

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

Writing: SCS Staff and GC members

Photos: SCS Staff and parents

Design & Editing: Jane Cathcart



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Guest Artists



We feel honored and privileged to have fostered relationships with local music organizations to help provide students opportunities to experience the performances of world class musicians! In February, Verde Valley Sinfonietta's guest artist and violinist Gregory Maytan wowed our students with his performance of Bach's

Sonatas and Partitas as well as an interactive question and answer session. Chamber Music Sedona then sponsored a field trip to the SPAC for our students to see a special concert presented by the Grammy-nominated Aizuri Quartet where students were treated to a dynamic and awe-inspiring performance by one of the most widely acclaimed string quartets in the world! In late March, we look forward to well-known French hornist, Nikki LaBonte, sharing her talents with our school on what is sure to be another magical event.

Experiencing live performances by top musicians in the industry is an invaluable part of a complete music education. They help to elevate our students' understanding of music and the world at large and provide inspiration to achieve greater proficiency and musicianship on their own instruments.

We are blessed to receive these gifts from Chamber Music Sedona and the Verde Valley Sinfonietta and encourage all parents to help support these organizations by attending concerts with your children throughout the year. In addition, Chamber Music Sedona has also provided scholarships for private lessons to some of our students performing at Carnegie Hall.

We can't wait to share our musical adventures in New York City with you in next month's newsletter!

Montessori Accreditation

Sedona Charter School staff are committed to authentic Montessori. For many years we have been laying the groundwork for Montessori accreditation, and in January achieved a significant milestone: "Step 6" on the American Montessori Society Pathway of Continuous Improvement. No other elementary school in Arizona has reached this level.

To reach Step 6, schools must demonstrate that there are Montessori

credentialed staff in every classroom, instruction is designed to support children in becoming self-directed learners, the class schedule allows for extended periods of focused work, there is a large variety of Montessori materials available to the students in the Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms, and children are developing a sense of responsibility for not only for themselves, but toward all humanity and our planet.



By achieving this marker, we are now ready to move into the next phase: a year-long, in-depth "self-study" of how we operate as a Montessori school. We will examine our strengths and areas for development. After the self-study is completed and submitted, representatives from the American Montessori Society will conduct an on-site review of our school, followed by their analysis, recommendations and finally,



accreditation. The entire process takes about 2 years. We are very excited about this effort and are on track to becoming the first Montessori accredited public elementary school in Arizona.

Pursuing

accreditation strengthens us as an organization and inspires us to provide the best possible Montessori education for our students -- setting them on the path to becoming outstanding young people who will make a positive difference in the world.

lower elementary >>>

Cooperative Learning

While Montessori education is all about students learning at their own individual pace, it's also about teamwork and shared decision making with peace and kindness. Our LE students have been working on long-term projects both as individuals and in groups. This creates opportunities for

cooperative learning and peer mentoring while fostering motivation, investment and excitement in education.

Through our continent study of



North America, Third Years have taken on researching different countries. They began by looking at the flag of their country and recreating it for a display in the classroom. As part of peer mentoring, our Third Years have been assigned small groups of younger students to help them with their research. They are using encyclopedias and research materials from the classroom to gather information for their country reports. Once written, students will be presenting their research to their peers.

In our Art Special, Ms. Haley's latest project is radial symmetry printmaking. Students were introduced to radial symmetry through the mandala and sacred geometry art forms. They were asked to create their print design on a piece of paper using only geometric shapes. Next, our artists used watercolors to paint their radial design backgrounds. Students imprinted their geometric designs on styrofoam printing plates, and using black paint, rolled

their imprints onto their radial design paintings. The result is a radial symmetry mural as pictured.



Our Third Years are also participating in literature circles. They are each given a book to read as a group and a role to play in the weekly discussion: Discussion Director, Plot Person, Scene Setter, Connector, Character Captain, Wordsmith, or Literary Luminary. The books we will be reading first are: *Flat Stanley: His Original Adventure* by Jeff Brown and *Ranger in Time: Escape from the Great Earthquake* by Kate Messner.

Onward!

montessori >>>

Did You Know?

Charter schools have been part of the fabric of Arizona's landscape for over 25 years. It's important to recognize that nearly 200,000 families have turned to public charter schools in Arizona when it comes to educating their children.



