

Montessori Pathways' News

February 2015

"We cannot create observers by saying 'observe', but by giving them the power and the means for this observation and these means are procured through education of the senses."

Dr. Maria Montessori



**Illustration to the book
"Draw me a Star" by Eric Carle**
(Elementary and Kindergarten Art Project)

Notes from Ms. Alena

I would like to begin this newsletter with a huge THANK YOU to all of our teachers, parents and students for your incredible cooperation and help in preparing for our first Fun Fair Family Night. The hit of the night was the Cake Walk, which was possible due to the cake contributions from many of our families.

The other hit of the night was live music from Mr. Anthony (Nora's dad). The *Fishing Game* from Ashley's family, *Bozo Buckets Game* from Cate and Jimmy's family, and *Marble Race Course* prepared by the Elementary students were also popular.



We were able to meet a lot of siblings of our students. Some of them are Montessori Pathways' alumni. I would really like to say a separate thank you to them for their help in preparation. All of them were so friendly, well mannered, and cooperative. It felt like a big family.

The small item contributions are also much appreciated. It helped us prepare great goody bags for our young friends and was a wonderful conclusion for the evening. Thank you Montessori Pathways families and team – you guys rocks!!!

Continued on the next page



February is a month when many of students begin to blossom after working hard during the school year. It is really interesting to observe them at this time and notice a lot of changes. I would like to share some of my observations with you.

One student came to me to share that she baked 4 muffins at school for her family for Valentine's Day.

"I should bake 5 muffins since I would like to give one to my baby sitter" – she said.

"I think it is still possible to share" – I said.

"Actually, yes. I can divide my muffin by 2 equal parts and give 1/2 of muffin to my baby sitter" – the 4.5 year girl resolved the problem.

Another student (Kindergartener) was asking several days in a row for permission to stay in the classroom after the Kindergarten Extended day and continue her work. She was working on her book. Every page of the book presented completely different themes: a page of Geometric Shapes (The Squares inside of the Squares), a page of Bird Nests, a page of Different Shades of Colors, etc. When I was not able to supervise her anymore because it was getting late in the evening, she would clean everything up and move to the afternoon class. One day I decided to ask her if she is not tired working on it all day several days in a row. She told me: *"I have to finish my book today since tomorrow we will be celebrating the Valentine Day and it will be not enough time to finish my work"*.

What a great example of independence, creativity, time management and self-expression!!!

Continued on the next page

One more exciting observation: two Elementary boys decided to make an Elementary Classroom tour for two of our Pre-K girls. They showed them around. Then they made several presentations for their younger friends: art presentation, solid shapes presentation, geography (working with globe), and math.

During the math presentation, the older kids wrote a math problem: $3+3$. The girls answered right away: 6. Then, the elementary kids decided to make this problem more challenging. They said: "What if we will write 3 in front of each of the 3s in a previous problem?" After thinking a little bit, one of the Pre-K girls was excited to answer: "If $3+3=6$, then $33+33=66$ "

Isn't it wonderful to see such a great relationship, real leadership opportunity, cooperation between older boys and little girls, and excitement of learning through teaching?

We are glad to announce about an addition in Montessori Pathways Team and introduce Ms. Eva Tiknor, who will be assisting in the South room starting March. A lot of our kids know Ms. Eva from the last two Summer Camps and were excited to see her back after spending some time in England as an Early Childhood teacher. [Please click here to see Ms. Eva's introduction letter.](#)

Coming School Events

- **March 2 - March 6 – Dr. Seuss Week**
- **Monday, March 2 – Kindergarten and Elementary Class field trip -**
"The Rainbow Fish" at Raue Center for Arts in Crystal Lake
- **Saturday, March 7 at 10am- 1:00 pm - Open House.**

We invite you to come and discuss any questions you may have.

