

# HMS

## Monthly News

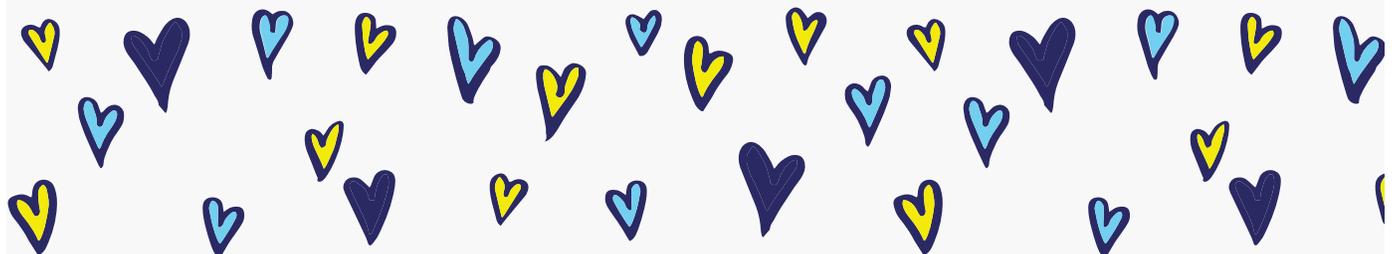
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ARTICLES, TIPS, PHOTOS, & MORE!



February 2021

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# ..... A Day in the Life ..... .....

Every year we auction off an opportunity for a student to be “Head of School” for the day. This is always a fun event, but the days leading up to it involve some creative planning and reflecting on my part. Which of my duties can be transferred to that of our student HOS? What parts of my day might be fun for them to take charge of? We have a few tried and true favorites: we usually do our monthly fire drill on that day, get take-out for lunch, and our new leader gets to go into each classroom to declare thirty extra minutes of recess.

One year a student sat in a planning meeting with me and gave really insightful feedback - another year a student found joy in inventorying all of our computers. No matter what the plan entails, at some point before the special day, I wonder to myself, *what do I do all day anyway?*

If you’ve ever peeked in my window and wondered the same, here’s a little snippet into a day in the life!



**5:00** My pets start their relentless routine in trying to wake me up. It usually works. I’ll start my day by shuffling downstairs and feeding my two dogs and two cats, and as they eat I scan my email and texts while still fantasizing about getting more sleep. If it’s Thursday morning, I get ready for the day. This is my early day and I get to help with morning drop off. I try to leave my house by 6:20 in order to get to HMS a bit before the morning childcare kids. On the other days, it’s not unusual for me to crawl back into bed for a quick snooze. I’m a firm believer in the power of sleep.

**6:15** Now I’m really up. I’ll go through my morning routine which involves showering, filling out my Covid screening, another round of emails (if there’s time I’ll respond, otherwise I’ll star them for later). It is not uncommon for me to have several conversations via text with my admin team before even leaving the house.

**7:45** On most days, if I’m able to get out the door before 8:00 I’ll treat myself to a stop at a coffee shop for a hot drink-usually a London Fog. I love heading to small businesses like Kimball Coffeehouse or the Harbor General Store, but I’ve also been known to head to Starbucks! My commute to work is about thirty minutes and I either use this time to think about the day ahead or listen to a book on audible.

**8:30** I arrive at school and am greeted by our parking lot drop off team. Their warm smiles and friendly hellos are a great way to start my day. Unless a teacher needs to meet with me before class starts, Quinci tries not to schedule anything for me before 9:00. I use this first thirty minutes to get settled in and get a lay of the land for the day. No matter what, I check in with Quinci and make sure we are on the same page about my day and my week.

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## **A Day in the Life (*continued*)**

**9:00** Each day is different, and this morning I have an hour blocked off without any meetings. With progress reports right around the corner, I put on my new reading glasses and start reviewing the reports. I am the second set of eyes that looks for typos, makes sure the content is clear, and it also allows me another glimpse into every classroom. Today I'm looking at the toddler reports and I can practically hear the busy, joyful noises of that room!

**10:00** My eyes grow tired just in time for my scheduled phone call with our Board Chair, Julie Thorn. Julie is incredibly supportive, generous with her time, and a great listener. She holds high expectations for the Board and for me. Julie also leads our Institutional Advancement subcommittee among the other things she does for the school. Today we are checking in about our monthly Board meeting, which usually lasts about two and a half hours. We meet over Zoom now and we all long for the days that we can be back in person and literally around the table together.

