

Montessori Pathways' News

Montessori Pathways

The best way to discovery!



School

February

"Success in life depends in every case on self-confidence and the knowledge of one's own capacity"

~ Maria Montessori, "From Childhood to Adolescence"

Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

February is the month when "Montessori buds" begin opening and the "flowers" are ready to bloom. There are so many changes we observe in our kids starting this month. Our very young friends know all of the routines and are so capable of doing so many things by themselves – choosing a work from the shelf, working independently, putting work away and cleaning up after the work. They become more and more curious about new and more challenging work because they see how the older kids are working and what kind of projects they are doing.



At this time of the year, we can observe how our students gain their self-confidence. Kids who have faith in their self-confidence have the urge to try out new things and explore every bit of them. They are more likely to give their best in everything they do. Building up self-esteem allows the child to grow in a positive manner. It lets your child learn from their mistakes and even if they fall at first, they will find their way to stand back up.

Self-esteem fuels the confidence of kids and makes them proud of themselves. As a result, it helps them do their best at school, at home, and whenever they are with their friends. It boosts their personality.

If at the beginning of the school year we hear the kids saying: "It is hard, I cannot do it...", now we hear more and more: "Can I do this? I would like to try that. I want to do the same project as".

One of the beauties of the Montessori multiage environment is that younger kids LOVE to learn from older ones and are always inspired by them.

Kids have become so confident in many ways and our job as adults is to create the environment that will feed their curiosity and desire and allow them to flourish. The best enjoyment comes after, when kids come to me, show their projects and say: "Look, Ms. Alena, I did it! And I did it by myself!" And I love to see the kids' eyes at that moment, full of excitement and pride. Aren't these the feelings that should be sparked by education?



Our team have attended 2024 Association of Illinois Montessori Schools Conference "Building Humanity's Future" on February 24th. I love the quote from one of our workshops:

**"WONDER evokes curiosity;
CURIOSITY reinforces inquiry;
INQUIRY supports discovery;
DISCOVERY furthers reflection;
REFLECTION deepens
KNOWLEDGE."**

*-On The Life of Wonder,
By Adam J. Pearson*

This is exactly what Montessori education is about.





Parents' Corner



What is the next step for my child?

- ◇ Are a couple of years of Montessori good enough for my child to reap the benefits?
- ◇ Will Montessori prepare children for traditional school?
- ◇ Why should I pay tuition for one more year in Kindergarten if it is free in public school?
- ◇ How are Elementary years in Montessori beneficial for my child?
- ◇ Isn't it time for my child to join his/her friends from the neighborhood in going to public school together?

These and many others are questions parents ask every year when it is time to decide about the next step in their child's education and development.

Just like all of us do extensive research before buying a new car or a house, we recommend to our parents to do the same regarding their child's future - learn as much as possible about the different types of education and choose what is most beneficial for your child.

As a part of this research, we decided to share some of our resources with you regarding the benefits of Montessori Education in the different stages of the child's development.

Montessori Preschool Year is a time for planting...

Montessori Pre-K Year is a time for growing...

The Kindergarten Year in Montessori is a time for blooming!



Click here for videos:

[Montessori Kindergarten: Essential & Empowering
A Time To Blossom - Montessori For The Kindergarten Year
The Montessori Kindergarten Year - A Question for Parents](#)



Montessori Elementary Program Develops Unique, Sensitive Individuals.

Children of the Elementary age are striving for intellectual independence and trying to satisfy their curiosity and excitement for learning. The Montessori classroom allows them to do just that. Rather than taking a step back to the basics and waiting for their peers to catch up, students of the Montessori class are able to progress at their own pace, discovering the world around them and focusing their varying interests appropriately.

What sets Montessori apart in the Elementary years—ages 6 – 12—is the individually paced curriculum that challenges children academically and safeguards their well-being and sense of self.

Click here for videos:

[Montessori: The Elementary Years](#)
[Structure with Choice in the Montessori Elementary Classroom](#)
[Montessori Mixed-age Classrooms](#)

Click here to learn more about Montessori Pathways:
[Kindergarten and Elementary Years at Montessori Pathways](#)

Click here to find more answers for your questions:
[Frequently Asked Questions about Montessori Education](#)





REGISTRATION FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR COMING TO AN END!



