



CASCADE Family Learning Society®

E 153, 7th Cross Street, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600090

<http://cascadefls.org> Tel: 044-24917644

Dear parents

September to November 2018 was time for reunion and euphoria! Changes were introduced in the classroom culture with systems that promoted inner discipline. Parents adapted these at home also and reinforced these changes. We became stronger and vibrant in understanding the working of such a network of families invested in education. Mentally and functionally, we are growing as much as the children. We are grateful to the bountiful blessings that CASCADE Family Learning Society has received as a Learning Cooperative from the Almighty, besides copious wishes from good hearts and admirers of this model.

Vidya Shankar

Founder

CASCADE Family Learning Society

Dr. Maria Montessori speaks:

“Let us leave the life free to develop within the limits of the good, and let us observe this inner life developing. This is the whole of our mission.” (Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook)

Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.” (Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook)



Upcoming Events

December 20

Christmas celebrations @2:30 pm

December 13

Infant and Toddler environment inauguration.

January 11

Pongal celebrations @ 2:30 pm

Important Announcements

Montessori trained Elementary teachers are welcome to visit and volunteer on scheduled days – contact us at cascadefls@gmail.com

Materials of this season:

Elementary : Lowest Common Multiplies: Pegs and board

Peg board, box of hierarchically coloured pegs, little sticks, tickets or mathematical alphabet, squared paper

This is a simple, sensorial introduction to lowest common multiples. The idea is to reinforce the concept of multiples first, by placing the number of pegs on the board as the chosen number, under each of the tickets. When they meet at a point, it becomes the first meeting point that is given to them as the Lowest Common Multiple.



News In the Community

CASCADE FLS has been declared a **Green School** by *Namma Ooru Foundation*, after a series of assessments. We compost all our kitchen and food wastes; recycle all paper, plastic and other dry wastes; and have reduced the overall consumption of plastic materials. Even our donors are well aware that we do not accept plastic wrapped items meant for children of CASCADE Montessori rural resource centres; these include toys or exotic and expensive items.

We are now attempting to facilitate green practices for CASCADE Families as well, by creating awareness programs and providing for collection of their dry waste with a local recycler. Families can drop their clean dry waste with a small token fee to our office, compost their waste with the 2 bins (courtesy of *Namma Ooru Foundation*), and have their homes declared as zero waste.

Casa - MOVABLE ALPHABETS

"To make himself heard, man no longer depended on the volume of his voice. With the alphabet he could be heard from one continent to another, from yesterday to tomorrow. He could reach people distant in space and in time. Without uttering a sound—in silence—his thoughts could be heard all over the world at the same time."

- Mario Montessori, quoting his mother

Learning to write is miraculous. It transformed human culture and it will transform the child. Did you know that ability to create words (writing) actually develops before the ability to read them does? It's obvious when you think about it; it's easier to create a code than to crack one. This means that, long before a child can write letters with a pencil, s/he can create them with the prepared alphabet! Our alphabets let children gain experience with written language at the age when it fascinates their brain!

- Limited selection of symbols (letters only, no numbers or other graphical symbols) empowers children to find the sound they seek
- Letters can be housed in an egg carton (traditional alphabet) or our craft box (traditional or phonogram alphabet)

We recommend offering the traditional Movable Alphabet alongside the Phonogram Alphabet. This gives children all of the key sounds of English. They are then able to phonetically create every sound in our language, and any word they are inspired to write. Use the red and black alphabets for phonogram and word study. The child's ability to spell will refine naturally as reading experience grows.



Highlights of the Quarter:

- ✓ Our Upper Elem and Adolescent children visited the Jamunamarthur rural centre in September and November with parents. They experienced true rural living and the joys of being one with nature.
- ✓ Study circles and parent education sessions were very well attended. Eager parents asked questions, and shared their experiences and new revelations after their CASCADE entry.
- ✓ On 21 September, a potluck and night-stay were the highlight for our children who danced their day away. Parents, too, shook a leg and feasted on the delicacies asking for more!!
- ✓ October admissions happened with a puja. We have now closed admissions for the Elementary till June 2019, due to the children moving up from Casa through the year.
- ✓ In September, we celebrated our 20th Anniversary and released two Tamizh books that our staff, Sri C Prasanna Bharathi, has authored.

