

Montessori Pathways' News



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

I believe that November is a month that not only begins the holiday season, but also brings the spirit of giving and sharing. Following the Montessori approach, we at Montessori Pathways would like to teach our students the importance of sharing, giving, and helping, which will let them continue to be proud citizens of a country that is ready to help people around the world in any difficult situation.

Annual Community Harvest

*"You can give without loving, but
you can never love without giving."*

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

We began November with a **Giving with Gratitude Week**, when kids and their families were able to donate food and other items to the **Annual Community Harvest**, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Together we collected and donated **1,051 pounds** of food and other items.



It was a great chance to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks for what they get, but also the importance of giving.



"An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of (the human), the enhancement of (their) value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live."

~ Maria Montessori

Thank you from the heart



- ◆ Thank you, parents, for all of your help, support, and participation in the kids' learning process, and for giving your kids a chance to feel the Thanksgiving spirit!
 - ◆ Thank you to our Elementary students for helping to load the donated items for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry!
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- ◆ Thank you, all our families, for the privilege to help your children grow.

“Is it really ‘C’ for ‘CAT?’” - Montessori Language Parent Night

In November, Ms. Masha and Ms. Kathy met with our parents to discuss core components of the Montessori language approach. When does language development begin? What is a foundation of language development? What does go first—sounds or letters; reading or writing? When and how to teach sight words and spelling? These and other topics were covered during the Montessori Language Night.

If you had no chance to attend this meeting, but still would like to learn more about Montessori approach in child's language development, please use the following links for the articles -



[Montessori Basics—The Language Curriculum](#)

[Spelling Comes Later](#)

[Guiding Spelling in the Montessori Elementary Classroom](#)



Parents' Corner



~ Process over Product in Montessori Classroom ~

It is not easy to be a Montessori Parent. Tolerating your child's shoes being on the wrong feet, sitting on your hands while they flip their coat thirty times before finally getting it on their body independently, and remaining unemotional but empathetic during meltdowns all come with the territory. Another aspect of Montessori that can be difficult to accept as a parent is the idea of valuing “process over product.”

Most of the work a child does in their Primary class does not involve the creation of a physical product that the child can take home to show Mom and Dad, especially when they are on the younger end of the spectrum. Instead, the experience itself with the materials is what is important—not the completion of a worksheet, test, or other physical proof that a child has worked on a certain topic. That makes it tricky as a parent to know what your child is working on and how well they understand it. They are not bringing anything home for you to assess! And to make matters worse, when you ask your child what they did at school today, they answer, “Nothing.”

[Click here to continue reading this article](#)





COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS



in December

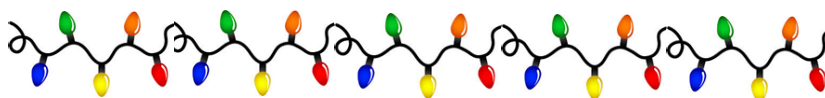


Christmas Tree Lane

Montessori Pathways School loves to support Crystal Lake Downtown by sponsoring their amazing events. At this time of the year we are happy to participate in Christmas Tree Lane Decoration. Go and find the Montessori Pathways' Christmas Tree in CL downtown.

- ◆ **December 3 (W) at 1:30pm —Nocturnal Animals Musical Puppet Show by MCCD** (in-school; Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group)
- ◆ **December 5 (F) at 2:00pm —Elementary Science Demo Day** (Parents are welcome to attend)
- ◆ **December 8—12 (M—F) —Spirit Week at Montessori Pathways**
Every day of this week will be special. Kids and teachers are welcome to dress up according to theme of the day.
 - **Monday—Montessori Pathways Day** (wear schools blue t-shirts on top of long sleeve shirt)
 - **Tuesday—Go Team! Day** (wear your favorite sport teams' jersey, t-shirt, and /or cap)
 - **Wednesday—Comfy Day** (wear your favorite pajamas or any other comfy clothes)
 - **Thursday—My Favorite Color Day** - (wear anything of your favorite color)
 - **Wacky Friday** (wear mix and match socks, mismatched clothes, make a crazy hair)
- ◆ **December 10 (W) at 5:30pm —Family “Reading Under the Stars” Night** (Primary Classes)
- ◆ **December 11 (Th) at 10:45am—Performance by Orchestra from Woodstock High School** (in school)
- ◆ **December (Surprise) —Caroling around the School** (by Elementary Class)
- ◆ **December 16 (Tu) at 9:30am - Montessori Community Service—Elementary Class Trip to Crystal Pines Rehabilitation / Health Care Center.**

Our elementary students will share a holiday season spirit with Crystal Pines' residents.



