

# Montessori Pathways' News



## parent Nights In October

In October, **Primary** parents met with **Ms. Masha** and **Ms. Kathy** to learn about how responsibility and respect fit in with independence and freedom within the Montessori school and home environment; how different the expectations should be of a 6-year-old versus a 3-year-old; and what approach at home best supports the social, emotional, and academic development of the young child throughout the 3–6-year period.

The teachers also shared some ideas on how parents can implement Montessori at home and help their children in their education and development.



Our **Kindergarten and Elementary** parents also met **Ms. Bridget** to discuss the Second Plane of Elementary children development; how Montessori approach and environment help the children of elementary age to develop self-confidence and self-discipline; and why learning at child's own pace stimulates children to be curious and love to learn.

This year Ms. Bridget concentrated on Montessori Language Curriculum and showed parents how hands-on Montessori language materials help students in better understanding of word study, parts of speech study, reading comprehension, sentences analyzing, and what really helps your child to become a good speller.



## Halloween at Montessori Pathways

We appreciate everyone's effort in preparing the **Halloween celebration** at our school. Some parents helped with classrooms decoration, many of you contributed a lot of items for the Halloween party, prepared the Halloween crafts and games, and hosted the activity stations. It was such a busy, exciting, and, at the same time, peaceful morning at school.



Our elementary friends planned and organized their party independently and enjoyed it in the afternoon. They started with a Halloween Feast and then played Halloween games. They also visited a Haunted House that they created in downstairs room. Thank you, Elementary Parents, for helping our students in preparation of the Halloween Fun Day!





## Parents' Corner



### FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

At Montessori, fostering independence and responsibility in children is a crucial aspect of their development. Here are some insights into how independence and responsibility are fostered through your child's environment and how it is integrated in our Primary and Elementary programs.

#### ENCOURAGING SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

Montessori environments are thoughtfully structured to enable children to undertake tasks independently. This includes practical life activities such as dressing themselves, preparing snacks, cleaning up, and taking care of personal needs. Activities such as these are central to the Montessori philosophy as they foster a sense of accomplishment, confidence, and self-reliance. Here are some examples of ways to encourage self-sufficiency in the way a child's environment is set up.

**Prepare accessible spaces:** Ensure easy access to commonly used items (ex. Set. For example, set up a cleaning station with a child size dustpan and small towels that your child can access, for example, a dustpan and towels for any spills they might cause). Show him or her how to use the tools and encourage them to practice cleaning tasks at their own pace. Allow mistakes and time to achieve mastery.

**Child friendly kitchen:** Designate a low shelf or drawer in the kitchen for your child's plates, cups, and utensils. Encourage them to participate in mealtime preparation and clean-up; this can promote a sense of responsibility and accomplishment.

**Personalized Wardrobe:** Organize your child's wardrobe in a way that makes it easy for them to choose their clothes. This can help your child gain independence in dressing and allows them to take pride in making small decisions about their appearance.

#### PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECISION-MAKING:

Children in Montessori settings are given choices within structured parameters. This could involve selecting activities or materials they want to work with, deciding on the sequence of tasks, or choosing from a set of options. These choices empower children, encourage critical thinking, and help develop decision-making skills. Here are some examples of ways to provide opportunities for decision-making within your child's environment:

**Clothing Selection:** Allow your child to choose his or her outfits for the day by making it easy for them to access their personal wardrobe (as mentioned above) or lay out a couple of appropriate options and let them decide what to wear. This promotes independence in dressing and allows for self-expression.

**Activity Choices / Work Cycle:** Give your child an uninterrupted block of time to engage in self-chosen activities. Set up a space where your child can see a few activity choices. Give them the freedom to choose the order in which activity they would like to work on first, giving them freedom that these activities are done.

This freedom promotes independent learning, and fosters a growth mind set while fostering a sense of responsibility and time management especially in Kindergarten and Elementary age children.

**Choice of Reading Material:** Create a designated reading area with a variety of age-appropriate books. Let your child independently choose a book they would like to read or use as part of a shared reading experience. This cultivates a love for literature and autonomy in decision-making. Read together.

**Family Outings:** Offer age-appropriate options for family outings or activities. Whether it is a trip to the park, the zoo, or a museum. Present a few options and let your child have a say in the family's plans.

#### DEVELOPING A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP:

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and their environment. They are taught to care for their belongings, tidy up after themselves, and respect the classroom or home environment. This cultivates a sense of ownership and accountability. Here are some ways to enhance your child's environment to develop their sense of ownership:

**In the Bedroom:** Let your child choose their bedding or decorative items for their bed, fostering a sense of personal space and ownership. For younger children, you may wish to preselect items they are likely to enjoy from which they can then choose. Children tend to care more for their belongings when they value or have input in them.

**In the Kitchen:** Encourage your child to help with food prep by providing them with their own child-sized utensils, and designated workspace. Allow them to wash and cut fruits and vegetables. Preschool age children can easily prepare simple meals while Kindergarten and Elementary children may delve into experimenting with and/or learning basic cooking techniques. Children's involvement in the kitchen can promote healthy eating habits, while cultivating a sense of responsibility and respect for their kitchen environment.

**In the Bathroom:** Use a sturdy step stool in areas such as the bathroom or kitchen, empowering your child to reach sinks and countertops independently. Place child-friendly toiletries on a low shelf in the bathroom, enabling your child to take responsibility for their personal care routines.

