summer. Please make sure your kids do some reading and math during the break. I look forward to seeing all of you over the summer and at the start of the new school year in August.

Respectfully yours,

Steven Paley, President  
Sedona Charter School  
Governing Council



## staff >>>

**Lower Elementary:** Katarina Houser, Amy Tedrick, Amy Alexander, Haley Seiber, Dolores Biermann, Stephanie Schmid  
**Upper Elementary:** Suzi Ashley, Maija Alanen, Laurie Altringer, Lucy Hill, Jacque Randall, Mackenzie Pace, Heidi Nila  
**Middle School:** Jacki Rice, Kaitlin Sublette, Ana Hansen, Tim Smith  
**Orchestral Strings:** Kristina Beachell  
**Athletic Director:** Tim Smith  
**Administration:** Alice Madar, Jannette Villalobos-Gil, Stephanie Knight  
**Title I:** Bob Wentsch  
**Special Education:** Lucy Schwill, Cynthia Tyler



## looking ahead >>>

### August 2019

*Back to School*

*Ask A Teacher*

*Meeting Our Newest Team Members*

*Classroom News*



year's luncheon and presented to the first recipient, Lucille Riccio. Congratulations Lucille! Although we will miss seeing you next year, we wish you well as you return to Minnesota to be close to family.

The Sisterhood Connection luncheon raised money this year to benefit the Verde Valley Senior Center and Meals on Wheels program, which suffered a recent flood. The Foundation forms partnerships with select nonprofit community organizations to increase their public awareness with the goal of extending the community support they receive.

Kudos to Lucille and Brenda for being among those honored as 2019 Women of the Year in the Verde Valley.

Another important honor was awarded to Ana Hansen. She was nominated by her peers and chosen by our local Rotary Club of Sedona Red Rocks as our 2019 Teacher of the Year! Ana has done so much to create a positive, peaceful school climate and we want to offer our congratulations on receiving this award. Way to go Ana!



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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.*

## around campus and beyond >>>

# 2019 Women of the Year Honorees

We are pleased to announce that Sedona Charter School's Lucille Riccio and Governing Council Secretary Brenda Man-Fletcher have been named two of the 2019 Women of the Year by The Sisterhood Connection Foundation, a charitable organization in the Verde Valley.



Lucille, our Lower Elementary volunteer extraordinaire, has helped in our classroom and read with our students for over twelve years. We won't mention our favorite grandma's age, but let's just say she puts many younger women to shame. Her commitment to volunteering after a rich career in elementary and early childhood education is unparalleled.

Brenda, our Governing Council Secretary and Parent Partnership Chair, serves tirelessly on our school board and in the classroom,

volunteering her time and talents to make SCS a better place. Brenda, who describes herself as a "90-mile-per-hour sort of person," has settled into our school with her son, who is showing her how to stop and smell the flowers. She enjoys volunteering in the community and works from home, employing her skills as a writer, lifestyle coach and attorney.

Lucille and Brenda were honored along with their fellow Women of the Year at the 2019 Women of the Year Awards Luncheon on May 18.

At last year's Women of the Year Awards, the annual Doralee "Terri" Wentsch Award for Excellence in Education was introduced, sponsored by Bob Wentsch, Brenda Man-Fletcher and the Sisterhood Connection Foundation. That award was debuted at this

