

# WRMS News



In This Issue:

- Adventure Trip .....pg 3
- Art Fair & Parent Appreciation.....pg 3
- Alumni Corner.....pg 4
- Student Poetry.....pg 5
- Tennis Team.....pg 5
- "Fairfield".....pg 6
- Fossil Rim.....pg 6
- Journey and Discovery.....pg 6
- Dallas Heritage Village.....pg 7
- Student Photography.....pg 8
- Garden.....pg 8

WHITE ROCK MONTESSORI SCHOOL NEWS • FALL • 2011

1601 OATES DRIVE • DALLAS, TEXAS 75228 • 214-324-5580 • WWW.WHITEROCKMONTESSORI.ORG

## White Rock Montessori Class of 2011

Members of the Class of 2011 reflect on their memories of their years at WRM.



*Clockwise from top left: Andrew Barnes, Daniela Usuga, Aviana Barrientos, Patrick Stein, Noah Thompson, Coach O, Mah-ro Khan, Sophia Anthony, Ms. Moore, and Tater*



### Sophia Anthony

Sophia is a serious scholar with a strong creative side. She is the kind of student who regularly listens to Democracy Now on KNON in order to stay informed. She also spends hours drawing and painting; areas that she is now exploring more fully at Booker T. Washington High School for the Visual and Performing Arts and Academics. Sophia, who attended WRM for six years, particularly values the lessons she learned during her business internships in middle school, where she developed skills in customer service that will benefit her in the near future, as she pursues a part-time job, as well as later in her chosen career.



### Andrew Barnes

Andrew attended WRM for eight years, and is now attending Bishop Lynch High School, where he received a performance-based scholarship. Andrew appreciates the writing and time management skills he learned at WRM. An excellent athlete and champion rock climber, he will always remember surfing and wind surfing in North Padre on the middle school adventure trip.

*Continued on page 2*



## Aviana Barrientos

Avi believes that WRM has taught her to manage her time wisely, to problem solve, and to develop great communication skills. After attending WRM for eleven years, she is attending Bishop Lynch High School, where she received a performance-based scholarship. A girl with many interests, Avi has participated in soccer, gymnastics, volleyball, and mixed martial arts. She also plays the guitar and has performed in plays at the Dallas Children's Theater Center. She volunteers at her church whenever she can, and is involved in the youth group there.



## Mah-ro Khan

After attending WRM for eight years, Mah-ro is now at the Talented and Gifted High School at Townview. Exceptionally well-rounded, Mah-ro is a serious student who enjoys organizing political events, attending Arabic (Quranic) classes, and breaking letter codes. She also enjoys religious activities, reading, piano, ice skating, writing, family activities, and eating exotic foods. She will always remember writing a newsletter with her friends at WRM, and thinks the most important lesson she learned is that trying your best at something, even if you think you can't do it, will always yield good results.



## Patrick Stein

Patrick believes he has learned excellent time management during his ten years at WRM; skills that he is putting to good use now that he attends Lake Highlands Freshman Center. Patrick is involved in Tae Kwon Do and plays the violin. He is an athletic outdoorsman who particularly enjoys baseball and camping. He will never forget the middle school adventure trips.



## Noah Thompson

Thinking back on his eight years at WRM, Noah appreciates the valuable lesson he learned from a fellow classmate in never giving up, no matter what the odds. He also gained excellent problem solving skills that he is applying as he continues his schooling at Woodrow Wilson High School. He will always remember when he used those skills to build a tree house out of found materials on the middle school's last trip to the Fairfield Wilderness land. Noah enjoys listening to music and being out of doors. One activity at which he excels is rock climbing.



## Daniela Usuga

Daniela is attending Ursuline Academy of Dallas. Having attended WRM for eight years, Daniela particularly appreciates the time management skills she developed in middle school. She feels this will help her manage her work load in high school. A four-year member of WRM's Student Council with notable academic achievements, Daniels also finds plenty of time for fun. She has enjoyed riding horses since the age of five, and has played soccer since she was four. She also likes to spend time with her family. One of the many memories she will carry with her of her years at WRM is the stop at IHop during the long bus ride home from North Padre on the middle school adventure trip. Exhausted after having no sleep during the night, teachers and students bonded together and everyone laughed and had so much fun!

