

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: Stephanie Knight



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Growing Despite Difficulties

A New and Improved Garden

While the campus has been closed due to pandemic safety measures, the garden has not. Our dedicated staff, parents and volunteers have been working diligently since March to revamp and improve our school garden, and it has started to flourish under their nurturing care. This year each of the classrooms have their own garden bed to care for and learn about horticulture through STEM activities and projects. We also have a pollinator bed which is beneficial to all insects and birds in our area and allows us to have the benefit of natural pollination in our garden to help the plants produce vegetables. Our garden volunteers have also worked to restore and refresh the plant beds that are on the patio where the students eat their lunch. This new and improved garden is in part due to members of the community donating some of their time or resources to ensure a healthy garden for all to enjoy. We are very thankful to many local businesses and volunteers.



- Mike Spielman and Verde Valley School for donating seeds, plants, and soil with manure

- Village Ace Hardware for donating irrigation materials
- Evan from Sedona Rock and Materials for donating 4 tons of gravel to place on our garden pathways
- Builder's First Source for donating weed barrier cloth
- Home Depot for donating 60 ft of edging for the borders for the new beds

All this could not have taken place without our willing and eager



volunteers who have stepped in and made the garden beautiful and functional. And so, we would also like to thank our volunteers for numerous hours spent cleaning up the garden, planting, weeding the garden plots and moving dirt and gravel. Our volunteers include Stephanie and James Schmidt, Dave Collins, Damia Collins-Papas, Vicki Blessing, Dottie Koehler, Jacki Rice and Michael Basso, Irene and Ken Klak, Melina, Mark, and Kalea Fuhrmann, Rose Velez, and Steve, Amy and Ari Tedrick.



While the garden is looking great and has improved so much, there is still work to be done. We still have opportunities for eager volunteers to help us clear the existing gravel and weeds, place weed barrier cloth on the walkways and cover it with gravel. We also need to install some borders in the garden to accommodate growing more edible plants. We are excited to continue to improve our garden, allowing students to learn and have fun growing things and enjoy the fruit of all our hard work.



Getting Back Into the Swing of Things

Happy August!

The teachers in Lower Elementary are excited to execute a new way of introducing our students to the brand-new school year. As many of you have heard we started the year online. This is rather difficult in the LE classroom without the benefit of having assessed students over the summer. Therefore, we will be hosting assessments in-person or through Zoom with all students throughout the first two weeks of school. These assessments will begin on August 5th and run through the 14th.

Assessments will cover mathematics, reading, and writing skills.

While assessments are happening, our families



will be visiting the Lower Elementary website: <http://scsleclassroom.educatorpages.com/>, where assignments will be posted for students to complete during those first two weeks of school. These assignments will include

traditional beginning-of-the-year Montessori works such as sewing, finger knitting, tracing/sketching, cleaning, hand

washing and more! These assignments are done during the first weeks of school to help students normalize back into the school mindset. We will post a schedule and help families reintroduce themselves to the day to day activities of school life.

We cannot wait to be back in the classroom with our students but until then we look forward to welcoming students as well as parents in our online Montessori classroom community.

Onward!



montessori >>>

Did You Know? Sports are Important

While we all desire to play things safe with the COVID-19 pandemic, after months of staying inside we all are feeling the need to be outside and active. This is especially true for our children. One way for them to do this is through sports.

Although we will continue having our sports program, the way it operates will be different this year. The first day of practice was a Zoom meeting that took place on August 5th in which Athletic Director Tim Smith explained how sports would look this year. Sports practices will take place via Zoom until we are all able to meet in person again. Any students interested in being on the team and competing throughout the year will need to attend these Zoom practices. Parents also must complete our Sports Permission Slips before students begin.

Our sports program will begin with Cross Country, which will be open to all Upper Elementary and Middle School boys and girls (Grades 4th-6th). Coach Smith will be sending out a practice schedule along with more detailed information in the coming weeks. Please contact him directly via email: tim.smith@sedonacharterschool.com for more information.

Here's to a great new season!

upper elementary >>>

A New Way of Learning

As we embark on the new school year, we realize just how bittersweet these next few weeks will be. Although we would love to be back in the classroom with our new and returning students, getting to know each other and catching up on the last several months, it is just not safely possible at this time. That being said, we are going to make the next few weeks of learning as enjoyable, enriching, rigorous and fun, yes fun, as possible!

Upper Elementary began online on Wednesday, August 5th, which was a half day. We are dedicated to making sure our students achieve their full academic potential and we don't want to miss any of the precious time that we have with them. Every student will be expected to log in to Google Classroom each morning for daily attendance by 8:30am. We have Chromebooks available for any student that will need one this year, so that will hopefully solve some technology issues we encountered last quarter. We covered many more details at our virtual Back to School parent night on Tuesday, August 4th at 5:00pm, so let us know if you have more questions.