- ◆ **December 22 (M) - January 2 (F) - No school; Winter Break—Enjoy the Holiday Season!!!**
- ◆ **January 5 (M) - School resumes**

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget, Ms. Carole



November, though a short month due to Thanksgiving break, is such a fun month for elementary. We had so many adventures, so I asked the class if anyone wanted to share any news from their perspective. Here are the write-ups from them:

"Upper Elementary has been doing a Sumerian checklist. They are answering questions like 'When did they exist and why did they decline?'. The checklist is due at the end of the month like every checklist that they do. They are also learning lots from it. This is just for the 4th through 6th graders. The 1st through 3rd graders are not included but will someday. This is the Upper Elementary's third history checklist. "----Stella Sitar (4th grade)

"We are going to see 'Fiddler on The Roof', the play. It is so fun. It is on Thursday, so it is on the 20th of November. I can't wait for the play." -----Wiley Bates (2nd grade)

"On Thursday the elementary is going to the 'Fiddler on The Roof'. Some of the actors are Reb Tevia, Goldie, Tzeitel, Hodel, Chava, Shprintze Bielke. Elementary sang 'If I Were a Rich Man'. The elementary is excited to go." ----Zuzana Hubacek (4th grade)



The kids loved the live action and the music. They sat attentive for almost 90 minutes watching the musical. I was glad to share one of my favorite musicals with them.

"When we went to the Food Pantry, it was Judy's birthday. We sang 'Happy Birthday' to her. She loved it. We went to the fridge. We went everywhere together. Everyone was excited. We all weighed 1305 pounds. We donated 1057 pounds. When we got back to school, we filled the pantry truck. It was fun. Everyone carried some food to the pantry too." ---Ava Salcedo (3rd grade)



"We chose a Science Demo for our Science Demo Day". For example, I got a book from the library about slime. Drew and I were looking at all the slime and playdough. Did you know that there are edible slime and edible playdough? December fifth is our demo night. All the elementary students pick one demo and they are all different.

Last year I made a leaf into a compass. It was really cool. Last year Drew made a cloud in a jar with Ava. That was awesome. I can't wait to see what Mom's face looks like when I take it home. She does not like slime. The last time I brought slime home was in summer camp and ruined my home journal. It was a disaster!" ---Elin Heatwole (4th grade)

Some other activities that we do are year-round like when students take turns to volunteer in Primary classes on Tuesdays. Each student gets to go teach in the class and help out Ms Kathy and Ms Masha with various tasks. They enjoy it and report to us on Wednesdays during line what they did and who was their work partner/s.

We had 2 presenters come into the class. One was a McHenry County Naturalist who taught us about local food chains and webs. They had a lesson, played a game and then explored owl pellets.



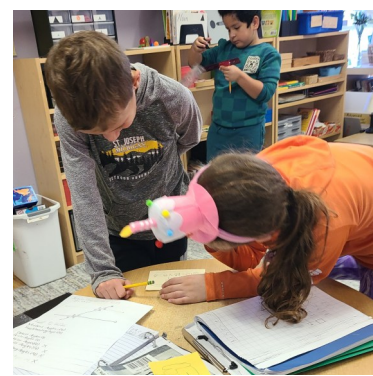
Our 2nd one was Beyond Green, our food catering service. Ms Alexa presents different topics to help the students understand nutrition and making good choices. We also have a tasting paired with it. This time, we are looking at the food groups. Finally, we have a Thanksgiving feast that the students plan, choose the food and prepare it. Then we all eat and talk about what we are grateful for each day. This year, we added a soup, Butter Chicken. It is a great opportunity for our whole class to enjoy a meal together and try new things. I love to see the expressions on their faces when a student tries something new for the first time and enjoys it.

We are grateful to be a community of learners and adventurers. Thanks for making this happen.



