



April / May 2017

# Monarch Minutes

## Classroom Updates

### Ms. Echo / Upper Elementary

#### What is your biggest project so far?

“My biggest project that I’ve done so far would be the 6<sup>th</sup> graders language projects which are Beowulf, tuck everlasting and right now we are working on inside out and back again which are books.”

–Destiny Marable, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

“Probably the Native American research and the poster I had to make for it. Also the three-page report we had to write.”

–Lucinda Jones, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

“My biggest project has been the Haiti research we did for International Day. I researched the Haitian anthem. And I’m working on an autobiography called, “Autumn Peterson’s Lifetime.”

–Autumn Peterson 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### What is your favorite material?

“My favorite material to use is a pencil because you can draw pictures with it and I like drawing.”

–Kevin Jackson

“My favorite material is the computer because it helps me research things, and I can plan field trips on it.”

–Jaylen Copeland

#### What do you like about Ms. Echo’s teaching?

“What I like about Ms. Echo’s teaching is she teaches me in a simple way that I can understand.”

–Paris Al-Fatah

“What I like about Ms. Echo’s teaching is that she gives us lessons every day that will help us in get better with the things that challenge us in our grade level.”

–Kayin Gunthrope

–The following was written by Archer Briscoe and Wyndham Mills

Welcome to the class of 213, Ms. Echo’s class. Today we explore the working wonder of 4th-6th grade. The entire class has been working on what connects to United States History. The fourth graders have been working on the American Revolution.

**Fact: *The American Revolution started because the Americans didn’t want to follow the English (England) rules.***

There has been a lot a lot a lot of essay writing, and a few handouts along the way.

Fifth graders have been working on the Civil War.

**Fact: *The Civil War started because some people wanted slavery (the Confederate Army) and some people didn’t (the Union).***

The sixth graders have been working on Culture and Religion.

**Fact: *Religion/Culture is the language, customs and art of a particular group of people.***

So Culture/Religion, The Civil War, and American Revolution, all connects to United States History.

Now *math* is another thing.

Fourth graders have been working on long division and long multiplication.

Fifth graders have been working on finding the missing numerator/denominator with fractions, and finding the Least Common Denominator (LCD).

Sixth graders have been working on ratios expressions PEMDAS and common inequalities.

4th-6th has also been working in Eureka Math Workbooks as homework.

**Special Event: Santana Robinson and Jibril Young were invited to the Department of Justice for their Environmental Essays about how they can help clean and take care of their communities.**

### Ms. Kaufman / Primary

One of our classroom mottos is “Our hands are for helping”. We help each other and we help ourselves. We hold hands, we hug, we wave ‘hello’ each morning and wave ‘goodbye’ each afternoon. Since the hand feeds the mind, the Primary Montessori Children’s House is filled with materials that need to be handled to learn from through repetition and concentrated work. Our hands carry our work to our tables and rugs. Our hands dust and wash tables, fold cloths, create art, and sew. Our hands build the Pink Tower, Brown Stair, and Red Rods. Our hands play the Bells! Our hands count units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. Our fingers trace the Sandpaper Letters and Numbers. Our hands help our friends carry their heavy Moveable Alphabet boxes and large Puzzle Maps. Teamwork! Our hands are washed frequently, especially when food is served, when we visit the bathroom, or when we catch a sneeze with our hands. Our hands hold our friends’ jackets, as they work their arms into the sleeves, and zip them up, to get ready for recess. Our hands carry our lunch boxes to the lunch room where we feed our hungry bodies. Our hands tuck our blankets around us when it’s time for a nap. Our hands love to clap, learn to snap, and give a thumbs up. Our hands help us dress, eat, carry, move, and learn. We have busy, helpful, and happy hands!



### Ms. Lowery / Lower Elementary

The first graders are learning about the *Sun, Earth, and Moon*. The sun is really hot. The moon does not make its own light. The sun makes sunlight. The sunlight shines off the moon and reflects it to the earth. People live on earth.

–Calder Schwalen

The second graders are studying a unit called *Then and Now*. We are researching cars. Cars changed over time and improved each time they were built. At first cars had metal or wooden wheels. Then, they were built with tires made with rubber. Rubber wheels made wheels easier to fix. Wooden or metal wheels had to be built then replaced.