**10:30** I get up, stretch my legs, and then return to my desk. Sometimes someone will pop in with a quick question or to say hello, but usually I have some work time which can feature a variety of things: maybe it's returning emails, or following up on a request from a teacher. It might be drafting a newsletter article or an announcement. It could be working with Nikki on enrollment or observing a student. On this particular morning, I have the honor of observing in the Spruce classroom. The students are so comfortable in the classroom and when they get a glimpse of the trash truck rolling down the street, Miss Alyssa follows their enthusiasm. The whole class puts on their outdoor shoes and jackets and they head to the fence to wave at the driver! It's quite precious.

**11:15** I return to my office and look at more progress reports. This time I'm looking at Upper El. While very different than the toddler reports, there are some similarities - especially regarding autonomy, independence, and confidence!

**12:30** I'm getting hungry. As I head into the break room to retrieve my lunch, I once again feel a bit sad about this "new normal." What was once a bustling lunch time is now limited to two people in the staff room at a time. Many people have decided to change their routines and now they might leave campus, eat in their classrooms, or even eat in their cars. I worry that our teachers don't get to see each other socially enough and make a mental note to do something fun at our next virtual staff meeting (held every Wednesday at 4:00).

**1:00** I sit on three nonprofit boards; occasionally I'll have a meeting during the school day. Today, we have a subcommittee meeting for the American Montessori Society's Member Engagement committee. I close my door and pop onto Zoom. It's great to see everyone's faces and check in about ways we can support Montessori schools across the country. The meeting is brief, but our list of action items for the month is thorough. I'll be calling school heads in the Pacific Northwest this month to check on them and see how AMS can continue to support them during this challenging time.

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**2:00** Just as every morning is different, every afternoon is, too. On Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons I attend meetings with other Heads of School in our area. Tuesday is a meeting with our state advocacy group, Washington Federation of Independent Schools, Suzie Hanson, the Head of WFIS works directly with OSPI and the Governor's office to advocate for private schools. She always has important information to share with us during this pandemic. Wednesdays I meet with folks from the Northwest Association of Independent Schools. This is a more casual meeting and the topic changes weekly.

**3:00** I try to reserve time Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 3:00-4:30 for our teachers. I have standing bi-weekly meetings with Kelsey and Oxana as they are the team leaders for their levels. This is also the time of day that I do my best creative thinking. If I'm not meeting with a teacher, this is the time I will dig into a bigger project. Today I'm working on creating a shared database of our curriculum. We have had these documents in a raw format for quite a while. The teachers looked at the state standards and connected them to our curriculum. This is a big project that I'm chipping away at when I have any free time. I'm so excited for this new database as it will be beautiful and easily accessible for all of our teachers once it is finished.

**4:30** If I have an evening Zoom on the agenda, this is the magic time to dash out and get home so I can do that final Zoom from the couch! If there's nothing on my calendar for the evening, I'll most often stay and continue to work. Today is the latter. Gail, our Upper El teacher, is working late tonight (not unusual). I'll continue on my projects until she is ready to go.

**6:00** My commute home is usually less about thinking and more about unwinding. Instead of listening to a book I usually just listen to music.

**6:30** I've been trying hard to spend my non-meeting nights focused on my family. Whether that means it's my turn to make dinner, or it means playing a game, proofreading an essay, or, yes, watching TV, my goal is to be as present as possible. Some nights there's too much to do and so I hop back on the computer around 9:30. Other nights I just enjoy the family time.

One of my favorite things about my job is that every day is different. There are so many unknowns held loosely together by the outline of a structured routine. While not every surprise is a pleasant one, I can promise you, I'm never bored. When I host a student HOS, it is my sincere hope that they can see all the good things about this varied job, and who knows, down the road, maybe they will be the next Head of HMS.



**Aimee Allen**  
**Head of School**



Warmly,

*-Aimee*



As we enter the 39th year since Harbor Montessori School's inception, we are embracing change and offering an event that is on the cutting edge of technology! On **Wednesday, April 7th at 6:00PM** we are hosting our **FIRST EVER LIVE VIRTUAL FUNDRAISING AUCTION!** Not looking forward to adding one more Zoom meeting to your calendar? Good news—this is not just another meeting! This is going to be a truly **exciting and pivotal community extravaganza!** We promise you will not regret attending our auction; this event is definitely going to be calendar worthy!

Historically, we've partnered with Stokes Auction Group to ensure that we are offering an excellent auction experience when it comes to our live event. We were thrilled when they reached out to offer their new virtual auction option! We will have [full access](#) to a live streaming production studio that is staffed with the very best technology experts! Just wait until you see what our virtual auction experience has to offer—you're going to feel like we're right in your living room!

