

Montessori Pathways'

News

March 2015

"These children have free choice all day long. Life is based on choice, so they learn to make their own decisions. They must decide and choose for themselves all the time. ...They cannot learn through obedience to the commands of another"

-Maria Montessori



"My Friends at Montessori Pathways"
by Molly G. (East Room, Pre-K)

Notes from Ms. Alena

These words by Maria Montessori still hold true today. So many wonderful things can happen if kids are given a choice and are able to make their own decisions rather than being forced by us adults. These are just a couple of my fun daily observations.

Knowing about the coming Chinese New Year Celebration, the kindergarteners decided to make their own Huge Dragon in addition to the store bought Dragon that we use every year. Gosh! So many discussions took place: the color of the Dragon, how big it should be, how to make the body, how to connect parts of the body, should it be partner work or group work, who is responsible for what, what tools and supplies are better to use, and the most important question –where to store this giant? All this work was initiated and completed without any orders or suggestions from the teachers.



Another situation occurred when we were lucky to have the warmer spring days. I came out to the playground during recess for the short break and, noticing a couple of corners stuffed with old leaves, I decided to clean them up. In a few minutes several Elementary students came to me and asked if they could help. After a reminder of where they can find the necessary tools, I felt that they do not need me anymore. Kids were just eager to make their playground nice and clean and have been working independently several days in a row with no request or expectations from the adult side.

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Since this warm weather encouraged us to begin spring cleaning, I thought it would be a good idea to sweep the sand left by the winter boots in our closets. But my Elementary friends decided that it would be better if they would also wipe the closets and vacuum the shoe rugs.



What great team work! The final touch was when students decorated their classroom with small bouquets of flowers in preparation for the Open House.

Thank you very much, my friends, not only for your help, but for the daily enjoyment that I have watching you!!!



I had one more exciting experience while observing the Elementary students during our *Parent/Child Night*. They easily involved parents in a work cycle and made them be attentive during various presentations. Doing the dynamic addition with a Bead Frame, long multiplication with the Test Tubes, finding synonyms, antonyms, or building compound words with a chain of cards made parents concentrate and think. I should say that all of our kids acted as very confident, nice, but strict teachers.



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Coming School Events

- **April 3 (Friday) - 10:00am** – “The Princess and the Pea” at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire
- **Saturday, April 4 - 10am-1:00 pm** - Open House.

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

- **Wednesday, April 15 - 6:00-7:30pm** – **Primary Class Parent / Child Night “Come and work together!”** (East and South room)

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!

- **Friday, April 17 - Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference by appt.**

- *Early Dismissal (11:45 am) for School Day Elementary students*
- *Regular Schedule for 4:15 and All Day Elementary Students*

- **April 20-24 – Earth Week**
- **April 22 (Wednesday) at 9:00am** – **Spruce It Up!: Doughnuts with Dads**

Work with Dad and enjoy doughnuts together!

- **Registration for Summer Camp and the upcoming 2015-2016 School Year are in full swing!**

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

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 April 15, 2015.

The 10% of annual 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

March and possibly spring have come and gone. It was exciting for us to finally be able to go outside again. We began this month with a walking field trip to the Raue Center for the Arts to see "The Rainbow Fish" musical together with our kindergarten friends. Hopefully that warm weather will return to us soon.



In March we did some exciting science demonstrations. We learned about the density of different materials, the weight of air, and that light can be bent and focused.

In geography, we began our study of North America. We learned about all of the other countries that are part of the continent in addition to Canada, the United States and Mexico. We also began our study of the United States, starting with the basic geography and will go more into the history going forward.



Each student also picked a state, did research on it and presented their research on a poster to their peers. The students did a good job with this and we learned many important presentation skills like: speaking at an appropriate level, holding your poster so that the audience can see it and knowing what information you wrote down. They will continue to have opportunities to refine these skills with their future research during the year.

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We also worked on a lot of reading comprehension skills while I read the students *The Pencil of Doom*. This is a very fun book for the children and we worked on skills such as visualization, connections, predictions and summarizing. The students really enjoyed this book and I think it helped with some of their creativity in their own writing because it is a kind of silly book with interesting characters.



