



LDVA NEWS
December 2015/January 2016

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ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE



On January 11th students in grades 1-8 went to the Ontario Science Centre. LEM students visited the Planetarium to learn about the "Night Sky", while grades 4-8 were involved in a programme called "Destination Space". The focus of this workshop was to see if you have "the right stuff" to survive the rigors of space travel. Later both enjoyed seeing the IMAX film: Hubble.

LEONARDO'S NOVEMBER CHALLENGE



On the surface November's challenge seemed simple: in eighteen minutes, teams of 3 were required to build the tallest free-standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one metre of tape, one metre of string, with one marshmallow on top. Students quickly found that this challenge would require many of the Da Vincian principles and lots of patience! It was a fun challenge that led to many interesting experiments and results. (More pictures on page 2).



LEONARDO'S DECEMBER CHALLENGE

For December's challenge, students and staff were challenged to take an old sweater, sweatshirt, or shirt and create a Christmas theme. The results were very creative and original and definitely put everyone in the spirit of the holiday. See pictures on pages 3 and 4.

STUDENT REPORTS

S. Ritacca

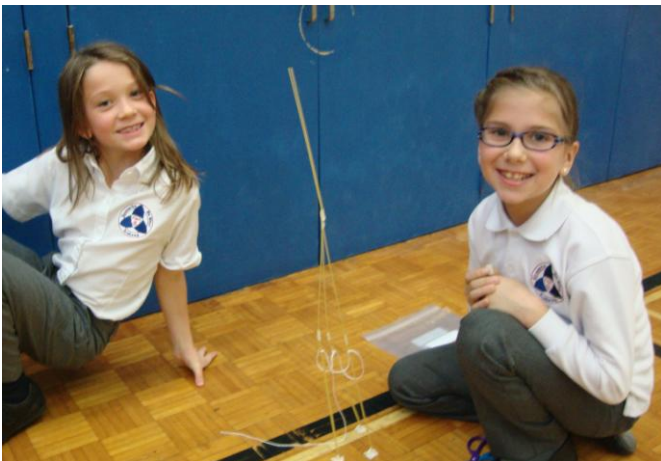
Term 1 Reports will be issued on January 29. When reviewing these, parents are reminded to focus on behaviour, attitude, and effort. During the formative years, nurturing character development and independence, not high test scores, ultimately leads to better education and future success. Developing responsibility and other life skills like perseverance, delayed gratification, and curiosity are essential for lifelong learning. Focusing on marks or test scores at this age is counter-productive and can impact negatively on self-esteem and behaviour.

Reports are most useful when they help parents and students identify areas of strength and weakness; encourage students to learn from mistakes; foster strategies for learning; and promote self-confidence. They are NOT a measure of worth or intelligence. Parents are strongly encouraged to engage their child in a self-evaluation of their own progress and achievements with this in mind.

During the formative years, student Reports should be viewed mainly as an evaluation of the learning process and not merely as a measure of student ability as this can be detrimental to learning. Using marks to motivate students is extrinsic motivation which is counter-productive to the kind of lifelong learning promoted by LDVA.

The old carrot-and-stick idea of external rewards (extrinsic motivation) does not promote the development of creative and analytic skills. The best motivation for learning comes from within (intrinsic) and has three elements: **autonomy**, **mastery** and **purpose**. These are key elements of "*Thinking Like Leonardo*" and *Montessori* philosophies.

Placing the focus on "learning" rather than on "evaluation" helps to nurture children's intrinsic motivation and best prepares them for an ever changing future.

BELOW: LEONARDO'S NOVEMBER CHALLENGE**MONTESSORI EDUCATION**

S. Ritacca

Montessori education has played a significant role in the lives of many successful individuals. These include well known people like: Julia Child, Anne Frank, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, and Google founders Larry Page, and Sergei Brin. There is evidence to show that Montessori students often develop better executive function, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, better reading and math skills, and are more prepared for life's challenges than non-Montessori students. Over the years, Montessori has enjoyed a number of famous advocates such as Alexander Graham Bell, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and physiologist David Elkind author of the "Hurried Child" (who visited LDVA several years ago). The proof of the benefits of Montessori methodology, when properly employed, can be seen in the calm, joyful expressions of the faces of the children as they develop a lifelong love of learning.

"Encouraging Independence" is a key feature of a true Montessori environment. The objective is to foster a classroom where the children are focused on their work and actively doing for themselves with confidence, pride and ownership - characteristics of an excellent learning environment.

Though there is an increasing body of research from around the world that validates Montessori methodology, the 'Montessori' label is often usurped and misrepresented. Since there is no formal licensing of the Montessori brand, the name is sometimes associated with childcare centres that would cause Maria Montessori to roll over in her grave. The Montessori movement has also been politicized by certain factions and used to promote an elitism that betrays the teachings of its founder. When selecting a Montessori school, parents are advised to research the school's accreditation and qualifications.