Last month we shared our 2021 Annual Auction theme. If you happened to miss our big reveal, our theme will be:

## **\*THE GREAT ESCAPE!\***

There will be two opportunities for you to score some awesome items (and support your very favorite non-profit)!

- **Let the Bids BEGIN! (the week leading up to our live event!):** We will be having a week-long online premiere item auction! There are a HUGE variety of items that will surely have something to interest everyone! This platform will allow our community the opportunity to browse and bid at their convenience prior to the live event.
- **Virtual Auction LIVE Items (the night of the event):** Sorry to keep you guessing but we can't give away ALL of our big secrets so soon, can we?! We are going to be dropping clues and hints as to what our 'LIVE Items' could be! Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming announcements. You are **definitely** going to want to be sure you are following us on social media! All that we will share for now is that all of our **\*big ticket items\*** will give you the chance to get out, explore, ESCAPE and enjoy all that the PNW has to offer. There will be an emphasis on: Local getaways, adventure, relaxation, rejuvenation and experiencing some truly beautiful venues!

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Now to the heart of this correspondence-- **Where do the proceeds go that are raised at this Annual Fund Auction?**

Tuition covers 88% of our operating budget; the other 12% comes directly from our Annual Fund Campaign in the fall, our Annual Auction in the spring and any outside grants we receive.

One of the most important ways you can make a positive impact on our school is to **participate**. Any Annual Fund monies raised throughout the year contribute to general operations and helps us continue to offer a high quality program for your children. The money raised provides HMS the flexibility to address current needs and seize future opportunities when they arise. As a non-profit dedicated to serving our students, we greatly depend on annual fundraising. In addition to general operational needs of the school, monies raised will give students and teachers additional opportunities that our yearly budget cannot cover.

Lastly, even if you are unable to financially participate at this particular event, please still consider joining us! We want to COMMUNITY BUILD! We want to help you GET AWAY! We want to have FUN TOGETHER and ENTERTAIN! Most importantly, we want to provide the perfect opportunity for CONNECTION!

Stay tuned for more details as our auction nears and as always, we appreciate each and every one of you!

Warmly,

*-Nikki*

**Nikki Hemphill**  
**Director of Admissions**  
**& Advancement**



**We need your help!!**

We are looking for someone to donate a long weekend at their favorite getaway.

Do you have a beach house? An airBNB in the mountains?

A peaceful cottage?

A condo in the heart of Seattle?

Help us to help one lucky family safely get away!

We are looking for something in state if possible. Email [nikki@harbormontessori.org](mailto:nikki@harbormontessori.org)



# Promoting Self-Expression Through Journaling

**by Nazzy Fardi, Aspen Room Teacher**

If you were to walk into the lower elementary classroom every morning you will see students starting their day journaling. I don't think our students are aware they are participating in a historical act that has been around for many centuries.

Journaling has been practiced for ages. The earliest example is from the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Often called "pocket notebooks," the journals of many famous people are preserved in institutions around the world. E.g. Albert Einstein's 5,000 documents were bequeathed to Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Charles Darwin's notebooks record his thoughts and observations including sketches of an evolutionary tree, new species identification, and notes on geology, and they are available through University of Cambridge, England. Frida Kahlo, Mexican artist, illustrated her journal with future works of art, wrote musings and described personal feelings over relationships and deteriorating health. In 2005 Carlos Fuentes published a color recreation of her journal. Leonardo da Vinci left more than 7,000 pages of notes and illustrations. He also recorded personal reminders. The British Library has published a digitized copy "Codex Arundel."

Unlike diary writing, which records observations of daily events, journaling is expressive personal writing. It's writing not so much about what happened, but what the writer thinks and feels about what happened. Feelings are expressed from the mind and heart, without regard to the form, spelling, grammar, punctuation, or other writing conventions. It may link the writer to scenarios involving relationships to others, the past, or visualization of the writer's future.

Journaling is a powerful tool and a perfect forum for students to channel their feelings and emotions. It allows for self expression and offers many benefits to children of all ages. The following list highlights some of these benefits:

- Helps children work through "little and big feelings".
- It can help children explore and identify their emotions.
- Children gain an insight into their own motives and the motives of others.
- It is an outlet for things that are difficult to express or uncomfortable to share.
- It can help kids be present minded and reflect on what is happening today.
- It allows children to gain insight into their own motives and the motives of others.
- Children can examine the pros and cons of something to help them make a decision;
- It enhances creativity.
- It allows for the process of ideas and dreams.
- Improves reading and writing skills, together with communication skills.
- Students can examine the pros and cons of something to help them make a decision.
- It can help children investigate and explore new ideas

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### At what age should my child start journaling?