In geometry we reviewed the polygons and curved figures. We also worked with the constructive triangles, which are multiple boxes of different triangles that can be used to build any of the quadrilaterals and other polygons.



We also worked on lines of symmetry. Students were able to work with different shapes, which they had traced and cut out and worked on folding those different ways to see if they were symmetrical.

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Some students were excited because they finally had words to describe a difference between an oval and an ellipse which was that an oval has one line of symmetry, but an ellipse has 2. A circle was also interesting because the students kept finding more possible lines of symmetry which lead a third grader to decide that there must be infinite lines of symmetry for a circle.



*Warm regards,
Mr. Matt*

Notes from the Art Class (*Kindergarten and Elementary*)

Ms. Susan

In March, the art class developed their art observation and acrylic painting skills. First, they practiced drawing and composing an artwork based on the idea of "zooming in", or observing small details, and making those details the subject of a larger image. They looked at Georgia O'Keefe paintings to see how she filled the whole canvas with a flower, rock, or other image.

Then, they transferred their drawings to canvas and painted them. They learned how to use acrylic paint from light to dark colors, and how to shade with paint. By drawing and then painting the same subject, they explored the difference between dry and wet mediums, and how to use each medium effectively. By painting on canvas, they were able to use layers of paint to develop their ideas more fully. In another activity, the art class took turns quizzing each other on identifying famous paintings in a fun and educational art game.



*Sincerely,
Ms. Susan*

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Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen

I enjoyed the conferences we had with you this past month. It was an opportunity for us to communicate your child's progress and interests in some detail, but your input was also valuable, often helping us to acquire a deeper understanding of your child.

This month, we have been enjoying some of the many Frog and Toad stories. The stories are simple, totally engaging, and, in a subtle way, have a moral to them. The author is Arnold Lobel. Perhaps when you are at the library, you would like to check some out. They were a favorite of the children's. They loved them and asked for another story every day. Actually, I looked forward to the story as well!



This past week was *science demonstration week*: simple activities presented to the group to demonstrate a principle or a fact. One or two of the ideas may have come home. Perhaps your child wanted to show you he/she could submerge paper under water and keep it dry (air in the jar) or perhaps he/she told you how we added 175 drops (we counted each one) of water to an already "full" glass of water ---surface tension or perhaps your child explained how we could extinguish a candle flame without blowing on it.



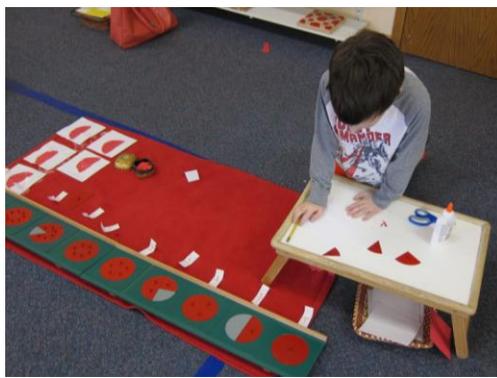
Montessori saw the necessity of creating an environment in such a way as to allow the child to concentrate. That is, to concentrate freely on a chosen project as long as his interest is held. "...such an interest engages the child's whole personality" (206 MM)

Do you ever hear "Oh that's so boring" from your child? They play with something briefly and then go off to look briefly at something else to do ---to just touch upon. And then move along again. That kind of interest level brings no satisfaction to the child as he/she wanders from work to work, but does not fully engage.

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However, when we can help the child focus on the detail, the precision, the challenge of the work, we find they are completely absorbed for long periods of time, perfecting their movements and seeking mastery of the task. Then we see children happily absorbed in the same activity: for example, peeling carrots---for 20 minutes or half hour. Or they are engrossed in their easel painting, or their attention is riveted by the PROCESS of division, or they are fascinated by their maps and geography, or explore the relationship of fractions.



The story of 5 cucumbers: two girls were involved all afternoon (and actually had to continue after the class) washing, drying and peeling the cucumbers. Then they carefully sliced each cucumber. But it did not stop there. They had an inspiration to make up a special plate of cucumbers, one for each teacher (and Miss Alena). They put cucumber slices all around the edge of each plate. In the center of the plate, they placed a cup of water. Decorating the arrangement were hearts they had punched out of construction paper with the message "love". Their own idea. Their own gift. Their own "work".