Montessori Pathways School has been serving the community for thirty years, building a better future for our children and our world—one child at a time. Innovative Montessori education is our trademark. Our unique Montessori Pathways Team are delighted that your child and your family have been a part of this vision.

The Montessori approach to child development and education encompasses a wide range of experiences. Montessori works best when the child has maximum attendance and stays with us for the entirety of the developmental stage, which includes the Kindergarten Year in Primary class and Elementary education.

The completion of the 3-year cycle in every stage is the key of Montessori Education.

We look forward to having you and your child(ren) continue with us in the coming 2024 -2025 school year!

The demand of enrolling children in the program is rapidly growing. Therefore, we would like to make sure that we accommodate our current families first and would like to remind you that registration for the 2024-2025 school year is wrapping up! We have a few spots left in both Primary Classes and in our Elementary Class. Please do not wait until the last minute and secure your spot at our school if this is in your plan.

The Tuition Schedule 2024-2025, Re-Enrollment Application Form for the 2024-2025 school year and Registration Form for Summer Camp 2024 were sent to all families. Please let us know if you have missed it.

⇒ If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please complete the **Re-Enrollment Form for the 2024-2025 school year** and return it to school along with the **\$50.00 re-enrolment fee (\$25.00 for the second child)** no later than **March 1st, 2023**.

Check or QuickPay via Zelle are acceptable.

⇒ **The 10% annual tuition security deposit is due April 15th.** *This will ensure a place for your child at our school and allow your child to continue in the same class with the same teachers. Contact Ms. Alena if you need a payment plan for security deposit.*

⇒ The tuition contract will reflect a 10% discount for the second child's tuition and 15% for the third one's.

⇒ **The Summer Camp registration begins March 1st. The application and \$30.00 early registration fee are due April 15th.**

Please note: If the registration forms will be returned after April 15, your child will be considered as a new student with a \$100.00 registration fee for the next School Year and \$50.00 registration fee for Summer Camp requirement.

~ It is important that we know who is enrolled in Summer Camp and the School Year as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate plans for hiring staff. Students who are enrolled just prior to the start of Summer Camp or School Year cannot be guaranteed a spot in the same class or at school at all. ~ We look forward to another great year with your family!

IN MARCH:

- ◆ **March 1 (F) – Summer Camp enrollment begins**
- ◆ **March 1 (F) – Read Across America Day**
- ◆ **March 4 — March 8 – Dr. Seuss Week**
- ◆ **March 14(Th) - 15(F) - Spring Primary Parent / Teacher Conference Days (East and South Rooms)**
 - * **No School** for all Primary students **on Conference Day, March 15**
 - * **The link to schedule** your in-person conference was already sent to all families. Please sign up for your conference.
- ◆ **March 25—March 29 – Spring Break (No School)**

The school will be operating for All Day (6:45am—6:00pm) Primary students during Spring Break.



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



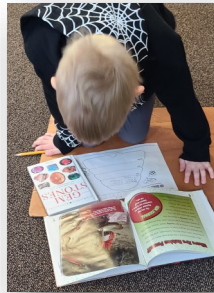
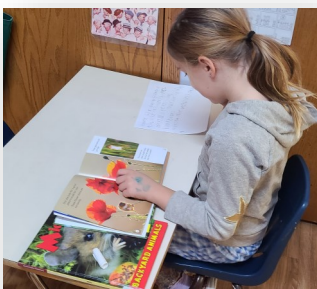
Ms. Bridget

"Equality consists in the same treatment of similar persons."
~Aristotle

Throughout the year, we study all people and their contributions to our world. However, in February, we focus on contributions of Black people to our world. This month, each child either picked some notable person from a book or the younger kids picked a field and then I found a person in this field for them to discover facts. I always learn so much about the people chosen. Thanks for helping them do the research.

We also sang some songs that were pertinent: *Follow The Drinking Gourd*, *We Shall Overcome* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. I also had music playing by different black artists in the morning.

