

November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

***“The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living”***

***Marcus Tullius Cicero***

The day is finally here! And we keep on celebrating this old tradition that has slowly made its way to reach the American culture. You can feel and see how much this celebration has grown and it's getting stronger every year with events that you can find in museums and libraries all over the city of Chicago and the suburbs. Painted skulls have been a huge hit among Plato students in every presentation, drawings, games, masks, or candy; and it's been a great opportunity to teach a bigger lesson about cultural traditions, tolerance, respect, and even death.

Although both Halloween and The day of the dead are associated with skulls, they are, as I've mentioned before, very different from one other. Where in Halloween is known for the frightening skulls, for the Day of the Dead the Calaveras are often artistically decorated in bright colors and smiling faces. They are decorated so the kids don't fear the dead. It's to make it more accepting of the dead, this is why skeletons are not scary. It's supposed to be more colorful and playful. Kids at Plato are proof, they enjoy decorating the masks, and cookies in a shape of a skull. Some kids have come and ask to make some homemade candy like we've done in past years, or to do an activity that they saw me doing with another class. As long as they are interested, we may take one more day to color skulls, play games and/or decorate Calaveras; always making sure this tradition is understood and respected. I invite you to watch the videos and live the tradition yourselves in the years to come.

<https://youtu.be/24CWzxoflno>

<https://youtu.be/jCQnUuq-TEE>

We also read a very short book that Mrs Anna T found at the library and let us borrow. We learned about the way that day of the dead is celebrated in some countries of South America like Guatemala. They have a carnival on this day and they set up a competition of kites. We learned that those kites are called **barriletes** in Guatemala. This is another word for **cometa** o **papalote**, which is the way kites are called in México. They have a huge competition whose winner's goal is to keep

the biggest kite flying for the longest time. What a fun variation of the tradition. Boy have we learned about other cultures today!

Did you happen to see our **Altar de Dias de Muertos** at school today? (Day of the dead altar) if you haven't, stop by next Monday since it will be taken down in the afternoon. Ask your child what is the meaning of the objects that are in it, and by now they should also know the word in Spanish as well. As I mentioned last time, we were disappointed to hear about the cancellation of the contest from the History Center, however, we still wanted to celebrate the lives of our loved ones.

We also started to review (introduced to the new students) the vocabulary on familia/family. Younger students are learning the immediate family – **mama/mom, papa/dad, hermano/brother, hermana/sister, abuelo/grandpa and abuela/grandma**. Older students are also learning the extended family vocabulary. We will set up a mural on the next following weeks, and for that we need your help. Please send a picture of your family by next Friday, this picture should include family members (older students would need a picture with extended family). Your picture will be returned to you by the end of our activity.

On another note, we also introduced the song that we will be singing at the Christmas program. Ask your child about the meaning of this song, we translated it and kids should be able to explain to you what it's about. Please follow the link and play it at home or the car, we have limited time to learn this song, but with your help we will learn it faster. 😊 [https://youtu.be/EFh8kml\\_0yc](https://youtu.be/EFh8kml_0yc) Es Navidad

Thank you for your cooperation.

***Hasta pronto!*** / See you soon!

**Soraya Castro**



