

Montessori Pathways' News

September, 2017



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

"It is not true that I invented what is called the Montessori Method... I have studied the child; I have taken what the child has given me and expressed it, and that is what is called the Montessori Method."

~ Maria Montessori

What a great beginning of the school year we have had! A lot of new friends joined us this year. Welcome to Montessori Pathways family, dear friends!!!

I would like to say thank you to all of our teachers who worked hard to organize and prepare a great and friendly environment for your kids to help them have a smooth and exciting beginning of the school year.

We, Montessori Pathways Team, really appreciate parents' help in being patient and giving us and your kids time for the beginning of school year transition and new students' adjustment.

Students have learned the names of their new friends and teachers, built a friendship, learned or reviewed the class and schools' environment, rules, and routine during September. Now they are ready for their exciting and satisfying journey and discovery.



Ice Cream Social



ENJOYING NATURE'S BEAUTY

Everyone enjoyed meeting old and new friends and spending some wonderful time together on our school's playground during the Ice Cream Social.





On September 21st the children from Montessori Pathways School joined together to celebrate the **United Nation's Annual International Day of Peace**.



Beginning in New Zealand and finishing in the Hawaiian Islands, the song "Light a Candle for Peace" was sung continuously for 24 hours by Montessori school children around the world. Our school was excited about joining the many other Montessori schools to "Sing Peace around the World".

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

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.



"Sing peace around the world" by MP students



~Hardy Mums Sale Fundraiser~

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to our **Fall Mums Sale Fundraiser**. We were able to collect **\$898.02**, which will go toward South Room renovation.

The participation of all of the students in the event is very important. The children were really excited about choosing the mums' colors and taking them home. The kids are very eager to be a part of school events. Therefore, we encourage participation in school events not so much for the event itself, but for the important feeling of community that they bring to the kids.

A special thank you to our Elementary students, who helped unload the mums from the truck! The kids were so excited, helpful, and fast, that the truck with 113 mums was unloaded in a mere 15 minutes!



Coming School Events



- ◆ **October 9 (M) – No School (Columbus Day)**
- ◆ **October 12 (Th) at 6:00-7:00pm– Montessori Fun / Educational Night for Primary Classes:**
 - ⇒ “How Independence Leads to Achievements or Montessori at Home” - workshop for parents
 - ⇒ “Movie / Popcorn Night” - fun night for kids

- ◆ **October 13 (F) at 9:00am - Elementary Students Trip to Crystal Lake Library for Research**

- ◆ **October 19(Th) at 9:00am– 10:30am - 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.

- ◆ **October 20 (F) at 2:15—3:00pm - “United Nations Day” - Elementary Students’ Presentation.**
* Parents are Welcome!!!

- ◆ **October 1—23— EQUAL EXCHANGE SCHOOL FUNDRAISER**

Please return your order and payment no later than October 23 and your products will be delivered before Thanksgiving.

**SUPPORT US
& A GREENER
PLANET!**

Your participation in the Equal Exchange Fundraiser helps our local community as well as small-scale family farmers and artisans around the globe.

- ◆ **October 27 (F) - School-Wide Field trip to “My Son Pinocchio, Jr.” play by CYT at Cosman Cultural Center in Huntley.**

- ◆ **October 31 (Tu) - Morning—Halloween Costume Party**

*Parents are welcome to organize Halloween morning activities in the classroom

- ◆ **October 31 (Tu) - Afternoon— Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF – Kindergarten and Elementary students**

Halloween Party Guidelines:



The children are invited to come to school dressed in a Halloween costume. Each classroom will have a simple celebration, which will allow time for each child to show off their costume and tell a little bit about who or what their costume represents. Afterward, each class will participate in special morning holiday activities.

Our children need consistency and routine even more so on exciting celebration days, so we will strive to make it special while maintaining a level of regularity for the children.

School Day and All-Day children will be changing out of their costume prior to lunch, so please send a comfortable change of clothing and a labeled bag to place your child’s costume into. Children who leave at 11:45 will wear their costume home.

Costume Guidelines:

We highly encourage you to choose an age-appropriate costume with your child. As a Montessori school, we aim to operate within our philosophy of providing the children with real experiences that are beautiful and natural and encourage you to choose a costume that is based upon a person, thing or animal.

Some costume ideas include animals, community helpers, athletes and storybook characters. The most important feature of your child’s costume should be comfort, please make sure they can still independently use the bathroom and can sit and move with ease.