All was decided upon and arranged by the girls. They found everything they needed in the environment with no help. They cleaned up and put everything away in its proper place. The making of a gift absorbed them all afternoon.



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Mental habits need to be practiced to strengthen them. Not so different from practicing any skill set. But it takes unbroken block of time for the child to process, to plan, to create, to execute his/her plan, to build his/her ability to focus. So how else does that manifest at this time of the year? Children are spending all afternoon making a map of a continent, someone else writing a story, copying it, making a cover and thereby creating a book, someone else absorbed in their own baking project, measuring, planning, decorating and then sharing the results with friends, someone else creating "menus" of "healthy foods" for dinner. It takes so many forms! Intensity of focus finds meaning in the details and interest in every subject.

The unfolding of the interests and abilities of the Kindergarten class has been a delight to watch.



*Best regards,
Ms. Karen*

Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

They say "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb".....what a roller coaster of weather this month! The children are so excited to wear light coats one day and snow pants the next. Happy spring!

We have introduced some new materials this month- *The Life Cycle of a Frog, Parts of a Root and How a Seed Grows*. We planted sprouted apple seeds that were kept in our refrigerator over the winter from apple tasting last fall. We mist them every day and so far, we have 3 out of 7 sprouts! However, it is a difficult concept to understand that we will not have apples from our "trees" this summer.

We celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday earlier this month; we made our own version of Cat in the Hat and read a wide variety of his famous stories. This was a great way to explore rhyming words as well.

The children were excited to learn about St. Patrick's Day traditions, leprechauns, and the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow - of course there really is no end, as a rainbow is a circle. Some children made shamrocks and we stamped green pepper "shamrocks" after a group tasting activity on the line. We sampled red, yellow, orange and green peppers - the red pepper won as the class' favorite.

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The work cycle is in full swing - everyone has their own unique routine and we are enjoying watching your children thrive and succeed in their daily choices. We have observed much growth and by observing and knowledge of your child's interests and skill levels, we offer appropriate extensions and challenges.



It was nice to meet with our parents to discuss goals and progress made over this past school year. We are looking forward to continued work with your children!

We celebrated Reagan, Penelope and Emily's birthdays this month - Happy Birthday wishes from the class were extended and delicious treats enjoyed; thank you. Have a wonderful spring!



Warmly,
Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Ambreen

March, the third month of the year, was a very busy and exciting month full of events and celebrations.

The first week witnessed the birthday celebration of Dr. Seuss, a famous children's author who has written many popular books like the 'The Cat In The Hat', 'Green Eggs And Ham' and many more. During that week we enjoyed reading his books during story time.

On 5th March, we celebrated Chinese New Year and the entire South room class is very thankful to Sophie Pan's mom and grandma for sharing their experiences of Chinese New Year and helping us celebrate in a traditional Chinese spirit with beautiful lanterns, Chinese dumplings, mandarin, oranges, and special red envelopes with chocolate coins for all the friends. To bring in more excitement and fun, we paraded with our 'FOO Dragon', thanks to Ms. Karen who brought this special Chinese symbol of good luck all the way from China. We visited the East Room and North room classes and shared with them oranges and a special story 'Max celebrates Chinese New Year'. This was a great practice of grace and courtesy as we from South room shared our joy with friends of other classrooms and kids from those classrooms offered their thanks to us.



On March 6th we celebrated ' HOLI ', the Indian Spring festival of Colors. Our special thanks to East Room teacher Ms. Laxmi, Vivek's mom, to share her experiences of Holi with us. A big thank you to our friend Shivain and his mom Soma for dressing up in traditional Indian clothes and sharing with us traditional homemade Indian sweet delicacy prepared for Holi. It was a delicious snack for all of us.



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On March 17th it was St. Patrick's Day. We saved the celebration to be included in our Rainbow Day. All of these events and celebrations motivated our Kindergarteners to research and learn all about China, India and Ireland. I observed big maps of Asia and Europe being studied in full swing. The kids even made the flags of those countries to adorn our walls.

