

COMMUNITY NEWS

Stone-Soup story turns into reality for Montessori

By Don Decker,
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Montessori students and their teachers came together to make the best soup ever served on Yavapai-Apache Nation on Friday, November 16. This wonderful soup put together by the students and teachers involved peeling the carrots, the potatoes, chopping and dicing up the different vegetables. The students were carefully supervised and of course, the teachers handled all of the hot pots on the stove.

The Stone-soup recipe calls for potatoes, chopped celery, an onion, small pieces of cauliflower, some salt, some pepper, a loaf of bread, a tomato and some kernels of corn, peas and a loaf of bread.

The Stone Soup is

a great folk story-tale that has its origins in Europe and the source is attributed to different groups of people such as Scandanavian, Finnish and other countries. No one takes the credit for the story as its interpretation is fused into the stories of the people and their culture. A sort of story about Dutch-oven biscuits in the wild west.

The rest is left to the imagination of course and the Montessori students share this story with visitors like this writer who is the "stranger" arriving in their village. The students then ask questions of the visitor, "What is your name?", "What is your last name?", "Your first name?" "Do you like vegetables?" (yes!!) and so forth.

The story starts with some hungry travelers

arriving in a village and two individuals want to share a meal with the villagers. Soon, large numbers of people are enlisted to donate vegetables from their homes (in this case, some veggies from the refrigerator at the Montessori School).

The Montessori students were seated at a table decorated in a Thanksgiving theme with symbols of Thanksgiving on the placemats sandwiched between laminated plastic sheets and each student had a "Turkey" made from a Styrofoam cup that had plastic eyes and colored feathers glued to the cups. It was very ingenious of the students to render such varied renditions of the decorated cup. Montessori stresses individuation in the development of the personality.

How to Make Your Own Stone Soup

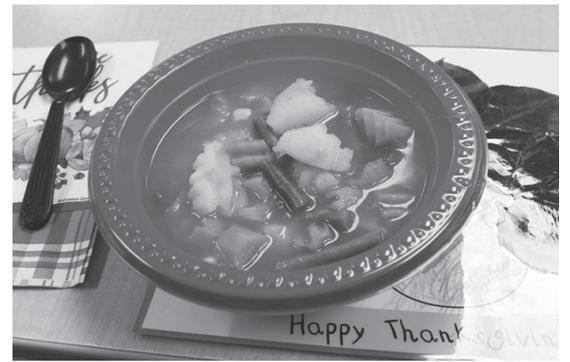
one large stockpot
a group of friends
one stone the size of an egg
two quarts of water
one quart of tomato juice
several carrots
an onion
a couple of potatoes
a couple of stalks of celery
a cup of peas

a cup of corn kernels
a tomato
a bunch of green beans
small pieces of broccoli
small pieces of cauliflower
a quarter-cup of uncooked pasta
a tablespoon of salt
a quarter-teaspoon of pepper
a loaf of bread
sharing

After the students offered a prayer of thanks under the direction of teacher Felisa McGavock, our food was served by the rest of the teachers. Teacher, Eva Ancira, also served the students (and the great pumpkin pie with the whip cream on top). In the other room, Christy Mejares, Santee Spurgeon and Maria Noguez-McClain served their students as well.

This was an opportunity to sit at a table in a semi-formal setting with the plastic utensils, napkins and soup bowls lined along with our juice cups. Ms. Ancira also served the hottest chili in the world (which was not in the original European recipe from the mid-1700s!) who made this writer gasping for air and a glass of apple juice immediately!

It is the Montessori educational experience



High impact veggies.



Stone Soup soon



Eating healthy

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DOCTORATE

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the help they were getting and the administration's perception on how they were addressing the needs of English language learners in the schools.

Mrs. Bilagody became Dr. Bilagody on May of 2014 after completion of her doctoral dissertation. The title of her dissertation "The Perceptions of Parents, Teachers, and Principals of American Indian English Language Learners and Teaching Strategies That Address ELL Learning Needs: A Multi-vocal Qualitative Study". It is not an easy process to obtain confirmation of the degree as a board of professors grill each candidate on the results of their studies and often, this can be contentious.

When she first

returned after obtaining her doctorate, Dr. Bilagody taught at the prestigious Dine' College (Tuba City branch) on the Navajo Reservation. And to her surprise, she recalls seeing her former students attending the college who were from the Tuba City schools where she had seen last seen them as 3rd graders.

Courtney Scott, a Yavapai-Apache Nation member and a former school teacher-administrator remembers Dr. Bilagody as an elementary student when Mr. Scott taught in the schools in Tuba City years ago. A small world.

