

# Montessori Pathways' News



# December

*Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.*

*~ Maria Montessori*



## Thank you!

Thank you, parents and kids, for your thoughtful Christmas gifts to our Montessori Pathways Team and for the many beautiful Christmas cards with a lot of wonderful wishes and very warm words!

Your understanding, cooperation, help, support, and appreciation are priceless for us.

Happy New Year!!!



## Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

Our Montessori Classroom always reflects diversity and connection to the world through hands-on activities. The children receive an opportunity to learn cultural foundations of other peoples and nations, respect their traditions and appreciate cultural differences. Maria Montessori was a truly passionate advocate for peace in the world. Promoting diversity, understanding, and implementing value of different cultures teaches children to accept and respect people and their traditions from all over the world.

Visual prompts, displays of symbols that represent different countries, and practical activities allow children to open up their minds and hearts towards someone who may be a little different and appreciate them.

Our teachers, with the support of our families, did their best to bring the holiday spirit to our school.

Ms. Joey made a wonderful presentation about Hannukah to our Primary students. They loved learning more about this holiday and traditions.

Undoubtably there was Christmas spirit present at school during the whole month of December. Listening to Christmas music, singing songs, decorating the school and classrooms, and working on Christmas gifts for parents were a major part of the learning process in December.

The favorites of the month were Spit Week at Pathways, Winter Art and "Secret Santa" Party for Elementary students, tons of Christmas work and projects for primary students, visiting Crystal Pines Health Care Center by Elementary students and sharing handmade Christmas Card with the residents... December was truly happy and festive for our kids!



*~ Reading time with Ms. Ciara, Montessori Pathways' alumna, current Junior at Prairie Ridge High School and member of the Chik-fil-A Leadership Academy*

I hope that everybody had a wonderful time during this holiday season. May everyone's New Year be filled with happiness, love, and prosperity!





## Parents' Corner



### Working Together

Independence is a major tenet of the Montessori philosophy, and yet, this does not mean children work solely on their own. In fact, working with others promotes independence, within the classroom as well as outside of it.

The Montessori classroom itself is set up to promote small groups and pairs during their work cycles. Instead of rows of single desks with chairs, you will find an assortment of tables or rugs: some long enough to accommodate large groups, others for four, some smaller tables or rugs for two... and sometimes children squeeze as many journals as they can fit onto a table in order to be together!



While working together certainly has a social draw – children begin their day by socializing with their friends and may choose to work next to those friends during a work cycle – there are many other benefits to working with another child. Children learn from each other, accept leadership roles in those works in which they feel confident, or step aside to allow a different child to be the expert in a different work. This is a confidence boost, and also a lesson in respect and community.



Some of us are quick with mathematics, while others are excelling in language; still others are the go-to artists or engineers of the classroom. This is particularly true of the Upper Elementary classroom, where the levels of independent work are higher, with a greater ability to see a project or idea through from start to finish. These children can often be seen bouncing ideas off one another, and gently arguing about how to go about one thing or another in the most efficient way.

In the Children's House (or Primary Class), children may choose to work on the same work next to one another, lending a helping hand to a friend who stumbles on a problem. Sometimes one child even helps redirect an off-task friend!

And here, there is much pride in being able to work out a problem without having to go to an adult in the room to solve it for them. The more children can effectively work together, the more independent they become!

Working together solidifies connections. Two children share their interests by researching a topic together, sharing knowledge, and building on that knowledge. In Lower Elementary, children research and give reports together. This process can take weeks or months, based on how quickly or slowly all members in the group move forward.

The mixed-age groups in the Montessori classroom (found in three-year groupings) also allow for a type of mentorship. The younger students learn an immense amount from the older children, not just socially, but academically as well.



Working together on such reports often leads to opportunities for conflict resolution, peer mediation, and learning how to speak up in a small group. Fairness (of huge concern to the Second Plane child) comes into play during small group activities, as the focus of a moral sense of order is forefront on the mind of a child aged 6 – 12. This opportunity also presents itself during shared jobs and during recess time.