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



PRE-K / KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP



Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

Art lessons: The abundance of maple leaves on our playground inspired the maple leaf painting project. Children chose where to place the maple leaf of their choice on their canvas to trace, adding veins afterwards by carefully noting where they begin and end. Our previous lessons came into play as children considered the main color of their leaf and which type of color would look best as a background color.



Group Food Prep & Botany: Root Vegetable Salad! We recreated the experience of "digging out" root vegetables in our garden to really see and experience where these vegetables come from. A group dug out the vegetables, while the other group scrubbed them clean from the dirt. One of the groups then peel the carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, parsnips, and beets, while another grated and cut up the vegetables once they were cooked them. Everyone came back together to combine their hard work into one delicious salad, seasoned with some mayo, onion and, yes, a bit of garlic.



PE: We took advantage of the amazing weather in the middle of this month for a PMD (Physical Motor Development) class outside. We stretched first, waking up every part of our body from neck to ankles. Then, we mixed getting our heart rate up (skips, gallops, high knees, jumping jacks, and more) with some strengthening moves while our heart rates calmed (kicks, squats, frog jumps, arm circles, etc). After a cooldown, we went on a "listening walk" around the school, letting our bodies cool and calm down, while focusing on the different sounds the beautiful November day had to offer. We heard planes, trains, rustling leaves, footsteps, and a dog's bark!



Science: As we move through the study of different states of matter, we had several water science experiments to test out. We set up our first Science Experiments day in the afternoon, during which children worked in groups of 4 to rotate through 7 different experiments. We discussed the scientific method, the importance of making a hypothesis, the benefits of making mistakes and discoveries they can help us make, as well as the importance of verifying our results! Though the children were entranced by the experiments, we enjoyed observing how they worked together to take turns and ensure everyone was involved in the process "you scoop the salt, I'll mix it!" or "Let's each put in 5 drops of water and pass it in a circle until it overflows!" The experiments helped us explore the following concepts:

- **Buoyancy** (What sinks and what floats? Can we make a floating object sink?)
- **Surface Tension** (How many drops of water can a glass hold after reaching capacity?)
- **Miscibility** (Can oil and water mix? What happens if we add soap?)
- **Solubility** (What happens when salt is added to water? What about pepper?)
- **Absorbency** (What absorbs water and what doesn't? What characteristics are similar among the objects that do or do not absorb water?)
- **Water Cycle** (Why do some clouds rain and others don't? How many drops of water will it take to make our sponge "cloud" rain?)



Group Lesson: Kindergarteners had an introductory group lesson on the pre-history timeline, which sparked many wonderful discoveries such as the importance of even the smallest organisms like bacteria and piqued the curiosity of some in understanding how Earth ended up where it is in the solar system!



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Ellen



Another month has come and gone, and all were reluctant to say goodbye to Halloween! Autumn is a great time to explore sensorially. Initially we feel the coolness of the chilly autumn breezes that soon change to cold harsh winds as the month progresses. We can smell the leaves and dampness of them as they lay on the ground. The children are using all 5 senses both inside and, in the classroom, as well! The Sensorial area of the classroom offers exploration of the senses, visual discrimination related to sight, touch, taste, smell, and auditory senses.



Sensorial is learning through the discrimination of these senses. Maria Montessori designed the materials to help children classify, clarify, and understand the world around them. She observed that from birth children learn through their senses touching and manipulating the world around them. This area of the classroom sets the foundation for learning in the other areas. These explorations develop nerve connections stimulating the senses and heighten memory. Various qualities of each material are isolated, the Pink Tower, all pink but varying from big to small, isolating the change in size only.

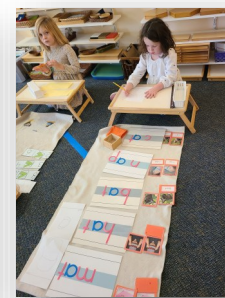
Each of the materials in Sensorial also only isolate one quality of the material itself. The Brown Stair is thick to thin; the Red Rods are short to long etc. Sensorial also encompasses classification of sound by matching pitches of the bells and matching and grading sound cylinders from loudest to softest, matching colors, textures of touch tablets, smell of smelling jars and the various weights of wood using the baric tablets. Sensorial materials benefit each child by refining each of these senses, improving cognitive abilities like problem-solving and critical thinking, developing fine motor skills, and fostering independence and confidence. They provide a concrete, hands-on way to learn about concepts like size, shape, and color before moving to abstract ideas, and help build skills that support future learning in subjects like math, geometry, writing and language. Sensorial is an exciting and developmentally necessary part of the Montessori classroom. There is so much to explore.