Please note the following guidelines for costumes:

- ~ No scary costumes
- ~ No weapons or “fighting” props (swords, light sabers etc.)
- ~ No masks or headwear that covers the face
- ~ Please do not send any costume accessories that may be lost or damaged.

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber



This past month seemed to fly by with all of the transitioning, adjusting, learning, and movement happening. It seemed we would just get started and suddenly the school day was ending! The students have been working hard on building their social community. Each new student was paired with an older buddy/mentor every week. Those mentors were charged with making the needs of their buddy a priority, even before their own assigned work. The camaraderie continued at recess as well with large group games. It is inspiring to see a Montessori community in action!



In addition to their daily jobs and lunch duties, students are taking turns leading our daily community meeting. Learning how to be cooperative and how to manage responsibility are a HUGE part of the elementary years, whether it is writing a name on a work paper, delivering the green folder, placing shoes neatly in the closet, completing jobs, hanging up a jacket, turning in work, filling the water pitcher, or cleaning up the work area. In fact, older students often pitch in to help, especially when recess time is limited because lunch clean-up is taking too long. Parents can help their elementary children by having similar expectations and responsibilities at home.



Elementary learning is more than just doing. **Reading is the key.** Reading, comprehending, interpreting, analyzing, and thinking are all part of the process. All students need lots of practice at reading, especially those who are still on the path to being fluent readers. Students need to practice reading at home as well for at least 30 minutes per day.

Most of this past month was spent reviewing previously learned academic concepts in Math and Language. New presentations have started slowly, and most students are at a point where they will be receiving weekly presentations on all the academic subjects.

For new students, it can be a confusing time adjusting to new expectations. Montessori learning is a process and builds on previous knowledge. Each year, the student is expected to do more. For example, completing a map goes beyond tracing, coloring, and labeling the continents or countries. Now the student includes a title, names of oceans, other land and water forms, and a compass rose to identify the directions. It is hard work to move out of the comfort zone of doing it the old way! Students adjust to the reality that nearly all work needs to be neatly recorded, and recorded as accurately as possible. *Do your best work. Do your neatest work. Take your time. Do it right the first time.* These are frequent reminders. Students do the work, and do it again until they have mastered the concepts. Montessori labeled the elementary efforts as "practice to perfection." The reality is the students want to do the work over and over, and they have the desire to get it right.



Topic-wise, we began with the big picture of our universe. Now we narrow our scope of learning to the study of continents and countries, members of the animal and plant kingdoms, time, word study, spelling rules, and so much more. There is always something new to learn!



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September Photo Gallery—Elementary Class



SEPTEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class Field Trips



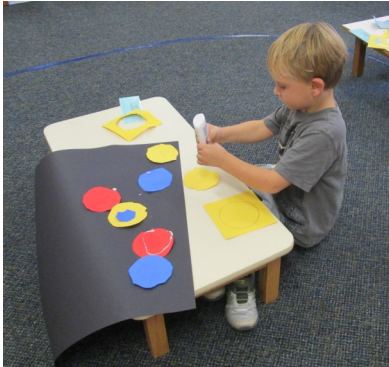
NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Karen

Skill building:

What we have accomplished in such a short time: Last month we highlighted the learning of the new environment for some of the children and the development of work: complex activities that require organization, multiple skills and multiple steps. The children have made much progress in those areas. Most are perfectly (or almost perfectly) comfortable finding their way around the room and locating materials needed. We added the skill of cutting on a curved line with accuracy.

The children love these activities and they help them develop precision and focus. And they see the application of the skill in their daily life. ("Look Miss Karen. I can cut exactly on the (curved) line!")



Highlight a work:

We present complex projects that require thinking, organization of the multiple steps and relationship of the part to the whole. But, there is a demonstration that precedes the product. So, we have done land/air/water books. Now we move to the more specific: a particular water form (lake) and a particular land form (island). In this way, we are beginning a pattern of progressing from the general to the particular, a common way of organizing and understanding information. We will be heading into an expansion of biology. For example, we will discuss and categorize living and not living, then vertebrate and invertebrate, then kinds of vertebrates. We are laying an experiential ground for relationship, sets, meaningful vocabulary. When your child brings home a work that has new vocabulary

or has new definition, please discuss with him. It takes repetition for any person to master new concepts/ vocabulary, etc.