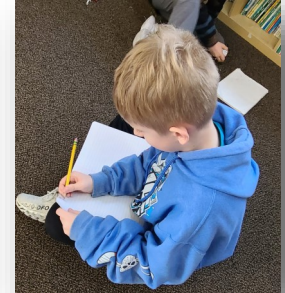
This month, for writing, each child chose a topic to research. We checked the library for available resources at the child's reading level from the Crystal Lake Library. Then they browsed through the books chosen to find interesting information and took some notes. Next step is the students will add more research after meeting with me and then writing a report. We will present the research soon.



Valentine's Day is always exciting. This year we decided on a fruit party to celebrate the afternoon. I read a book about the history of the day. Plus students brought in cards to pass. At the end of the day, each student made a heart. I then asked students to tell me a positive thought about each person and then wrote what was said on the heart. The positive affirmations that the class said about each child were very thoughtful. I was impressed with some of the comments from children in the class. They are observant and full of love.



We began receiving our Kindergarten visitors for their official visit to our class. The goal is for them to experience the elementary class and to see that it is not too different from their current class. Each lower elementary buddy wrote a letter to their Kindergarten friend to welcome them to our class.



Then it was the elementary child's task to decide what work that he/she could accomplish with their kindergarten partner. It has been nice observing the patience and kindness of the elementary students. Now kindergarten friends are looking at the list to see when is their day to visit!



Finally, we walked to the Raue Center to see *Dot Dot Dot*. The kids liked the fact that the musical was much like the book, was a mash up of a few other Peter Reynolds books and had songs. We enjoyed the characters and the humor.



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K / KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP



Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

The field trip to see the musical “Dot, dot, dot...” was the highlight for our Pre-K and Kindergarteners this month.

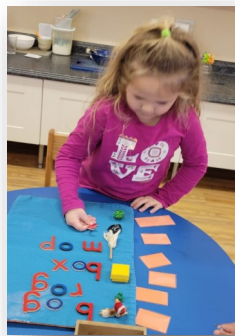


and why don't we draw smiley faces on them!



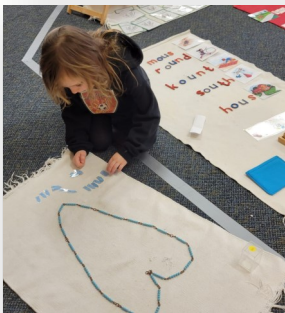
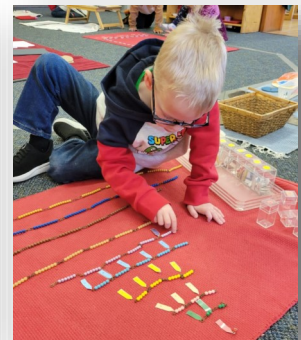
It was a simple but inspiring story of just taking the chance to try something, rather than giving up because we think we can't do it. This was an especially important message for our afternoon group, where they frequently tackle the longer and more complex works. Tracing, painting, and labeling a map, or reading and writing out facts about the five animal classes, or organizing the class list in alphabetical order all can seem overwhelming and time-consuming at first. But all it takes is just a “dot” to get us started and the momentum of practiced focus and concentration builds upon itself!

Our Pre-K and Kindergarten students take this additional work cycle time as a chance to really try out some of the more challenging works, often excited to know that their work is lengthy enough to need to be “saved” for the next morning.



We also see students who transition from the nap room into the afternoon group take much pride in this transition, and carry over that drive to do more challenging works into the morning work cycle as well.

February gave us the chance to explore the Groundhog and get creative with some hearts for Valentine's day.

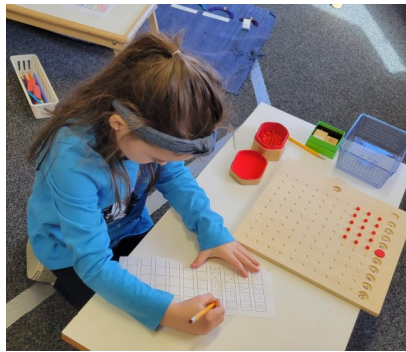


Prior to President's Day, we took a look at the past presidents and our students noted how serious they used to look in their portraits! There was a chance to create a silhouette of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, which created a fun discovery all on its own – what exactly is a silhouette



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM



Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana

Hello February! We began our month with Groundhog Day, and we sure liked what we heard. There will be an early Spring. Although the weather is currently cooperating, please remember to send hats, mittens, and boots daily. If the high for the day is 50 degrees, it is never that warm at recess, the temperature is usually 15 degrees less and reaches the high long after we have been outside. The playground can get quite wet and muddy, much too muddy for gym or fancy shoes! It is always better to be prepared and have hats and mittens daily, than to stay inside.