Children can start journaling as early as they can draw pictures or write out complete sentences.

If they feel more comfortable with drawing pictures as a form of journaling, then encourage that! Some children have a hard time writing out what they feel, so drawing it feels better.

It doesn't matter whether they write out their feeling in art or writing form—the point is that they are expressing their feelings through an action, and that in and of itself is therapeutic and helpful for their emotional and mental health.

### Types of Journals your Kids May Love:

- **Prompt Journal** - A prompt journal gives students an idea of something to write and can be as little as one sentence about their day.
- **Gratitude Journal** - Jotting down a sentence or two about what you are grateful for can lead to a more positive attitude. A gratitude journal will focus your kid's attention on all the positive things in their life. This journal is absolutely gorgeous and it helps kids discover.
- **Travel Journal** - Students can create a collection of memories of places they have visited and explored.
- **Art Journal** - Pen, Pencil, felt, anything you can put to paper. An art journal gives you an outlet without having to actually write. You can sketch, draw, or paint. The possibilities are endless – and it's a great starter journal for younger kids.
- **Nature Journal** - Nature journals allow children to slow down, relax and focus. It encourages observation and allows children to use their senses. It allows kids to form a connection to the natural world.

Watching children take on journaling daily is a beautiful vision. I hope the above information inspired you to take on journaling with your young ones.

*"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."* -Anne Frank



# Parent Grove Presents



## **How Do We Love HMS? Let Us Count the Ways....**

By Elia Grogan and Giovanna Franklin, Maple Room Parents

We love the...

1. Harbor Montessori sign that welcomes us each new day
2. Our friendly dedicated teachers and staff
3. Closeness of the Community
4. Campus that continues to grow and improve
5. Music of Senor Carlos and Mr. Peterson which emanates throughout the buildings and outdoors
6. Play Structures and Swings
7. Community Garden
8. Hand Painted Rocks
9. Lower Field with its offerings to explore nature, small creatures, and be with our classmates
10. Birthday Ceremonies – “The Earth Goes Around the Sun the Sun, the Earth Goes Around the Sun...”
11. Morning Circle
12. Work Mats which provide us opportunities to explore new lessons with classmates or on our own
13. Apple Tree
14. Nutsy the Squirrel!
15. Working with Beads and Sand Letters
16. Lessons Led by Teachers
17. Being able to attend from a wee baby up through middle school
18. Solid COVID Protocols which keep us safe
19. Generosity of our parents who continually support the school and staff
20. Summer Camp

We could go on and on and on, but this newsletter submission would get very long! What do YOU love about HMS? During these challenging times, we encourage you to take a moment and think about what you as parents love about HMS. Also, ask your children what they love about their school!



# Board Corner

Happy February!

I can't believe we're already past what always feels like the longest month of the year! If I look back to last year at this time, we were just starting to learn about the pandemic and I don't think ANYONE expected what would shortly follow.

Over the past year, the Board has met for countless hours with Aimee evaluating the circumstances and making decisions in the best interest of students, families and long-term sustainability of the school. There were certainly times where we weren't sure what the future would look like, especially if schools were expected to stay closed for a long period of time. As a non-profit, we rely heavily on tuition and fundraising efforts like the auction and the annual fund to keep the school running. With the school closures, classroom size restrictions, additional PPE/sanitization requirements, having to cancel last year's auction, and so many more unexpected circumstances, our focus as a Board has been to continue to uphold the our fiduciary responsibility for the school. The circumstances also meant exploring some other financial resources, including grants. While we were eligible for the PPP loan (which was recently 100% forgiven!), many of the financial resources were to be used for very specific things – it wasn't just "free money."

Over the past year, Nikki and Quinci have secured 7 grants, totaling over \$42,000 for our school!! These financial resources range from matching money the school spent on reopening supplies, to mortgage and utilities relief, to payroll, technology, cleaning supplies and PPE. We are so grateful for their steadfast commitment to thinking outside the box, putting together loads of paperwork and collecting this money for our school. We look forward to the rest of the year with a renewed commitment to thinking outside the box and exploring other financial resources in the future. If you know of any specific grants that we should look into, please let Nikki know! On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees, a HUGE thank you to Nikki and Quinci for all of their continued work on these efforts!

We look forward to "seeing" you all virtually at the auction this spring!

Julie Thorn

**This month's staff contributor:**



**Julie Thorn**  
**Board Chair**



**Nazy Fardi**  
**Lower Elementary Teacher**