# Adventure Trip

White Rock Middle School students spent a glorious week in April at Padre Island National Seashore for our 2010-2011 Adventure Trip. This park meanders along the Texas Gulf for 70 miles making it the longest undeveloped barrier island in the world. Each day began with a beautiful sunrise and ended with a stunning sunset. Middle school students camped on the beach and learned surfing on the Gulf of Mexico. They also learned wind surfing and kayaking in the shallow waters of the Laguna Madre.



*Sophia Davison surfs in the Gulf of Mexico.*



*Coach O kayaks in the Laguna Madre while a student windsurfs in the background.*

This section of the Gulf Coast is along the Central Flyway, and it is renowned for its wondrous bird life. Students regularly saw sea gulls, egrets, brown pelicans, and other exotic species. Side trips included a visit to the Texas State Aquarium and the U.S. Lexington in Corpus Christi. Our history buffs marveled at the World War II era aircraft carrier with its tight corridors and facilities.



*Patrick Stein and Andrew Barnes study the coastline.*

Another highlight of this trip was the day spent with park rangers who provided instruction in a variety of subjects including oceanography and marine biology. Students learned about the sensitive marsh and dune ecologies. This experience included a practical component in which students strained sand, seaweed, and seawater to explore the intricate life forms that use this habitat as a nursery. Students participated in a conversation about pollution and the development of the gulf's rich petroleum resources. The park rangers also facilitated our service project in support of the re-establishment of breeding grounds for Kemp's Ridley sea turtles, an endangered species that once thrived on these beaches. For this project, middle school students picked up trash and looked for turtle eggs along a one mile stretch of beach.

# Art Fair & Parent Appreciation



*WRM hallways were filled with students' art work.*

Teachers and children hosted their annual Art Fair and Parent Appreciation Night on Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Every inch of the building was used to exhibit the students' colorful art work. Under the direction of art teacher, Res Hauck, the show was organized around several themes, the major one being "The Art of Japan." Multi-colored kites soared over the hallways. Student-created kimonos, wind socks, and origami, were on exhibit, and charming Haiku was displayed. The children dedicated their show to the people of Japan who had recently been impacted by the earthquake.

Other works included the Molasses of the Kuna Indians, studies in black and white inspired by Gustav Klimt, parrots of the rainforest, paintings of cats in the style of Van Gogh, Matisse collages, and introspective self portraits in various styles and media. In collaboration with Director of Environmental Education, Andy Maeding, and inspired by the chickens they raise in the Discovery Garden, students created a series of large paintings and a colorful banner entitled "City Chickens."



*The colorful "City Chickens" banner could be seen from the entrance of the building.*

Children presented their parents with handmade gifts to show appreciation for their love and support during the year.

# AlumniCorner

## High School Grads / WRM Class of 2006-07



### Evan Ott & Rebecca Stimson Co-Valedictorians at TAG

In the last newsletter we announced that 2007 grads Rebecca Stimson and Evan Ott were ranked #1 and #2 in the senior class at the Talented and Gifted High School at Townview. Although it seemed inevitable that one would end up valedictorian and the other salutatorian, this is not what happened. They were named co-valedictorians! What a storybook ending for two who became fast friends at WRM and remain so today! Evan is attending University of Texas at Austin, pursuing a double major in physics through the Dean's Scholars Honors Program and computer science through the Turing Scholars Program. Rebecca is at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. She has not declared a degree, but is interested in neuroscience. Congratulations to Evan, Rebecca, their teachers, and their parents! This makes six WRM students who have gone on to become valedictorians. Two additional grads have been named salutatorians.

## College Grad / WRM Class of 2000-01



### Daniel Malhotra

Congratulations to Daniel Malhotra upon his graduation from Texas Tech University! A 2001 graduate of WRM, Daniel attended high school at Lakehill Preparatory School. He completed a BBA in Business Management and a minor in Political Science at Texas Tech last August.

