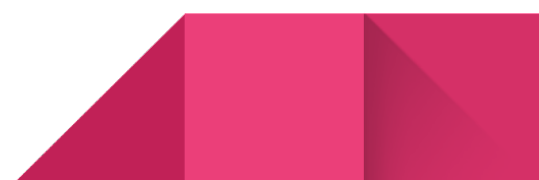


Rock Prairie Montessori

# Rock Prairie Montessori Newsletter

November 15, 2023

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# 2023 Fall Newsletter

## Orientation and New Routines

Declan Beyer

It's a new year of school! The middle school had a great field trip before school started, at Lutherdale Camp, doing the high ropes course, which consisted of a zipline and a 40 foot rock wall. The low ropes course was also very interesting and fun with games where the students had to use their minds to complete the tasks. The middle schoolers stayed two nights at this camp. This was the 7th graders' first time doing a two night sleepover on a school field trip. The first day of school was very interesting, where new people met returning students.

The first week of school has been an orientation week (there are no classes, meaning no math, Spanish, work time, and gym because 7th graders are still learning the schedule of middle school.) Now, the second week of school we are starting gym on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and every day we do Spanish, Math, and work time. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays the whole class takes a walk for a good amount of outdoor time. On Tuesdays and Thursdays the class has gym class so they do not take walks on those days.

On Fridays, our class has art and library time. Some weeks, the class splits up into two groups, one that goes to the library and one that stays at school for art class. At the library, the class is exploring the teenage section where there are fun activities, comfortable chairs, and a good amount of appropriate reading books for our age group. At school, the art class will be very interesting once we get farther into the year. The recent art class was working on resin for sketching notebook covers. That covers everything we have done in Inquiry 1!  
Photos from our [Lutherdale Camp](#) trip.

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# Ukulele Practice

Aviva Smith-Hicks

This year we are practicing ukulele. We know the F chord, the C chord, and a few more complex tunes. We are planning to play "Jingle Bells" with the children's house students who will be singing. We have practiced different songs that are in our notebook like "My Little Baby Bumble Bee," "Row Row Row Your Boat," and more. Practicing is a fun, gathering time for us to tune our ukuleles and teach each other chords.

We practice at the end of each day. Sometimes we have our instructor Mr. Dave come in to teach us. Mr. Dave is awesome at ukulele. We are glad to have him teaching us. Some people brought their own ukuleles that are different from the others. We purchased the ukulele racks with our Growing Roots money. They are soft, heavy and fit our ukuleles.

We are a good orchestra. Recently we have used paper with tablature for the chords. We all play great together. We are all good at being in sync and not trailing off. We know how to tune with a tuner; we haven't practiced without one. Some of us use picks to help us strum and some use their fingers to strum. We are all excited to be performing as an orchestra in the winter!





## Angelic Organics Field Trip

Corrina Markestad

The Middle school class took a trip to Angelic Organics Learning Center on 10/26 - 10/27. Angelic Organics is a farm where they teach school groups about the outdoors, and taking care of farm animals. They are located in Caledonia IL, and the lodge overlooks a bend in the Kinnikinnick creek. We stayed overnight, and had fun learning all about composting and different plants and animals. We arrived at 8:30, and met our guides, Jessie and Randy. We took a nature walk through their patch of woods, and learned about what to do in case you are ever stranded in the woods. On the walk we explored the area around Kinnikinnick creek, and identified different types of plants.

After lunch we spent time in the lodge, reading in our bunks, or doing puzzles in the lower level. Throughout our stay we learned how to start fires with a flint and steel, and tended to goats and chickens. The goats even came out to help us with trimming the fence line of invasive plants. We made our own dinner of chili, and wrapped up the night with smores by the campfire. We told scary stories by lamplight and spent time in the bunks reading and relaxing. In the time we spent at the Angelic Organic Lodge we had fun with the animals, and had a lot of fun outdoors. Although it was cold and rainy almost the entire time, our stay was no less enjoyable. With our new knowledge of flowers and fauna we will continue to appreciate our planet, and pass on what we have learned. We can't wait to come back!

[Angelic Organics Photos](#)

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# Fun Fridays

Cole Fraundorfer


Here are all of the things we do on Friday. Fridays are special because our class does many different activities. The day always starts at 8:30 when we have our community meeting, where we have our gratitude circle. Our gratitude circle is when all of the students share what we are grateful for. After, we go to group math where each group does their math at the same time but for a longer period than other days. Then the class transitions to Socratic Seminar. This is described in another article. At 11:30 we clean up and eat a special meal prepared for us by a group of 2-3 students. This lasts until 12:10. Then the class takes a walk in our woods and comes back into the building at 12:30.

We start art/ukelele or the library at 12:30. There are two groups of students who each go to different places. On the days we do each of these activities, one group goes to the library for the last half, and the other group does art for the last half.

Art is a different activity every class. So far we have completed 3 projects in art class, we did stained glass art, abstract art, and resin art.

In the library we have been learning how to find different types of books and other materials/resources around the building, along with the rules and areas we are allowed to go into and use. Then if there is any extra time before we have to leave at 3:00, we can look for books we want to read. Ms.Tracey, Mr. Scott, and Ms.Mary/Ms.Melissa have each been kind enough to take us to the library.

In Ukulele, we have been learning different chords, how to tune our instruments, and how to play some songs. We are currently learning Jingle Bells.



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# Socratic Seminar


Sienna Dahl

On Fridays, our whole class participates in a Socratic Seminar. We gather in a circle and take turns sharing our opinions and ideas. At the beginning of the week, we are given a piece of writing to annotate and take notes on for the upcoming seminar. We each write questions to ask during the discussion. At the end of each seminar, we do a quick whip around the circle, allowing everyone to express their last burning thoughts about the subject.

"In Socratic Seminars people think on a deeper level than on a daily basis," Corrina explains. Socratic Seminars teach us to dig deeper into a subject. When preparing for the Socratic Seminar, we try to look at different perspectives to find more information on our work. It teaches us to look more into what we are working on.

"I enjoy hearing everyone's unique opinions on the same topic," Maddie added. Everyone interprets the writing in different ways, so it's interesting to hear everyone's ideas on the texts. Everyone adds to the discussion, and at the end of the seminar everyone leaves with more information to think about.

Socratic Seminars are so interesting to participate in because you get to think on a deeper level and hear many different ideas and opinions.



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# Museum of Stories

Sophia Ludeman

The middle schoolers created a Museum of Stories to show some of the projects we have worked on. We had many projects to choose from. One of the projects we could choose to put on this was our Narrative story, and we were able to do either one or two scenes. We first wrote a 6 word memoir on the first day of school then a 34 word one after this we got to choose one of these stories to turn into a one hundred word story, and for our final Narrative we added snapshots to turn it into around 300 words. We had character snapshots and setting snapshots where we would describe in detail what we looked like and what was surrounding us. We used those activities to practice creating our own snapshots and thoughtshots.

Another project was the Google Earth project where we would go onto Google Earth and create a project with 6 locations. 2 in the midwest, 2 in North America and 2 in a different continent. We would describe why we chose the location, whether we had been to that place or maybe something we owned was made in that place. We would have pictures of what related us to this project.

Every student had a "room" on a google slide where we got to display 3 artifacts, or projects that we worked on this inquiry. We also had to answer one of two questions somewhere in our slide. Then we presented our tables with all of the projects on them during conferences.

Thank you for reading our Newsletter!



