



Montessori Matters



***"From there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere!"
- Dr. Seuss. A friendly visitor recently came to our campus.***

Montessori Mondays

Montessori Monday is a monthly morning gathering for our families and friends of our families to participate in interactive sessions with a variety of topics that help link our school to home. We will have different topics each month from child development to Montessori curriculum.

Come join us on Monday, April 11th at 8:45 am in the newly renovated parent lounge. Bring a cup of coffee for a Montessori educational session given by Paul Epstein. The Montessori Monday will last about 30 minutes but feel free to stay and visit with other parents. Also, right after the gathering we will have our monthly PTSA meeting to discuss exciting happenings

On the Calendar

For calendar dates, go to www.rmschool.org

The RMS band will perform a short concert in the School's lobby on March 18th during morning arrival. Please attend.

Rochester Montessori School

*Because how children learn
influences who they will become*

Big Work!

By Paul Epstein, Ph.D.

It so happens that as children grow they of course become even more capable. When they are two or three, they engage in learning activities that lead to more complex challenges: for example, from a tray with two pitchers and a spoon to a dish washing exercise requiring wash basins, sponges, soap dishes, and aprons; from counting to ten to setting up place value materials for adding $5,261 + 3,894$. Initial lessons with the phonetic sounds of letters lead to independent reading. We often refer to the learning activities of older children as "big work." The word "work" has two referents - the learning activity and the personal work of becoming. The 3rd year or kindergarten students now integrate all of their previous experiences, and we are astonished! When they were three, they demanded, "I can do it." During the kindergarten year, they affirm, "I *can* do it."

The pictures on the pages that follow document some recent kindergarten students' "big work." These are but a few examples and include writing each African nation in cursive, creating a cardboard model of a city skyline, counting by 10 to 1,000, and more. Each exemplifies both

the content that a child has learned and the habits of mind that the child is developing. “Big works” take many days, and these are not assigned activities. That is, children initiate a “big work” of their own choosing. From “big work,” children develop such habits as persistence, decision making, process development, time management, and organization. These are an essential part of the Montessori dual curriculum - academic content and lifelong habits. Together, this makes for the twin meanings behind the phrase “big work”: academic learning and personal development. This continues in both elementary and middle school.



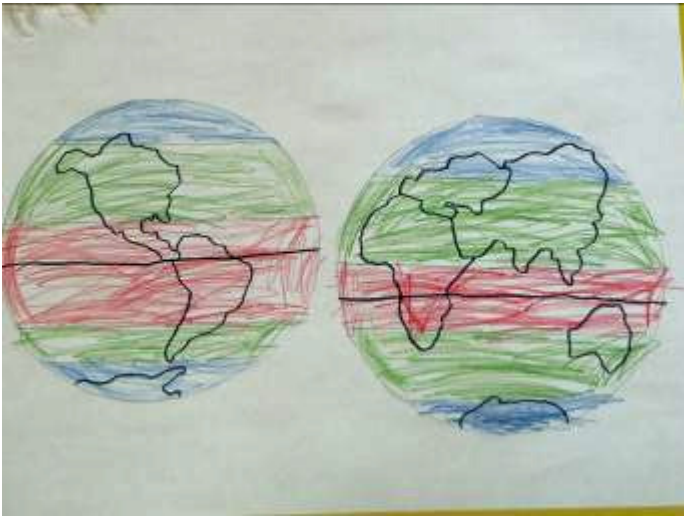
Constructing a city skyline. This project of many days involved research, creative design, and persistence.



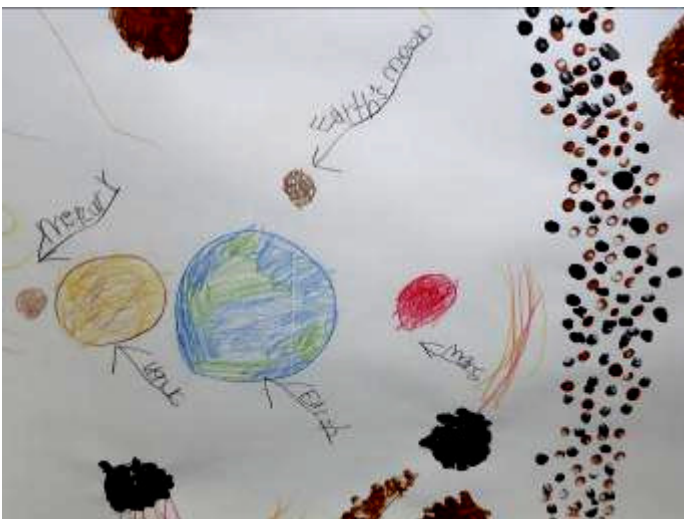
Sequencing and then writing all the components of time - the hour, half hour, and quarter hour.



Writing the names of each African nation in cursive is an example of a “big work.” This work involves make the map and then reading/researching each name. This student persisted with her work for well over a week. Most impressively, this was not an assignment; it was her choice!



A global map with the equator and the climate zones.



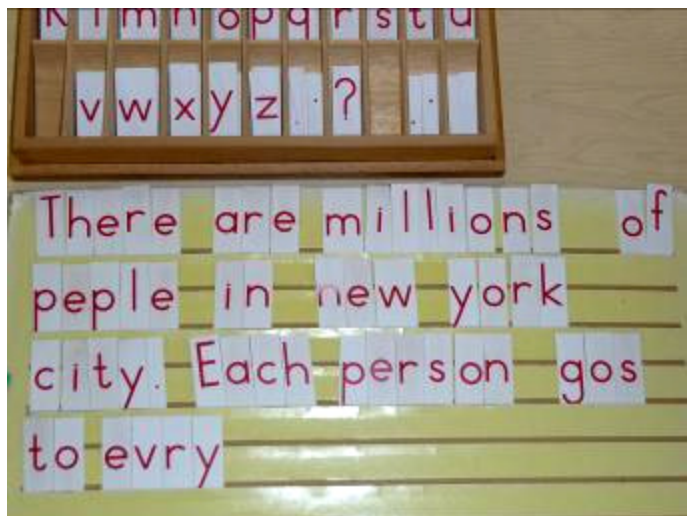
A kindergarten student's map of the solar system - another example of a really "big work!"



A big multiplication work - counting and recording multiples in sequence 1x1 to 9x9.



A really "big work": The thousand chain. Multiples of ten to 1,000 are counted and labeled. Square of one hundred are placed next to the square numbers (100, 200, 300, etc.) This work is part of the process of learning multiplication facts in the context of place value.



Research-based writing, and learning that, alas, English is not a true phonetic language.