## WRM Staff 1999-2005



### Ann Sutton

Former WRM middle school teacher Ann Sutton celebrated her birthday last March in Copenhagen with her two daughters, WRM grads Jenny Waldrop and Dorothy Alexander. Ann is now teaching at Woods High School, a Montessori secondary school in Houston. In the summer she works with teacher-training interns at Houston Montessori Center. Jenny is working part-time in research and development with Hallmark in Kansas City, while exploring the field of photography, her latest passion. Dorothy is a junior at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona, majoring in Psychology.

## DonorBridge



Many thanks to all those who donated to the school through Donor Bridge on North Texas Giving Day. Although it was a bit of a challenge getting through during certain times of the day, eighty WRM supporters persevered to help us raise \$12,000 on just one day! We appreciate all who worked on this campaign as well as those who contributed on this particular day so that the school could receive the matching funds.

Donations to the Annual Giving Fund are very important to the school, and are welcome at any time of the year.

## WRM Class of 1999-2000 Medora Davison

Medora Davison dropped by the school on the very day she was leaving for a month-long trek from Istanbul to Moscow and Moscow to Mongolia via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. This is only the latest journey for this adventuresome 2000 WRM grad. After attending White Rock from kindergarten through 8th grade, Medora attended Booker T. Washington High school for the Performing and Visual Arts with a focus in music. Upon graduation, she enrolled at Loyola University in New Orleans. There, after an unanticipated 3-month stay at University of Texas in Austin due to Hurricane Katrina, she completed her bachelor's degree in Music Therapy. After five-years in New Orleans, Medora decided it was time to explore something new. She returned to Dallas for a brief period, working and saving money for her next adventure. A year-long stay in Italy and Greece was made possible through WorkAway, and WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities in Organic Farming). Both of these programs put people in touch with hosts world-wide who provide room and board in exchange for work in a variety of jobs. Medora is proud to say that through these programs she has honed and polished skills in jobs ranging from pulling weeds, harvesting produce, chopping wood, homeschooling children, managing hotel staff, and marketing, while working on several farms within Italy and Greece and in a boutique hotel in Marrakech, Morocco.

Returning to the states, Medora realized she definitely had the travel bug and wanted to try to create an indefinite adventure. She returned to Morocco until she found herself running low on funds. Returning to the U.S., she again found work and saved her money until she was ready to embark on her latest adventure, travelling with friends who are making a documentary on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Medora has started a travel blog to document her adventure and, perhaps, inspire people to travel.

In a recent email, Medora tells us that she learned as a White Rock Montessori student to consider anything possible. "At White Rock you were always given a choice, and knowing that I have choices has carried me on these adventures," she says. She writes that she wanted to create an extraordinary life, and that the things she learned at White Rock gave her the confidence to do that. "White Rock also taught me so many things that I use in my daily life. Organization skills, time management, and, most importantly, communication were part of my weekly progress reports in middle school. These skills have aided me in being successful in life and have given me the ability to connect with different cultures and people. White Rock, the faculty and teachers, always encouraged me to be myself and guided me in realizing my full potential," Medora concludes.



Follow Medora on  
[www.zorbascaravan.com](http://www.zorbascaravan.com)

# Student Poetry

Inspired by Mary O'Neill's  
"Hailstones and Halibut Bones"

## "Universe of Colors"

by Israa Akhtar, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

*A dropped silver dime  
Reflects the sun  
Shining on the deep mountain valley.  
Through black darkness  
A shining red light,  
Purple glow,  
Bringing black holes from hiding,  
Swirling in the sky,  
From planet to planet,  
From star to star,  
From galaxy to galaxy,  
From universe to universe,  
From dream to dream.*

## "Pink"

by Anja Cronjaeger, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

*Pink is a baby, also a rose,  
Pink is a mosquito bite  
right on your nose,  
Pink is a sunset and sometimes dawn,  
Pink is the color of a baby swan,  
Pink is a poem, already said,  
Also, the color of my cousin's bed,  
Pink is laughter of a baby duck,  
Pink is the color of when a chick goes "cluck!"*

## "Orange"

by Mia Lopez, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

*Orange is the color of stripes on a tiger,  
Also the color of a carrot, but brighter,  
Orange is the color of oranges on a tree,  
Also, the color of monarchs you see.*

