

# this month at

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## stoneridge

CHILDREN'S MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## The Sixth Grade Trip to D.C.

Laura and Virginia, 6th graders

Last week, the sixth grade class went on a trip to Washington D.C. Our trip was a great experience. We learned a lot about the government and a little more about each other, and we gained some street smarts.

Washington D.C., was a great place to go because we got to see many important aspects of the United States. We went to memorials such as the Vietnam Memorial, WWII Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial. We visited many Smithsonian museums such as the Natural History Museum, the American Indian Museum, the Air and Space Museum, and the National Zoo. We saw many important places like the U.S Capitol, The Supreme Court, The White House and beautiful places like the Library of Congress. At the American Indian Museum, we had quite an interesting lunch. We dined on burgers or fried chicken with yucca fries and had an option of delicious (not!) frog legs that only a few people were brave enough to try.

Here are some comments from our group:

*D.C was really fun and a good experience*  
- Nina

*The trip was a good experience; it got me to think about my country- Jake*

*The trip was really good and the next 6th graders should take the same trip- Jon*

*It was really fun going to D.C. and D.C. was fun because we learned lots of interesting things, and because we got to have fun game nights and stuff like that with other 6th graders- Rachel*

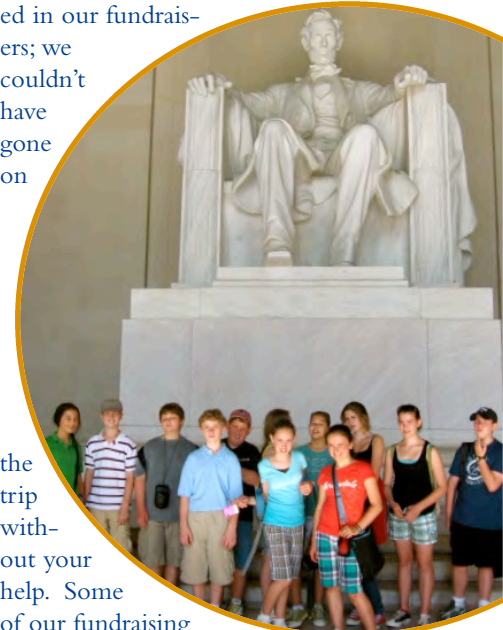
*The monuments in D.C. made me think of this country in a whole different way- Laura*

*My memories of the trip are memories I will never forget. I have seen things most people will never see in a lifetime on this trip- Virginia*

*It was quite an experience- Isabella*

We exercised the "street smarts" we learned when we were younger: look both ways before crossing the street, and don't talk to strangers. We learned that it is really important to stay as a group because it's hard to keep track of seventeen people unless all of us help keep track of ourselves!

Our trip was definitely an experience. We will all be talking about this trip in days to come. Again, all the 6th graders would like to thank our teachers, Cathy and Mary; the chaperones, Carrie H., Jim K., and Nick A., and everyone who participated in our fundraisers; we couldn't have gone on



the trip without your help. Some of our fundraising events included bake sales, a raffle with Middle School, a pizza lunch, and a car wash.

## Calendar at-a-glance

**LE - MS Spring Show** – Thursday, May 28, 7:00 pm

**All School Crazy Hair and Hat Day** – Friday, May 29, Bring Beverly Bootstrap donation

**Grades 3-6 Stanford Achievement Testing** – Monday, June 1 - Thursday, June 4

**Lower Elementary Day at Gull Pond** – Friday, June 5, 8:30-2:30 pm

**K Solar System Play** – Friday, June 9, 1:15 pm

**Last Day of Child Care Programs** – Wednesday, June 10

**Graduation Ceremonies** – Wednesday, June 10, 6:00 pm (see page 4)

**Last Day of School** – Thursday, June 11, 11:30 am, TH-CH dismissal, 12:00 pm LE-MS dismissal

**PlaySoccer** – Monday, June 29, through July 3 (see page 5)

**Sea Change** – June 27 through July 3

**Summer Mornings at Stoneridge** – July 6 - August 7. (see page 5)

## Coming Up

**Last Chance to Sign-up for PlaySoccer and Summer Mornings at Stoneridge** – Registration due by June 10. (see page 5)

**Faculty Return** – Wednesday, August 26

**Summer Mailings in July and August** – Please have forms returned by August 15

**School Reopens** – Wednesday, September 2

For up-to-date calendar information, see the online calendar.



## Looking Backwards, Looking Forward

Alan Feldman, Head of School

In another two weeks, we will be closing the school year for our children and families. It has been a year filled with learning and growing for the children and for the School. I want to share my immense pride in the learning from this year and preview briefly the challenges that lie ahead for the School and the learning we will need to do as we respond to these challenges.