In the sensorial area, our emphasis this month is on geometry: We begin with the geometric cabinet which consists of drawers, each of which contains a category of shapes. The geometric shapes in each of the six drawers are classified by particular properties of the shape (ex. straight side, curved side, number of sides, etc.) This particular activity of the classroom relates to vocabulary development and classification of the shape by its attributes. The children then make books and/or posters if they choose. In the beginning, we have fairly common shapes. But be prepared for shapes that you perhaps are not familiar with (heptagon, curvilinear, etc.)

Thank you to Miss Christine who substituted for me last week. Miss Christine discussed the autumnal equinox and then the children created a project to represent the idea. Additionally, they made a "Parts of the Apple" book -- tasting, writing, organizing a book. And fun!

Montessori environment:

The particular material described (geometric cabinet) also prepares the child for and leads to the creation of artistic geometric insets (more on that next month). One of the strengths of the Montessori environment is its interconnectedness. One activity is foundational for a related, but more advanced concept. This contrasts with random, unrelated information.

Montessori principle:

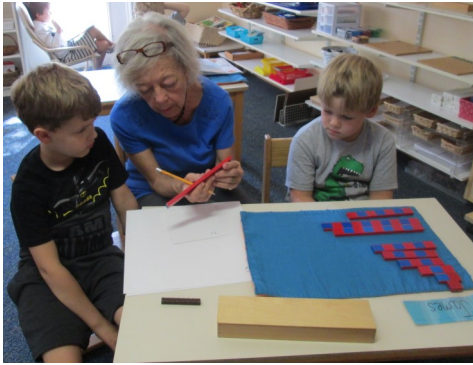
Maria Montessori emphasized the need for work with concrete materials. Children need experience, sensory input, repetition before going to the abstract (words, pictures, or symbols). The actual experience provides a solid base for deeper understanding. (How many of us memorized formulas that had no meaning because we did not have the experience to support understanding the formula.) The classroom also allows for repetition of activities to deepen the child's comprehension of the content.

Speech pattern of the month:

Our speech pattern this month was: *If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.* Speech patterns help form the rhythmic base for music.

Looking forward to the coming month (and the end of our heat wave!)

September Photo Gallery—Kindergarten Class



NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS

(KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

Ms. Linda

We've had a great start to the year in art class. The kindergarten class has been working on shapes and colors. We did a color mixing exercise and made some beautiful play dough rainbows, created an autumn tree using q-tip paintbrushes and a friendly shark from cut paper.

In the elementary class, the students started the year by designing self-portraits for the cover of their art journals. They warmed up their drawing skills by creating some "dancing cows" using oil pastel and watercolor. They are currently studying the artist Matisse and we are discussing the use of color and painting a still life by observation.



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



Although it's sweltering outside autumn is here and it's hard to believe that we've been in school for over a month already. We have eliminated the morning playground time and instead begin the day in the classroom. This allows the children to enter one at a time, and be greeted at the door by me (Ms. Andrea). It's a great way to start the day, and I'm able to say "good morning" to each child individually and be able to get a feel for their mood/temperament/etc. for that day.

At that point, the children can choose an activity themselves, I can help guide them into a new work, or they might choose to help set up the classroom by: folding clean laundry, filling dishwashing tubs, folding glue towels, preparing the morning snack, etc. The children seem to have internalized their new schedules and are able to follow the daily routine quite well at this point. Every morning we welcome happy and confident young people into the classroom, ready to begin a new day of exploration and learning. The children are becoming much more independent and are beginning to solve their own problems either by themselves or with the help of a friend. It's amazing to see this confidence and independence so early in the school year; we truly have a great group of children this year.

A lot of the younger children as well as children who are brand new to our school, typically like to begin their day in the Practical Life area of the classroom. This is the area where they are learning the skills necessary to be more self-reliant and increase their overall self-confidence. The activities in this area are designed to strengthen each child's sense of *Independence, Order, Concentration, and Coordination*; four important elements that will serve them well in all the areas of the classroom.



The work they do in the Practical Life area emphasizes (1) care of the self (handwashing, food preparation, learning to use various utensils: spooning, tonging, tweezing, cutting) (2) care of the classroom (polishing, table scrubbing, etc.) (3) care of the world (plant care, gardening, weeding, etc.). The older children use the Practical Life area in a different way; they do handwashing not for the activity itself, but so they can

prepare snack for the whole classroom, they choose table scrubbing when they have gotten pencil or glue on a table and are preparing it for the next person to use, and sometimes they choose a Practical Life activity as a break and re-set from the more academic work they are involved in.

