



GOVERNANCE BOARD NEWSLETTER

VOLUME V, ISSUE 3 | 2017-2018

STEAM Fair

Our school showcases student work in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math through our annual STEAM Fair. Students work individually or in small groups and research, write, and present on a wide range of topics including robotics, architecture, and anatomy. Students and families then spend an afternoon touring the school allowing students to showcase their hard work.

The multi-aged classroom format at our school provides a unique aspect to our STEAM Fair. Younger students have the opportunity to learn from older students who serve as mentors. Students with previous STEAM Fair experience remember impressive projects from years past which in turn sets high expectations in the classroom.

Individual classrooms handle STEAM fair projects differently. Some rooms have a central theme allowing students and groups to support each other and use similar language while other rooms allow students to pick their own topic and form groups based on interest.

STEAM Fair is an important project early in the year to open the door for project-based learning, student choice, and follow-through. These projects are student centered with the teacher acting as a guide, versus teacher-led instruction on what and how to do things. We hope you had the chance to visit this year's STEAM Fair on October 31st. If not, please plan to join us next year!



Dr. Steven Hughes Presentation

In early November, CVMCS hosted Dr. Stephen Hughes, a pediatric neuropsychologist, past president of the American Academy of Pediatric Neuropsychology, and chair of the Association Montessori International Global Research Committee. Dr. Hughes lectures around the world at Montessori conferences and is also a Montessori consultant.

On the day of his visit, Dr. Hughes spent time meeting with both Mr. Todd and the Governance Board. He also gave a staff professional development lecture in which he presented, among other things:

- the unique challenges of teaching Montessori in a public charter school setting
- what current employers are looking for in graduates
- how Montessori education helps children grow a strong, creative, innovative, and capable brain

Dr. Hughes was also able to give an evening presentation open to the public. Parents and educators from around the district were invited to attend this community talk. You can also hear more talks at his website:

GoodAtDoingThings.com / BuildingBetterBrains.com

As outlined in the October Governance Board newsletter, we have adopted a new three year strategic plan. Clarifying and reinforcing our school's Montessori identity is an important part of that plan. Bringing in Dr. Hughes allowed us to begin dialoguing on important aspects of the Montessori philosophy and how it applies to our working goals.

What the hand does the mind remembers. -Maria Montessori

Project Lead the Way Article by Ms. Jen Peck E1 teacher

Recently, while working on a surveying and graphing project, my students were asked what their favorite thing was in school. Science came out on top. Above recess. And lunch. Our kids are fired up about science, and part of the reason why is Project Lead the Way.

This program for K-5 is called Project Lead the Way Launch. Science modules engage students in activities, problems, and projects that allow them to not just learn about science principles, but also become creators, designers and problem-solvers. For example, one module for Children's House students begins with the classic story of the Three Little Pigs. Over the next several weeks, the students are involved in activities and projects that allow them to carefully examine materials and how they interact. They learn vocabulary such as force and collision, and gain experience and understanding used to solve problems. At the culmination of the module, the students are given a variety of materials to choose from in order to solve a final problem: how to build a house for their pig that will not be blown down by the "wolf" i.e. a high-powered fan. This activity, project and problem (APB) approach is found throughout the PLTW curriculum. The program builds on these learning modules during first through third grade so that by the time students are in E2, they are solving much larger problems related to real world issues. This can include designing and programming Automated Guided Vehicle robots to remove hazardous waste, much like those used during the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

PLTW began as a pilot program in E1 at CVMCS in 2015. Our staff and Governance Board were impressed with how well the curriculum fit our school. With support from the Eau Claire Area School District, Chippewa Valley Montessori became the first and only K-5 PLTW Launch school in Eau Claire in 2016. PLTW is a great match for the Montessori classroom. Students are engaged with real materials, learn to face challenges, persevere and encouraged to work together with the goal of solving real-world problems. The teacher's role is to guide, ask questions, and encourage; it is up to the students to define the problem, explore creative solutions, and test and refine their solution.

PLTW Launch is used in many schools around the US. However, our school is unique due to our truly multi-age approach. Instead of teaching separate lessons to fourth and fifth grade students, for example, the entire E2 classroom is involved in the lesson, all working together, contributing solutions and learning from one another. The materials are rotated so each student has experience with all of the unique modules during their years at Montessori. Recently, I was invited to give a presentation featuring our innovative multi-age approach at the National Project Lead the Way Summit in Orlando, Florida in October and will share our approach again at the Wisconsin PLTW Conference in February. I am excited about Project Lead the Way and how it compliments the curriculum of our school and the multi-age classroom.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, Jan 8, 2018 at noon
in the school library. All meetings
are open to the public.

OCT. MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Recapped recent parent ed nights and how to continue to educate our parents on Montessori practices
- Community Engagement Survey Process and continued Strategy
- Debrief of Dr. Steven Hughes event and professional development
- Ms. Jen Peck presented on a Project Lead the Way conference she attended
- Observed E1 classrooms followed by a discussion



Operation Gratitude *October 31*

E1 students participated in Operation Gratitude, a program that creates care packages for US troops and first responders. WHOA! We sent well over 100 pounds of candy, dozens of cards, toiletries!



Korean Dance Troupe *November 01*

Students and staff watched an authentic Korean Dance Troupe who has been touring in the United States.



Veterans Day *November 09*

Ms. Maddy's E2 class made cards and recited a poem for Veteran's at the L.E. Phillips Senior Center.



Peace Ceremony *November 15*

The whole school gathered in the gym for our annual Peace Ceremony which acknowledges the importance of peace in our school and in our world.