- The **Parent / Teacher conferences** will be held by appointments on
 - **March 13 (F) – for East Room (Preschool and Pre-K)**
 - **March 16 (M) – for South room (Preschool, Pre-K, and K)**
 - **March 17(Tu) – for East Room Kindergarten students**

Please fill out the conference schedule form and return it to school by Monday, March 2.

- **Wednesday, March 18 – Picture Day**

Please dress your child(ren) appropriately. If your child does not attend school that day, you can bring him/her between 9:00am -10:30am to take a picture. In this case your child will have a chance to be included in the class picture.

- **Wednesday, March 18 at 6:00pm– Parent / Child Night for Elementary Class**

Don't miss this very enjoyable evening working with your child in their special environment. When you arrive, you'll go to your child's classroom and experience with them a little of what their day is like. See what's changed in their day since the first Parent/Child Night!

Continued on the next page

- **March 23 – March 27 - Spring Break**

The school will be operating for All Day students during Spring break.

- **Registration for Summer Camp and the upcoming 2015-2016 School Year has begun.**

Thank you to all of the families who have returned the re-enrollment application for the Summer Camp and next School Year.

If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please complete the Registration Form for Summer Camp and / or Re-Enrollment Form for the next School Year and return it to us, along with the registration / re-enrollment fee, no later than March 15 2014.

The 10% tuition security deposit is due April 15, 2015.

Please help the school be prepared for Summer Camp and the next School Year on time

As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us via e-mail
montpathways@hotmail.com

Warmly,
Ms. Alena

Notes from the Elementary Class (North room)

Mr. Matt

February was an exciting month. Academically the students mostly continued to work on concepts that had already been introduced and really solidify these. A focus of mine this month was less on math and language and more on practical life and grace and courtesy activities. There had been some habits in the way our class was kept clean and the way we handled some encounters that needed to be improved upon. I reviewed procedures for cleaning tables, chairs, floors and walls. We also continued our discussions on peace and community from last month. I brought a yoga mat for the children to use if they have a need for movement during the day. I also introduced straw weaving, which really works on the children's fine motor skills.



Continued on the next page

In math the third graders continued their work with division and fraction work. The second grader began to work with division materials. The first graders were introduced to the process of division and began rudimentary work with division.

In language I presented the concepts of summarizing and paraphrasing to the children. We discussed the importance of being able to put information into their own words and how this shows greater knowledge than just copying down what is written.



We also spent significant time talking about research. Research is an important part of the Montessori Philosophy. It is an opportunity for the child to be completely self-directed in picking what they are interested in learning more about and figuring out where information about that subject can be found. Most of the preliminary research focused on different types of animals or different countries.

In biology we learned about another invertebrate, the platyhelminth or flatworms. They are very simple animals, but are the first invertebrate that we've studied to have a visual sensing organ (a very primitive eye that can detect differences in light). We also reviewed the bird and learned the ways in which they differ from the other vertebrates we've learned about.



Continued on the next page

This month, all of the kindergartners were welcomed to visit the Elementary class. The elementary students were very excited and eager to present some of their materials to their younger friends and work together as partners.



We also spent time preparing for the Fun Fair. The elementary students decided on which games we wanted to have in our classroom and developed how they would work and what would be the rules for each game. They also decided who would be involved with running each game during each portion of the Fun Fair. The students worked together and came up with solutions on how to fit everything in our room and the logistics of getting everything set up. They also thought about potential problems that could arise and worked on how to arrange things in such a way to avoid these.



*Warm regards,
Mr. Matt*

Notes from the Art Class (Kindergarten and Elementary)

Ms. Susan

In February, the art class explored Chinese calligraphy and elements of color. First, they learned to write several Chinese words, or "characters". Then, they created a Chinese New Year scroll or card using the different characters, as well as drawings of Chinese zodiac animals.

In another activity, they chose to draw and paint either cherry blossom trees or Chinese dragons using multiple variations of the same color to shade and add detail.

During this activity they learned about observation, light, and uses of color. They also created circle art inspired by artist Wassily Kandinsky. They used marker, colored pencil or crayon to create various sizes of circles using complementary colors.