November brought us giving with Gratitude and many were surprised to hear others in our community do not have the same basic needs we take for granted. This brought a lesson on community itself. What is a community? We initially narrowed it down to the South room, we then added the East room, Elementary room and our community of Crystal Lake. The children were quick to realize we all care for our room and both others and their needs within it as well. Who cares for the playground which belongs to us all, as the community of Montessori Pathways? We all do! Even if the wild winds of fall made a mess! Thank you all for your donations to the food pantry.



The general classroom is bustling with various aspects of math, geometry, geography and language as well. A great many children have made huge strides since conferences on sound recognition, initial sound to card or object matching, writing skills, word building and so much more. It is amazing to realize it has only been a month since conferences and already so much growth has blossomed in the South room.



We still have one extremely overly loved pumpkin left for scrubbing! It may just make it to winter break. Practical Life introduced peppercorn grinding, and new sewing items. The other new additions are parts of a squirrel, types of squirrels and well we just cant seem to let go of our beloved interior and exterior of a pumpkin.



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Laxmi



November brings with it the calm of Normalization—children are now familiar with the routine, each other, and their environment. They enter the room with a plan in their mind are focused and concentrated for longer periods of time. There is less seeking of assistance and more delving into discoveries with confidence. The room has reached a steady buzz of purposeful work.

Of course we the impact Thanksgiving has on November and everything that happens in the classroom cannot be overlooked! Giving with Gratitude week gets the children excited to discuss some of the meaning behind Thanksgiving beyond the delicious feast! We talked about giving *and* being thankful. To show their gratitude to their families, children worked in groups to bake bread and take a piece home to share with their families. They also each worked on weaving a paper placemat – a tough skill to be mastered but a challenge they rose up to beautifully!

One of the most exciting additions to the room has been the Tea Party work in our Practical Life area in parallel with our Asia study, though, as most Montessori materials, it spans across several areas. The host reserves the work when it is available and sets out composing an invitation with the moveable alphabet. We discussed how to address and sign a letter – words like “dear” and “sincerely” are so novel and intriguing to the young child! The composed invitation has to be written and delivered to the guest who may accept or kindly decline the offer – a practice in grace and courtesy in and of itself! The host then prepares the menu promised on the invitation – a choice of tea (peppermint, lemon, and/or honey), and any fruit or vegetable or snack available from the Food Preparation area. The children then gather together at one of the snack tables to patiently wait for the (warm) tea to steep. When it is ready, the host offers each guest some tea, honey, or anything else they have prepared. They are also practicing taking care of their guests “Would you like some more?” “How is the tea tasting?” Surprisingly enough, the children are indeed enjoying the tea! And the social aspect of a tea party is quite short lived, much to everyone’s surprise, as the children are more entranced by the workings of making, serving, and receiving the tea!



Our science shelves had several new additions this month. We are exploring volcanoes, how they erupt and the types of volcanoes there are and, alongside them, the rock cycle and types of rocks (metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary). Children are in the prime age for vocabulary development and love these big, complex words to explain the fascinating world around us!



We have also switched our experiments with solids to be water experiments as we progress through the states of matter on our shelves. We are discovering buoyancy, surface tension, miscibility, solubility, absorbency, and the water cycle. The children have been learning about the scientific method along the way, making their own hypotheses and testing them out!



Many new experiments and discoveries are also happening in art. We are discovering the power of white paint by making tints, texturizing paper and making paper sculptures with it, and creating Thanksgiving themed cornucopias and turkeys.

But despite all of the Thanksgiving and November themed excitement in the room, the math and language materials are most often in use! Many children are realizing their dream of getting to play the Bank Game, while others have moved to the more abstract Stamp Game – both materials are used to experience the four math operations in a hands-on way.



The younger children are beginning to make quantity to numeral connections, while the older children are getting more and more proficient with their math facts and finding important patterns in math that help them understand, not just memorize, these facts. How much more meaningful to notice that “doubles” of numbers come from adding the same number to itself *and* when multiplying it by two! Aha! And they’re all even numbers! The joy and spark from these small daily discoveries is what fosters the coveted lifelong love of learning.

NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS

