

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

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Music Brings Oneness



The first part of our school year has flown by and now 2020 brings new challenges for our musicians. Our strings students who are performing at Carnegie Hall will be ramping up their practice and rehearsal time. We will be spending every Saturday morning in a two-hour full orchestra rehearsal in addition to our normal rehearsal obligations and daily practice requirements. Kristina has been so impressed with the level of commitment and grit that our Carnegie participants have shown.

The goal of performing on the most coveted stage in the world is a lofty one, and yet our students are rising to the occasion with grace under pressure and remarkable tenacity. It is a testament to how playing an instrument can teach us to push ourselves to attain higher degrees of excellence and self-discipline while mastering new technical skills and developing a higher caliber of musicianship and responsibility.

It is not only the musicians who have been on this journey. Our parents, teachers, office staff and members of the community have all sacrificed an enormous amount of time and energy fundraising, caring for administrative responsibilities, coordinating, planning and driving their children to rehearsals! It takes a village to make this happen and our SCS family and community have stepped up in a BIG way.

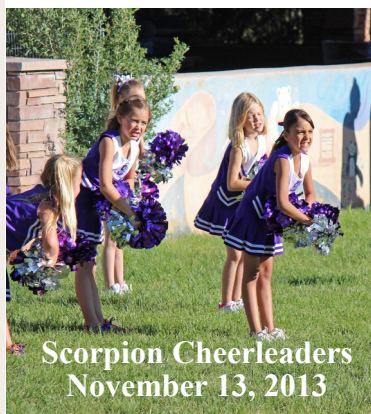
In a world where uncertainty is in the news every day, it is refreshing to see the shining example you are setting of how our children can come together in the name of a common goal to make the world a better place. This has turned into much more than just a trip to NYC, it has become an example of how music can save the world. For that we must all be truly grateful.

Looking Back to See Ahead

In 1994, Arizona became the 11th state in the nation to enact a charter school law. Today, enrollment in Arizona public charter schools is at an all-time high with more than 200,000 students attending one of over 550 charter schools statewide. We are taking a look back in time this 25th year to discover our roots and learn about those who had the vision to start Sedona Charter School as well as the people along the way who continue to make it a reality.

We can thank the parents of children graduating from Miss Gail's preschool and kindergarten at Sedona Montessori School for their vision to get the ball rolling! Realizing there were no local elementary schools providing Montessori based tuition-free education, they took advantage of the new charter school law and worked to build a school where their children could continue learning in the same style and environment to which they were accustomed.

Our design team had the vision to begin



Scorpion Cheerleaders
November 13, 2013

working on the charter before the new Arizona charter school law even went into effect to ensure ours would be one of the first charters granted. Sedona Charter School was born in 1995



and is the oldest charter school still operating in Arizona. After months of planning and working with the city of Sedona, a modular classroom was set up near the Deer Trail campus and school began with Bob Wentsch leading grades 1-2 and Chris McGee teaching grades 3-5 at the Library house. With only 27 of the original 55 charter schools still operating, we are among the strongest in the state.

After six years in ten temporary locations, we moved into our permanent campus in 2001 which was designed and built from the ground up to support a Montessori educational environment. In this small-school atmosphere, our students reach high levels of academic achievement, score well on standardized tests, and compete and win national and regional language, arts, science and math competitions. They learn the skills needed to become leaders and high-performing students in high schools and universities across the nation.

lower elementary >>>

New Year Traditions



Happy New Year from Lower Elementary! The New Year is such an exciting time in United States culture, and we use this time to teach students about the passage of

time and New Year traditions on the continents we are studying. This year we are studying North America, specifically the Native Americans and other indigenous tribes.

We enjoy talking to the students about the earth and why we are celebrating a New Year. How many days are in a year?

What is the difference between an orbit and a rotation? How long is a year on other planets? What is the International Date Line and what does it have to do with the New Year? Our Lower Elementary students love learning about our planet and solar system.

On the continent of North America many Native Americans celebrate the New Year with the Winter Solstice. During the Winter Solstice, Native Americans often tell their Creation stories. One Native American tradition is to bring in the New Year with a fire ceremony. The Hopi and Iroquois celebrate the New Year with annual planting festivals.