Sincerely,
Ms. Susan

Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen,

Another month - interesting, full, creative, (cold), fun, energetic!! At this time of the year, it is interesting to see the development that has slowly taken place over these past months.

Now, for instance, if we have a "problem" to solve, immediately there are multiple solutions offered. "I know", "I have an idea", "What if we..." "Let's do ..." Practice for "real life" problem solving!



Continued on the next page



Now, the children are at home in the environment and can be almost fully independent in getting supplies needed for their project. Now we see projects that stem from the children deciding to carry out an activity they are interested in. The children are creating and “working” throughout the Extended Day. In fact, one problem we frequently encounter is running out of time. Many of the students are still busily engaged at 3:00!



During the month of February, we always invite next year’s Kindergartners to come and spend an Extended Day with us. They look forward to their visit and love the time spent with us. But what is also interesting is that the Kindergartners also love this time. They want to work with the visitor, help them find supplies in the environment, make them feel at home. Always, when we would say who would be visiting for the day, a kindergartner (or several) would say: “Can I work with ...” It is a special opportunity for the Kindergartners.



Continued on the next page

Have your children been coming home with riddles? Many times we have begun or ended the class with a riddle they can share with you. Some samples they may have brought home:

- ✓ What animal can jump higher than a house?
- ✓ What is as big as an elephant, but weighs nothing at all?
- ✓ What goes to sleep with his shoes on?
- ✓ Why do white sheep eat so much more than black sheep?

Of course, riddles are fun just because of the play on words, or a different way of thinking about the words or a carefully posed question.

Several new geometry ideas have been introduced. Some of the children carry on with the idea; others watch the idea develop through the work of their classmates.

- Cutting triangular and square based spirals
- Equilateral triangles: All sides must be equal.
- Vocabulary of the 3 dimensional geometric solids. Also identifying these solids by their attributes when the solid object is hidden under a scarf.
- Patterning using geometric shapes.
- Constructing equivalent tower (height) using knobless cylinders
- Making 3 dimensional shapes from construction paper. Helps understand area of a 3 dimensional object. Vocabulary development. Who would have thought of all the vocabulary words which come up just in a activity of gluing, cutting, folding, taping: *overlap, top, bottom, separate, empty, side, space, corners, edge, next to*, and more. These are all vocabulary words which are used in the field of math!



Also, at this time of the year, we are often seeing applications of mathematical thinking. Easy to figure out how many are absent. Easy for many to really understand that $3 + 4 = 4 + 3$. Easy to see patterns and relationships that exist in math.

Continued on the next page

Sometimes the expression: *"Oh that is so easy!!!"* Of course it may not have been easy just a few short months ago. It is blossoming all around us!

Finally, a very special visitor. Many of you may know Terri Rueckert. She had been a teacher here at Montessori Pathways for many years before moving to Denver. Well, she came back to visit last week and spent an entire class with us. She had been our art specialist - so we were treated to a special, surprise class. We had such a good time. The idea was taken from the book *"Draw Me a Star"* by Eric Carle. What a fun and engaging afternoon. Yes, Mr. Matt and I participated too --couldn't resist. See front hallway.



*Best regards,
Ms. Karen*

Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

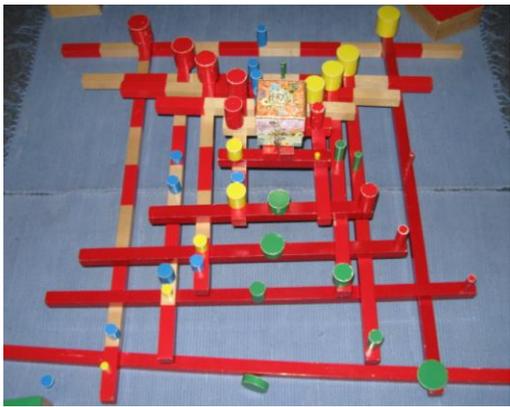
Happy Febr-r-r-r-uary, East Room Families!

