



Celebrating 30 years!

The Lake Fern Montessorian

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Roxanne's Reflections

News for all LFMA families!

◆ Welcome back! I hope you and your family had time to hang out and enjoy some of the beautiful weather. While you were gone all of the classrooms were cleaned, organized and new work has been put on the shelves. This month we have a few things scheduled so grab your calendars.

Tuesday, April 19th we are having group pictures taken. We will begin at 9 AM. So that our children look more uniform please have your child dressed in their forest green shirt and khaki pants or shorts. All groups will have their photos taken. If you have any questions, please see one of the teachers.

Pre-primary conferences are scheduled for April 25th through the 29th and VPK student conferences will be of May 2nd - 6th. Sign up sheets will be available in the foyer the previous week.

Our Spring Fling will be on Good Friday, April 22nd. We rescheduled this event from March. Parents are invited to join us for games and crafts. If you want to provide a special snack or treat a sign up sheet will be available in the foyer the previous week.

If you have not registered your child for the 2011-2012 school year, we recommend you do so today. Slots are filling up quickly and registration is now open to the public.

Mrs. Price's Class News

◆ The countdown has begun until the end of this school year. We are definitely on the home stretch. I hope everyone had a relaxing spring break and that the students are ready to keep the momentum up for the remainder of the school year. Over the break the teachers were doing some spring cleaning and setting out new work, so the students will have more exciting things to do when they get back.

For the remainder of the school year, we will be studying Australia, rainforests, plants, and the human body. Share items related to these things may be brought on Fridays.

The students have worked hard this year and have learned a great deal. I am proud of them all for the accomplishments they have made so far this year and I am thankful to all of my parents who have so diligently worked with their children this year. You can really see the growth in each and every one of the students, and I appreciate the help from home.

Hopefully, most of you have gotten your "Flat people" back from the various places they have been sent and are beginning to put an album or folder together. We are all very excited to see how many different states, countries, and continents our Flat people have visited. Please remember that projects are due by May 2nd.

Pre-Primary Class News

Ms. Jennifer and Ms. Jessica

◆ We hope everyone had a great Spring Break! Over the break we were hard at work cleaning our classroom and putting out new and exciting work! In geography, we will begin studying Asia. In science, we will begin studying plants. Our letter for the week of April 4 is "W", for the week of April 11 is "E", for the week of April 18 is "V", and for the week of April 25 is "Q" and "U".

Our students have been doing an excellent job identifying letters and sounds, colors, shapes, patterns, and numbers. Some have even begun to add and subtract! Please continue reinforcing these concepts at home.

On Tuesday, April 19th we will be having class pictures. Please send your child in a forest green shirt and khaki pants or shorts that day!

We have rescheduled our Spring Fling for Friday, April 22. We will begin at 9:15 A.M. Closer to this date we will have sign up sheets for volunteers and snacks in the foyer.

The week of April 25th -29th will be Preschool level conferences. Please sign up for the time that works best for you. If none of the times listed works for you, please see Mrs. Richards or Ms. Jennifer.

The week of May 2nd - 6th will be VPK conferences. Please sign up for the time that works best for you. If none of the times listed works for you, please see Mrs. Richards or Ms. Jessica.

Happy April!

If I had my life to live over again, I would make a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music... The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness and may possibly be injurious to the intellect.

Charles Darwin (1809-1892)

Restoring Parental Responsibility for Education Marshall Fritz (excerpts from the article)

I would like all children to enjoy the benefits of schools chosen by their parents. If we learn a lesson from our own history it could be possible in very short time. In America we don't use the government to run the churches, and considering our diversity, we have admirable religious harmony. I think this "hands off" policy is America's greatest gift to the human race. I believe the condition of our "public" schools has us poised to consider another great gift to ourselves and the entire human race: the separation of school and state.

Marva Collins, founder of Westside Preparatory School in Chicago, has gained international fame as an educator for what she has done with public-school castoffs. I've seen her in action, and she gives them what she has plenty of, courage. She "encourages" them to do their best, and they do. In English the en prefix can mean to provide, transfer, or somehow evoke or instill. Marva likes to say, "If it ain't caught, it wasn't taught." In other words, if the children aren't "getting it," the person in front of the class is a talker, not a teacher. Some talkers admit the distinction by saying they "covered the subject" as opposed to "taught a lesson." Professor Howard Hendricks of Dallas Theological Seminary says that distinction is easy to grasp in Hebrew because that language has no distinct word "to teach." Instead, a form of the word "learn" is used to mean "to produce learning." We could translate it more correctly if we had the word "enlearning." Indeed, we could avoid some mistakes in education if we replaced the word teaching with enlearning. Because we "teach what we are," a person who tries to enlearn values he does not hold is simply enlearning hypocrisy.

People have long pondered why parent-funded private schools seem to work fairly well for their constituencies and tax-funded public schools seem to be going downhill at an increasing speed. In fact, public-school educators are scrambling to imitate the non-essential features of private schools. Some call for uniforms, some want "values" programs, all clamor for fewer layers of administration in their hopes to reverse their downward plunge. (More next month!)