We have spent a majority of the year studying the Navajo or Diné people. The Diné celebrate the New Year in October with the new moon in the month of Ghaqji'. Ghaqji' translates to "back to back" or "the joining of seasons." It is where winter joins summer. During this

time the Navajo people harvest and prepare for winter. They talk about how the insects and reptiles, bears, and plants/trees seek safety and protection in the blanket of mother earth. They believe the winter is a time to rest, renew, teach, learn, reflect and pray. Some of their winter/New Year traditions are the nine-night nightway chants, the shoe game, string games, stories and teachings.

Make sure to ask your children to show you some string games or tell you about Native American winter traditions!



montessori >>>

Did You Know? Benefits of Montessori

There are many benefits to receiving and experiencing a Montessori education. At Sedona Charter School we have observed far too many to list here. We highlighted some of the most prominent benefits in the October issue and this is the second and final part in that series.

Community Awareness: Children learn to live in harmony with people who have different strengths and weaknesses. They learn to evaluate and accept ideas outside their own and live at peace with everyone.

Respect for the Environment: Children learn the importance of preserving the environment while using its resources wisely.

Self-Worth: Children gain an extremely strong sense of self-worth; they learn that they are important and their ideas are valuable.

Leadership: Children are not afraid to lead others while at the same time being part of a team.



upper elementary >>>

A Montessorian Lifestyle

As we enter the second half of our school year, we'd like to take this time to encourage all of our families to embrace the Montessori Philosophy in their everyday lives. Maria Montessori believed that "Children should be so inspired and enthused by school activities and presentations, that their interest will naturally carry over to after school hours. Given the opportunity, children will naturally create their own projects and challenge themselves."

We are often asked why we do not assign homework in the Upper Elementary classroom. We strongly believe that students should be able to have the freedom to create art projects, explore culinary skills, research areas of interest, learn practical life skills, and explore their majestic Sedona surroundings, all while spending quality time with their families.

During our Friday electives, our goal is to ignite these fires of curiosity in our students. We have presented culinary, sustainability, music, art, drama, crocheting, hiking, chess, origami, and a variety of other classes for them to

explore. Many have discovered new passions they never knew they had!

Many parents ask, "What can we do at home to help keep these fires of intrigue burning?" Although there are many wonderful sources available online and print, here are just a few ideas:

- Emphasize life skills. Show children how to cook a meal, wash dishes, set the table, do their laundry and complete basic home maintenance tasks.
- Focus on intrinsic motivation, not external rewards. Encourage your child to enjoy and seek the feelings of pleasure and pride that come with learning or completing a new task.
- Expose your child to a variety of art, music, dance and drama.
- Explore different customs, traditions and cultures together.

Working together, we can continue to provide our scholars with practical life skills, intrinsic motivation, and global awareness to prepare them for the challenges ahead as future leaders of our world.



Causes to Care About

Do you ever have a period of time when you witness an exceptional number of beautiful moments? The final months of 2019 were like that in Middle School. From caroling for our friends at Sedona Winds, to performing African songs and drumming during Winter Holidays Around the World, students have grown their community stronger than ever. We will carry this into 2020 with maturity and compassion as we embark on new endeavors.

We are in an exciting time as students are taking greater charge of their learning. We have begun a long-term project called "A Cause to Care About." After students evaluate their true interests and passions, they will choose a cause to research. Engaging with their topic, they will create numerous writing pieces, communications, plan field trips and ultimately present a final exhibit encompassing all they have learned about their cause. This gives students the opportunity to truly learn more about things they care about while sharpening skills needed to move on in their educational paths. Our project brings daily life into the classroom as students gain experience with contributing to society in real ways. Watch for news and events related to this project in the coming weeks.

We hope you have observed the new mural outside the front door of the Middle School classroom with the Helen Keller quote, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." Students worked hand in hand with muralist Joan

Bourque from Artists in the Classroom to create this wall piece that represents ideas and values of our classroom. It was an incredible group effort that brought deep thinking and coordinated collaboration of our whole class. The result is stunning and impactful! Thank you Joan.

As we begin 2020, we are cognizant of national and world events while keeping a safe and supportive environment around us. We will continue to learn about how our government works, observing current political events while engaging in productive, respectful discourse based on factual, reliable information. It is important that our young people continue to learn how to distinguish truth from fiction and develop their decision-making skills based on their values and knowledge. This is real life civics in action.

As always, feel free to visit our classroom and observe all that our students are learning.



Letter from the President



Happy New Year Everyone!