PHOTO GALLERY



Inside our classrooms



Lab work by adolescents group.

Electrical classes for 9+ students.

Community snack preparation at CASA.

Peer learning by topic presentations.

Jostling to take work home 😊

Sri Jayaraman, a parent, giving a session on Snakes to elementary group before a visit to the Snake park.



Coming in

Namma Ooru Foundation offered their expertise and, along with our students, created a grow bag garden full of veggies. We have started harvesting its benefits

already. We were declared a Green school after a series of assessments by Namma Ooru Foundation, on 1 September

2018.

Renowned Bakery expert Smitha Kuttaya gave a demo on vegan cake-making in Sep '18.



- Limit shelf materials and options – keeping in mind rotation possible.
- Convert play room into guest room.!!
- Library of books and play material excess destroys curiosity and creates mind clutter. They stop seeking!

Featured Study Sircles:

On Sep 27th we had an elaborate session on the **Summary of home visits made by guides**, with recommendations for transitioning homes into child friendly spaces. The changes required in each part of the house were discussed. Parents were encouraged to draw their floor plans and provide for child access to materials that they could use by themselves.

Order

- Casa - kind of order.
 - Spatial: Establishing and being consistent about a set up.
 - Functional: set up contains all materials from start to finish as much as possible and the rest of items accessible in an allotted space.
- Elem – they can pick up and assemble from various places – it's a challenge.

Allotment of space, equipment for the child:

- Living room
 - No TV
 - No sofa
 - Chairs and mats
 - Play room – not a great idea – children want to be with and around adults.
 - Living room can be equipped with some books and board games

- Bedroom
 - Floor mats, dim light with switch access to children
 - Low shelf, books to read and sleep by themselves.
 - No rocking or 'putting to sleep' – just read one story or sing one song.
 - A clear demarcated sleeping place.
 - Habit of folding up the bed and sheets (watch out for optimal size) after they wake up.
 - Early waking up possibility, sound and light disturbances
 - Elem no waking up. They should wake up to realise their tardiness.
- Puja room
 - Lighting – lamp or agarbathi
 - Puja flowers
 - Access to make eye contact with the alter idols or pictures.
- Kitchen
 - One child size – 2'x2' table with cutlery, cutting washing equipment
 - Elem children can have stove and oven access after demonstration
 - Cleaning and washing access – to soap and towels, drying arrangement for vessels and cloth, sponge.

- Bathroom
 - o Toilet
 - o Washing, arrangement of brushes /bathes
 - o Soap – washing and bathing
 - o Towel hanger
 - o Changing area, access to clothes
 - Decision on clothes
 - Limited options

- Hangers and clips – where kept?
- Folding area - a table in the bedroom to fold clothes
- o Vessels
 - Neat sponge, wash liquids, drain dirt removal facility
- o Shoes
 - Polishing materials, wiping cloths and rack
- o Cycle
 - Washing and drying materials in the balcony.

Comfort, adequate covering, plain, ease of wear and removal, rotation considerations

- Balcony
 - o Purpose it serves ?
 - o No clutter
 - o Child access
 - o Beautify with plants even if it is a service verandah
 - o Small wash basin provision
 - o Washing area
- Clothes

- Garden work
 - o Sprayer, cutter, tray, spade, small basin, pots and seed supplies (by children, when they cut veggies and fruits)
- General house cleaning and arrangement
 - o Cleaning cloth, dusting brushes, pans, cobweb removing sticks of two sizes.

Family Programs: View the Deepavali program videos here – <https://goo.gl/7Q3XBH>



Navarathri and Deepavali celebrations were held with full gusto. Casa and Elementary students visited almost all homes for Navarathri. They thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality and camaraderie.

Children chanted slokams and Devi Ashtakam for Navarathri.

Deepavali celebrations included a Villupaattu in Tamizh on the significance of the festival in South India, and a Hindi skit on the victory of Lord Rama over Ravana.