Dr. Bilagody gives much of the credit to her parents who taught her the values that she still uses in her profession today. "My mother was not raised traditionally

(in the Navajo culture), she is a Christian

(which) kind of instilled those values in us as children. We go to the Assembly of God Church here. My husband (a Navajo) was raised more traditionally-so we kind of try to balance that for our kids," she said. The Bilagodys have 4 children with one at the university level.

Dr. Bilagody's husband, Michael, is a retired Marine but also is a certified teacher at Hopi Junior Senior High School in Keams Canyon 70 miles east where he commutes to each day.

Dr. Bilagody's brother, Brent Engle, Jr. who resides in Tuba City, is a teacher as well.

Dr. Bilagody is in the top management of her school district as a principal of a school and supervising 45 staff members each day. From the school nurse,

the janitors and to all of the teachers. A school principal has to know everything, especially the school's budget and every quirk about the students she interacts with each day.

"I think the best thing about my job is being able to interact with my students on a daily basis. Knowing that I'm able to be here and welcome them—to let them know that this place belongs to them—that it is an important place and that we're happy that they are here," she said about her profession as a principal.

Every other Friday, there is "PD" - Professional Development she says. That's when the teachers get together with the principal and go over problem areas and finding ways to upgrade or improve teaching standards and strategies to

serve the student body.

The day of this visit for the interview, teachers were arriving for their 3 hour PD (Professional Development) training on a Friday afternoon right after lunch. Promptly at 1 p.m. teachers were scurrying toward the training site while looking at their watches. This is what Dr. Bilagody requires: professionalism and being on time.

"It's great to come back. In a certain way, my duty is to give back to my community-to my people. I know just about every student, the children. It's hard to go away to school. Time flies-it goes quickly. Tuba City will always be here," said Dr. Bilagody.

Dr. Bilagody is the homespun lady and held in high esteem in the community. "Our families are intercon-

nected; it's easier to have buy-in and people know already who you are, where I come from and what I stand for. I think it's easier to promote what you think is good for education for our children," she finally said.

Editor's notes: Dr. Bilagody's aunts are Linda Harnett (Camp Verde), Brenda

Engle - Fenton (Middle Verde), Rhonda Chicharello (Ft. McDowell), Shirley Bonnaha Coffman (Camp Verde) and Joanie Bonnaha (deceased).

Her uncles are Irvin Bonnaha (Paulden), Hubert Bonnaha (Prescott) and Allen Bonnaha (deceased) and her paternal grandparents were Wilson and Florence Engle.

YAN News photo

NO TO DRUGS

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our community that we don't want no more alcohol, no drugs, no violence on our reservation. I want to be able to feel free and to have our children to play with them, (not) being worried about getting hurt and so it's good that we came together strong and let the community know that we're not putting up with it (drug problems) anymore."

Genevieve Datsi (YAN council member)- "The community came

together in response to the drugs, crime and violence that is rampant in the Tunlii community and so as leaders, we are taking a stand to let community members know that we stand with them."

Nancy Guzman (YAN council member)- "It was needed a long time ago. When I was campaigning (During the most recent tribal election) I had a couple of ladies tell me that they feared living in this community because of the drug use and hopefully, this will release some of

that fear--that community and tribal council is finally standing up. I hate drugs!"- (With emphasis).

Amanda Honwyte (YAN council member)- "It allowed us to take a stance against the Drugs, Crime and Violence in our Community. To show we will no longer sit quietly and watch our children, families, communities and Nation suffer.

We will be doing walks in other communities.

I hope that this protest walk led by the trib-

al leaders will grow and more community members will join in.

Thanks for coming!!"

Sylvia Jackson (YAN elder)- "It was wonderful time together and our community would like to see us clean and sober, and going in that direction because that's what God wants us to be. HE helps each one of us even though we are doing bad, but yet, we all love our community, we love our people, we want to see our people clean and doing the right thing."

Bertina Honwyte (YAN member)- "I think

it's good; it's healing for the Nation, our community and to show the little kids that we support them and we're trying to protect them, especially the elders as well. So, we come together as one, we can stand as one and make a change for the better. It just shows that we love our community."

Becky Jackson (YAN member)- "I think it's great, it's positive, it shows our people that what the YAPD are not to blame and that there are bunch of us that don't like the drugs that's going around. It's affect-

ing a lot of families."

Robin Hazlewood (YAN member) "I think it's good to do the walking for the Nation, for our community because drugs are so out of control and some of our people need help and they have issues with drugs and it's tearing the families and the kids apart."

A healthy pancake breakfast with fruit was shared among all of the participants.