To conclude the month of March and welcome the official start of springtime we celebrated 'Rainbow Day' on March 19th. It was a morning full of excitement and fun. In honor of Dr. Suess and his stories, all the kids with their beautiful imaginations created amazing play dough characters. To usher in spring, we planted spring lily bulbs (hope to see them bloom soon). We also created beautiful butterflies with water color painting and Rainbows with crayon coloring. We enjoyed Irish soda bread with butter and green grapes for snack. We performed the Irish Dance on the line and read the story 'Leprechaun's Gold '. As it is said that at the end of a rainbow is a pot of gold, we concluded our story time with chocolate gold coins for everyone.



I extend my great appreciation to the parents of Ana Sofia, Ellie, Monika, Daria, and Vivek for helping us celebrate the 'Rainbow Day'.

On March 16th was our Spring Conference Day and I would like to thank all the parents for taking their valuable time out to come and see me. I was very happy to share with them their children's accomplishments and progress.



I wish all my friends a very happy spring and look forward to see you after Spring Break.

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I would like to end with a quote from Dr Maria Montessori, *"Education is not something which the teacher does, but it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in human beings"*.



Warmly,
Ms. Ambreen

Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

Ms. Ambreen



I would like to start with a quote from Dr. Maria Montessori, *"It is true we cannot make a genius. We can only give to child the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities"*.

The month of March was a very busy and exciting month. I observed the pre-kindergarteners working side by side with the kindergarteners practicing a lot of grace and courtesy. They were respecting each other in terms of their work and interactions.

I observed a lot of activity in our sensorial area as well as practical life area. The most popular activities chosen were color tablets box 2, red rods, sound cylinders, pink tower and brown stairs.

All of the Sensorial materials and activities are designed to help the kids gain refinement of senses which is important for the richer development of an intelligent, creative mind. For example, working with the Pink tower, a group of 10 cubes all pink in color but graduated in dimensions, help kids visually discriminate the sizes from big to small and see the order and sequence while building the tower thus helping them develop a mathematical mind. Besides intellectual growth exploring with sensorial materials also help kids gain muscular coordination, enrichment of vocabulary, independence and sharpening of memory skills.

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The most popular activities in the Practical life area were all the polishing activities, which were carried out with great focus, order and concentration.

All the movements practiced through practical life activities are truly constructive as they help the kids gain coordination, order, concentration, self-confidence, independence and self-satisfaction required for their all round development.

Working along with the kindergarteners motivated the Pre-ks towards big number works like addition, subtraction, and fractions. They were also inspired to do a lot of word building and work on the big maps like the map of North America and South America.



Although we only had three weeks of school in March, during these weeks the Pre-ks kept themselves very busy and full of zest and motivation towards learning.

I wish everyone a very happy Spring Break and look forward to see you all with your happy smiles after the break.

*Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen*

Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna



Green was our color and a shamrock was our shape for the first half of March. The second half of March we talked about different signs of spring and we began looking for them. New green shoots were coming up out of the ground, it was getting much lighter outside and we saw our first robin and the weather was getting warmer.

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Art: we traced a large felt shamrock and then painted and cut it out, made a Leprechaun wind sock, made Leprechaun traps out of recycled materials(we put them in our inside gym area and went to check them after our snack) The Leprechauns were very careful and did not get caught.

Songs and Games: "I'm a Little Leprechaun" (tune: I'm a little Teapot):

*I'm a little Leprechaun dressed in green.
The tiniest man that you ever seen.
If you catch me, it is told.
I'll give you my pot of gold!*

"Five Green Shamrocks" (we sing as a group, when they hear their name they pick up a shamrock):



*Five green shamrocks growing outdoors
(Child's name) picked one and that left four.
Four green shamrocks green as they can be,
(Child's name) picked one and that left three.
Three little shamrocks playing peek a boo,
(Child's name) picked one and that left two.
Two little shamrocks nodding in the sun
(Child's name) picked one and that left one.
One little shamrock for St Patrick's Day fun,
(Child's name) picked it and that left none.*

Books: Lots of Dr. Seuss Books

New activity: Going outside again.

Happy spring,

Ms. Donna

