



**WESTPARK MONTESSORI SCHOOLS OF IRVINE
DECEMBER 2016**

TO ALL OUR FAMILIES:

As the holiday season approaches, we want to thank each of you for the gift you have given us by allowing us to teach and care for your wonderful children. We know that your children are most precious to your hearts and we are honored that you would share your families and these early years of your children's development, learning, and joy with us.

Sincerely,

*Cheryll and Richard Ruszat, Executive Directors
And the staff of the Montessori Schools of Irvine*

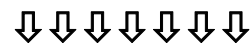


THANK YOU TO CHEF CYNDI, MISS BARBARA, MISS LASHONE AND CHEF OSCAR

A "BIG" thank you to all of the Chefs at Montessori Schools of Irvine! The Thanksgiving Feast with all of the trimmings was delicious! The staff and children appreciate all of the prep and work that goes into making this special meal a success!!



VERY IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ!



School closes at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, December 14!

HOLIDAY PROGRAM

On this special day each year our program **CLOSES at 5:00 pm.** as our staff is otherwise in their classrooms for open house and the children's program (see next page).

Thus **ALL CHILDREN must be picked up by 5:00!**

LATE FEES OF \$1 per minute will be charged to all parents whose children remain after 5:00.

This event brings whole families to the atrium and classrooms to see the children and our **children anxiously wait to be picked up from the front office.** It is thus safest for us to close child care at 5:00 so that children are kept safely with their parents and not be overwhelmed and upset by the unusual crowd.

Thank you for assisting us in keeping your child safe and happy on open house night.

As you arrive, please remember to pick up your child **BEFORE** proceeding to the classroom for the program. Children will be brought to the front office as the number of on-site families grow and can be picked up there. Children cannot proceed to their classrooms to sing without their parent.

**Cookies will be served in the atrium after the performance and
candy canes handed out at the door as you leave for home.**

YOU ARE INVITED! - CHILDREN'S WINTER PROGRAM

You are invited to our annual Children's Winter Program on **Wednesday, December 14**. Children will be singing in their classrooms according to the schedule below. **Please arrive early to allow time for parking delays and be in the classroom approximately 10 minutes before their scheduled time to sing!** This allows the teacher time to gather the children and prepare them for their performance. We apologize, but as each class is performing at a **scheduled time**, we will not be able to wait for your child if you are late as it would delay all the other classes. *(Please note: some classes may perform at the same time).*

5:00 – SCHOOL CLOSES- All children must be picked up by their parents!

Toddler Sing-Along – 5:00-5:15
Miss Jenn's Preschool Class 5:00-5:15
Kindergarten and Miss Dinah's Classes at 5:15-5:30
Miss Ina's class at 5:30-5:45

After your child's performance, **please exit through the atrium, and enjoy some refreshments!**
Please let your child's teacher know if he or she will be unable to attend the program.

Parking for the Winter Program

Due to the number of large families and multiple cars arriving in a short period of time, we are cautioning parents to plan on additional time to find parking. In addition to our school parking lot, parents can find parking in the Culverdale school parking lot, on the school side of San Leandro, or in the surrounding neighborhood.

CHILDREN'S PARTY

Thursday, December 15 is the day of our annual children's classroom holiday party. Parents are invited to sign up on the PARTY snack list to bring treats on that day. The PARTY snack sign up will be posted on Thursday, December 8.

A "BIG" THANK FOR THE OCTOBER DONATIONS!

A big thank you to all of the families who donated candy to "Operation Gratitude" and canned goods to "Families Forward"! Your kindness and generosity is appreciated by both charities. Our donation bins were overflowing with candy and canned goods!



TOYS FOR TROOPS

Each year Montessori Schools of Irvine holds a toy drive for children in need. This year we will be collecting toys for "Toys for Troops". Toys for Troops will collect new, unwrapped toys for children of actively deployed units from Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Our toy collection begins now, the last day to donate is: Friday, December 9!

Gift Ideas? Below is taken from the Toys for Troops website:

Q: Is there a list of toys available to guide me with my donation?