The Sensorial area of the classroom has also been a very popular spot for many of the children. This area also lends itself to small group lessons. I have invited several groups of 3-8 children for lessons on various sensorial and geometry materials including: sound cylinders, color tablets, geometric solids, pink cubes and brown stairs, knobbed and knob-less cylinders, etc. This is a great way to engage several children at one time and also a great lesson on taking turns.

We have jumped right into math and language as well. Children have been hard at work learning their numbers, quantity and symbol as well as more advanced works such as addition, the 100 board, odds and evens.

In the Language area we have been working hard on our sounds. Determining which sounds each child already knows and building from there. We will soon begin sending home your child's *sound book* (small index cards on a spiral) so please look for it in their blue schoolbags this week. The idea is for them to learn their sounds at school and practice them at home with you. This is a great way for them to share what sounds they have mastered as well as have another chance to practice the ones they are currently working on.



When working on their sound books at home, please first ask them: "what sound does this letter make?" so they have an opportunity to recall if they can. If they are unable to recall the sound, then say: "this letter makes the sound mmmmmm." You can then trace the letter with your index and middle finger, always starting at the top of the letter, and repeat the sound it makes. Then have them trace and make the sound at least 2 times.

We have had an incredible first month of school and are enjoying getting to know your wonderful children.

September Photo Gallery—South Room

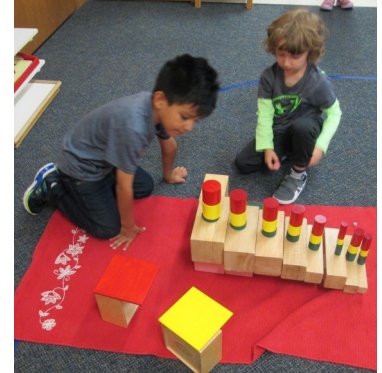


NEWS FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY



Ms. Andrea

The afternoon group of Pre-k children continue to show just how amazing and capable they are. They have already adjusted to this afternoon work cycle and enter the classroom confident with great ideas of what they want to explore that day.



It's incredible to think that just a few months ago, these children were the "little nappers" and now they are experiencing the classroom like "big kids."



This has also been a great opportunity for these Pre-K children to observe the more advanced activities that the kindergarteners are currently working on. It seems to help inspire their own ideas as well as strengthen their maturity and self-confidence as learners.



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM



Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

Warm September Greetings from the East Room!

We have had a wonderful beginning of the school year. Old friends have been reunited and new friendships are blossoming.

As children arrived at school this month they had an opportunity to play on the playground before we went inside. Once inside, we brought our coat/shoes to our "black line" where we learned how to hang up our coats. Older friends quickly began helping our younger friends accomplish this task and as needed helped with shoes too. Whew... this can take some time in the beginning. :)

When all our friends are settled in, we would sing songs, as a way to introduce each other, eat a small snack together, and present new works or present short grace and courtesy lessons. As our group time ends we then transition into their own individual work cycle.

If I was to come up with a theme for the month it would be "Building a Community of Helping Friends." Through our grace and courtesy lessons we began to show how we all can individually and collectively become helping friends. Caring for our environment, caring for ourselves and caring for each other are some of the areas we discussed as a group. Some of the lessons we talked about are listed below.

Caring for our environment: rolling up rugs, wiping up spills, pushing in chairs, sweeping up crumbs, walking carefully, putting our works away and help to prepare our morning snack

Caring for ourselves: washing hands, putting on our coats and shoes, using the bathroom, coughing into our elbow and how to use a tissue, and how to ask for help from a teacher or friend.

Caring for each other: how to help someone who is sad, hurt or needs a friend to play with, helping a friend find something in the classroom, show a new friend a work that you can do together and talking softly

Naturally, this is a work in progress and we will continue to build on these thoughts throughout the coming year. On the playground we have already heard, "would you like an ice pack?" We have also observed a couple of friends ask another friend to play with them. A short time later, hand in hand, they all run off together. Sweet moments for sure!!

We also introduced our "quiet table" this month. This is a one person table where items of nature are placed on a tray.

Children can quietly sit and closely examine various pieces. On our table this month were pieces of bark (with many woodpecker holes), a woodpecker feather, an Indian peace pipe, milkweed pod and a sealed container of high bush cranberries. We hope to cultivate a love and respect for nature through our group discussions.

