

Dear Sierra Nevada Community,

Welcome to the new school year! I hope that you all are having a lovely summer and that your children are excited to be back at school. I have been working on and off this summer to create our new environment and it's starting to come together. Here are a few things that will help you and your children get off to a great start:

### **Communication**

Every other week you will receive an email like this one that will have the subject line "Sierra Nevada News". This email will contain information about happenings in our community. It may also include reminders, requests and Montessori topics that will hopefully be of interest to you. I also like texting pictures of your children every other week or so, as well. Please let me know if you do NOT wish me to send you texts/pictures. I have found this to be a quick and easy way to get pictures to you and to receive short bits of information from you. Please make sure that your information is updated with the office so that I have the correct phone number to text to! You will continue to receive the weekly bulletin from the office that includes all-school information, the calendar and website information. All of my communications can be found on the website as well as all permission slips, forms, etc. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns that you have. I am available through e-mail and, although I am always happy to have an impromptu chat at drop off or pick up, it is always best to set up a time to meet so that I can give you my full attention.

### **Timeliness**

Being seasoned Montessori parents, I know that you have heard more times than you wish about making sure that your children get to school on time. However, I do want to reiterate the importance of this. It is difficult for both the child and the entire community when a child comes in late to class. Class starts promptly at 8:30 to ensure that the children get a full three-hour work cycle. When your child arrives after this time, it disturbs the work of the other children and often leaves your child alone as groups of friends have already formed and begun their work. If you know that this is a challenge for you, please commit to setting your alarms a full half an hour earlier to see if that helps. I open my classroom at 8:15 so that children can have time to settle in and prepare for their day.

### **Food**

Many of you know that I have a special interest in nutrition and the importance that it plays in the health and vitality of children as well as aiding in their ability to concentrate. In my classroom, the children may eat snack whenever they feel hungry. Snacks that are allowed in the classroom are: fruits, vegetables and non-sweet protein sources. I will attach a handy list at

the end of this e-mail to help you and your children plan for which snacks to bring. Any food with sugar or grains will be reserved for lunch. We have a couple of children in our classroom with very severe allergies to nuts, so please be careful to follow the school's no nut policy.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

In past years I have assigned birthday celebrations to the Friday closest to the child's birthday or half birthday. Because we have more children than available Friday's this year, we will now celebrate a child's birthday or half birthday as close to the child's actual date as you wish. Please take a look at your calendars and send me an e-mail or text saying which day you would prefer to celebrate your child's birthday. Please do NOT schedule your birthday for a Thursday, as those afternoons are reserved for "specials" (I'll write about those on another day!). Birthdays will be from 2:45 – 3:15 p.m. I will also send details later about how birthdays are celebrated in the Sierra Nevada classroom.

### **Yarn**

This summer I had the privilege to attend the EAA Montessori Conference in Boulder, CO on handwork. At this workshop we learned all about working with wool, yarn, weaving, knitting and crocheting. I am very excited to share what I learned with the children. We are always in need of yarn in the classroom, but I anticipate that the need will be even great this year. Although I have a small monthly budget for classroom supplies and animal needs, I rarely have enough for as much yarn as we seem to consume every month! If you happen to have any yarn you would like to donate or have access to inexpensive ways to purchase yarn, please let me know. Any and all kinds, colors and thicknesses are welcome!

### **Solarium**

As I was putting together the two classrooms this summer, I noticed that the "library" was transforming itself more into a Solarium – a peaceful, quiet space filled with sunlight and plants. This will be our group gathering space, our music and large motor area and, during the work period, a place for those children who seek a quieter spot to work. My vision is to have it filled with all kinds of beautiful plants. If you feel so moved as to wish to donate a plant to the classroom, that would be lovely. Or, if you would be willing to bring a cutting of a plant from your home, that would be great, too!

### **Parent Orientation**

I look forward to seeing all of the new parents to lower elementary (as well as anyone who would like to come – I'd love to see you all!) next Wednesday the 15th at 6:30 p.m. Hopefully I

can answer any questions that you may have regarding logistics and expectations as we start the new year.

Patty

P.S. Here are some healthy snack ideas!

Some healthy, easy snacks for fuel

- Hummus and cut vegetables
- Baby carrots in single packs
- Berries
- Watermelon cubes
- Seasonal fruit
- Cut vegetables
- Cherry tomatoes
- Celery and cream cheese
- Edamame
- Corn
- Peas
- Cheese sticks or cubes
- Jerky
- Cottage cheese with ranch dip and vegetables
- Seaweed snacks
- Unsweetened fruit sauce (ie. Applesauce)
- Avocado slices
- Hard boiled eggs
- Guacamole and vegetables
- Pickles
- Sardines
- Smoked salmon
- Olives
- Roasted chicken