Toys for Troops does not publish a list of appropriate toys to donate. If such a list were created, most would follow it, resulting in a limited selection of items to distribute in each community. We would rather our donors consider what might be an appropriate gift for their own child/relative, purchase the item, and donate to Toys for Troops.



DECEMBER IS MULTI-CULTURAL!

December is a month of many holidays and festivities. December brings with it many festive celebrations from all over the world. Montessori Schools of Irvine invites our families to share their rich heritage and family traditions with their children's classmates. Please help us include all those who wish to participate by scheduling your presentation with your child's teacher. Thank you for your enriching gift of time and heritage during this special time of the year.

***KlayKids* Pottery Paint Day!**

Projects made by your little ones will make wonderful holiday gifts...Don't miss out - sign up by completing the form at the front desk. Painting dates TBA.

JACKETS, SWEATERS AND COATS

We do encourage your child to put on their coat when the weather is cooler, however, they do not always leave them on. Please help us by reinforcing this message at home.

WINTER RECESS! - Schools Closed

Please remember that Montessori Schools of Irvine will be **CLOSED** from **December 19, 2016-Monday, January 2, 2017**. We wish all of you and your family a fun-filled recess. School resumes on **Tuesday, January 3, 2017**.

What will you do on recess? Here are a few ideas:

1. Go to **Build a Bear – then donate it** to the Salvation Army who will give to a child “in need”. Salvation Army has a church at 10200 Pioneer Road Tustin, CA 92782 - 714.832.7100. They would LOVE to have a few bears!
2. Invite 2 other parents and their children and bake different kinds of cookies! Then have a **cookie exchange**.
3. Use your I-pad and record a children's play **starring your child!**
4. Have a family pizza party – with **homemade pizza (or almost homemade)**. Make or buy pizza dough and top it with all your favorites. (Don't forget the veggies!)
5. Go to a public library show the children **how a real book works!** Get a free library card!
6. Go to an art museum! Museums expose children to new ideas and visions and help develop **higher critical and creative thinking skills!**
7. **Ride the train to Los Angeles** and shop in **Chinatown**. Eat dim sum at Express Pavilion or Ocean Seafood where you can pick what you want from steaming carts. Then shop for cheap knick-knacks and souvenirs. Even have dessert from one of the great bakeries!
8. When was the last time you went **bowling?!** It is a hoot with the children! Try Bowlmor- at the District.
9. Buy some Prismacolor colored pencils from Michael's and learn some special techniques at <https://www.art-is-fun.com/colored-pencil-instruction/> - Children can make their own **thank you notes** to send!
10. Get out some blankets, put on your jammies, pop some HOME MADE POPCORN and snuggle up in front of the TV to **watch the Polar Express** – maybe even **ride the Polar Express** – there is a great one in Arizona (Grand Canyon Railway Express - <https://www.thetrain.com/special-events/the-polar-express/>). The Ruszat's and their younger son's family did this - BEST family weekend EVER!

Brainstorm other things to do and share them with us when you return in January.



BROWN PAPER BAG DAY- Friday, December 16

Friday, December 16 is our last day of session until Tuesday, January 3, 2017. Please send a **BROWN PAPER GROCERY BAG** to school on **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14** so that all holiday projects can be taken home.

PAJAMA DAY & DAY CARE DAY – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

Friday, December 16 is our last day of school for 2016! Each year the children look forward to pajama day. Please **no slippers** because we will be playing outside. As our teachers use that day to prepare for the coming semester, our children's activities will be focused on play and fun and will function as a "daycare only" day for all children. Snacks and lunch will be served as usual. Montessori lessons and daily routines will begin again upon our return in January 2017!

EXTRA CLOTHES – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16!

On Friday, December 16 all extra clothes will be sent home. Please check your child's bag and make sure the clothes still fit your growing children and are appropriate for colder weather. Please send replacements back on Tuesday, January 3, 2017 and be sure to put your **child's name** on all items!