# Tennis

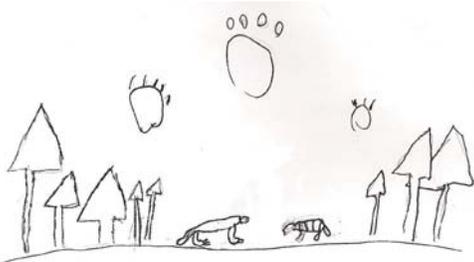
WRM's tennis teams are doing us proud! The twelve-and-under team has won four and lost only one so far this year. Players on this winning team are Michael Stein, Ben Hurt, Michael Thomas, Beck McCall, Ashlyn Duy, Thomas Farner, and Julia Mitterer-Claudet.

The ten-and-under team consists of Evan Bibb, Reeve Harrison, Raphael Mitterer-Claudet, Jonathan Farner, Benjamin Schwartz, and William Matthews. Players at this level play other teams but do not compete.

Congratulations to Coach Kathryn and her accomplished tennis players!

# “Fairfield”

by 3<sup>rd</sup> graders,  
Benjamin Schwartz  
Jonathan Farner



*When we got to Fairfield, we had lunch and started on the trail. First, we found an animal track, and we thought it was a bobcat's track because we looked at the field guide. And then, we saw scat and thought it was the same bobcat that had walked by and gone to the bathroom. Then, we saw another track, and it was from a grey fox. We saw more scat and thought it was from the same fox. We saw parts of fish in it. Farther along the trail, we saw deer tracks. We thought that a grey fox had eaten fish and was going on the trail. And we thought that a deer ran across the trail, and the fox saw the deer but could not eat it. We thought that when the bobcat and the fox were face to face the bobcat ate the fox.*

## FossilRim



On May 12<sup>th</sup>, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class of 2011 took off for their annual two-day trip to Fossil Rim. Activities included hiking and a safari tour of the animal parks, where students were able to get up close and personal with exotic species of wildlife and actually feed a giraffe. Students also participated in several classes related to ecology and veterinary medicine.

# New Parents' Journey & Discovery

On Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, parents were given the opportunity to become Montessori students for a day. Time spent observing and then working in classrooms at each level gave an appreciation of the ways in which Montessori uses multi-sensory materials in a spiral curriculum that is designed to address the specific needs of children as they grow and develop. A bounteous brunch was served by our school lunch caterers, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. At the end of the day, all agreed that it was a valuable and eye-opening experience.



Gina Deitz and Denise Merlick in the garden.



Matthew and Jeannette Warren explore the Time Line of Life.



Ms. Neilsen gives John and Natalia Garrett pointers in squaring a binomial.



Aaron and Tiffany Hubbard try their hand at Shuji on the porch.

**“I thought I was choosing Montessori for the environment, but now I know I am also choosing it for the academics. The work is hard!”**

**“I don't want to leave!”**

**“The materials just draw you in! When you finish one thing, you immediately notice something else that you want to explore.”**

**“In the Montessori environment, it felt safe to try.”**

**“Everything looks so interesting; I just wanted to learn more about it.”**

**I didn't feel at all intimidated.”**

# WRM Students Serve as Junior Historians at Dallas Heritage Village

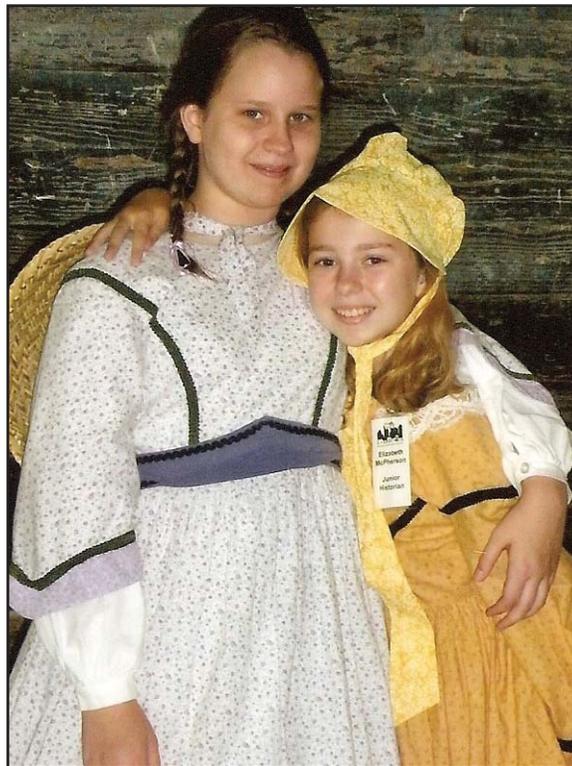
The Dallas Heritage Village is a living history museum portraying North Texas life from 1840 to 1910, including a working Civil War-era farmstead. The village is made up of a large collection of 19th century pioneer and Victorian homes and buildings. Those who visit will likely run into a character or two from the 1900's who look suspiciously like WRM students. That is because White Rock students, Isabel Brown, Sydney Abdo, and Elizabeth McPherson volunteer their summers and spare time throughout the year serving as Junior Historians. Dressing in the style of the period is part of the job.

