



# The Keystone Voice

January/February 2011 — Volume Number 5, Issue Number 1



## Keystone Montessori School

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### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

**Happy New Year to all of our Keystone Families and a Happy New Decade!**

New Year's has actually become a global celebration.

This year the celebration started in Australia's Sydney Harbor, communist Vietnam held a rare Western-style countdown to the new year, and Japanese revelers released balloons carrying notes with people's hopes and dreams as the world ushered in 2011. In Madrid's central Puerta del Sol square, 50,000 people gathered to take part in "Las Uvas" or "The Grapes" a tradition in which people eat a grape for each of the 12

chimes of midnight. Chewing and swallowing the grapes to each tolling of the bell is supposed to bring good luck. (I wonder if they slice the grapes to prevent choking?)

Perhaps you noticed if you read the "New Yorker" Magazine, one of the Blue Heron and Snowy Egrets art projects was modeled after the Jan 2 cover illustration: "Happy New Decade," by Richard McGuire. We incorporated the basic design but without the Martini glass!

To start the New Year we welcomed three new Families to Keystone (Fledgling Class): Lucia Anderson (mom- Leslay

& dad-Tom), Isabel Huang (mom- Qian & dad-Jijun), David Ji (mom-Amy & dad-Zhiying).

We had 3 families move in December- The Feinstein's to San Ramon (Nathan-SE). The Epstein's to Lafayette (Allie-SE). The Ziskind's to Montclair (Maor-BH).

During January the focus of study is the life of Martin Luther King Jr. We have reprinted Latrondra's Parents Corner from last year.

Keep a look out for "Lyuba" this year-a 42,000 year old baby woolly mammoth that was preserved in the ice in northwestern Siberia and discovered in 2007. She has been traveling around to American

science museums so maybe we will be lucky enough to have her visit S.F.-The Best to all in 2011! -Linda Shehabi



Keystone Montessori 2010  
Holiday Staff Party

### ~Words From Maria Montessori~

"We are the sowers—our children are those who reap. We labor so that future generations will be better and nobler than we are."

"Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future."

"It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience."

"We are here to offer to this life,

which came into the world by itself, the means necessary for development and having done that we must await this development with respect."

"The needs of mankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet; the Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity."

## PARENTS' CORNER—by Latondra Goode

I think about my children, and everyone's children, when I read one of my favorite Martin Luther King Jr. quotes, "Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education". Martin Luther King Jr. is a man that inspired the world through his example of love not hate, peace not violence, and together not separate. The example Dr. King set- of giving back to the community- is one that we as parents can instill in our children on this day, and every other day throughout the year. Consider try-

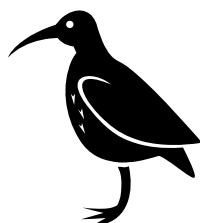
ing to make MLK day "a day on instead of a day off". It serves as a day that not only commemorates the struggle for human and civil rights in America, but it is also a nationwide day of community service. Amazing things can happen when we all work together and in the words of this great man "Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve...you only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love"

- Latondra Goode (Leiah's mom)



### LETTER FROM DAWN NASH HEAD TEACHER- SANDPIPERS

Happy New Year! Happy New Year! I hope everyone has a great one. It was very nice to see everyone. The children were very excited to see each other again, lots of hugs and smiles. The classroom is very busy these days with lots of work going on. Luca and Ava have moved up we will miss them. Good thing they are not very far away. We would like to welcome Jeremy Yu and Micaela to the Sandpiper class the month of January. We will be studying North American animals, bears, bob cats, deer etc. -Dawn Nash



### Happy Birthday

#### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS-

Snowy Egrets: Jason, Jacob T.  
Blue Herons/Fledglings: Alice R., Shaun  
Sandpipers:  
Staff: Ernestina

#### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS-

Snowy Egrets: Kathryn  
Blue Herons/Fledglings:  
Sandpipers: Desmond  
Staff:



## CALENDAR FOR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

**January 3**-Teacher Workday-  
School Closed

**January 4**-School Reopens

**January 14**-Martin Luther King Jr.  
presentation in SE class 9:30am,  
BH class 9:45 am

**January 17**-Martin Luther King Jr.  
Holiday-School Closed

**February 3**-Start of Chinese New  
Year. Introduction to Chinese sym-  
bols presentation in SE class 9am

**February 8**-Story of horoscope-  
scroll-zodiac presentation in SE class  
9:00am

**February 14**-Valentine's Day card-  
exchange for all classes at 9:00am

**February 15**-Chinese Music and  
clothes SE class 9:00am

**February 17**-Chinese New Years  
Parade 10:30am

**February 21**-Presidents' Day  
Holiday-School Closed



## LETTER FROM JACQUIE JONES– HEAD TEACHER– SNOWY EGRETS

Happy New Year 2011! January is the month we begin a new decade and celebrate winter, snowflakes, and snowmen. We'll also honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a special way. We were all so elated to see each other after our Winter Break, and I enjoyed the children's sharing time about what they did when we weren't at school.

