

Montessori Pathways' News



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

The Magic of Montessori Math Family Night

~Learning to be Change Makers~

“For parents who invest in a Montessori education beyond the earliest years, you are gifted with a child who goes into the world able to reach their highest potential—not only academically and eventually in their careers, but as human beings who are going to give back and make it a better world.” — Michelle Morrison, Head of School, Princeton Montessori School

If children near the end of their kindergarten year in Montessori, many parents struggle with the question whether or not to keep their children in Montessori for Elementary Program.

On the one hand the typical Montessori five-year-old's self-confidence and love of learning lead many families to ask: *Why tamper with something that is clearly working?*

Other parents feel that, since their kindergarten graduate will be moving on to another class one way or another, next year might be the logical time to make the transition from Montessori.

If you are facing this choice, we encourage you to take a good look at your school's elementary program. Although, you will, of course, want to gain an impression of the teacher, focus your attention on the students themselves. Elementary students are often the best spokespeople for the value of a Montessori education.

What makes Montessori special is its ability to nurture talent without needless competition and stress. In a nutshell, Montessori children never lose the joy of learning.

Why Continue in Montessori Elementary?

[\(click here to read an expert's opinion\)](#)



“It is certain that Mathematics organizes the abstract path of the mind so we must offer it at an early age, in a very clear and accessible manner, as a stimulus to the child whose mind is yet to be organized.”

~Maria Montessori



Thank you so much to all who came out to our “Montessori Math” family night. It was a great turnout and the parents who attended were amazed by the progression of the Math curriculum from Primary through Upper Elementary, the material and the way in which it is presented to the children, and how the children learn to internalize mathematical concepts.

The Montessori Math Curriculum is broad in its scope. It begins with the child's first impressions of numeracy: counting objects and then matching them to representative numerals. Later on, children will practice operations, measurement, fractions, algebra and many other topics in Math.

At each stage, the child will have the opportunity to use manipulatives – the specialized Montessori materials. “Manipulate” is derived from the Latin root “manus”, which means “hand”. These concrete materials allow children to get a “handle”, quite literally, on mathematics concepts in the concrete sense. It is only after the children have successfully practiced a skill with concrete materials that they are asked to make abstractions. By this point, true understanding of the process has been internalized and children can work out and record calculations with pencil and paper.

Along the Montessori Math continuum, there exist many instances of overlap and connections between different pieces of work at different levels. There are also many opportunities for children to practice and incorporate already mastered skills in more and more challenging ways.



Parents' Corner



Multi-Age Grouping: Observation + Imitation = Learning

Inside the Montessori community and beyond, multi-age classrooms are a hot topic for parents, teachers, and school administrators.

Angeline Stoll Lillard, in her authoritative research review "Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius", describes the Montessori multi-age setting this way: *"Montessori encourages learning from peers in part by using three-year age groupings. This ensures that as children move through the classroom they will be exposed to older and younger peers, facilitating both imitative learning and peer tutoring... Dr. Montessori was quite clear about the need for this mix of ages."*

How & why multi-age grouping benefits younger learners?

Simply put, children learn readily from other children. Not only are they eager to play "teacher," they are astonishingly attentive "pretend" students. What young child has not played "school" with a friend or sibling? Multi-age Montessori schools take advantage of this natural tendency toward spontaneous learning by letting them "play school" with structured classroom activities.

Along with direct lessons given by classmates, younger students in a multi-age setting also learn by observing the activities of older peers and even by "eavesdropping" on advanced lessons given by the teacher to another child. Montessori teachers are careful to present lessons to older children in a manner that allows interested younger children to watch, listen, and learn.



The benefits of multi-age grouping to older learners.

It's easy to see how access to advanced activities and lessons benefits younger children academically. What about older children? Any adult who has tried to teach something the least bit

complicated to someone else has enjoyed a taste of the older child's Montessori learning experience! There is no better way to reinforce one's own knowledge than by teaching someone else.

Teaching a real lesson, as children do in Montessori classrooms, helps older children identify gaps in their own knowledge and often inspires them to achieve even greater mastery.



Leadership opportunities are extremely rare for children in a single-grade classroom; such roles are often assigned by the teacher. A Montessori multi-age classroom affords children daily opportunities to teach a skill or share information with others. Further, because every child is particularly good at something, this opportunity exists for every child, every day. This difference in how leadership roles develop in the classroom is a typical illustration of the difference between single-grade, teacher-centered, traditional schools and Montessori multi-age, child-centered classrooms.