One of the pleasures of our work as educators is to see each one of our children grow in every dimension of their lives. They all do! — and this growth is evident to all of us who work with the children each day. Teachers have been busy assessing their growth. Some of these assessments are informal: recording how a CH child now performs practical life works with efficiency and confidence; noting a MS child's ability to capture an argument in an essay. Some of the assessments are more formal: teachers review our checklists of "standards of readiness" for each child, and teachers administer the standardized testing for our students in grades 3 through 7. At each level, the oldest students have been visiting next year's level for the past several weeks or months. For the children who are moving up, all of us are justifiably proud that they have each achieved important benchmarks of independence, intellectually and socially. They are clearly ready for the next level.

It is not just the children who are growing, but the School is growing, too. Faculty have completed their first annual cycle of our evaluation system (titled "Meaningful Faculty Evaluation") in which faculty members set goals for their individual growth for the year, then document their progress. Reading through the faculty's reflection on their growth has been an extraordinary experience for me these past weeks: important goals set by each person, significant learning documented, and a higher level of skills brought to their work.

New programs at the School demonstrate important growth and change, too. The Learning Skills Program has not only helped individual children master literacy skills, but has helped establish a consistent approach to spelling across the levels. The strength of the writing program, developed over several years, is more and more evident this past year as a number of our students have had their writing accepted in student writing publications and one student received awards for two of her poems in the Beverly Public Library poetry contest. Mathematics, too, is flourishing in UE and MS through the consistent application of an inquiry-based approach. Our community (faculty and families) is now better informed about some social learning issues including spectrum disorders and bullying and our faculty is more knowledgeable about when and how to intervene.



It was a special pleasure for me to see us do a much better job with community events this year. To parents, most evident were the music and drama programs — two productions of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* last fall, the December Holiday Program, the MS play (written by MS students and presented to the Mexican exchange students in March), and the all-school musical that is being presented this week (written by UE students). Less visible to parents—but equally impressive—have been the assemblies that take place every other week for our students from LE to MS. Individual children sing, or read original poems or stories, or play a musical piece on the piano or drums, or share a talent like juggling; a LE class reads a story chorally; the UE student band shares their latest piece; and we typically end with the very traditional Stoneridge words,

*May there be peace before you,  
behind you, above you, below you;  
From your heart to your lips to everyone.*

Through it all, students are appreciating each other's achievements—for older students, remembering when standing in front of a group was so very difficult, and for younger

children, wondering if they will ever be able to be that grown up! These excellent assembly programs have been a high point for me this year, and I expect that we will find ways to share them with parents next year.

We have also designed new approaches to long-familiar concerns. Perhaps one area of our greatest learning — meeting the needs of families where there is no stay-at-home parent. We have made some changes this year in response to the needs of these families, and will make more changes next year — including a start-of-school routine that meets these families' needs better (e.g., the CH Extended Day Program and the After-School Program will be available on the first full day of school for all our families).

I am confident that next year will be another year of growth and change for the children, families and faculty at Stoneridge. But the kinds of growth that I summarize above will only be part of the challenge we face next year. There is an additional challenge as well that rises in front of us. We are all recognizing that the world has changed enormously in the past year. We all knew that some change was coming, yet no one could predict the way that the world economy—and consequently our national and regional economies and our personal lives—would shift so rapidly. Stoneridge—along with most other independent schools—is working hard to find our way in a significantly altered landscape. With strong leadership from our Board and School administration, we are organizing ourselves to look afresh at the changed and changing world that we face. There are still many uncertainties in front of us, but the measure of our success in the months and years ahead will not be in our ability to persevere with the same approaches, but rather in our ability *to learn and to transform ourselves* in order that we can continue to fulfill with excellence the inspiring mission of the School: *helping students and their families construct their learning, lives, and communities.*

We have enormous strengths from which to draw among the many people that make up the Stoneridge community today as well as in the past. Orchestrating these strengths and responding to new challenges is the task ahead.



## Trustee Update

### Words of Deep Appreciation

Gregg Hershenson, Board Member

*Gregg has been a Stoneridge parent for the past three years, and began on the Board a year ago.*

As many of you are aware, our daughter has missed much of her Upper Elementary school year due to illness. Therefore this is not the usual commentary from a Board member but rather a note of thanks from a grateful parent who happens to be on the Board.

As I write this, our daughter is in Washington D.C., with her sixth grade classmates enjoying the company of her friends, and from all reports, she is keeping up with a very demanding schedule of monuments, museums and healthy (and carefully supervised!) “Tween” mayhem. At this juncture we are indeed grateful for many things and I feel compelled to express our family’s gratitude and to take the time to remind us all how truly fortunate we are to be part of the Stoneridge Children’s Montessori School community.

At Stoneridge we are blessed with compassionate, intelligent, enthusiastic teachers, with tireless, supportive administrators, and with gracious, generous, likeminded families that together make up the greater Stoneridge family.