–Joshua Dunn and Trenton Thomas

Third graders are learning about characters in stories. What I learned is that an antagonist is a bad character. A protagonist is the good guy. A supporting character is closely related to a main character.

–Jackson Trinca

### Ms. McCracken / Primary



While the middle of the year testing cycle in math and literacy opened after the winter break for kindergarteners, many other activities are going on in our classroom that testify to Montessori curriculum’s development of the “whole child.”

Case in point: sewing, in many different iterations! Tracing patterns on burlap with yarn; button sewing on cotton fabric; linear rows of brightly colored floss inside a hoop.

Case in point: yoga on our gray yoga mat, with a choice of many cards to suggest positions.

Case in point: activities with Montessori materials that demand fine motor skills and satisfy children’s desire to make something beautiful (see photo).

Case in point: the bells. Lessons take children from holding the striker correctly all the way to learning the names of the notes and finally, composing their own music.

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# Classroom Updates

## Ms. McCracken / Primary

(continued from page 1)

At the end of January, our second- and third-year students attended a children's concert at the Kennedy Center featuring an NSO tuba player and a percussionist. Not only did the concert represent an excellent opportunity for our students to begin to familiarize themselves with symphony instruments and musical samples, but it also served as an introduction to performance "etiquette". We attended with children from Sherri Jones's class and Karen Via's class.

As springtime approaches, we hope to continue our development of the "whole child" with gardening and cooking activities. In that vein, as teachers, we keep this quote in mind:

*Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to make him to memorize but to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.* —Maria Montessori

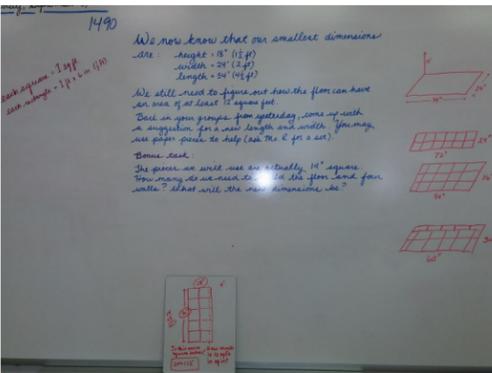
## Ms. Kimboko / Upper Elementary

Hello from Ms. Kimboko's room. This year began with big changes...most of the class is new and it's almost twice as big! More than half of us are fourth years from the various Lower Elementary classrooms. Even though a lot of us knew each other before, it's been fun to make new friends and new work partners.

**Math Projects.** At the beginning of the year we did a math activity where we used math to describe ourselves, like writing an equation where the answer is our age. Each of our math projects has some real-life connection, like planning a class pizza party or making math facts books for a younger student or figuring out how much it will cost to have a family pet. After we do all the math work, we choose a way to present our project to the class. For our first project, we put all those presentations out on the tables and we did a "gallery walk" so everyone could see each project work. Everyone got comments ("glows and grows") from the class.

**Book Club.** This fall we tried out a new idea: having a book club in our room. We had a "book tasting" where everyone read twenty books for five minutes at a time. We rated those books on how interested we were in reading them and Ms. Kimboko used that information to create reading groups. Over about three weeks, we read books like *Circus Mirandus*, *The Westing Game*, and *Time Cat*, and then we discussed them. A lot of us are excited to try another round of book club.

**Bunny Condo Design.** Last year, we adopted a "teenage" rabbit rescued by Ms. Echo's sister. We named him Hero and he has been with us since then. This fall, Ms. Kimboko had us read about the amount of space that rabbits need to be healthy and happy; and it turns out that Hero really didn't have enough room.



So we worked together to design a new space for him. First we had to figure out what was the smallest space that would be humane. Then Ms. Kimboko showed us the material we used to build, 14-inch grid wall squares. We had to agree on an arrangement of those pieces that would be large enough. Hero's new space is more than twice as big now – 28 inches deep by 56 inches long – and he has a little shelf where he can stretch out full length to watch us.