When peer-to-peer learning is self-directed, when it happens because children are ready, willing, and able to participate, it bolsters the older child's self-confidence, opens doors for younger children, and sharpens the academic skills of both.

Maria Montessori observed that children are eager to learn, and she identified self-directed, observational learning as a central theme of childhood. Describing the phenomenon of observational learning in a multi-age group, Montessori wrote that the child *"...suddenly becomes aware of his companions, and is almost as deeply interested as we are in the progress of their work."*

www.montessoriservices.com



School Events in February

REGISTRATION FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN!

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!

Our school offers **Morning classes** (for preschool / Pre-K only), **School Day, Extended School Day**, and **All Day** programs for children from 3 to 12 years of age:

- ⇒ Primary Class – 3 - 6 years of age (Preschool - Pre-K - Kindergarten)
- ⇒ Lower /Upper Elementary Class – 6-12 years of age (1st – 6th grades)
- ⇒ Summer Camp

We all know that after the pandemic, a lot of great private schools and childcare facilities were permanently closed. Because of this, and with an increased interest in Montessori Education, the demand of enrolling children in our program is rapidly growing. We are not able to enroll new students at this point because we are absolutely full. The spots filled up very quickly last year. Therefore, we would like to make sure that we accommodate our current families before opening registration to new families on February 1st and are beginning preferred re-enrollment for our current families for the 2024-2025 school year.

If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please:

- 1) **Complete the Re-Enrollment Form for the 2024-2025** school year that was recently sent to every family **and return it** back to us **along with the \$50.00 re-enrolment fee** (\$25.00 for the second child) as soon as you are ready with your decision, but **no later than March 1st, 2024.**

Check to Montessori Pathways or Zelle to montpathways@hotmail.com are acceptable.

- 2) **The 10% annual tuition security deposit is due no later than 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 deposit.*

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

- 3) **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 FEBRUARY:

- ◆ **February 1 (Tu) – New Families Enrollment begins**
- ◆ **February 8 (Th) – Trip to Raue Center for the Art to see "Dot, Dot, Dot..." musical for Pre-K / K Afternoon Group and Elementary Students (4.5—12 y.o.)**
- ◆ **February 14 (W) – Love and Friendship Celebration (Valentine's Day at Montessori Pathways)**
- ◆ **February 16 (F) – NO SCHOOL (Teachers' Institute Day)**
- ◆ **February 19 (M) – NO SCHOOL (Presidents' Day)**
- ◆ **February 20—29 – Moving On Week: Elementary Class Visit Days for Kindergarten Students**

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In honor of Martin Luther King, we talked about how the only thing that can halt mean people is to love them so hard... "kill them with kindness". Many were amazed that this could work. I overheard one student tell another that she was making a chain to give to her brother since he can be mean sometimes. She said, "I'm going to kill him with kindness." If only we could make all have love.



Writing is an area of growth for many of the students. We have discussed punctuation (end marks, commas, and apostrophes) as well as capital letters. I am encouraging them to diversify their writing.



For two weeks, we worked on How to/ Explanatory Stories. Many students were quite creative when choosing their topic: *How to Make Snow. How to Write a Story. How to Make a Paper Airplane. How to Drive a Car. How to Make a Friend. How to Find a Pet.*

Many students are getting excited to present math to all of the parents. We have lessons weekly with follow-up work for math. Each child will choose their favorite math to share.



Practical Life Skills begin in the primary classes. Each child learns to do folding, sweeping up, washing hands, washing dishes, setting up and cleaning the tables, simple baking and cooking, and much more to create independence. In elementary, we have daily jobs, dusting jobs, bookshelf tidying jobs and monthly jobs. These change bi-monthly, semi-annually or annually. The children take on more and more responsibility as they grow. Classroom jobs are an extension of their sense of community and ownership of their personal spaces; they help a child to appreciate the hard work that goes into keeping a space neat, clean, and ready for the next friend.