Although we have been navigating some of the most challenging terrain of our lives, I have been struck, at every point of contact with the school (from conversations with Alan Feldman and Anne-Seymour St. John to every employee and family) by the palpable concern, kindness, and friendship that we as a community are so lucky to have at our core. This expression of solidarity has made our family’s dark times a little easier and the love that has been expressed in the constant stream of cards and letters from our daughter’s classmates is frankly beautiful and overwhelming. Stoneridge is a very special place indeed.

Sometimes it is difficult to convey what it is exactly that sets Stoneridge apart from the plethora of impressive school choices that present themselves to parents in greater Boston. I am not sure how one would craft a pitch for the school around what I have experienced, but for me the reality is that Stoneridge is a focal point for intelligent, engaged, warm, giving people who care deeply about children and each other.

After being at a bit of a distance (due to the demands of my daughter’s illness) and then coming back “into the fold”, I was reminded, in a very pleasant wave of rediscovery, just how exceptional Stoneridge is. Thank you to everyone that has expressed concern for us and thank you, Stoneridge Children’s Montessori School, for existing and continuing to draw extraordinary families from the North Shore. These are challenging times for the school in many ways and nothing in life is perfect or easy but Stoneridge is surely a sanctuary for us all.

We would like to thank especially Rick Boomer and Mary McCormack, who have guided our daughter back into her learning life with great care and compassion these past months. We will never forget your kindness.

## Introducing Our New Spanish Teacher

You may have seen a new person around the School these past weeks...one with an authentic Spanish accent! Marta Montaña Cortina grew up in Barcelona, Spain, and graduated from the Open University of Barcelona. She recently moved to Rockport. For the past month, Marta has been familiarizing herself with our Spanish program, sometimes teaching classes. She will be taking Jeannie’s place when Jeannie and her family head off to California this summer. We welcome Marta to the Stoneridge faculty!.

## Graduation

Alan Feldman

June 10, 6:00 pm

Graduation is a very special time for Stoneridge. It is the time the community recognizes our graduates, individually and as a group, and thereby our own work in sustaining Stoneridge. We are looking forward to celebrating this special day for Katy, Amelia, Mia, and Aaron.

We invite all families to join us on Wednesday, June 10 at 6:00 pm here at the School to celebrate. The Graduation ceremony, with musical performances and speeches by our MS students, is an important way of honoring our graduates and marking the accomplishments of the whole community. **We strongly encourage all UE families—children and parents—to attend so that you will experience this very impressive event, and so that you can look forward to your family’s own graduation ceremony.** Please mark this date on your calendar!

## Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast

Tracy Chait, S.P.A. Chair

June 3, 8:45 am

Did you volunteer at the Book Fair, Auction, Mitten Tree, or in any number of projects throughout the school year? If so, in recognition of your efforts, Tracy, Alan, and Camilla invite you to join them at the Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on Wednesday morning. Even if you have to rush off, please drop by the terrace or multi-purpose room (in case of rain) for a cup of coffee, light refreshments and a moment of appreciation. You have made such a difference to this school, and we want to celebrate the role you have played.



## Toddler House

Pam Richardson, Paulette Dettorre,  
Sarah Webber

The weather has been so great this spring that on many days we have been able to open our exterior classroom door during work periods and allow the toddlers to choose indoor or outdoor works. Outdoor works include getting water from a push button cooler, "painting" surfaces with brushes, scrubbing surfaces, use of a water-wheel, use of a miniature well pump, bubbles, a tea party set with table and two chairs, and sand cake molding. All interested toddlers have been busy planting and watering our flower boxes that are now full of pansies, petunias and dusty miller. Sometimes golfing and a tunnel are available. One day we had taste test as well as circle outside! What a treat!

Toddlers who will be entering Children's House in the fall have visited classrooms two or more times. These visits have been fantastic. They were given warm welcomes from the teachers and students and felt comfortable in choosing to explore works with an "upper class person," a fellow toddler, or on their own. A couple of the students were even able to receive a one on one work lesson from a Children's House teacher.

Recently, our food preparation work has switched to orange juicing. This month toddlers will be able to wash clothes and hang them to dry outside. They will have the opportunity to gently bath and dress a doll named Kyla. We have a delicate ceramic duck and three ducklings who nest inside for use by the children when singing, "Three Little Ducks Went Swimming One Day." We've been practicing several new finger plays including ones about bumble bees, a pigeon house, and a robin. On Wednesday, we finally took a walk through the woods, across the stream and to the field. Yippee!! Last week we spent an extended amount of time on the Children's House playground.

Please apply sunscreen to your child on sunny as well as overcast days, since we have increased the length of time the toddlers may potentially be outside. Also, please be

sure he or she is continuing to wear socks and supportive, comfortable, safe footwear. Thank you.