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is simply being aware of what's happening in the present moment.

Modeling and guiding a child through mindfulness at an early age has many benefits. Some of those benefits are the following: It helps them cope and slow down when needed, it increases their compassion for others and themselves and it teaches them to pause and respond to situations rather than react. It helps with emotional regulation and cognitive focus.

Engaging a child in mindfulness can be tricky. It's best to make it fun and casual, not as if it was a task or chore. It can be implemented little by little throughout the day. Most importantly however, it's best when parents model this behavior. Mindfulness is a skill that is slowly learned.

Here are some ideas to practice mindfulness with your child:

- Blow bubbles "slo-mo" style, emphasizing a big deep breath in through the nose and a slow blowing exhale through the mouth to blow the bubbles.
- Squeeze and let go of different muscle groups, tensing or flexing different muscles in the body for five seconds and then slowly releasing.
- Have a "mindful" snack by describing the smell, texture and taste of the food that you are enjoying.
- Explore textures in nature by taking a walk and collecting several different objects. Take turns observing and describing how each object looks and feels.

In short, mindfulness is both a journey and a skill that will evolve overtime. Living in such a fast-paced world makes it difficult for children and adults to slow down, even in Sedona. I encourage you to give these a try or create some exercises of your own.

Yamile Daher, President
Sedona Charter School Governing Council



Gingerbread House Contest>>>

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS



the York family winning for their creation of the Nightmare Before Christmas. In addition so many votes came in for Ari's Pirate Ship, which featured sails made out of seaweed, that it earned a special prize for creative use of edible elements. What a fun time for families to work and create together!

We had wonderful entries in our Gingerbread House competition at Winter Holidays Around the World in December. New this year was a "kit" category in which pre-made elements could be used. There were 5 entries in this category, and the winner was Scarlett, who spent a month working on her multi-building creation of Santa's Workshop. We also had 3 amazing entries in our made from scratch category with



staff >>>

Governing Council: Yamile Daher, Meg Haesloop, Brenda Man-Fletcher, Steven Paley, John Griffin, Julie James, Katarina Houser, Suzi Ashley, Jacki Rice, Alice Madar, Gail Olson

Lower Elementary: Katarina Houser, Amy Tedrick, Amy Alexander, Haley Seiber, Dolores Biermann, Stephanie Schmid

Upper Elementary: Suzi Ashley, Maija Alanen, Lucy Hill, Jacquie Randall, Mackenzie Pace, Heidi Nila

Middle School: Jacki Rice, Tim Smith, Alexandra Winter

Orchestral Strings: Kristina Beachell

Athletic Director: Tim Smith

Administration: Alice Madar, Jannette Villalobos-Gil, Stephanie Knight

Title I: Bob Wentsch

Special Education: Cynthia Tyler



looking ahead >>>

February 2020

Classroom News
Ask A Teacher
Special Events
Around Campus



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

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Sedona, AZ 86336

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 >>>

Being Together Really Matters

Enjoy this pictorial review of our Winter Holidays Around the World event from December. Thanks to everyone who volunteered to make this a wonderful time for our students and families.

Our classrooms worked hard preparing to introduce everyone to the traditions of Africa, China and our Native American Hopi and Navajo friends. We enjoyed traditional foods, games and activities including mask making, string stories

and more.

Our hot beverage bar was a fan favorite and everyone enjoyed the face painting and traditional foods shared in each classroom.

Our photo booth and gingerbread house contest added the spirit of Christmas with everyone working hard to create some fabulous entries. See page 3 for our gingerbread house winners.

Visiting with Santa, rides around campus on the Christmas train and the popular petting zoo rounded off the afternoon's adventures. Children really enjoyed feeding and petting the ducks and other animals.



The holidays, while celebrated in many different ways around the world, always remind us that kindness, spending time together and giving are the qualities of life that really matter. Let's continue that spirit in the new year.





Sedona Charter School

JANUARY 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Looking Ahead: February 1 — Sedona Marathon February 6 — Eat lunch with a firefighter February 7 — Sinfonietta Performance February 14-17 — President's Holiday No School February 20 — Chamber Music Performance				1	2	3
				W I N T E R B R E A K		
5	6	7		8	 Report Cards Available	10
12	13	14		15	 Student Presentation 3:45 pm	16
19	 NO SCHOOL	20		21		23
26	27	28		29	30	31
						New Student Enrollment