Sixth grader, Elizabeth, always loved going to the Historical Village as a child. She got involved as a volunteer last spring and continued working there last summer. Since then, she heads to the Village to volunteer when she has a free Saturday. Elizabeth particularly enjoys serving as a docent at the log cabin or the school house, where she demonstrates, among other things, the "bucket of shame," which was placed on children's heads as a punishment. She also has helped with the Historic Fair, leading popular games of the period, such as the ring toss. She studies about the period and details of each building from binders provided for the docents and is most excited when she gets to give a tour and describe all the buildings.

Sydney and Isabel, both eighth graders, got involved at the Village when they were 5 years old. Since taking the training at the age of 11, they are now allowed to serve as regular volunteers. In this capacity, they help with everything from serving as runners or working the craft table, to their favorite activity, playing the role of a period character in one of the houses. This involves learning about history from



Doctor's Office Reimagining Team:  
Sydney Abdo and Isabel Brown  
(1st and 3rd from right)



Elizabeth McPherson (on the right) with a volunteer friend from another school.

the perspective of a person of that period and engaging in an interpretive acting experience akin to improvisation with visitors. They love this creative part of the job most.

Isabel plays the part of Tamar Letterman, a 13 year-old girl. Sydney is her cousin, Rivka Steiman. They have travelled from their homes in Houston near Bray's Bayou, to visit the Jewish family of their aunt, who came to Dallas after the Galveston hurricane in 1900. The girls say that playing these roles is challenging and requires a lot of historical research on their part. "There is no script," Isabel says. "You become a character." On a given day the girls might be asked to work in any house in the village. They relish the fact that their house has a wood burning stove, so they get to cook. Best of all, one of the volunteers regularly prepares the world's most delicious biscuits on that stove!

Recently, Sydney and Isabel were part of a team of 10 who took on the task of reimagining the 19th-century Doctor's Office, sponsored by Baylor Healthcare System. Their team researched and labeled medical tools, identified and researched medicines used for the Apothecary Shop, and narrated an audio tour from the perspective of Alice, a real skeleton that hangs around in the office. The exhibit opened to the public mid-summer.

"I like learning about how the knowledge of medicine has evolved, but how some plants are still used today," Isabel said. "It's interesting to me to compare the treatment methods today to those of more than 100 years ago." "I enjoy doing research", Sydney added. "And I find all of the different medicines interesting."

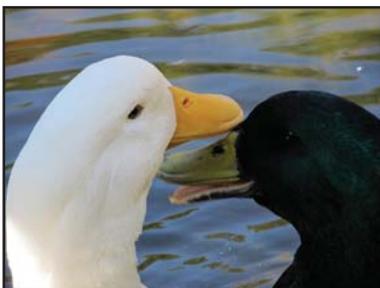


# Student Photography



Oreo

by UE student  
Emily Ranspot,  
taken during  
Mr. Maeding's  
after-school Nature  
Photography class



Blizzard and Comet

## What's Going on in the Garden



Chasy Johnson, Julia Mitterer-Claudet,  
and Emily Ranspot plant flowers.



Reefe Harrison and Garrett Bender  
hang bird feeders.



Thomas Farner and Anna Wehrmann  
in the greenhouse.



Everett Scott pats the soil in  
her classroom's flower bed.