The UE distance learning program will incorporate several types of technology this year. We will continue to have literature study groups on Zoom with small groups of

students. We will meet weekly, discussing our novels and delving further into the elements of writing. An exciting change this year will be morning math groups at 8:30am, live with our teachers. We feel presenting new concepts with this interactive approach will enable students to take notes and ask questions, leading to better understanding and a deeper, internalized knowledge.

Also, we will still be utilizing Google Classroom for weekly work and strongly encourage every child to use their school planner to write down all assignments due, just like when we are in the classroom. The greatest success stories from the end of our last school year involved students that kept themselves organized this way. Some great resources are out there to help us all navigate this unprecedented new way of education, and we will be compiling a list and sending it out to all families. On a final note, we want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your flexibility, communication, and most importantly, trust during this difficult time. Suzi, Maija, Lucy, and Jessica are looking forward to the day when we can all be together in the same room again!



A New Year, A New Start

The Middle School team has had a super time preparing for a new year together. We are in great anticipation of starting our new community of scholars and teachers, albeit in a unique way! Because of Governor Ducey's executive order to close school buildings for the time being, our planning includes both at-home and in-classroom learning, which began online on August 5th. We are utilizing what we learned last quarter and this summer to create a program that follows our school's three part COVID-19 plan while inspiring the excitement, engagement and interest of our students. Our online program will be available throughout the year and aligns with our in-classroom curriculum for a smooth transition between the two (or a connected experience for those choosing online when we physically return to the classroom).

We understand the stressful circumstances that we are all living under right now, from dealing with illness to needing to work and have a place for our children. So, we are very grateful for the flexibility of both the state guidelines and our school administration to accommodate different modes of delivering education this year. This ship will be built as a team. While the teachers will have a dynamic program in place, we will also respond to the needs of parents and students as we navigate these highly unusual times together.

We are also grateful for the flexibility and support of parents and students who are living

with the impact of a pandemic while adapting their lives to the new school "norm." We are committed to full inclusion of every member of our community in the way that works for them to our best ability. Our lines of communication are wide open.

Some great news! Sedona Charter School students are effective problem-solvers, strong communicators and have great flexibility... all terrific skills to navigate a world in a pandemic. This year will certainly give us opportunities to grow these skills even further as we live during history in the making. More great news... our school has developed fantastic procedures for sanitation that will give us the cleanest spaces we have ever had. So, when we do come together in person, we can feel assured about the hygiene of our environment.

With all that is going on in the world and locally right now, we are ecstatic to start the school year. We hope you enjoyed our Parent Informational Evening by Zoom. Please let us know if you have any remaining questions.

~Here's to health, peace and living in beautiful northern Arizona~



Mural created in Spring 2020 by the Middle Schoolers with muralist Joan Bourque

COVID-19 Update

Dear Students, Parents and Staff,

The operations team and our Governing Council are working together to navigate the safest possible outcome for reopening our school with our COVID-19 Plan B or C scenarios. The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) released public health benchmarks last week that provide our school communities much-needed clarity on schools' safe reopening. The benchmarks align with three of the learning scenarios outlined in the Roadmap for Reopening Schools to help school leaders, educators, students and families understand how the metrics should influence school reopening decisions. Kathy Hoffman, MS, CCC-SLP, Superintendent of Public Instruction has shared, "While it's clear that Arizona is not currently ready to resume in-person or hybrid learning, we now have clear goals for knowing when it is safer to return to the classroom. I urge all school leaders to use these benchmarks to make safe decisions about learning this school year." These benchmarks and thresholds indicate which scenario should be in place based on the spread of COVID19. Families may choose to stay on our Distance Learning Plan for the entire school year. Please contact your Principal Educator if you are interested in this option.

Sedona Charter Governing Council approved the continuance of Distance Learning in all classrooms until the end of the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year when this decision will be reassessed. This decision was made based on guidance from the AZ Department of Education and the AZ Department of Health, comparing benchmarks for safely opening schools to the local data. As a reminder, we are currently implementing "Plan C" of our Three Part COVID-19 Plan and will continue this until at least the end of the first quarter. In addition, as is required in one of Governor Ducey's executive orders, we are providing a safe, supervised work space on and off our campus for students who are at risk or who have special needs for school resources.

First, Second and Third years who are at risk at and/or who have special needs may attend Precious Stones or Sedona Creative Childcare Club from 8:30am -12:00pm Monday through Friday. Fourth through Eighth years can utilize our lunch patio with a hired supervisor from 8:30am to 12:00pm. **Parents will need to sign up for these supervised safe spaces no later than the Friday before the week they are requesting this service. Please contact your Principal Educator to sign up for the service.**

You may also look at our COVID-19 plan and our Distance Learning Plan on our school website: <https://sedonacharterschool.com/>

Thank you for being patient while we all work through this together.

music notes >>>

Engaging in Strings

Despite having to start this year's music instruction on line, our Strings Department is committed to providing students with a robust and engaging musical learning environment. There will be challenges for which we must adapt and work together for the sake of our budding musicians. Kristina will create a schedule of weekly classes for students using virtual platforms like Google Classroom, SmartMusic software and Zoom lessons to provide instruction, track assignments and assess each student. Additional software may be added as we progress through our virtual musical adventure!

