

# HMS PTO TIMES

*Hilltop Montessori School*



## Upcoming Events

### November 8

#### PTO Meeting

Meet in the multi-purpose room 8:45

### November 11

#### Book Fair preview day

### November 14-18

#### Scholastic Book Fair

### November 19

#### Hilltop on the Green

### November 23

**Thanksgiving Feast - 11:00 in the multi-purpose room**

### December 13

#### PTO Meeting

## LETTER FROM THE PTO PRESIDENT

Hello Hilltop Families,

First of all, thank you so much to everyone who came out to our Hilltop Hustle 5K/Fun Run in October. The PTO truly appreciates your support! Also, thanks to our many volunteers who made the event possible. We could not have done it without you!

November is a busy month for HMS, with several upcoming events. The Scholastic Book Fair will take place November 14-18 in the school lobby. The Book Fair provides a wonderful opportunity to pick out a book with your child and encourage a love of reading. The Book Fair also provides an excellent way to do some holiday shopping while your child is in class. We hope you'll come check it out! If you would like to volunteer for the Book Fair, please contact Jill Walton at [jjweldonw@att.net](mailto:jjweldonw@att.net).

HMS's annual Hilltop on the Green event will take place on Saturday, November 19. As always, this event promises to be a night to remember. The school recently sent home invitations for this exciting fundraiser, which features dining, entertainment and silent and

live auctions. If you need additional information, you can contact the main office.

On Wednesday, November 23, we will have our annual Thanksgiving Feast in the multi-purpose room. Parents and grandparents are invited to enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving meal with their children. The Thanksgiving Feast is for pre-school and older.

Feel free to contact me at [sallydollar1@gmail.com](mailto:sallydollar1@gmail.com) for more information about the PTO or how you can get involved. You can also visit our blog at [www.hilltopmontessori.com/blog/pto](http://www.hilltopmontessori.com/blog/pto) or check us out on Facebook. Whatever your talent or interest, we would love to have you become involved with PTO!

Sally Dollar  
PTO President

# From the Executive Director...



November is always such a busy month in school and this November is no exception. Most notably, this month involves our first observation period where parents are invited to observe their child in the learning process and our bi-annual parent-teacher conferences. Conferences are always so fun, as it gives the staff an opportunity to pause, reflect and then share with the parents the joys of each student, as well as highlighting strengths and weaknesses, goals for the year and our general impressions of the children. As parents, we hang on every word from our child's teacher and I am no exception! Typically, we search for information and clues as to how our child is progressing, their academic potential and what kind of person they will end up being and we ask ourselves if the teachers love our children as much as we do? Are they making progress to their fullest potential? Are they happy? The answers are yes!

This month, we hope you will find joy and comfort in the observation in the classrooms, as well as parent teacher conferences. The staff is committed to all of the children and the true beauty of Montessori is the recognition of the individual child. Yes, they all have some goals that they need to work on. Yes, they all have their strengths and weaknesses but the wonderful part of Montessori is the recognition of the individual, and the whole child: the academic, social, and emotional parts that make up each of our unique students.

As you participate in your child's evaluations, offer contributions at conferences, observe in your visits and offer support at home, relax, enjoy and take comfort. Know in your heart that we feel honored that you share your children with us every day. Know how much we care for your little one, care for you and want the very best for your family. We hope this translates in our conferences, in our smiles and in our hopes for your children. We enjoy their individual personalities and the uniqueness that makes them who they are.

Join us in November by coming in for your observation, coming to your conference and hearing our future goals for your children. Let's all work together to make this year a success.

Michele Scott  
Executive Director

# Hilltop Hustle 2011

## Winners of the 1 Mile Fun Run:

Boys age 0 to 6 :

- 3rd Tucker Bradberry
- 2nd Noah Holmes
- 1st Oliver Stover

Girls age 0 to 6 :

- 3rd Skye Otter
- 2nd Hannah Hamilton
- 1st Elizabeth Bandura

Boys age 7 to 9 :