It didn't take the Snowy Egrets long to get back into our school routines! We spent the first week reviewing our ground rules and practicing them, as well as moving forward with our curriculum.

Our geography study takes us to the continent of Africa. The children are learning to identify several natural habitats of this vast continent: rain forests, savannas, and deserts. In our reading area, the walls are becoming transformed with the children's

African mural of these particular habitats. In addition, we'll be working on maps, learning about the animals, the flags, the regional dresses, and highlighting several African countries. I've added some things to the geography shelf from Tanzania where I visited a few years ago, and we'll be learning a bit of Swahili.

In science, we have moved to the next class of vertebrates, amphibians. We listened to a story about the life cycle of a frog told by using visuals that transformed a tadpole into a frog. We're also studying leaves, although we actually got a head start last month when we collected many ginkgo leaves from the tree in front of the school. We recently learned that the ginkgo trees were around when the dinosaurs lived, and we're still enjoying them in 2011 here in El Cerrito!

Our daily language and math work is always exciting, especially since more of the children are becoming interested in writing letters and numbers and learning sounds. We continue to focus on a different letter each week, and everyone loves story time. Lately, we've enjoyed many books by the well-known author Leo Lionni. Several children have told me that their parents read stories to them before bedtime. What a great model you're providing for your child when you make this a part of the bedtime routine! - Jacquie Jones



### Thank You

Snowy Egrets- Food Prep- The Harrison-Stubb's, The Urban's, The Kim's, The Hudako's, The Lebeck's The Sun's, The Staib's

Laundry: The Abee's, The Urban's

Flowers: The Sun's, The Urban's, The Kim's, The Harrison-Stubb's, The Trader's

Blue Herons/Fledglings-

Food Prep: The McCullough's, The Aujla's, The Wycoff's, The Castro's

Laundry: The Piersol's, The Staib's

Flowers: The Staib's, The Mire's, The Chan's,

The Rixford's, The Hudacko's, The Lockett's

Parents' Corner: Thank you Mike McCormick (Emerson's Uncle) for the November/December Parent's corner submission.

Thanks to Sangit Ziskind (Maor's mom) for giving a Hanukah presentation.

Thanks to Emily Mires (Cole & Lane's mom) for giving a Antarctica presentation.

Thanks to Katie Epps (Jalen's mom) for giving a Kwanzaa presentation.

Thanks to Kelly & Michael (Avery's dad) for volunteering to be the keyholder for the Nutcracker Ballet and for distributing the staff x-mas funds.

Thanks to all the parents X-mas contributions to the Keystone Staff.



## LETTER FROM JOE WEAVER- HEAD TEACHER- BLUE HERONS

We are still learning about insects in the Blue Herons. We wanted more time to learn about insects. Insects are interesting for instance a fly can beat it's wings 200 times in a second!

Studying the senses has been fun. We experienced smells and tastes, and talked about what we can discover with the sense of touch, sight and hearing. We did an experiment to see if we could identify a color without using our sight.

Lately the children have been choosing metal insets and tracing shapes. This gives

them practice using proper pencil grip and familiarize them with geometric shapes with the added benefit of fun.

We have been learning about Martin Luther King. We talked about the civil rights movement in circle and sang "We Shall Over come" Tim Moppin (Daniel's dad) came to class on Friday, January 14 and gave a MLK .

Presentation. He recalled being a boy in the segregated south. He told the children how Dr. King said that what mattered was not the color of someone's skin but their character. He handed out eggs that were brown

and white and when we opened them we all could see they were all the same inside. The added benefit was everyone who wanted one could have an egg for an extra snack. Thank you Tim Moppin.  
-Joe Weaver



## Communication

Keystone wants to promote an "open door" policy with families and keep open lines of communication. There are several ways we do this:

**Blue Books:** to write to teachers, pull out your blue child's blue book and write your note then place in the basket. We'll respond back and place the book in your mailbox. When the exchange is done please place the book back into the black box.

Office Hours for:

Linda, Director, 9:00-4:00 (Mon-Thu)

Windy, Operations Manager, 3:30-4:30

Ginger, Secretary, 8:30-5:00

Jacquie, SE Head Teacher, 11:30-12:00

Joe, BH Head Teacher, 2:15-3:15

Dawn, SP Head Teacher, 1:00-2:00

Email the Office:

info@keystonemontessori.org

## Keystone Snack List

### As of JANUARY

#### Fruits

Giovanni's: Organic: apples, pears, oranges, (cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberries when available)

Costco: Craisins

Rancho del Paraiso: Organic asian pears (seasonal)

Keystone's Apple Tree (October)

#### Crackers

Trader Joe's: Organic Assorted Multi-grain crackers

EC Natural Grocery: Organic Annie's Bunny Crackers: cheddar, whole wheat, buttery, cinnamon graham and honey graham; Organic Wheat crackers

#### Drinks

Giovanni's: Organic 2% milk

Trader Joe's: Organic filtered apple juice



MLK presentation with Tim Moppin and son, Daniel Moppin.