Charter schools serve a diverse student population in Arizona and consistently see higher academic outcomes. For the last four years, public charter school students have outperformed the state average on AzMERIT for their group in math and English.

A 2019 parent survey conducted by Ed Choice in Arizona found that 82 percent of Arizona charter parents were either completely or somewhat satisfied with their child's school—a higher level of satisfaction than for either district or private schools.

Arizona's 556 public charter schools served almost 200,000 students in the last school year. Academically, they continue to produce excellent results (such as our "A" ranking). We are proud to be the oldest charter in the state, teaching students to think for themselves and change their world for the better.

upper elementary >>>

Art in Education

"The human hand allows the mind to reveal itself."
-Maria Montessori

One of our biggest focuses in Upper Elementary is incorporating the arts into our curriculum. Currently in Arizona 35 percent of elementary school children, that is 381,284 students, do not have an arts or music program in their schools. Unfortunately, when budget cuts take place, art and music are the first things to go. While Sedona Charter School is well known and respected for our beautiful strings program, we also encourage our students to explore as many art mediums as possible. We believe that art is fundamental to the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. Art gives children a chance to express themselves creatively, as well as kinesthetically.



Recently our class had the chance to experience creating various forms of art to display at our annual Bohemian Night of the Arts. They created "Pour Art," "Medieval Catapults," "Foil Art," and "Bubble Art." There were also performance pieces featuring poetry and song. As we head into the final quarter of the year, we are looking forward to creating new and wonderful masterpieces that tie into our Renaissance/Middle Ages theme.

We started the month off by taking our 6th grade class to see the amazing production of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. This cultural experience will help our class thespians prepare for this year's musical production of "Shakespeare Unshackled" in May. In our weekly art class, we are creating chainmail art and students are also creating their own personal coat of arms. Each Upper Elementary student is also drafting a Magna Carta for our entire school that all students and teachers must follow. We are proud of our scholars using art to connect their history, science, math, geography and language arts!

Reality Exceeds Imagination

Our very own math and PE teacher, Tim Smith, has been successfully building our sports program over the past year to the point that we now offer track, cross-country running, soccer, basketball and flag football team opportunities. A few weeks ago, our basketball team participated in an all-day tournament. While this may seem like no big deal, it was very special because competitive sports have not permeated our middle school community so significantly in the past.

Since we don't have a gym, our basketball games are all "away" games with not many home-team parents or peers in the stands cheering. For a recent tournament, all our students who were not playing basketball loaded onto a bus and traveled to Cottonwood to provide energetic support for our team. When we entered the gym, reality soon became better than our imagination. The other teams had their fans, but the unrestricted support of SCS students cheering, yelling players names, shouting "great hustle, you got this," and "great shot!" was a new community-building experience for everyone involved!

This enthusiasm and camaraderie carried over to our time spent with the elder residents in Cottonwood Village several days later. Students interviewed residents one-on-one to gain more knowledge about their "Cause to Care About" projects and in the process made new friends and received advice about living

as a teenager. These moments were precious, and students had many inspiring stories to tell. This was another example of reality exceeding imagination. Students often have trepidation when anticipating interacting with the elderly, but when they are all together... magic! These intergenerational times have been so rich and impactful.

Our daily routine continues to be filled with projects, literature, geometry design and more. Students are finishing up the delightful novel "The Education of Little Tree," putting the final touches on their informative writing in "A Cause to Care About," and creating 3-D models to go with their final exhibits of this semester-long project. We also enjoyed a creative break from the normal routine to prepare for Bohemian Night of the Arts last month. Our students created canvas art



with paint and used alcohol ink on ceramic tiles to make terrific coasters.

We have many beautiful designs and are selling these projects to raise money for our 8th grade trip to Catalina. We are also running a 50/50 raffle and encourage everyone to participate so that this rite of passage trip for our graduates is a memorable learning experience. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25. Contact jacki.rice@sedonacharterschool.com or anyone in the school office for details.

ask a teacher >>>

Q: What makes a Montessori classroom so different?