Mrs. Manley's Class News

◆ April already! I hope everyone had a safe and relaxing spring break.

March was a great month. We had the opportunity to start planting in our planters that are located on the playground and the kids are really enjoying themselves. So far, three planters on the playground have been successful. We have cilantro in one, basil in another, and in the last planter one of our parents, Dawn Torres, planted green onions, peas and lettuce. The kids are very excited to see the beginnings of our plants start to sprout. We are all looking forward to see how the planters will continue to grow over the next few weeks.

We finished reading The Chocolate Touch two weeks ago in literature, and since then we have began reading Frindle. Everyone seems to be enjoying the book and we are learning a great deal of inference in this piece of literature. Frindle is a book about a young boy named Nick who is not looking forward to fifth grade because of a particular teacher. This teacher has immortalized the dictionary and she is sure to spread her love of the dictionary to all who enter her class.

Science has been so much fun! We have been learning about our solar system. We have watched some interesting videos and viewed fantastic pictures of space from some of NASA's missions. One of the conversations that continues to come up in our Science class is how none of us can believe how small earth is when compared to our solar system and beyond.

April will go by very quickly. Our spring fling was rescheduled. It will be held on Friday, April 22nd. My class will be doing some spring crafts that day and playing games outside after we finish our morning work. April 19th is our class pictures. Please continue working with your children on reading aloud daily and working on those multiplication and division tables. Thank you for all of your support.

Mr. Price's Class News

◆ Wow! We are already in the final grading period of the year. I can't believe how fast the year has flown by. April is our last month of pure academics. May will consist largely of test preparation and the administering of the test itself.

We have started our final literature book, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe."

Group pictures will be April 19th. Forest green shirts and khaki pants are the uniform of the day!

Our Spring Fling has been moved to Friday, April 22nd. Sign-up sheets for various opportunities will be placed in the foyer. If you'd like to bring something special for our festivities we would enjoy that, and as usual all are welcome to join us!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- CLASS PICTURES

- APRIL 19TH

- SPRING FLING!

- FRIDAY, APRIL 22ND

- PRE-PRIMARY CONFERENCES

- APRIL 25TH THROUGH 29TH

- VPK CONFERENCES

- MAY 2ND THROUGH 6TH

Legislative Update

LFMA is a long time member of the Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM). The Florida Legislature is currently in session and FACCM has personnel involved in the legislative process to watch over and attempt to influence as necessary potential new legislation that may impact member schools and families that utilize these services. Below are some excerpts from a recent email update on the current legislative session.

Legislative Update #1

This is our first summary report of the Session. As a reminder, while Florida has an approximately \$70 billion annual budget, only \$25 billion of that is considered discretionary; all the rest is federal pass-through dollars and trust funds. That means that the \$4.6 billion shortfall in this year's budget must all come out of the discretionary funds - which include education and readiness. This is a very difficult session, but we have a first rate lobbying team representing us in Tallahassee.

BUDGET

Given the current economic conditions and budget shortfalls we are working to limit cuts to our program. On Thursday, the Budget Subcommittee on Education PreK-12 Appropriations of the Senate Budget Committee reported out on their allocations and VPK funding actually increased by 2.7% year over year. Their proposed budget is \$415,855,792. The PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee proposed a VPK budget of \$368,605,059. Unlike the Senate subcommittee, they did not fully fund the loss of Federal ARRA (stimulus) funds. The current view is that this is a positive position to be in as the respective Chambers begin their deliberations and trade-offs. We have a lot of work to be done, but last year we started in a far worse position.

SCHOOL READINESS

This is the only really bad news that has appeared so far this Session. No one has said anything official, but influential members are talking about reductions of up to 11,000 slots. This would obviously be catastrophic for many of our members, and we will work this as hard as we can.

GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

Gov Scott has proposed a massive reorganization of the Executive Branch, including dismantling the Agency for Workforce Integration. The Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee is proposing that the AWI Office of Early Learning move to the Department of Education. We have opposed that for a number of reasons, including DOE's general lack of support to private providers on things like CDA-credentialed teachers, readiness scores at the classroom level for providers offering multiple classes, lack of access to ECHOS and FAIR tests that are shared with public school VPK programs, and their encouragement of VPK in public schools. (Editors note – We work with the DOE on our McKay Scholarship participation. Inflexible, uninformed, slow and incompetent to be kind.)

The House Committee on Government Reorganization is also fielding a similar proposal. It does not appear that we can stop this from happening. However, we are fighting to protect the VPK funding from DOE encroachment and trying to get a statement of legislative intent of the importance of private providers to Florida's VPK program.

FOOD INSPECTIONS and DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

For reasons we still don't really understand, the Legislature simply does not like the Department of Health. At the same time, our membership does not want health inspections conducted by DCF which not only lacks expertise in this area but seems intent on adding punishments to progressive enforcement. We are working with Legislators and letting them know that we support moving health inspections to the Department of Agriculture. (Editors note – for those of you that have been at LFMA for a couple of years or more, you will recall our "food fight" with the local health department.)