In preparation for Valentines Day, we focused on our community and friendships. It brought discussion on what it means to be peaceful and how we can all be respectful to create peace around our little community. We discussed what it means to be kind, how to be a friend and a helpful member of the community. The children began making Valentines for others and many wrote their names for the first time this month. Thank you to all the Volunteers who donated items or time for our Valentines Party. It was a fun-filled day. It would not have been a success without all of you.



Valentines Day sparked an interest in writing and the Language Area has been very busy. All the students have been working in the Language area at different independent levels. A few are still learning basic sounds with the sandpaper letters and sand tray, while others have begun word building and readers. The sandpaper letters are unique, they help the child form "muscle memory" of the shape of an individual letter while reciting the sound. The sand tray then allows the child to recreate the letter and erase/ shake the tray if it is not exactly to their liking. The sand tray works much like a chalkboard but on a more tactile level, again reinforcing the feel of making each individual letter's sound. Each letter must be remembered both visually, sounded out for its unique sound and then reproduced to create individual words.



We teach the sound and NOT the name of the letter as a basis for beginning phonetic awareness which will lead to building words. For example, "C", its name is "cee" and "cee" says "c" (as in cat). The vowels are first taught as the short sounds, "a" as in apple, "e" as in elephant, "i" as in insect, "o" as in octopus, and "u" as in umbrella. It is also extremely important to focus on lower case letters! Many children begin writing their own names with all CAPITAL letters when only the first letter should be capitalized. We cannot stress this enough; most of the print in books is lower case letters. The children are asked to get a book off the shelf. Which book? Any book! We open it and look at the letters in the book, most are lower case. We introduce the concept of using a capital at the beginning of a sentence and for names. Writing in capital letters creates problems in the future and is a habit which is very hard to break.

Word building with the movable alphabet encourages and empowers children to express themselves without having to write the actual letters. The movable alphabet has all 26 letters precut of plastic or wood. They choose the sound which represents each letter in a word, from the alphabet and place each out on a rug or table to visually form "spell" the word they have chosen. For example, for a picture of a bat, the child would get the letter "b", then "a" and finally "t" to build the word 'bat'. We then have 3-part cards (we have discussed in previous newsletter) one with a picture and the printed word, one with just a picture and another with only the print. These are the controls for each child to visually correct their work from the picture and print.



Readers are only introduced after a lot of work with the movable alphabet and when each child knows most of the alphabet phonetically and is extremely confident of the sounds for each book. When your child brings home a reader, encourage them to say each sound in a word. Children try and guess from the pictures. Remind your child "the sounds will tell you what to say". What is this sound, pointing at each individual sound? (remember they know the sounds, or they wouldn't have the reader, don't fall for "I don't know") Constantly refer them back to the print and ask them to say each sound fast or to sing it. This encourages blending of the individual sounds into a word. Initially children have trouble blending the sounds they see into a word, but practice and experience will build their reading skills. The repetition in the readers will eventually (be patient) lead to word recognition. Again, a huge Thank You to all for our wonderful Valentines party!

FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha Ms. Carole



The month of friendship and love has brought with it plenty of excitement! We have been channeling the extra energy with more chances for movement during Line Time in between our preparation of the East Room fish tank. It has been a slow and steady process to make sure our friends are set up for success in respecting the newest member of our class, and we have now welcomed the addition of a pet Betta Fish! The students worked together to pick a suitable name for our friend: *Diamond*.



With all the extra motivation that extra sunny days bring, we have are seeing more students excited to try more challenging works or offer presentations and help to their friends.