**ART BY CASCADE CHILDREN:
3 D Painting by Maitreyi R (13 years)**



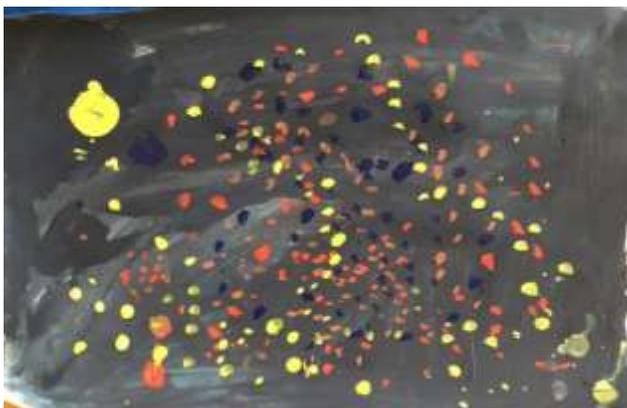
Peacock duo by Stuti (8.5 years)



Peacock by S. Ramya (10 years)



Symmetry in alphabets (Cascade Elementary)



Night star gaze – CASCADE Elementary

Age-Appropriate Chores for Children



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Ages 2-3

- Put toys in toy box
- Stack books on shelf
- Place dirty clothes in laundry hamper
- Throw trash away
- Carry firewood
- Fold washcloths
- Set the table
- Fetch diapers & wipes
- Dust baseboards

Ages 4-5

- Feed pets
- Wipe up spills
- Put away toys
- Make the bed
- Straighten bedroom
- Water houseplants
- Sort clean silverware
- Prepare simple snacks
- Use hand-held vacuum
- Clear kitchen table
- Dry and put away dishes
- Disinfect doorknobs

Ages 6-7

- Gather trash
- Fold towels
- Dust mop floors
- Empty dishwasher
- Match clean socks
- Weed garden
- Rake leaves
- Peel potatoes or carrots
- Make salad
- Replace toilet paper roll

Ages 8-9

- Load dishwasher
- Change light bulbs
- Wash laundry
- Hang/fold clean clothes
- Dust furniture
- Spray off patio
- Put groceries away
- Scramble eggs
- Bake cookies
- Walk dogs
- Sweep porches
- Wipe off table

Ages 10-11

- Clean bathrooms
- Vacuum rugs
- Clean countertops
- Deep clean kitchen
- Prepare simple meal
- Mow lawn
- Bring in mail
- Do simple mending (hems, buttons, etc.)
- Sweep out garage

Ages 12 and up

- Mop floors
- Change overhead lights
- Wash/ vacuum car
- Trim hedges
- Paint walls
- Shop for groceries w/list
- Cook complete dinner
- Bake bread or cake
- Do simple home repairs
- Wash windows
- Iron clothes
- Watch younger siblings

The GeoVidyaa Geography Centre – Chennai (GVGC) is a collaboration between Relief Foundation and The Institute of Geographical Studies, Bengaluru (<http://tigs.in>). Initiated in 2014, it is growing rapidly! Cascade children are embracing geography study with great zeal. The Primary group has taken to geography study as naturally as 'ducks to water.' Their daily activities invariably include geography study using maps and atlases, and asking questions.

The elementary group engages with geography just as naturally, and their inquisitiveness comes out particularly when they watch various documentaries.

We also conducted a 12-session course called "Developing the Geographer's Eye" for Montessori teachers in Chennai. In this course, teachers engaged with geography in innovative ways, away from the usual textbook approach to the subject. This course inspired a replication of the same effort in Bengaluru also.

Beginning in February 2019, we will be offering another iteration of the course. It will be called *Geography for Life* (GfL). The course will have 10 sessions, once per month on the second Saturday. It is open to anyone aged 12 years and above ... students, parents, teachers, and anyone interested in exploring a world of ideas. More details at: <https://goo.gl/LdYZfr>

OUR STUDENTSPARTICIPATE IN A SPECIAL PROJECT



Muttusvami Dikshitar (1775-1835)

Under the aegis of the GVGC, the adolescent group is participating in an innovative project to make a documentary on *geography and its connections to the compositions of Muttusvami Dikshitar (1775-1835)*, one of the acclaimed trinity of Karnataka (aka Carnatic) music. Dr. Chandra Shekhar Balachandran, geographer, TIGS, Bengaluru is guiding this project. For this, two of our Adolescent students are working with three homeschooling students. They have been studying many aspects of this topic for the past quarter.

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