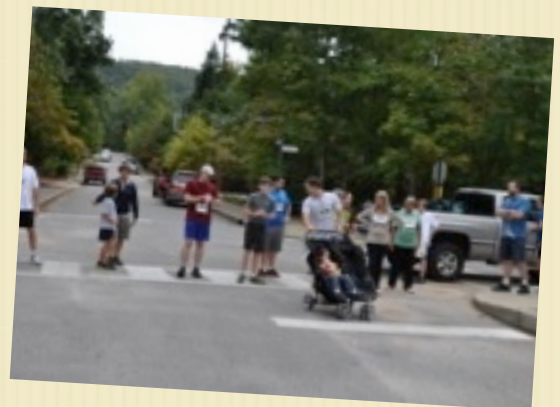
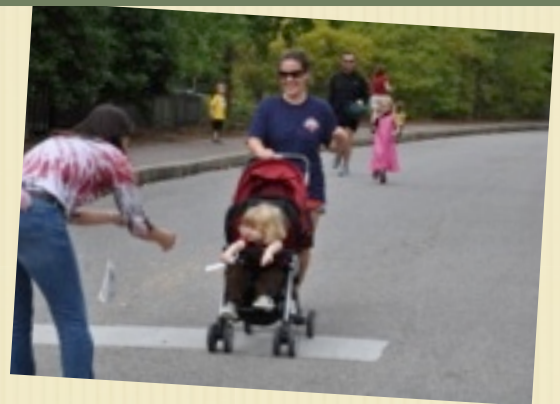
- 3rd Alan Griffith
- 2nd Lucas Moore
- 1st Jack Hudson

Girls age 7 to 9 :

- 3rd Seana Griffith
- 2nd Rosie Otter
- 1st Tyndal Ann Griffith

Boys age 10 to 13 :

- 2nd Jonathan Lewis
- 1st Hunter Scott



# From the Classrooms

## Toddler Times

### Ms. C & Ms. Shelley

It has been a busy few weeks; the kids have been trying new snacks!  
We recently tasted what our Hilltop Gardens have to offer. The toddlers were able to try snacks that included fresh spinach harvested out of their own play area!

That's not the only new thing we've been trying!  
Please check out the WORD OF THE DAY! It's posted each day on a whiteboard by the sign in/out sheet.

It allows you to practice with your child the new word they learned that day, what it means, how to say it in Spanish, and how to sign it in American Sign Language (ASL)!

We learned about trees and made observations of them every day, and discussed what colors their leaves can become, and what foods can grow on them! One day, the word of the day was APPLE. We watched Ms. C peel and core an apple. We saw the seeds and tasted the skin. For snack, we had apple slices with red skin, crispy apple straws, and homemade applesauce that we made from scratch with Granny Smith Apples that have green skins! Who knew education could taste so yummy!?

We are enjoying time with Ms. Susan's class. The two classes combine for line time and the lesson on the word of the day in Sign Language.

We enjoy snack and outside together as well! What fun we're having with our new friends!

You know as well as we do that just because the last few weeks have been action packed, things won't slow down any time soon! So, don't forget our....

UPCOMING EVENTS:  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH @ 4:30PM  
In the Hilltop Montessori School Cafeteria

Each potluck will have a different theme! November's will be:  
BRING YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE!  
Simply make your family's favorite dish, side, or dessert (we would love to try new ethnic dishes!!) and bring the recipe, we will be trying to compose a "recipe book" for everyone so that we can recreate the dish for our hungry crew!

Hope to see you there! It will be another great opportunity for parents to catch up and for the kiddos to play!

The fun of Fall goes on and on! We will be working on our project for... HILLTOP ON

THE GREEN. Parents who attend the event on SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH will be able to view and even bid on the kids' hard work at auction. All projects sold will help raise money for the school so that we may continue to provide the best education for our present and future students!

Don't forget about OPEN OBSERVATIONS: TUESDAY NOV.8th - THURSDAY NOV. 10th!

A sign-up sheet will be posted outside of our classroom door.

And finally, get ready for PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES! FRIDAY, NOV. 11th

THERE WILL BE NO SCHOOL FOR THE STUDENTS ON THAT DAY!!!  
The sign-up sheet for the conferences will be posted outside of our classroom door.

We are looking forward to learning the parts of the pumpkin and then making the famous pumpkin bread! The aroma will draw everyone for a slice!  
At least a recipe will be given to the parents and if we have enough samples will be given out.

Enjoy the photos!!!



# From the Classroom

## Ms. Susan's Toddler Class

October was a busy month for our toddlers! We learned all of our colors, how to sign them and say them in Spanish. All of the color works are very popular in the classroom right now. We began the Zoo Phonics program where we are learning how all of our letters sound. The children are really enjoying blending with Ms. C and Ms. Shelley's class for large group lessons and snack each day, so you may hear about an expanded group of friends when the children talk about school.