**Learning About Aquaculture.** Another animal moved into our classroom this fall. Raindrop is a bright blue male betta fish. He is living in a really cool environment too. Raindrop's tank is specially designed to allow us to do something called aquaculture: we are both growing a fish and growing greens on top for Hero to munch on! A pump cycles the water from the tank through a set of plant pots on top of the tank. While the waste in the water fertilizes the plants, the plant roots clean the water for the fish. Our first batch of greens was harvested before the holiday break. The radish sprouts and wheatgrass went from seeds to sprouts over Thanksgiving weekend! In our next batch we'll try a mesclun lettuce mix. Another nice thing is that we don't have to clean the tank as often. Normal tanks are supposed to be cleaned once a week because the fish waste makes the water unsafe, but with the help of plants, we can do it way less often.

**Birthday Lunch.** Our class has "Birthday Lunch." Four times each year, all students having a birthday in that season plan a menu for a class lunch. They figure out how much food to buy for all of us; we usually have a budget of around \$100 and everyone chips in to pay. The kids who are having a birthday are the ones who prepare and serve the meal. Did you know that our school has two mobile kitchen carts with burners, convection ovens, blenders, and the tools you need to cook? It's a lot of work, but so cool. In Upper EL, we have made baked chicken, chicken wings, tacos, pizza, pancakes and eggs, lots of macaroni-and-cheese...even sushi. People can still bring in something special for their own birthday if they want, but this makes sure that everyone gets to celebrate together.

## Ms. Sherri / Primary



International Day was by far the most exciting event for our classroom community. Our classroom selected Poland as our country for this year. The children did research and with a bit of assistance from parents we were able to create culturally appropriate dress. The children learned a dance called "The Krakowiak" and per-

formed for our classroom families. Mrs. Biedzinski-Mariano was invaluable in helping us bring the culture of Poland to our classroom. We read many Polish folktales and learned about wycinanki (the art of Polish papercutting).

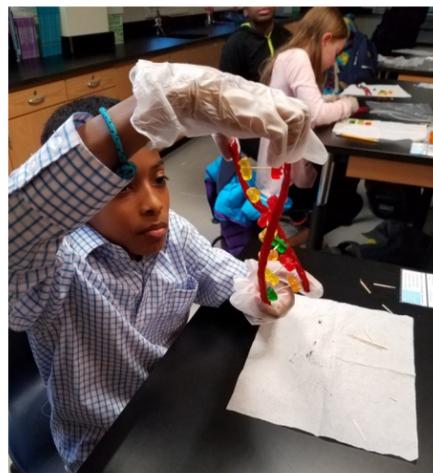
As the winter has progressed, singing has become a favorite pastime of the students. At any given moment someone is likely to break out in song during the work period. A culminating moment for the students was a Winter Holiday Social that was held prior to winter break. Students and parents/grandparents joined in and had a wonderful time singing their favorite holiday songs.

We also traveled to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to see "Feel the Vibe." NSO tuba player Stephen Dumaine and NSO percussionist Eric Shin teamed up in a unique pairing to show just how lively the tuba can be! We heard plenty of exciting music from classical to jazz, and experienced the joyful sounds of tuba favorites like Effie the Elephant and the innovative Fnugg. Along the way, we got to meet some ancestors and relatives of the tuba from around the world.

## Ms. Chambers / Science

**Grades 3&4** have been exploring the E in STEM—engineering. Students assumed the role of engineers and undertook challenges to solve problems, the true work of an engineer. Tackling such tasks as building a prototype of a museum statue base out of index cards and water bottle, to creating a Puff Mobile, a wind powered car, students modeled the work of engineers—analyzing materials, working within a budget, and following directions.

**Grades 5&6** explored inquiry and what makes a question a testable science question. Our first experiment in the series sought to answer the question: What happens to an M&M when it is placed in water? Students discovered that the colored sugar coating dissolves into the water in a relatively circular pattern around the M&M. The water molecules have an attraction for the molecules that make up the sugar and the coloring and in effect pull them from the surface of the M&M, which results in dissolving. The color dissolves in a uniform way around the entire M&M because the M&M is exposed to about the same amount of water all around its surface. Students also noticed that the chocolate part of the M&M did not seem to dissolve. Why do you think that is?



**Grade 7** continued life sciences studies, with a particular focus on the human body and genetics. Students created 3D globes of 20 panels, which highlighted each system, including its function and a drawing, to display their knowledge. The semester ended with the study of genetics, where students made candy models of a double helix and collected classroom data of recessive and dominant traits.