Children receive much help in the collaboration process from the experienced Guides in their classrooms; group dynamics are often aided by mediation and careful observation by the adults in the room. In this way, Montessori children are learning how to work with others on a daily basis, a sure way to prepare them for adult life, both in work and personal relationships.

<http://www.montessori-blog.org/2018/01/25/working-together/>

**[Click here to see more teamwork at Montessori Pathways](#)**

## COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS

in January

- ◆ January 3 (Tu) - School resumes
- ◆ January 13 (F) - **ELEMENTARY Parent / Teacher Conference Day (Virtual)**

The link to sign up for Parent/Teacher Conference will be sent on Tuesday, January 3rd.

No school for Elementary Students on Conference Day, January 13th.

- ◆ January 16 (M) - **No School (Martin Luther King JR. Day)**

- ◆ January 17—31 - **Returning Families Preferred Re-Enrollment Period**

*The new year arrives with new problems and questions for us. In the beginning of every year, the parents of 5-6-year-old kids have to make a very important decision – what is the next step for my child? Where should he/she continue his/her education?*

*There are two common things we hear every year from the parents.*

*The first one is a question “Will my child be prepared for public kindergarten or elementary?”*

*It is very important to understand that if we would prepare our students for traditional kindergarten, then we would not be Montessori, but the same conventional school where kids of the same age (but still developmentally very different) learn the same material at the same time based on the teacher's plan.*

*While offering a versatile learning opportunity to our students, the major goal of the Montessori schools is preparing our students not for public kindergarten or elementary level, but for real life, which more and more requires great thinking and organization skills, independence, initiative, creativity, ability to work as a team, and so on. We provide a child centered, multiage environment, where kids are learning at their own pace through a hands-on experience, exploring, discovering, making connections, and developing all necessary life skills .*

***It is important to understand that the Montessori Kindergarten Year is the final and very crucial year in the primary 3-year cycle of the Montessori environment.***

*The second thing that we hear every year from many parents is that “being in a Montessori environment during one or few years was enough for our child's development. It is time for him/her to move to a public school like most of his/her friends. He /She will be fine there.”*

***There is no “enough” in education and no bounds in a child's development. And being “just fine”- is this what we are looking for for our kids?***

*So, if you are still open to exploring all of the options and possibilities for your child's education, check our coming January and February newsletters in for more information about what Montessori environment offers for the next level of your child's development.*

- ◆ January 25 (W) at 5:30- 6:30 pm- **“The Magic of Montessori Mathematics” - Students' Math Presentations for Parents (Elementary and Primary Classes)**



## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget



After our wonderful month of gratitude in November, we turned to the month of love and giving the gift of ourselves.

We worked hard on being a good friend, teammate, helper and just an overall good asset to the community. More observations are made of students taking care of each other and the desire to work with others has increased.



Since it is a short month, lessons decrease and work that is yet finished is accomplished. I am more on hand to guide good work and meet one-on-one with students.



Our celebrations for the holiday this year were a bit different. We kept traditions we liked and added others. Here is what we did:

### Old Traditions:

**Food.** Everyone brainstormed what type of food we should have at the party and then we voted. We had food from each category: sweet, savory, veggie. Then they were able to choose what item they wanted to bring in for the party.



**Secret Santa.** Students wrote their names on a piece of paper and then put them folded up in a basket. Each child then drew a name and showed it to me so I could record it. The students were then tasked with buying a gift to give to their "Secret Santa". They were overjoyed by this challenge. We discussed the art of gift giving and receiving with strategies. I was very impressed with the gratitude kids showed to each other upon opening gifts. I loved the expressions and excitement of the students regardless of how was opening the gifts.