By marrying the Montessori methodology to the Da Vincian Principles, Leonardo Da Vinci Academy has found the perfect balance that is true to the teachings of Maria Montessori while upholding the Academy's stated mission.

SCUOLA MATERNA NEWS

Ursino/Ricciuti

I bambini della Scuola Materna Montessori, dopo le vacanze di Natale, sono ritornati con grande interesse e tanta voglia di assimilare il programma del mese di gennaio, e continuare ad esplorare le varie aree Montessoriane arricchendone così la conoscenza. Il programma di dicembre è stato pieno di eventi che hanno dato la possibilità ai bambini di approfondire l'apprendimento linguistico e culturale. Il programma di gennaio è ricco di temi didattici che si stanno svolgendo seguendo le varie tappe Montessoriane, evidenziando soprattutto la matematica, la lingua, e la cultura.

Questi sono stati gli eventi del mese di dicembre:

- 7 dicembre - La signora Simone ha svolto un lavoretto natalizio con i bambini. Grazie per la sua disponibilità.
- 10 dicembre - Visita della Signora Rosanna Magnotta alla scuola, che ha assistito alle prove del Concerto di Natale e ha distribuito un regalino a tutti i bambini.
- 16 dicembre - "**Pancake Breakfast**" per i bambini che in quel giorno hanno indossato il pigiama.
- 17 dicembre - Il **Concerto di Natale** alle ore 4:30 pm è stato un evento speciale per i bambini e per i genitori. I bambini hanno evidenziato l'atmosfera natalizia attraverso canzoncine e poesie, portando così tanta gioia.



Eventi per il mese di gennaio:

- 29 gennaio - I genitori riceveranno la pagella dei figli dove dettagliatamente viene comunicato il miglioramento ottenuto; chi desidera avere un colloquio con le maestre potrà farlo tramite appuntamento.

Si prega i genitori che per qualsiasi informazione o comunicazione possono mandare un email a:

scuola@ldva.in.ca

Si ricorda ai genitori di vestire i propri figli in modo appropriato per la fredda stagione, e quindi: giacca, pantaloni per la neve, stivali, guanti, cappello e sciarpa..

Buon Anno a tutti !

CASA MONTESSORI NEWS

Grimaldi/Pinto



The casa students and teachers are excited to be back in school and are quickly adjusting to the routine of the classroom. We wish to extend a warm welcome to the new families joining us in the new year and are thrilled to have Matteo, Giuseppe, Antonino, and Sara join our class. A special welcome to Mrs. Monardo, our newest Casa staff member, who has also joined us in November.

It sounds like everyone had a busy holiday; some of us came back with tans from an exotic vacation and some of us practiced the baking skills we learned in December. We will have to look over some more challenging recipes soon and head back to the kitchen. In December, we worked hard practicing for our Christmas concert and are still humming the merry tunes as we work.



Please remember to label any items sent to school with your child's name. Labelling mittens, scarves, hats, and especially water bottles will prevent mix-ups from happening. With the weather outside getting much colder and wetter, please provide extra pairs of socks and waterproof gloves/mittens and snow pants. Parents are reminded to continue to drop off their children appropriately dressed (snow pants and all!), as the children immediately head outside for outdoor play.

We are excited to announce that the *Arranging Flowers* volunteer sign-up sheet is now posted at our side door entrance. *Arranging Flowers* is a wonderful activity in our Practical Life area that aids the child in the embellishment of their environment while promoting a logical sense of order. On your sign up date, please send your child to school with a bouquet of flowers for the classroom. We can't wait to brighten up winter with our flower arrangements.

LAPA NEWS

On the first Monday of every month a group of LDVA parents meet at the Second Cup at Humbertown plaza to socialize and discuss ways they can help out the school. All parents are welcome to participate in this informal gathering - just show up and introduce yourself.

The Academy's Board of Governors is on a campaign to increase enrollment and secure a permanent campus for the Academy's future growth. Parents with expertise in Fundraising, Marketing, and/or ideas of how to promote LDVA are invited to contact the Founders Sal Ritacca or Dom Tassielli with suggestions or to discuss how they can help with the campaign.

RE-ENROLLMENT FORMS FOR 2016-2017

Re-enrollment forms for the 2016-2017 school year will be sent home on January 27. Parents are reminded that in order to receive the "returning student" discount, and/or to insure that a space is reserved for your child, the form must be returned by **February 26** with required payments. **After that date the new tuition will apply.** Please be advised that decisions concerning staffing and programmes for next year are based on students **officially** enrolled at the time.

SNOW DAY POLICY

Now that winter is here, parents are reminded that in the event that an unplanned closure of the school is required due to severe weather and/or road conditions, parents will be notified by 7:30 am (when possible) by email or by phone. If in doubt parents are invited to call or email Mrs. Lee at sl@ldva.on.ca before heading off to school.



ABOVE: Casa Montessori children engaged in learning

RIGHT: Students proudly wearing their creations