KINDERGARTEN – PRIMARY GRADES OPTIONS NIGHT

The Importance of the Early Elementary Years and Why These Are Critical for Your Child's Ongoing Academic Success

Miss Cheryll, Executive Director of the Montessori Schools of Irvine will be hosting a special meeting to work with parents as they make this important lifetime decision for their children. The program will be held at our **VILLAGE** Montessori school which is centrally located for the four schools and home to our early elementary program. The meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 19** and will begin promptly at 6:00 and last until 7:00. Cheryll will have a special presentation on the Montessori curriculum, special methods, advantageous ratios class size and the wealth of materials that makes up the Montessori program. This will be the time to answer questions about how our program compares to California educational systems found in public programs and other private schools.

Many parents have questions regarding the choices for Kindergarten and primary grades. Based on our many years of experience and watching the increased success of our children who remain with Montessori through the crucial kindergarten through third grades we would like to share with you some of the insights about how children learn and why Montessori children have the advantage throughout their education and their lives.

This is a great time to learn about the exciting world of learning that awaits your growing child as well as have your questions about "what's next" answered. Due to the large group that usually attends and the amount of information being shared, this meeting **WILL NOT** be repeated.

Please check the January Newsletter for sign-up information.

COLD AND FLU SEASON

It is that time of year again. We hope that your family will have a healthy winter! However, if your child does come down with a cold or flu, please remember that state licensing does not permit us to allow children to attend school if they show **ANY** signs of illness. CHILDREN MUST REMAIN HOME THE ENTIRE FOLLOWING SCHOOL DAY (WITHOUT EXCEPTION) AFTER BEING SENT HOME DUE TO SIGNS OF ILLNESS. The additional rest time helps them to fully recover, builds their resistance, and also helps prevent the spreading of illness to other children. All children who are healthy enough to be at school must be able to participate in both inside *and* outside activities and should thus be dressed accordingly.

School officials can administer **prescription medication** (such as ongoing antibiotics for bacterial infections) **only!** If your child requires continued medication during the day upon their return to school, parents will need to complete a medication form at the front desk. Please note that ALL information must be completed and the forms signed by the parent before we are allowed to dispense the medicine. Over-the-counter medication that masks signs of illness will require school personnel to send the child home due to the contagious nature of symptoms these medications attempt to cover.

***** EXTRA NEWS FOR ONE'S AND TWO'S *****

TODDLER SING-ALONG

Our annual Children's Winter Program will be held on Wednesday, December 14. The One's and Two's will again have a combined "Sing-A-Long" in the Two's Room from 5:00-5:15 PM. Please join our staff and your children for this joyous event. Please remember to plan extra time for parking!



DECEMBER STAFF BIRTHDAYS

- December 3 Miss Dona
- December 7 Miss Jenn (preschool)
- December 15 Miss Cheryll
- December 30 Miss Dinah



DECEMBER Staff Anniversaries: Richard and Cheryll would like to THANK our wonderful and loyal staff members! Your dedication and contributions to the children and families you work with are appreciated more than words can express!

DATES TO REMEMBER

- December 8 Children's Party AM Snack Sign Ups
- December 9 Last day to donate toys to "Toys for Troups"
- December 14 **WINTER PROGRAM- ****SCHOOL CLOSSES AT 5:00!******
- December 15 Children's Holiday Party
- December 16 Bring in a **BROWN PAPER BAG**
- December 16 Pajama Day & Last Day of School!
- December 19-January 2, 2017 **Winter Recess *** SCHOOL CLOSED*****
- January 1, 2017 Happy New Year!
- January 3, 2017 School Resumes
- January 19, 2017 Kindergarten-Primary Options Night at Village Montessori

Chef's Table by Executive Chef Cyndi Paulson



*Wishing you a Joyful Holiday Season
From your food service staff:
Executive Chef Cyndi,
Village Miss LaShone, Westpark Miss Barbara, and Northwood Chef Oscar*



WHITE CHOCOLATE TING-A-LINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 3½ c. chow mein noodles
- 2½ c. salted cocktail peanuts (optional) or raisins
- 32 oz. white chocolate candy coating, vanilla chips or candiquick
- Holiday candy sprinkles

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix chow mein noodles and peanuts in a large bowl.
2. Melt white chocolate over low heat until smooth; add chow mein noodles and peanuts and mix well.
3. Drop by spoonful onto wax paper; top with candy sprinkles.
4. Cool completely and store at room temperature.