We have been harvesting spinach from the garden and enjoying fresh spinach wraps for snacks. The parts of an apple lesson was just amazing, because after we learned all about the apple, we made and ate homemade applesauce! The

children had a lot of fun making apple crafts too!

We had front row seats for the Fall Festival Costume Parade. Special thanks go to Amy Huddleston for providing the special Halloween treat buckets for everyone- they were a huge hit.

In November we are looking forward to learning more about nature, especially the parts of a pumpkin. We are all wondering what we will make with all that pumpkin in the classroom! On November 7, we will have a Fall Planting morning with Ms. Jill in the garden. We will be planting winter flowers and herb containers.

Don't forget to sign up for your conference and observation spot on the list posted outside the classroom.

We are having "Potluck Playdate" on November 8th with Ms. C and Ms. Shelley's class.

Watch your email for Thanksgiving Feast Day information, as our class will have its own celebration of the holiday.



# From the Classrooms

## PreSchool News

Ms. Marcia & Ms. Allison

Dear Parents of Ms. Marcia and Ms. Allison,

Fall Festival was lots of fun and had lots of things going on at once. The children were very happy until the end of the morning when they all obviously needed some rest before the evening's activities. We want to especially thank the Mothers who gave of their time to see that the day went off as smoothly as possible (no easy task). Our next celebration is the Thanksgiving Feast in which all families contribute a side dish to pass, with the PTO supplying turkey for each class. We do have some vegetarian families and will need at least one non-meat entrée for them. Please do not choose stuffing as your side dish since the children will be preparing cranberry/orange cornbread

stuffing as their contribution. We crumble, cut, dice and mix it up the day before and I cook it at home.

Our new cultural studies for November are Native Americans, the human body and Nutrition. The Kindergarteners will be erecting a very large tepee housing four activities in the classroom to be shared with the Primary children from all four Primary classes. It is a very big deal and the children get to practice sharing their space. All these special works, from the food preparation, cultural awareness and sharing are part of the Montessori curriculum which endeavors to teach children to become sensitive, peaceful, contributing members of society.

I should say a few words about Music. As many of you know, I am the music teacher for the four Primary classes. We meet together once a week in our room to learn to sing, connect music to body motions and especially to

"find the beat". We have a series of display rhythm boards which I put up on the wall and we practice counting and clapping them together. The children are actually getting quite good at playing 'which one will Ms. Marcia point to' and coming up with the correct sequence. As to singing, the emphasis is on tonal quality, dynamics, pitch and watching a conductor. The selections of recorded music we listen to are tied directly to the cultural curriculum. For instance, this month we will be listening and clapping to traditional Native American pieces played on authentic instruments. With about 80 children in each session, we can make a big and joyful sound on Friday mornings.



## Scholastic Book Fair

November 14 - 18

Contact Jill Walton at [jjweldonw@att.net](mailto:jjweldonw@att.net) for more information or to volunteer.

## Ms. Shellie & Ms. Lorena

The Halloween party was a great success. The kids had a blast and enjoyed every minute. Thank you to all the parents for coming to the parade and to Libby Holmes, Kati Higginbotham and Mary Parisher who helped with the party

Now that November is here, we will continue studying the continent of North America. Other topics that we will cover are Native Americans, the Life cycle and parts of the apple and pumpkin and nutrition.

On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will be having our Thanksgiving Feast and everyone is invited. All parents, brothers, sisters and grandparents are all welcome to come. The feast will start at 11:00 a.m. on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and after the feast is over the children are free to leave. School closes at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday for Thanksgiving. Hope everyone is able to attend. More details will follow closer to the day of the feast.

# From the Classroom

## Mary Jo and Christi's Class

**W**October 31st was one of the most exciting days of the year for the students at Hilltop. Our annual Fall Celebration was a day of fun, games and parties. All of the students dressed up in creative (and adorable) costumes. We had plenty of superheroes, princesses, cute animals and movie characters. Even the teachers joined in the dress-up fun. The preschool students participated in a parade around our front driveway. All of the elementary and middle school students and many parents came out to cheer us on and take pictures. We then went to the three elementary classrooms to play games and receive prizes. Back in our classroom, the students trick-or-treated with each other by giving each other small toys and Halloween items. Our party was next and the students

decorated sugar cookies. Everyone had a fabulous time! Thanks to Sarah Seelhorst and Jessica Smith for the great Halloween decorations and snacks.