**Study Abroad** Two 8th grade students were selected to travel abroad this summer! The DCPS Study Abroad program helps ensure that our global citizens have access to global experiences, so that travel becomes the expectation rather than the exception for students. A competitive process, with more than 1,200 area students applying for around 500 positions, students submitted essays and sat for personal interviews with DCPS staff before being selected and assigned to a trip. This summer, Kallista Robinson and Morgan White will travel to Paris for a week to study the French language, culture, art, and history. Congratulations!

# PTSO News & Notes

**BOX TOPS:** Thank you for clipping and supporting Box Tops for BOOKS at CHML. Last month we submitted 4,785 Box Tops! Our school will receive a check later this month. All funds received will be used to purchase books and other much-needed supplies for our school library. We will be collecting through the end of the school year, so please keep clipping and turning in your Box Tops regularly. We are getting very close to our goal of \$1,000 for this school year.

**Also, don't forget to download and use the new Box Tops app for iPhone, iPads and Androids.** It's another easy way to capture more money from the Box Tops for Education program! For more information about the Box Tops for Education program go to: [www. BFTE.com](http://www.BFTE.com)

**AUCTION:** Our annual online-auction opens on April 3rd and runs through April 12th! There will be something for everyone: birthday parties, summer camps, restaurant certificates, sports and theater tickets, vacation getaways, and more!

**Auction link:** <https://www.charityauctionstoday.com/auctions/Capitol-Hill-Montessori-1204>

**Mark your calendars for CHML Auction Night on April 6th from 6:00 – 7:30 PM** (entry is free, food and refreshments will be provided). We'll hold a live auction and raffle. Classroom art will be on display and open for bid. We'll have a kid's raffle as well, along with a dance party and other fun activities.

**Auction Night – Please RSVP:** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/capitol-hill-montessori-logan-auction-party-tickets-32194875740>

Huge thanks to our sponsors: Grain Food Foundation, Fulcrum Properties Group, The Smith Team, Keil Construction, National Capital Bank, Penn Hill Group and Fowler Architects. The auction is a great and fun way to raise money for our school. We hope everyone will participate!



## Special Events

### DC STEM Fair



Two Capitol Hill Montessori @ Logan students competed in this year's DC STEM Fair for Secondary Students.

Congratulations to Alona Robinson (Grade 7) for placing 2nd in the Plant Sciences category and Jaylee Davis (Grade 7) for placing 3rd in the Animal Sciences category!



The DC STEM Fair is the premier student competition in the District of Columbia. The secondary fair is open to 6th-12th grade public, public charter, parochial, private, and home school students. This event brings together students from all eight wards to create, problem-solve, and innovate.

### "Everyday DC" Photography Exhibition

A select group of our middle school students completed and submitted a photography project with our former art teacher, Ms. Lombardo. Their work had the honor of being chosen to be on display as part of the "Everyday DC" Photography Exhibition—congratulations! The exhibition was on display during the entire month of March at the Southwest Arts Club here in Washington, DC, and featured the photography of one hundred 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students from eight DC public middle schools. The idea of the exhibit was to display how students from all four quadrants of the city visualize daily life in Washington, DC. The exhibition is the culmination of a multi-week photo-journalism unit designed by the visual arts department at DCPS, DCPS visual arts educators, and the Pulitzer Center.



### "I Have a Dream" Speech



On March 10, in honor of African-American History Month and Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, CHM@L 5th grade students (along with Ludlow-Taylor and School Within a School elementary students) read the "I Have A Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In addition, the students sang two songs, including "We Shall Overcome". DCPS students have been continuing this tradition for more than a decade!



The exhibition featured photography by the following CHML students: Alona Robinson, Beckham Baffer, Marcus Beggs, Erica Branham, Aaliyah Bunn, Jaylee Davis, Cydney Jamison, Jibri Martin-Edwards, Jasmine Murphy-Smith, Kaniya Robinson, Khyree Pettis, Trevor Scofield, Jasmine Smith, Kelly Stewart, Sadia Williams, and Morgan White.

—Stephanie Beggs

# Spotlight on Montessori Materials

This year's Monarch Minutes articles about Primary Montessori will focus on the four main areas of the classroom, rather than on specific lessons. This article will highlight the Sensorial area.