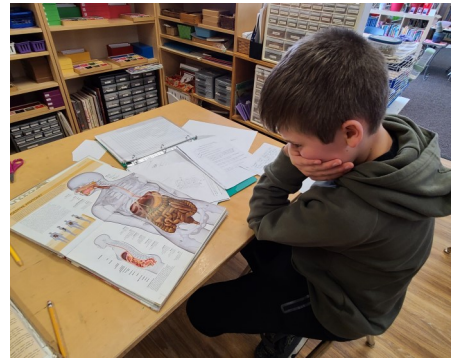
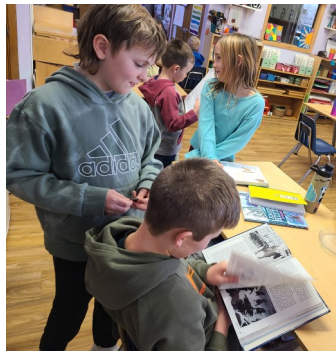


It was great to see you all at the conferences. It is important to touch base so that students know that we are a team, here to help them be the best they can be. I feel that many students are working hard and are more independent. Many students are making choices, completing more assignments, helping other complete works, and feeling empowered to help present lessons.



JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP

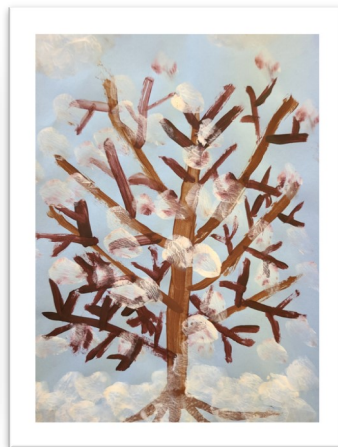


Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

Our Pre-K and Kindergarten friends returned from break with much excitement to see at least some snow on the ground—this was before the big snowstorm! We read about the lifecycle of the snowflake and brought some snow inside to see how long it would take to melt into water. The less than appealing water that remained was a good reminder on why we don't want to be eating the snow!



We also took time to revisit parts of a plant as we see them now in the winter—trees that still have their roots, trunks, and branches, but no leaves. This led to a fun discussion of the purpose of leaves and how they follow the sun. We noticed a plant with leaves reaching right for the window and turned it around to see if we could notice the leaves moving. The children then had a chance to create their own wintry tree painting, which has turned our hallway into a wintry forest!

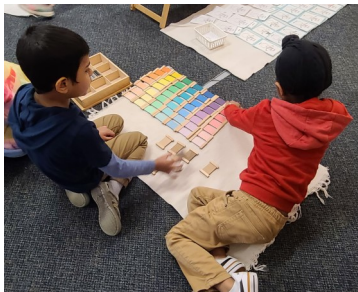


Our class has been filled with the sound of more friends practicing reading, sentences built with moveable alphabet, and stacks of thousands cubes as students practicing building, adding, and multiplying with 4-digit numbers!



JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten—Afternoon Work Cycle

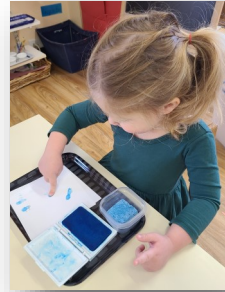


NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



Happy New Year! We came together as a group on January 8th and had our first "Snow Day by Friday the 12, followed by no school on Martin Luther King Day. O.K. January may be the shortest month this year. However, the children were happy to be back after the long holiday break. Everyone settled back to the routine beautifully. Everyone had a personal area to revisit. It was amazing to see how many children knew exactly what they were working on before the long winter break. They picked up like it had just been a weekend rather than a few weeks!



Everyone was excited about "The Magic of Montessori Math night"! The chance to show what you know to your parents. In anticipation of our evening, the children were focused on choosing a favorite work. They explored different operations and skills, hence, a lot more math explorations were observed.

The beauty of a Montessori classroom is before you do any "Math" the children have already been exposed to math, like it or not! The Sensorial area of the classroom indirectly prepares the child for the "Math" area. Nearly every material in the sensorial area is in sets of 10 and graded by size changing by centimeters of 1 cm to 10cm. Indirectly preparing the child to recognize the difference between one unit and ten units or one unit and 1000 cube. The physical difference between a one or unit bead and a 1000 cube is not only seen through dimension and size difference of the materials it is also felt by the weight. A thousand is "big", 9000 is huge! This concrete experience with the materials will later lead to a better understanding when moving to abstract concepts. The math area is divided to give experience with many forms of numeration, the decimal system, operations, memorization and finally the move to abstraction.

The children were all anxious to repeat their favorite activities or return to activities with a new purpose in mind. These sensitive periods of repetition bring focus to the child and develop neural connections based on experience, repetition, and practice to help them fully learn. Repetition comes in many forms, daily routine being one. When the environment is stable the child knows what to expect and feels at ease, creating an optimal learning environment. For some children the schedule is the major focus, learning how to choose a work on their own and feeling confident and secure enough to thoroughly complete the entire cycle on their own. This is the practice of the child developing self-discipline and concentration before mastery can be achieved. Abstract thinking and problem-solving skills bloom from the self-correcting materials.