A: The short answer would be it doesn't stop at four walls! It is essentially a child-sized world. Our "classroom" environments are designed to stimulate each child's interests and facilitate their understanding and learning capacities starting with manipulative, self-correcting materials for younger students and moving to abstract concepts and hands on experimentation for older kids. When it comes to Montessori learning spaces, the sky is literally the limit! Everything in the world can be meaningfully incorporated into a Montessori classroom – whether it exists within four walls or extends beyond them to a beautiful garden, campus, community and world.

Our teachers carefully select materials that allow a child the space to explore life on a level he/she can understand. Opportunities are designed to stimulate independent exploration. Each prepared environment entices the child to proceed at his own pace from simple activities to more complex ones. Through the years, each student's natural curiosity is satisfied, and he begins to experience the joy of discovering the world through practical life excursions, sensory activities, reading, language, math, geography, history, science, art, music, drama and more.

Maija Alanen

Letter from the President



Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.

Maria Montessori

Hello SCS Family!

This month I'd like to discuss how you can make your home a Montessori home. As you know, Montessori education focuses on child-led learning. Students are encouraged to be the directors of their own study, identifying and pursuing projects that interest them, with the teacher serving as a guide to their learning.

You can also apply these same principles to your own home. Here are three ideas to continue to enforce the Montessori theory at home:

• Organize Your Environment

"A place for everything and everything in its place" is one of the critical principles of Montessori at home. Create systems that enforce organization through the eyes of your child.

• Emphasize Life Skills

Even young children are capable of pitching in around the house, and the older your child gets, the more involved they should be. Let your kids load the dishwasher, set the table, do their own laundry, maintain the outside landscape or cook a meal. This helps them realize that they are valued as a contributing member of their environment.

• Focus on Inner Motivation, Not Rewards

The Montessori method isn't big on giving children rewards for behavior, such as stickers or candy. Verbal praise is valued, although it's important to make sure it is given in moderation. The key is to teach your children to enjoy and seek the feelings of pleasure and pride that come with learning something new or completing a task.

Yamile Daher, President
Sedona Charter School
Governing Council



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 >>>

April 2020

Classroom News
Ask A Teacher
Carnegie Wrap Up
Around Campus
State Testing



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

165 Kachina Drive
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 >>>

Swap! Don't Shop



On Saturday, March 21st from 10 am to 1 pm, Sedona Charter School will be hosting our third Annual Clothing Swap. This is a great time to upcycle some of those like new clothes, shoes or accessories that you or your kids have outgrown. Let's face it, clothes are expensive, and children outgrow them quickly.

We welcome all clean, gently used clothing, shoes, outerwear and accessories in all styles and sizes. If you would like to help or need more details, please contact Suzi or Katarina at

suzi.ashley@sedonacharterschool.com or katarina@sedonacharterschool.com. Join us for your morning coffee, bring some clothes, take some clothes — it's as easy as that!

All unclaimed items after 1 pm will be donated to the Humane Society of Sedona Thrift Shop. We will also have a donation jar available just in case you don't think you've swapped equitably; but keep in mind this is a FREE event.

Clothing swaps are not only a good way to refresh your wardrobe but are also an environmentally friendly alternative



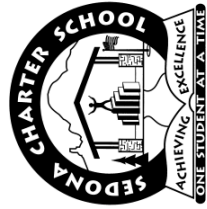
to shopping. In keeping with our school's efforts to foster sustainability, let's remember our UE Pledge to the Earth in which we promise to "share our resources justly, so that all people can live with dignity, in good health and in peace." We look forward to seeing you in a few weeks to spice up your closet for spring!



Clothing Swap

Bring what you can share. Take what you can use!





Sedona Charter School

MARCH 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		SCHOOL SPIRIT WEEK			End of 3rd Quarter	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
					CARNEGIE HALL	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
PERFORMANCE						Clothing SWAP 10-1
		<i>St. Patrick's Day</i>				
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Student Led Parent Conferences		Student Led Parent Conferences	Student Led Parent Conferences	Report Cards Available	
29	30	31	Looking Ahead: April 10—No School—Enjoy a break! April 17—Swings & Strings Event AZ Merit Testing in April—Sleep well and eat a good breakfast!			
		Testing Writing Grades 3,7,8				Box Tops for Education