Your child will have greater success learning his/her instrument virtually with access to the right equipment. Please consider making the following investments in your child's musical education:

- High quality headphones or speakers (preferably headphones) will translate pitch and tone quality better.
- Assure the microphone in your computer is working *well* or consider investing in a high-quality external microphone that will hook into your computer. Use advanced audio features on Zoom.
- A sizeable computer screen will help students see the physical intricacies of instrument instruction that will be required of them.
- Easy access to a printer to print sheet music and other music notation assignments.

Students who have been studying with Kristina in past years will begin their curriculum first, followed by the plethora of beginners who are new to SCS this year. Parent participation will be vital to getting the beginners on their instruments and playing (particularly our youngest musicians in LE).

Some challenges we face include distributing instruments, sizing and tuning instruments. Kristina will be working on a system to address these needs, so it is vital that parents are reading emails and attending all scheduled parent Zoom Meetings.



staff >>>

Governing Council: Yamile Daher, Meg Haesloop, Brenda Man-Fletcher, Steven Paley, John Griffin, Julie James, Katarina Houser, Suzi Ashley, Jacki Rice, Crystal Hoyle, 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, Jess Sweeney

Middle School: Jacki Rice, Alexandra Winter, Olof Ehrenstrom

Orchestral Strings: Kristina Beachell

Athletic Director: Tim Smith

Administration: Crystal Hoyle, Jannette Villalobos-Gil, Stephanie Knight

Title I: Bob Wentsch

Special Education: Vicki Blessing



looking ahead >>>

September 2020

Classroom News

Ask A Teacher

Special Events

Around Campus



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 >>>

Welcoming New Staff Members

Sedona Charter School is blessed with staff longevity and great relationships within our community. This year we have a new Special Education Director, a new facilitating teacher in our Upper Elementary classroom and a new teacher in our Middle School classroom.

Vicki Blessing comes to us with a background in Special Education having worked in the field for over 30 years. She was an education American Sign Language interpreter on the White Mountain Apache Reservation for nearly ten years. A long-time fan of Maria Montessori, she is looking forward to working at Sedona Charter School and experiencing the values and teachings of Montessori.



Vicki cannot wait to work with our students and collaborate with each of the classrooms. She also has a love of gardening and has already helped to oversee and

implement the various changes and improvements to our garden. In her time spent outside of school, Vicki enjoys gardening, sewing, spending time with her dog, and playing board games with her friends.

After working in Montessori education for the past ten years, Jess Sweeney is excited to join us as a facilitating teacher in Upper Elementary. She is certified by the American Montessori Society, holds a B.S. in Psychology and English Literature, and a M.Ed. in Montessori Integrative Learning. She is passionate about incorporating Montessori philosophy into students' lives. An east coast transplant, Jess enjoys exploring the southwest with family in her spare time as well as doing yoga and reading mysteries.



Last but not least, we enthusiastically welcome Olof Ehrenstrom to the Middle School teaching team. Olof has 15 years of experience teaching Montessori math and science in middle school. He is a world

traveler, avid mountain biker, has a passion for the environment and nature, and loves to create outdoor education experiences for his students. He was born in Massachusetts but spent most of his formative years in Cote D'Ivoire, Africa. His native tongue is French, adding an extra flare and knowledge to our language classes. He considers himself a lifelong student channeling his own excitement and energy for learning to his students. One of his favorite things about teaching is getting to know his students and tailoring education to meet their needs. He is excited to join our Sedona Charter



School community and looks forward to our classrooms being full and meeting everyone in person. Until then, he is enthusiastically planning with the team for fun and innovative education online.

We know that you will come to love our three new teachers and hope you will join us in making them feel welcome as valued contributors to our SCS family.





Sedona Charter School

AUGUST 2020

back to school
Keeping parents informed



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 2	<div> <div> Looking Ahead: September 2, 9, 16, 30—Early Release Wednesday September 7—No School—Labor Day September 11—Patriot Day September 21—Peace Day </div> </div>	<div>  Back to School Night 5:30 pm—Middle School Families </div>	<div>  Back to School Night 5 pm—Upper Elementary Families </div>	<div>  Early Release Wednesday  Back to School Night 5pm—Lower Elementary Families </div>		1
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	Governing Council 18 3:45 pm 	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	Early Release  Early Release Wednesday	27	28	29
30	31 Maria Montessori's Birthday					