**MCH Sixth Grade Exit Project: The Island Project 2015-16**

Teacher: Nicole Champoux

**Goals & Objectives**

***Overview***

**The Sixth Grade Island Project is a culminating experience for students in their final year at Montessori Children’s House. All of their experiences are drawn together and brought to a close through this year-long undertaking. While each Sixth Grader student creates his/her own project, the fact that all of the Sixth Grader are on similar journeys provides many opportunities for community building, shared work and shared strength. The Island Project is an opportunity for Sixth Graders to showcase their proficiencies and bring their Elementary experience to its completion with a tremendous accomplishment.**

***The Ability to Do Big Work***

**The Island Project is a monumental undertaking and requires a tremendous commitment. It incorporates a great deal of thinking, reading, writing and creativity. First, the student pictures the world, and everything they’ve learned about it over the years. Then they select a longitude and latitude – an actual location on the globe – where they will spend the academic year creating a place from scratch. Once a location has been selected, the student is committed to it and it cannot be changed.**

**The project happens in segments over the course of the school year. Each distinct task lasts anywhere from two to eight weeks. Students must manage their own time and efforts in order to accomplish each segment; each task feels large and important due to the student’s on-going investment in it.**

**The Island Project tackles big concepts and requires big effort. Students directly address some of the most important concepts in global development and survival, like the confluence of geography, culture and economics. This work brings the hypothetical/imaginary (yet complex) world of the student’s Island directly into the modern world of current events and ethics.**

***Independence***

**Each student must choose a unique geographical location. This means that they have sole responsibility to independently research the geographical, biological, historical, cultural, economical and sociopolitical aspects of the region in which they’ve placed their island and the country upon which they have modeled it.**

**The Island Project papers that are handed to the students include all of the descriptions, tasks and due dates. Each student is on an individual journey, with many long and short term goals and objectives throughout the year.**

***Collaboration***

**Although each student’s Island Project is a unique and solo endeavor, the project involves frequent opportunities for students to work together. They work together in seminar-like discussions, grappling with a wide variety of complex and sophisticated ideas. Students talk together, share articles, help each other, and give each other formal and informal feedback on their writing. They participate in each other’s projects and present together at the end-of-the-year Island Night. Throughout the process, they become aware that they are dependent upon one another, essential contributors to the learning community.**

**Island Project Management Overview Time Frame**

***September 1-18 - Research***

1. **Discover and take notes on facts about existing islands, including information on population, religions. The Internet is a key source; students use teacher-provided websites and also share their own discoveries.**
2. **Prepare mini-reports that compare and contrast information about the existing islands.**
3. **Research in more depth about specific islands. Prepare and present brief (5 minute) presentations to the group, including graphics.**

***Sept. 25- October 2 - Commitment to a Location***

1. **Research and think – using books, the Internet, your own interests and preferences**
2. **Choose a latitude and longitude**
3. **Select a working name for the island (not for the political entity it may later become)**
4. **Complete an investigation of the actual country nearest to the student’s island, using the CIA World Factbook. This helps the student make a reality- and fact-based island project**
5. **Submit a proposal that details the location and biome of an imaginary island**

***October-November: Creation of the Island’s Geography (due November 30, 2015)***

1. **Model of the Island - Three-dimensional model of the Island’s geography (made of ceramics, to be painted and labeled later)**
2. **Geological History - A series of illustrations, graphics, plate tectonics maps, diagrams, and/or other visuals explaining how the Island was formed and how it changed over time**
3. **Topography Map of the Island – One precise topographical map and a visual display of the topography (can be a collage or set of illustrations)**
4. **Biome Map of the Island showing animal and natural plant life of the Island, includes key**
5. **Global Context Map – One Map showing Island’s location on the globe, the surrounding waters and currents, nearest neighboring countries, trade routes. This map offers an illustration of the Island in its global context**
6. **Human Impact Map - One map showing the location of human settlements, roads, rivers, railroads and major landmarks, with a key (hand-drawn)**
7. **Economic Resources Map – One map showing industry, natural resources, agriculture and livestock (hand-drawn and stamped)**

***November-January: Formal Writing Projects (students will progress through the Formal Writing Process)***

1. **The Cultures of Your Part of the World: A Formal Writing Process Report, Non-Fiction (minimum 500 words) – due December 10, 2015**
2. **A Creation Myth: A Formal Writing Process Report, Fiction (minimum 500 words) – due January 18, 2016**

***January- February: History (due February 29, 2016)***

1. **Timeline of events on the Island from 2000 B.C.E to present day (on paper, in PowerPoint, or other technology-based format) with narratives to accompany 10 key dates/events/people represented on the timeline.**
2. **A written account of a key upheaval in the development of the Island, for example a natural disaster, war, arrival of an outside culture, or other (minimum 300 words). Must include the following information:**
   1. **Detailed account of the upheaval**
   2. **The situations that confronted the Island’s people in connection with the upheaval**
   3. **The possible outcomes of their various choices**
   4. **The choices they made**
   5. **The outcomes of their decisions, both short and long-term results**

***Alternate to written account: an original script for a student-performed skit that contains, in a dramatic way, all of the above information (to be performed at Island Night)***

1. **Biographies of two fictional people from the following list:**
   1. **Political leader/ruler from the Island’s history**
   2. **Educator and/or scientist**
   3. **Artist**
   4. **Musician**
   5. **Spiritual leader**

***One of these biographies must be a formal writing project (minimum 300 words). The other may be a formal writing project, an interview, a video of a famous speech given by the person, or a PowerPoint presentation.***

***March-April: The Arts and Culture (due April 29, 2016)***

1. **Design and create a flag (may be state, local, or national; must be at least 30”x20”) and write a description of the different meanings embedded in the flag (30-50 words)**
2. **Choose at least 3 of the following:** 
   1. **Dance: a choreographed dance that is the result of collaboration with other students**
   2. **Traditional Housing Model from the Island, with written description/explanation (100-150 words)**
   3. **Traditional Cuisine: create and test a recipe for a significant food that is traditionally served on the Island**
   4. **Visual Art: Choose two artistic forms of expression in the Island’s society, illustrate or construct examples and write 40-50 word explanations**
   5. **Write a national anthem (using music that is original or “borrowed” from another national anthem)**

***May: Prepare All Work for Presentation***

1. **Create a 10-15 minute presentation for Island Night**

***Present and Celebrate: Island Night on May 13, 2016***