Our month ended with our annual apple tasting. It's one of our favorite activities to do together. This year we tasted a couple new apples we never tried before. Pacific Rose, Pink Lady, Macintosh, Golden Delicious and Granny Smith were the types we tasted this year. There was a quite a discussion about which one tasted the best!



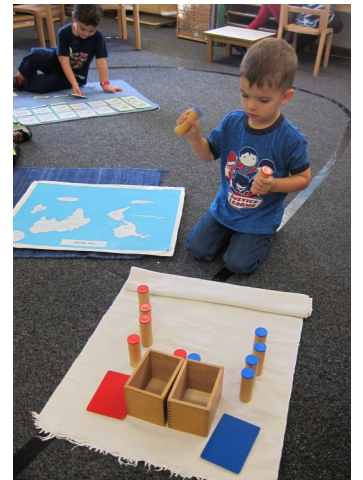
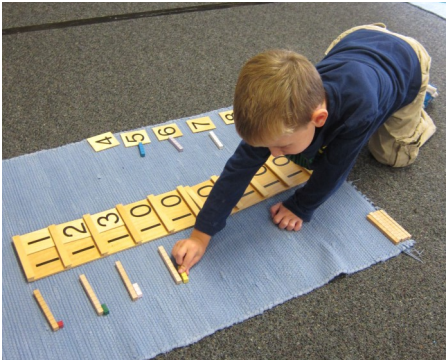
On the shelf there are works to support our apple discoveries. They are "The Life Cycle of the Apple Tree", "Seasons of the Apple Tree" and the "Parts of the Apple" booklet. Naturally, we had to "dissect" an apple to find and name all the parts, too. In art the children made an apple collage emphasizing the parts of an apple.

There were songs we learned and books to read. We learned new apple trees are started with small branches called shoots and it takes about 3 years for a new apple tree to blossom ... "Wow, that's really cool" "I'm 3 years old too" were just a couple of responses.

Next month it's all about fall, pumpkins and Halloween, can't wait!!!

Just want to take a moment to thank you for your contribution towards the sharing basket. We truly couldn't do this without your support, thanks again. It is one small way that the children can participate in "Building a Community of Helping Friends"

September Photo Gallery—East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS



Ms. Donna

Group Activities:

- ◇ Learned about ANTS. Ants are insects, they have 3 body parts (head, thorax, abdomen) six legs and 2 antennae. Illinois has almost 100 different species of ants. We then drew a picture of an ant.



- ◇ Will an apple float or sink when placed in a bowl of water? The children made their guesses and then we placed an apple in the bowl of water and watched what happened. We tried different types of apples. We put some in upside down and watched what happened. Try doing the apple experiment at home and don't forget to write down what you think will happen before you do the experiment.



- ◇ Each child was given a different color of paper. When their color was called they had to find something in the room that was the same color as their paper.
- ◇ Fall came on Sept. 21st. We said goodbye to summer and hello to fall. However, summer did not want to leave and seems to be staying a bit longer. We learned that fall is one of our four seasons. The four seasons are winter, spring, summer and fall. The children said that in the fall leaves change color, squirrels and chipmunks gather nuts, acorns drop off oak trees, weather gets cooler and

pumpkins are put out for decorations.

Game: "Who is knocking at my door?" One child is the it and sits on a chair another child knocks on the door (back of chair) and says Mr. Apple (they try to disguise their voice. The child who speaks goes back in the circle then the IT child tries to guess who was knocking at their door.

Science: Looked at some items from nature using a magnifying glass. Items looked at were bark, berries, leaves, feather, pumpkin and something called an Indian toothbrush. (it did look like a toothbrush).



Books:

- ◇ "Charlie Comes To Town" by Diane Ohanesian (a small train is needed to help in the city)
- ◇ "Fish Is Fish" by Leo Lionni (Fish is sad when his friend turns into a frog and leaves to go on the lan)
- ◇ "Come Back Amelia Bedelia" by Peggy Paris
- ◇ "The Big Orange Splot" by Daniel Pinkwater (all the houses on the block looked exactly the same until the day that a seagull dropped a can of orange paint on Mr. Plumbeans's house)

Art:

- ◇ Stamped an apple on burlap and paper
- ◇ Cut squares into triangles and glued them on paper
- ◇ Finished drawing the other side of faces
- ◇ Matched up bugs paper
- ◇ Made our dreams on a house after reading the story called "The Big Orange Splot".

Outside activities: Hanging on the bars, walking the balance beam and watering the plants