Our continent of the month was North America. The children enjoyed learning about the landmarks and animals of our continent. We talked about the human body and its systems, and the children's favorite was the skeletal system. They had so much fun putting together a life sized skeleton on a work rug. The students loved to see how the individual bones fit together to make a person. Each student made a "Q-tip skeleton" for an art project. Ms. Mary Jo and Ms. Christi enjoyed seeing each student's individual creativity shine. Our water table was enjoyed by everyone, and turned out to be a great activity for hand-eye coordination. The children love to hear about animals, so we grouped animals by classification and by fur/feathers/scales. We also studied animal

tracks and used our new animal tracks stamps. The children enjoyed deciding on the animals that would be walking across their paper.

Next month we will continue our study of North America. We will also study nutrition, parts of apples and pumpkins, leaves, and Native Americans.



# From the Classrooms

## Ms. Cindi and Ms. Toni

October was a very fun and busy month! We continued our study of North American as well as the human body. This month we will study the United States of America and Native Americans. We will also focus on the garden and fall plants. We should have a great harvest of lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, arugula, spinach, kale, peas and swiss chard!

Our Fall Celebration was a big success thanks to Libby Holmes, Sharoz Pabani, Denise Mullaney, Nasreen Issa, Regina Newsome and

Lisa Bandura. The children loved decorating and eating sugar cookies. Please be on the lookout for our Thanksgiving Feast sign up sheet. Libby Holmes is in charge of the feast and our classroom basket for Hilltop on the Green.

I want to thank all of the reading volunteers. This is such a big help to me!

Thank you for your wonderful support.

Cindi and Toni



# From the Classrooms

## Lower Elementary News

**Ms. Carol & Ms. Vicky**

October was a great month of discovery and fun. After an extensive study of the Solar System the class had another fun Cooperative Learning discovering their own planets. A new planet was discovered between Venus and Earth named Planetgo. Yet another planet named Chirpier was discovered between Mars and the Asteroid Belt with geometric shaped moons orbiting around it in an oval pattern. Also discovered were Armetros, Nepdino, Lovor, and Mixlie. They had so much fun writing facts about their planet and then presenting it to the class.

Our class had a great time preparing a snack for the "entire school." We prepared a basil pesto with basil from our garden. Lots of preparation and planning went into this adventure. The children grated the cheese, picked the basil, sliced the bread and prepared each individual snack. It was delicious with lots of children asking for the recipe.

Preparing for the Fall Festival is always a highlight of the year. The children transformed our classroom into a Haunted Barn. This is a great learning experience for our children as they continue to develop their organizational skills, creativity, leadership, cooperation and ability to develop a plan and carry it out. This also was incorporated into our Cooperative learning groups.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at conferences!

### Important Dates:

November 11th-conferences

November 18th-American Village (Field trip)

November 23rd-Thanksgiving Feast

November 24th-27th-Thanksgiving Holidays

November 28th-classic book report due

## Ms. Dama & Ms. Chelsea

As Maria Montessori said, "When dealing with children there is greater need for observing than of probing" We are looking forward to having parents in our classroom next week for observation. Observation is very important in the Montessori classroom, and it is important for parents to take part in that experience.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: First full week of November

FALL CONFERENCES: November 11, 2011 (all day); Sign up sheet outside the classroom on the door.

Our book reports kicked off October! The assignment was to memorize a poem to recite to your peers. This is the only time we ask our children to memorize in the classroom, but our children got creative with their poetry and interpretations. We had some children acting out their poems, some children provided props and some who simply happily recited their selection. Overall, they were very exciting!

We have had some wonderful experiences throughout October.

We went on our first field trip to Ruffner Mountain. The children got to experience the wetlands on a somewhat foggy, muggy, wet day. Not only were the children troopers on this outing, but so were our parent volunteers. We got muddy ... but it was fun!

We finished the month with our Fall Festival. The children put together some easy booths for the preschoolers, but had a great time. It's always wonderful to see role modeling, helping and working together in the classroom.

# From the Classrooms

## Upper Elementary News

### Ms. Janet & Mr. Brent

Upper Elementary had an exciting October with lots of great hands-on activities in math, language, science, and cultural studies. Students enjoyed dressing in costume for biography book reports and for Halloween. They put on a fantastic fall festival for the Lower Elementary and Preschool children. Students also enjoyed our food prep day on November 2nd, when we made spring rolls for the whole school. Additional information and photos are located on our blog at <http://www.hilltopmontessori.com/blog/upperelem/>





# From the Classrooms

## Middle School News

### Science and History

This year 8th grade has been taking physical science and history, in history the 8th graders have learned about many ancient civilizations such as the Mesopotamians, the Israelites, the Sumerians, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Kushites, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans. Also the 8th grade has learned about many different rulers such as Hatsheput, Thutmose III, Ramses II, King Khufu, Moses, King David, and Nebuchadnezzar.