Despite February being the shortest month of the year, it has felt like a long one due to the extreme weather temperatures that have kept us indoors. But, we have made good use of our indoor time with new and exciting extensions of our materials, and your children's creative minds!

On an indoor day last week, we presented a project using sensorial material "Red rods" in conjunction with math material "Red and wooden" rods to build a pyramid. Each child had their turn to bring a rod to the rug and demonstrated their ability to lay them down on top of each other in either a "parallel" or "perpendicular" pattern, thus constructing the Pyramid. They loved it!



Continued on the next page



Someone then suggested that we use the colored, knobless cylinders to "decorate" it; they carefully took turns with this task, and then, spontaneously, conducted "line time", dancing, skipping and running around their structure! It was an amazing group project that they were able to create and excited to have in the center of the classroom. It will be interesting to observe their replication of this experience on their own devices.

In Language, we continue to practice work with writing and proper use of lower case and capital letters, as well as finger spacing between words when writing sentences. The younger children are working on letter formation and many have also mastered a majority of individual letter sounds; vowel sounds take a bit longer. We encourage the children to phonetically sound out their words rather than focus on spelling them correctly at this point; this is a big step to their success in reading - English has a lot of diversity in the phonetic sound "rules". "Oo" as in "spoon" makes a different sound than in the word "book"... , etc.



In Geography, we have observed an acute interest in map making - the art of poking out provinces, states, countries....gluing and labeling is perceived as a "big work" and it is. The children are very proud when they have completed their maps, and hopefully, you are saving them; they are truly beautiful treasures! Several students have also experienced vocabulary lessons with land forms. We create and identify those using Montessori materials, and then, in turn, look for real life examples within the continents on our globes.



Continued on the next page

Some fun celebrations we have enjoyed this month were, of course, Valentine's Day, President's Day and Groundhog's Day. Thank you Julia and Mark Vera for your help with our "Hugs and "Kisses" that the children took home to share with their families. Thanks to our Sharing Basket parents for sending in items for this and other delicious snacks the children have enjoyed this month!

We were glad to seeing everyone at our First Annual Fun Fair on Feb. 26th! It was a lot of fun and a great way to spend a cold evening with friends and family!!



Warmly,
Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Ambreen

February the second and the shortest month of the year started with the onset of snowfall and bitter cold temperatures. On the 2nd of February was 'Groundhog Day' and the groundhog saw its shadow which means 6 more weeks of winter!

Inspite of cold wind chills and gloomy weather we in South room kept ourselves very busy just like the bees.

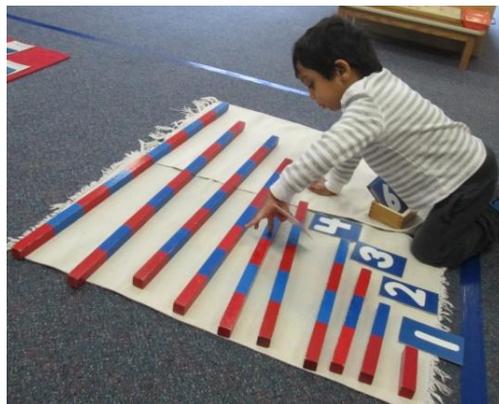
Our Kindergarteners were busy working with the big works like word building, skip counting using the long bead chains from our bead cabinet, making 3 dimensional geometry solids with construction paper and big maps of Africa, Asia and Europe.



Continued on the next page

The Pre-Ks worked on Teen boards to reinforce the teen numbers and continued doing addition and subtraction with counters. One of our Pre-kindergarteners focused on a big work. She made a beautiful chart of the Color box 3 which involves visual discrimination and grading of colors from darkest to lightest.

The preschoolers were busy learning their sounds and Number formation through tracing of sound paper letters and numbers. They also worked on counting using the Red and Blue rods and Spindle box with Spindles.