**Our tree.** The kids assembled it, put the lights on it and decorated it all by themselves with only a little direction from me. It took several tries to get the branches right and the lights strung correctly but it was all their work. Finally, a tradition we will keep is the sharing of a favorite ornament. Each student was able to bring in their favorite ornament to put on the tree. (Even Ms. Suzy participated!!) The ornaments will come back home after break when we take down and box up our tree.

**Coupons.** Each child received a gift from me. It is a coupon book. For all of the first level parents, this is a coupon book that students can use throughout the last half of the school year. They may redeem them at any time. Some of the coupons are: no homework week, vacation from job or free donut on Friday. This, too, is a highly anticipated gift that the kids enjoy.

### New Traditions:

**"Crystal Pines" Center:** We hoped to do a craft with the residents of *Crystal Pines* but due to COVID, we were only able to deliver the handmade cards that the primary classes and we made for them. We met two of their residents and are looking forward to doing a craft with them in the spring.

**Caroling:** We decided to carol to the 2 primary classes and Ms Alena. The kids picked the songs that they wanted to sing and then we went outside to each class. We knocked on their door and when they opened, we began to sing. When we got to Ms Alena, she gave us cookies to enjoy with our hot chocolate once we were back in the class.



So as we head into the new year, and decade, my hope is that the spirit of love and understanding for all that I have seen often on the classroom will carry over from 2022 into 2023. Best wishes for an exciting and fun-filled year of growth and learning.

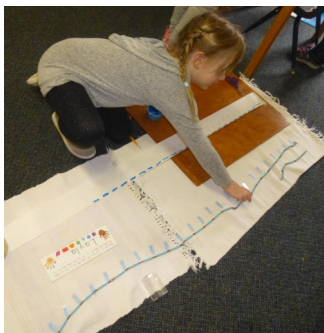
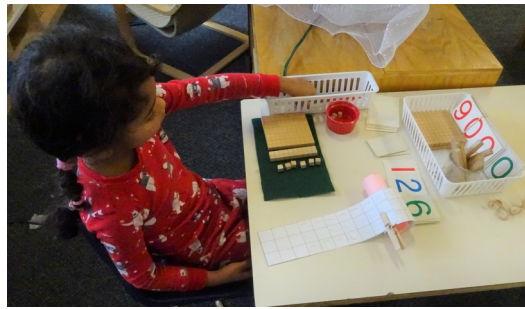
# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class



# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



It is hard to believe that 2022 is coming to an end. December was truly a very short, only 2.5 weeks of school this month. We packed in as much in as we could. We began the month with Spirit week. The children were so excited during arrivals each day to see what peers had chosen to wear as their favorite for spirit day, Pajamas, color, team and what was going on for wacky day! It was an exciting and fun beginning to our month!



The older children set up the Christmas tree. They helped remove everything from the box and sort the branches by size and color and assembled the tree with out assistance at all. The lights were strung, and all began to create decorations for our classroom tree.



If you have not done so yet check out Montessori Pathways tree in downtown Crystal Lake and enjoy the other trees decorated by the community as well. This would be a fun family outing.

The holidays are a time for giving. The children worked hard to paint and, in some cases, add extra decorations to their ornaments for family. They were involved in all steps of the process some painted again and again to get them just right.



Children made things for each other out of kindness in the spirit of the season. Children looked in folders and exclaimed "This is not mine", only to find a friend had handmade a picture or card to share with them as a gift.

Practical Life held was full of red and green, pouring jingle bells, sorting presents and pom poms with tweezers, stringing beads to make candy canes, all while indirectly refining fine motor skills.



Math brought us tree counting and ornament counting which also included color matching the ornaments on a given tree. For example, the tree with one ornament had just one color to match but the tree for ten had ten ornament colors to match. This is a long process and many only had the stamina to lay it out.



In Language and Science, we added the favorites Parts of a Gingerbread man, Reindeer and Christmas tree. The children enjoy learning the names of the parts building their vocabulary, matching picture to picture and word to word, coloring, writing skills and fine motor. Not to mention attention to detail and visual discrimination needed to match the words to the correct part. Remember to "read these little books with your child and maybe even set up a library for your child to store their creations.