In physical science, the 8th grade has learned a lot about the states of matter, forms of energy, and much more. In chapter 1 we learned about what is physical science and how and why it was used to help you with your career. In chapter 2 we learned about different types of mixtures, and different types of energy.

Overall, the middle school loves learning more about physical science and how it works, and loves to learn about ancient civilizations in world history.

### Algebra 1 and Grammar By :David Allen

Helloooooo parents! This week in algebra we have we have studied solving equations and formulas, solving equations with the variable on both sides, integration: geometry- angles and triangles, and solving multi-step equations. We also have our usual test every Monday. And we are getting our second report card this week. In grammar we are studying multiple things. Next we will be studying interrogation: statistics. I

hope you have enjoyed this post, and have a nice day!

### Extracurricular activities-Hayden Desmond

Hello Parents. In my last post I told you what the middle school has been doing in our extracurricular activities. I'm here again for that same reason. Here are your updates; in Spanish with Ms. Amber we have been discussing how to conjugate words to the correct form for the correct pronoun. In P.E. with coach Trey we have still been using the basketball court for everything we have been playing basketball, ultimate, football, and soccer. In music with Mr. Derek we have been playing the orph instruments and learning about music. In art with Ms. Ona we have been matching artist with picture, shading, tracing and shading leaves, drawing portraits, and discussed art history. That's your extracurricular activities update, check back here in a month or so for your new update.



# Chess Team



Registration Has Now Opened for Winter Chess

Looking for some real fun? Join the biggest chess party in Birmingham! Coached by State Champion David Brooks, Ph.D., our Chess Team meets once every week right after school right here at school and we would love to have you! Beginners are

welcome along with established players, and enrollment is open to kids in kindergarten and up. It is amazing how the younger kids take to the fun and competitive nature of chess! Last year, for example, one of coach's first graders won the city championship, defeating a seventh grader in the finals! Coach's teams are now 48-0 in Knight School history. Our chess team practices are 80% fun activities--chess movies, fun tournaments, silly puzzles, and competing for prizes-- and 20% deadly serious chess. The Knight School chess team would love to have you! We are Birmingham's super-fun interconnected network of 35 school chess teams, including many of the Mountain Brook, Vestavia, Montessori, Catholic, and many other

school chess teams! Individuals from any school may join with our exciting school chess team. Become a part of this exciting network of chess friends who take their tactical chess training and their fun very seriously!

Weekly music-driven puzzler quizzes, colorfully bracketed ongoing monthly chess tournaments, chess puzzles, chess movies, and Dr. Brooks' high-energy teaching style makes Knight School chess addictive! See [www.theknightschool.com](http://www.theknightschool.com) for all the details! To join our school chess team, simply contact Coach at 823-5715 or email him at [dbrooksphd@hotmail.com](mailto:dbrooksphd@hotmail.com).



**Everyone welcome to come to our  
monthly PTO meetings. All  
meetings take place the 2nd  
Tuesday of each month at 8:45 in  
the Multi-Purpose Room.**



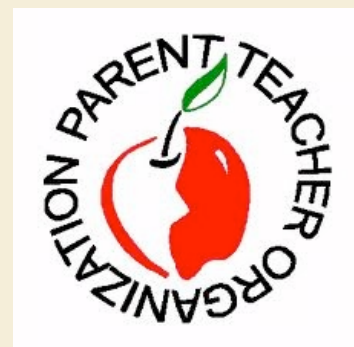
**Future PTO Dates:**

November 8

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December 13

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**Hilltop PTO Officers**

**President:** Sally Dollar

**Vice President:** Harper Basquill

**Secretary:** Nancy Patterson

**Treasurer:** Paola Garza

**Fundraising Chair:** Martha Kay Griffith

**Social Event Chair:** Libby Holmes

**Publicity Coordinator:** Alli Kahl

**Newsletter Editor:** Jennifer Burke

**Box Tops Co-Coordinators:** Jenny Brengelman  
Elana Swiney

**Scholastic Book Fair Coordinator:** Jill Walton

**Teacher Appreciation Week Coordinator:** Anneris Schutts

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