Thank you to all who attended our event. It is an eye-opening experience and demonstrates the beauty of the materials Maria Montessori put into place for all children to intuitively learn.

We had Ms. Rachel from Beyond Green give us another informative lesson on vitamins in our food. She also brought seasonal fruits and veggies as well as tasty pumpkin and zucchini muffins for all to try.



In Art and Practical life, little snowmen and snowflakes have appeared. Snowflake spooning, snowflake making and gluing, and fingerprint snowmen are flying off the shelves. Math contained snowflake counting 1 – 10 with beautiful snowflake cut-outs to represent the quantities. In Science we incorporated the parts of a snowman. These variations in each area are familiar and yet each contain subtle differences, renewed interests, and new vocabulary.

JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole



Happy New Year and welcome back, East Room! Our students came back from break energized, refreshed, and hungry for knowledge! We also had two new friends join our class this month, allowing for our existing students to fully embrace their roles as leaders and helpers. It has been amazing to see students who, just a couple months ago needed help themselves, offer to help our newest members.

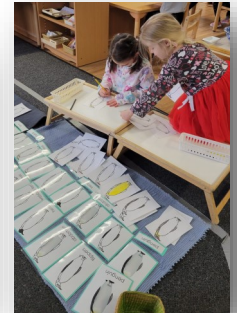


Despite the cold, often dreary weather, which hasn't always allowed us the much-anticipated time outside in the snow, we have been keeping the excitement alive with many new areas to explore. In Botany, we are exploring the types of citrus, along with the parts of a citrus fruit. We spent a week analyzing and tasting four different types of citrus fruits: Sumo orange (similar to a tangelo), grapefruit, kumquat, and lime. Taking a look at each of these fruits allowed a daily repetition of the different part names such as pith, segment, juice sac, and the ever-popular pips. Our class is now acutely aware of what the word "sour" really means! And much to our surprise, we have quite a few sour citrus fans in the class! Some of our students assisted in creating a chart to keep track of class favorites: the sumo was most popular with a vote of 16, but even the grapefruit and lime boasted a surprising 9 votes.



Zoology has welcomed a very beloved collection of penguin works, including parts of a penguin, types of penguins, and the lifecycle of a penguin. Some of our students have had to use great attention to detail to tell apart the penguin types based on small nuances, while others have been having a blast trying to stand like a penguin incubating an egg as they work on the lifecycle book. Creating these books is not just an opportunity to learn important vocabulary and concepts like lifecycles—it is an important practice in reading (or pre-reading), organization, patience, creativity, and problem solving.

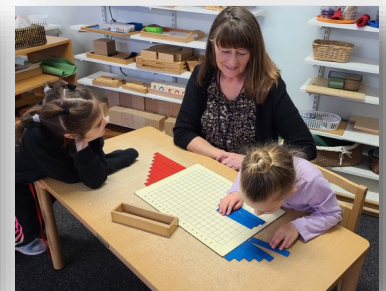
Children will often come back to re-create these books, but each time they've found a different skill they feel needs to be refined. We've said it before and we will say it again – repetition is key at this age!



We have also moved into the Polar Region study in our Cultural area, introducing plants, animals, and people of the Arctic and Antarctic. Our class finds the arctic animals to be absolutely adorable, while also being intrigued by the ways the Inuit people live, and shocked at the beauty of the plants in the Arctic. This excitement also naturally led to an exploration of what animals do in the winter (hibernate, adapt, or migrate) as a fun Line Time activity.

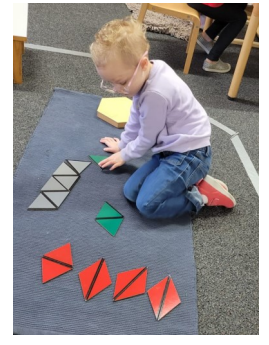


The upcoming Math Evening has created quite a buzz in the class as well, generating even more interest in our math materials. Many of our friends have been doing bigger works, both literally and figuratively! Dynamic addition with multiple exchanges through the stamp game looks just as fun and exciting as the seemingly endless roll of numbers for Roll Work. Our math area is absolutely bustling this month with students inspiring each other, and we can't wait to share the excitement with you!



JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

East Room





WE LOVE SUCH MOMENTS!!!



“Children acquire knowledge through experience in the environment.”
~M. Montessori