In the area of Geography and Cultural studies we talked a little about Hannukah which didn't start until after break on December 18. Many learned how to play the dreidel game. The children amazingly learned the game very quickly recognizing the Hebrew letters on the dreidel and what each means.

The Pre-k and K children made cards for Crystal Pines residents to enjoy for the holidays many made a few. The Elementary children delivered them along with their own. Enjoy the break and stay safe and healthy

# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM



### Ms. Joey, Ms. Carole

It has been a busy and exciting month, as the holidays are upon us. The children have discovered that there is a unique beauty in all cultures, and although there are differences, there are many similarities. These traditions and celebrations quite often share a common theme: being thankful, caring for others, giving gifts, lighting candles, sharing meals, and spending time with family and friends, providing us all with a sense of comfort and community. Sharing stories, memories, and experiences with our children strengthens family bonds and reminds us of what truly matters.



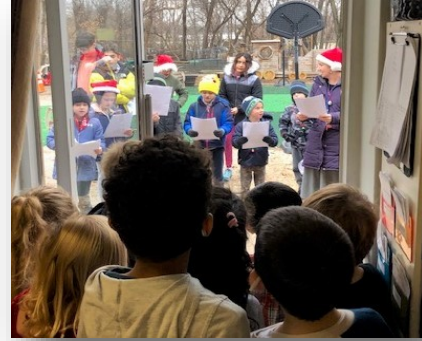
This year Ms Bridget invited us to help spread the joy of the season, by creating beautiful handmade Christmas cards to be shared with the residents at Crystal Pine Healthcare Center.



During the holidays and throughout the New Year we continue to encourage an understanding of care, compassion and respect for those around us. In the classroom the children had fun trimming the tree by hanging lights, and hand made ornaments, making our room festive!



And the elementary students gave us a wonderful surprise, when they came to our door singing Christmas carols.



Our last day we enjoyed a special snack together, hot chocolate and popcorn. The Practical life area was full of holiday themed activities, tweezing bells and stars, spooning colorful pompoms and sorting beautiful objects.



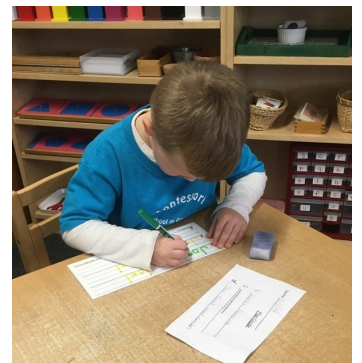
In the art area the children pin poked gingerbread men, stars, stockings, dot painted Christmas trees, and much, much more! The children really enjoyed making their special Christmas gifts for you because...you can never use too much glitter!



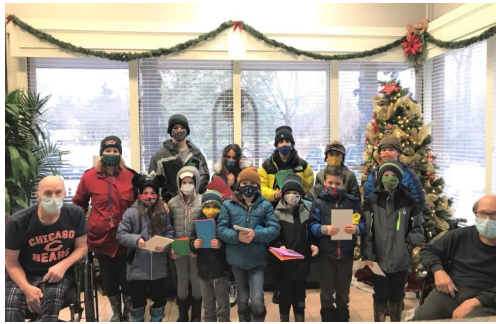
Math had 1-10 Christmas tree ornament counting and number writing. Language and science held parts of the gingerbread man, reindeer and poinsettia. We read "The Wild Christmas Reindeer" and "The Mitten" by Jan Brett. The children then could choose to craft their own reindeer and sew a colorful mitten, so much to do! We discussed many celebrations that take place this holiday season... Christmas, Kwanzaa and Hanukah, the dreidel game was fun for all. We had 2 Birthdays this month. Happy Birthday, Vivian and Presley!

# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room



# MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



*“An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child’s energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self-mastery.”  
~ Maria Montessori*