Now that our class has become quite comfortable with baking, we have introduced making the dough as part of the activity. The addition of measuring and leveling the baking mix, adding in water little by little, and adjusting the recipe to get the consistency just right has added an extra level of complexity to an already lengthy activity that starts with Handwashing and ends with Dishwashing. The same level of focus and concentration needed here is then used to work through long sentence building and operations with 4-digit numbers! Our students have also been loving making orange juice, and coffee grinding continues to be a hit. Both help the children strengthen their wrists and hands for writing.

The simple addition of a blindfold has also piqued the interest of many in our Sensorial Area. With their eyes covered, children have to fully rely on their sense of touch to identify matching tablets based on their temperature (warmer wood versus colder metal) or guess the different objects in the stereognostic bag. This is a wonderful opportunity to work on adjectives and prediction: "Is the object cold or warm? Is it smooth or rough? Hard or soft? What do you think it might be?" Amazing skills needed later for creative writing and storytelling!

Our science shelves have welcomed the newly popular activity of Absorbent and Non-Absorbent. We had doubts if our students would confuse the findings of this activity with the similarly set-up Sink and Float activity, but of course they pleasantly surprised us with a quick grasp on the difference in the two concepts. We encourage the kids to be scientists and predict whether the object they're holding will be absorbent or non-absorbent. The most surprising discovery by far has been the pipe cleaner that it is indeed absorbent! Our older students have also started to explore different states of matter with a simple Solid, Liquid, and Gas activity. One child quickly noted that the material reminds them of Land, Air, Water,

making the important connection between the components of our environment and the states of matter.

In Geography, we have traveled all the way to Australia (and other countries of Oceania) to explore the different flags, plants, animals, people, and landmarks there. We've made the fascinating discovery that seasons in Australia are reversed, and they celebrate Christmas during their summer season! Alongside our Australia unit, we have been exploring parts of a Kangaroo and Koala, trying out dot painting inspired by Aboriginal Australian art, and decorating our own boomerangs.

Of course, we were busy adding hearts, decorations, and making a "Valentine's Post Office" in preparation for the Valentine's Party! After all that anticipation, our students were beyond ecstatic the day of the party, playing games, making crafts, and sharing snacks. Thank you to everyone who helped make our party a success by contributing items for the party or coming in to volunteer. And a special Thank You to Landon from our Elementary class for helping our students deliver each of their Valentines to their friends.

Surprisingly, the day after the party was extra peaceful and quiet – we noticed even our most active students needing some peace and quiet after such an exciting day. Stepping back to observe the children throughout the day is an integral part of the Montessori environment that allows us to continuously create a place where the children are most able to thrive. The same can be done at home to understand your child better, especially as we enter the season of change (as cliché as it may be).

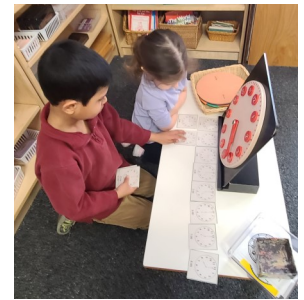
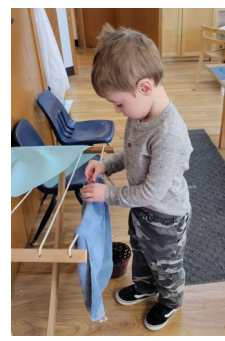
It sometimes feels that we are more in tune with our child when they are a newborn who is still unable to verbally communicate their needs. We carefully observe their cries, coos, changes in behavior, etc just to understand what they are reacting to, and how we can help them appropriately. But once our children become verbal, we heavily turn our focus to just their words, and all but stop observing them to get the full picture of the what and the why. And as they become 3, 4, 5, and even 6-year-olds who can say more and more, we continue to be perplexed by their changes and behaviors. Because we have stopped taking the time to observe our children. Try as they might, they actually cannot put into words for us why they're feeling a certain way or "what is wrong".

As adults, we often can't do that for ourselves either! But we pay close attention to how our own exercise, food, and sleep habits affect our moods. We may journal, track, or even seek the help of another adult to observe us and tell us why we are feeling what we feel, and what we can change to be the "optimal" version of ourselves. And as parents, we need to do the same for our children – take time to objectively observe our children, their environment, their routine, and how they are honestly reacting to it, in order to better understand and help them.



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT PATHWAYS IN FEBRUARY



"There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community."

~ Maria Montessori