In the Montessori environment, the Sensorial area refers to materials that address the five senses: Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Gustatory, and Olfactory. The Visual Sense concerns visual perception in terms of color, dimension, and form. The Auditory Sense concerns sounds in terms of noise, pitch, and voice. The Tactile Sense concerns information received through touch in terms of texture, temperature, and weight. The Gustatory Sense refers to taste and the Olfactory Sense refers to smell. The Sensorial area also includes Geography, Botany, and Music materials.

The Absorbent Minds of young children are taking in everything (Totality Impressions), but they may not yet have the clarity of mind to understand what is being experienced because the impressions are still in the subconscious. When the children arrive in the Children's House at approximately age three, they have had three years of the Absorbent Mind at work. In the Children's House, the adults strive to give the children the opportunity to isolate their experiences so that they can simplify and organize the impressions and bring them to the conscious mind. The children don't need more impressions at this time. They need a vehicle for sorting the impressions already stored in their minds. The Sensorial Materials are called "Materialized Abstractions" because they bring the abstract impressions to the concrete piece of material to isolate a single quality to bring clarity to the children's minds. For example, the Color Tablets are all the same size and shape; the only thing that changes is the color, so a child can match the tablets (two red, two yellow, two blue, etc.) and later learn the names of the colors.

Adults in the Prepared Environment, and outside of it, can facilitate Sensorial development by protecting the children's liberties, which are their rights to choose, explore, and concentrate within safe and reasonable boundaries. Through experience, practice, and repetition, the children can establish a knowledge base. The Montessori Method stresses Experience before Language. The children are given plenty of time to explore with the materials before language is attached to them. The child will build the Pink Tower many times before the Guide (Teacher) attaches language to the varying sizes of cubes (small, smaller, smallest, large, larger, largest).

The primary aims of the sensory education are: to allow the children opportunities to categorize and classify sensory impressions, to give the children the opportunities to develop accurate and discriminating recall of these impressions, and to give the children the opportunities to develop lifelong tendencies towards order and precision (refinement). The secondary aims of the sensory education are: to allow the children the opportunities to create refinement through exploration with the Sensorial materials, and to allow the children the possibilities for "Touchstones" (a perfected or almost perfected level of abstraction).

The Sensorial materials offer the children the keys to the world. These materials isolate a single quality so that the children need only use a single sense. The Sensorial materials are interactive. The children need to get their hands on the materials to get information from them. The materials are limited in number to allow the children to focus their energies. There are unlimited levels of activity built into the materials, so there isn't a need for an unlimited number of materials. They are mathematically precise to give the children accurate sensory information. The children benefit greatly from working with the Sensorial materials, which stimulate all five senses and bring clarity to the many impressions their young minds and bodies have received and stored during their first few years of life.

—Sarah Kaufman-Relph



A view of the Cylinder Blocks and the Pink Tower. Behind those materials are the Bells.

## Advocacy Update

As part of the PTISO advocacy efforts, in February parents were asked to sign on to a letter requesting help with CHML modernization needs. From our community, 232 people representing all 8 wards signed the letter to the DC Council asking for CHML to be modernized and in addition, to have a large enough capital budget to fix all schools.

Six CHML students hand-delivered letters to councilmember offices at the Wilson Building. The students met with and gave the letter to staff of: Mayor Bowser; Councilmember Robert White (At Large); Councilmember Trayon White (Ward 8); Councilmember Vincent Gray (Ward 7); Councilmember Mary Cheh (Ward 3); Councilmember David Grosso (At Large); Councilmember Charles Allen (Ward 6); Councilmember Jack Evans (Ward 2); and Councilmember Brandon Todd (Ward 4). The students shared their experiences about the needs of our building and let everyone know what the school means to them.

The students represented CHML and all DCPS kids well! Thank you to Layla Hasan, Wyndam Mills, Sophia Kluck, Layla Bunch, Makayla Bryant, and Grace Whitsell for being our advocacy team. Also, thank you to Danica Petroschius and Sandra Moscoco Mills for chaperoning the students.

—Danica Petroschius



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[www.fulcrumpg.com](http://www.fulcrumpg.com)

Fulcrum Properties Group  
1328 G Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003

main: (202) 573-8552  
broker: (202) 243-7700  
agent@fulcrumpg.com

  
Fulcrum  
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