MLK presentation in the Blue Heron and Fledgling's classes.

## Hello's & Goodbye's

**Hello to:**

Sandpipers-

Jeremy Y.,  
Micaela, Jade  
(Feb)

Fledglings-

David, Isabel,  
Lucia, Mallory (Feb). Mikayla  
(Feb)



**Goodbye to:**

**All the children who moved**

Fledglings- Maor Ziskind

Snowy Egrets- Allie Epstein,  
Brandon Pena,

Nathan Feinstein

## Congratulations!

To Noga Klepach (Elai's mom)  
and her new son, Yair, born  
January 14, 2011.



## Monthly Cultural & Science Themes

Sandpipers-

January: North American Animals

February: Bugs, Valentines

Blue Herons & Fledglings-

January: 5 Senses, MLK Jr. Day

February: Fish, Valentines, Chinese New Year, Presidents' Day

Snowy Egrets-

January: Amphibians, Parts of the Tree, Antarctica/Africa, MLK Jr. Day

February: Reptiles, Roots/Stems, Asia, Valentines, Chinese New Year, Presidents' Day

## CARMELITA'S CULTURAL CORNER

### CULTURAL STUDIES COORDINATOR

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to everyone! Hope you had a wonderful holiday visiting with family and friends. The winter performance was so precious and the children did an exceptional job singing. Thank you to Bill Chapman (Zenaida's dad) for accompanying Linda and Jonathan playing guitar. It was nice for the children to see their families together. What a great way to start off the holiday season. Jacquie presented several celebrations from around the world. St. Lucia, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Jalen's Mom Katie presented the holiday of Kwanzaa. She read the story and introduced the symbols that were significant to the celebration. The children chanted the African words Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa, Nia, Kuumba, and Imani that represented the seven days of Kwanzaa. Thank you Katie for sharing a wonderful tradition.

Our trip to the Nutcracker ballet was a great success. The children really enjoyed the ballet and remember the story of the Nutcracker and especially the Mouse King! Thank you to all the parents who participated and to Kelly Scribner for keeping us all together.

We also had an interesting presentation by Cole and Lane's mom Emily about Antarc-

tica. She started her presentation with the fact that the only humans living there are only scientists visiting and only animals live there. There was a picture of an airplane landing on the ice. She brought in gloves filled with ice and a thermos filled with hot water. Emily used the steam from the hot water to show the children the condensation on a mirror. She traced the letter A on the steamy mirror. She then broke open one of the gloves so that the children could feel the temperature of the ice. She proceeded to pour the hot water and asked them what was going to happen. The children were excited and eagerly gave her their hypothesis. The experiment was a success. The children experienced a hands on lesson of the three phases of water - liquid, solid and gas! They also had a coloring project of animals from Antarctica. Well done Emily thank you for sharing.

Our first presentation of 2011 started off with Brian Epps (Jalen's dad) and Tim Moppin (Daniel's dad) who came to share the story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For the Snowy Egrets Bryan read the history of his life and had the children color a picture of Dr. King. He explained that they could color him any color they wanted. It didn't matter what color he was on the outside, he explained, what mattered was the person inside. The children shared their thoughts about peace and sang a song about freedom. Tim told the story to the Blue Herons and added the profound words from Dr. King's speech

"I Have a Dream". He presented a brown egg and white egg. The children commented and observed the similarities of the shape and size of the eggs. Tim was surprised by the children's surprise that the eggs were the same color on the inside! He also stated that the color on the outside doesn't matter but what is inside. The children enjoyed eating hard boiled eggs. Some did not like the yolk but at least they tried it! Thank you Brian and Tim for sharing the dream and giving our children the story of Dr. King.

We will be gearing up for our annual Chinese New Year celebration (The Year of the Rabbit), Valentine's Day, President's Day.

It makes a difference for children to see their families represent their cultural backgrounds and take pride in their traditions. Acceptance and tolerance begin with educating one another and sharing information about each other. It all begins with families and teachers so please continue to bring songs, stories, art, food, and anything you can share to make our community a whole. Wishing you and your family a peaceful, healthy, and Happy New Year 2011!

-Carmelita



MLK presentation with Brian Epps and son, Jalen Epps



MLK presentation in the Snowy Egrets class

### Announcements

**"Nap Zone" 11:45-3:00:** There is a very large bright orange cone inside the front door during nap time to remind parents to close the door quietly so the children do not wake up

**Evening Pickup:** Please leave the building once you have collected your child so staff can go home. Conversations with other parents can continue outside.

**Snowy Egret Class Pickup:** If children are inside the classroom, please wait at the class door for a teacher to help collect your child. If children are outside, walk through the classroom to the yard.

Do not leave your child unattended in the classroom unattended.



Antarctica presentation with Emily Mires (Cole's mom) in the Snowy Egrets class

Kwanzaa Presentation With Katie Epps (Jalen's mom) in the Snowy Egrets class