On February 13th we celebrated Valentine's Day in our classroom. It was an exciting fun filled morning. All my friends enjoyed making their own treat bags and were very excited to pass out their precious valentine to their friends. Each one of them with a lot of creativity made their pretty hearts and prepared take home treats with a special ingredient ' LOVE ' to share with their families.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all the moms who came in to help us celebrate this event.



On the 16th of February was President's Day and we had no school. But during that week, all the friends in South room came together as a group and worked on a special project of making the Flag of the United States of America to honor our beautiful free country and all its Presidents. We also pledged our allegiance to our flag.

Reading is always a challenge and all the friends in South room are taking this challenge very seriously.

Continued on the next page



The kindergarteners enjoy reading in story time but the preschoolers inspired by the kindergarteners don't want to be left behind and they are anxiously participating in our reading time.

The books we read and shared in February were: "Henry and the Valentine Surprise", "Will you be my Friend?", "President Abraham Lincoln", "President George Washington".

During February we had group lessons on Grace and Courtesy, Parts of our body and our 5 senses. We even practiced our song of parts of our body in Spanish. All my friends eagerly participated and enjoyed playing the ' I Spy Game '.

I would like to share my most interesting observation of the month. I experienced the joy of seeing a friend accomplish zipping. This may seem an easy task to us adults but these accomplishments in children are milestones that build on their confidence and independence.

Also one Friday, we in South room noticed that some of our materials were not in place on the shelves and our plants needed water. Hence all my friends came together as a strong community and offered to help. Together they decided that Friday will be our Clean up Day. Each one of them got their cleaning supplies and teamed up in groups to get the mission accomplished.

I am very proud of all my friends in South room. Each one of them is a great helper. Together by helping each other when needed we are building a strong foundation of a community. I would like to thank all the families who have participated in our sharing basket activity and we in South room deeply appreciate your kindness.

I would end my newsletter with a special quote from Dr. Maria Montessori, *"Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment."*



Sincerely,

Ms. Ambreen

Continued on the next page

Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

Ms. Ambreen



February, the short and sweet month of the year, started with the onset of snowfall and bitter cold temperatures. But the excitement of Valentine and the thoughts of sweet treats kept all of us completely energized.

February also witnessed the visits of pre-k kids to our kindergarten classroom, to help them get an insight of the great kindergarten year. These visits boosted their confidence and feeling of being a kindergartener.

Inspired by the kindergarteners and their big works the pre-k students got themselves busy with works like fractions, word building, addition with counters and learning the concept of 'Taking Away' i.e Subtraction. In Art they enjoyed making their beautiful heart paintings.

I would like to end with a famous quote from Dr Maria Montessori, "The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, the children are now working as if I did not exist."



*Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen*

Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

February may have been a short month but we were busy learning about so many things. February 2 was Groundhog's Day. We had a beautiful sunny day which meant that the groundhog was able to see his shadow. Many people believe if he sees his shadow there will be six more weeks of winter. It sure has been cold and we did get more snow.

Next we worked on making hearts for many Valentine projects. Valentine's Day is observed on February 14. Cards and small gifts are sent on this day to people you like.

Chinese New Year lasts for 15 days. This year is the year of the goat. *Gung hay fat choy* is a traditional Chinese New Year's greeting that means "May you prosper". Families gather together to show their love and support for one another. They visit friends and honor their ancestors. The children will receive gifts and everyone will celebrate in special ways.





Art: Groundhogs with their shadow, heart flowers in a flower pot, trace a heart and then decorate, heart owls, penguins using hearts.

Songs/ Games: *Valentine Do You Have a Letter?* Person with the paper heart walks around while we sing a song. At the end of the song he/she drops the valentine behind someone. The person with the heart becomes the new mailman.

Do You Know My Valentine? Everyone sings until the last line of the song. The chosen person will sing a solo announcing the

name of another child.

New Work: Squishy Sand for figures building.

Science: How to make a penny drop into a bottle.

Looking forward to warmer weather,

Ms. Donna