The year has flown by so fast. We have truly enjoyed the toddlers! Thank you so much for allowing us the opportunity to share their mornings with them. Have a fantastic summer together!



## Children's House

Linda Seeley, Thora Press, Alison Ney, Susan Bourgeois, Genevieve McHugh, Celia Soltis

**In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer quite the other way  
I have to go to bed by day.  
~Robert Louis Stevenson**

The end of the school year is fast approaching! We know summer will be here soon when certain events happen in our classrooms. The children had a wonderful time enjoying tea, lemonade, and handmade goodies with a special guest at Spring Tea. There was also singing and dancing, in our pajamas, with Hannah and Peter Stewart at Pajama Night. The Children's House classrooms are buzzing with activity, both indoors and outdoors, from painting to planting. Our doors to the backyard are open. The sandboxes have received a refill of new sand and children are happily digging. Remember that the sun can be very strong

during the time we are outdoors, so please send your child to school with a hat, and apply sunscreen. We will be outdoors as much as weather allows from now until the end of the year. As always, remember to check your child for ticks.

The Kindergarteners have just returned from their field trip to the Dunn Planetarium, where they saw a fun and informative show about our solar system. They are hard at work preparing the set and scenery for their upcoming play *The Dance of the Cosmos*, on Wednesday, June 9. Please arrive at 1:15 to see the performance. Children will go home after the show.

On June 3, the Kindergarteners have another field trip, this time to Appleton Farms for the Spring Awakenings program. They will have the opportunity to help in the vegetable fields, visit with the new calves and dig in the dirt for insects!

For people looking for a fun day trip this summer we recommend *The Butterfly Place*, located about an hour away in Westford, Ma. Their website is [www.butterflyplace-ma.com](http://www.butterflyplace-ma.com).

As the summer approaches we would like to thank you for your support and participation during the past school year and wish you a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable summer. We look forward to your return in the fall.



# This Month at Stoneridge

## Lower Elementary

Diane Sullivan and Heather Grice

This month, the Lower Elementary children visited the Joppa Flats Education Center on Plum Island in Newburyport, Mass. Audubon planned the morning for us and provided naturalists to teach about the habitats we would explore: dunes, barrier beaches and marshes. The children formed three small groups and followed an interesting adventure on a windy May morning. The wind turned out to be a great teacher on this trip since the wind is constantly changing the shape of the dunes.

We started out on the salt marsh. The children enjoyed jumping up and down on its sponge-like surface and feeling the peat marsh vibrate under their feet. They searched for tiny invertebrates (food for the birds) in the marsh grasses and found grass shrimp, mud snails and one tiny little horseshoe crab. We learned about the fish that live in the salt marsh pools and identified the mummichog in a sample of water from the pools provided by the naturalists.

We learned about the importance of beach grasses with their forty foot root system – they hold the sand dunes from blowing away. The children were able to construct a miniature sand dune on the beach and using available sticks and grasses, tested the strength of a dune. We also identified other plants on the dunes such as beach pea, dusty miller, beach plum, salt spray rose and bayberry.

Plum Island is a stopover along migration routes for many birds and also an important feeding and roosting areas for migratory shore birds. Specifically, we learned about the piping plover and its habit of laying its eggs right on the sand. A six mile stretch of beach on Plum Island is closed around nesting time, to protect this endangered species.

We were welcomed back to the Joppa Flats Education Center for lunch in a special room with spectacular views of the salt marsh for bird watching. Mass Audubon provided a marvelous experience for us with much learned by all. We hope to return to Joppa Flats again to participate in their wonderful nature programs.

## Spring Cleaning?

The Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is asking families to hold on to all kinds items that might otherwise be disposed of. The school will hold its first annual rummage sale next October and will sell kids items in good condition. So think of the school, and don't get rid of that old train table or bin of last year's clothes. Let family and friends know too! Help raise money for our children's school!

Thanks!



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CHILDREN'S MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## It's not too late...

Sign up for PlaySoccer or Summer Mornings at Stoneridge.

After our Memorial Day weekend taste-of-summer, reality is setting in. Summer is almost upon us! Your children all experienced the good humor and enthusiasm of the PlaySoccer coaches a few weeks ago when they came and taught soccer to all class levels during PE period. There are places in both the 4-6 age group and the 7-12 age group for PlaySoccer's week June 29-July 3. Please get your registration in by June 10 and bring your friends!

Registration for Summer Mornings at Stoneridge, a summer morning for 3-5 year olds is also ongoing, so please speak with Pat and fill out your registration form.

## Lost and Found

Did anyone find a pair of Burberry sunglasses lost at Stoneridge last week. Please turn in to Pat.

Many thanks.

## Joppa Flats