#### GRADUAL INCREASE IN RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Montessori approach advocates for gradually increasing responsibilities as children grow older and develop more skills. This progression allows children to build upon previously acquired skills and take on more complex tasks or challenges, instilling a sense of confidence in their abilities. Here are some examples of ways to gradually increase your child's responsibilities in their environment:

**Self-care:** In the early years, teach your child to wash hands independently and introduce basic dressing skills, such as taking off socks and shoes. As they grow, introduce more complex tasks like buttoning, zipping, and tying shoelaces.....

[Read More](#)



## COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS

### In November



- ◆ **November 3 (M) at 1:00-2:30pm- “At Home in the Woods” Field Study** at Prairieview Educational Center (Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group)
- ◆ **November 7 (F) - No School – Teacher Institute Day** (staff in-service)
- ◆ **November 10 - November 14 – Giving with Gratitude Week** (Crystal Lake Community Harvest Food Drive)

As Thanksgiving approaches, we would like to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks, but also the importance of giving. Therefore, every year, we participate in the **Annual Community Harvest**, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.

We are asking that each family provide their child with a chance to select with their parents and purchase 5-10 items to bring as a donation to school any day from Monday, November 10 through Thursday, November 13.

The donated items will be picked up by Crystal Lake Food Pantry from the school on Friday, November 14 in the morning.



- ◆ **November 14 (F) at 9:30-10:30am - Elementary Class Trip to Crystal Lake Food Pantry for a tour.**
- ◆ **November 14 (F) at 2:00pm - “Chains Make Webs”** McHenry County Conservation District Outreach Program for Elementary Class
- ◆ **November 20 (Th) at 9:30-11:00am - Elementary Class Trip to Willow Crystal Lake to see “Fiddler on the Roof” Musical by Chicago Youth Theater.**
- ◆ **November 27 - 28 (Th- F) – No School (Thanksgiving break)**

~ Follow our school on Facebook for brief daily updates ~



## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget, Ms. Carole



October began with spooky songs to be sung and music of the season. The decorations begin to appear around the class, and we begin to build our Ofrenda to honor people and animals who we have loved and have lost.



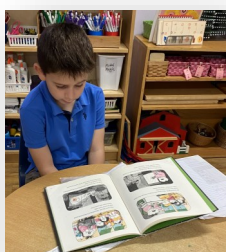
Students are thriving! They are so engaged with work and love to work in teams. Managing time is still in progress but students are becoming more successful with planning. Autonomy is important for all Montessori students as they navigate their own path through the curriculum.



First level have completed work plans and enjoy being in lessons to learn about our world. They are really excited about telling time. Reading group on Thursday is a favorite as they love to all read a book together and talk about it with Ms Carole and me.



Second and third are advancing. They are taking all subjects to the research level. As soon as I present a new topic, many want to immediately begin research whether it is a continent, ocean, plant part or speed and acceleration. They are also working on larger number operations in math.



Upper Elementary can run the class. They are capable and are incredible managers. They keep an eye on all who need help and are willing to help bring peace to the community. They are working on deep parts of speech, factoring, chemistry and native nations around the world (which is their favorite).



We went apple picking and had a handwashing lesson from a representative from McHenry Health Department.

Curriculum Night is a special time to connect with parents and to show them the many topics we cover in elementary Montessori. This year, parents dove into the language arts curriculum with me.

The specials classes continue to add enrichment to our week. Ms. Lilly has taught movement, rhythm and singing in our music class on Tuesdays and Ms Suzy created fall art for our Thursday afternoons. We still visit the library and Veterans Acres for more enrichment.



The kids have been planning and preparing for the Halloween party. The older students are heading the committees- games, food and decorations. Every child is on a committee to plan the party. It is always interesting to hear their ideas and to see the excitement on their faces when they work together as a committee to make decisions. On the day of the party, the committees of students will set up and clean up. After, as a class, we discuss what was liked about the party and what we will improve on for the next party.



# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Ellen



Well, it's hard to believe October is here and the burr of Octo-BURR came quickly! The children transitioned to indoor arrival seamlessly. They take off their outside shoes, retrieve indoor shoes and enter class to care for belongings hanging hats, storing mittens and are off to choose an activity or "work". It is time to send in weather appropriate clothes. It is better to be prepared for the chilly days ahead with a warm coat, hat and mittens than to be miserable and cold. We had many miserable children in the last few weeks. Please remember we also open our windows daily to let in fresh air and help keep everyone healthy. Please send your child in long sleeves and/or a light jacket to ensure they can accommodate for the change of seasons.

And so, it is officially Fall and the classroom has changed its seasonal gears to experience and teach the change of the seasons and what things come with this change. Gone are the parts of an apple and in its place are the parts of the inside and outside of a pumpkin as well as the life cycle of a pumpkin are on the shelves, well not actually, as they are a favorite in the South room and rarely on the shelf but rather someone's rug.



Each area of the classroom has a seasonal flare from art to math, as well as history and science. These simple switches are easy for the children to replicate. The lesson is the same, only the vocabulary and pictures change. This keeps the children interested while they are still mastering 3-part cards for nomenclature. We also have parts of a bat and spider! Keep your eyes out for those books.



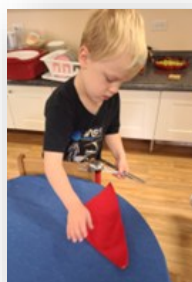
Invertebrates and Vertebrates have always been on the shelf. Halloween brings new discoveries of Vertebrates. Humans are Vertebrates as are many other animals! We have replicas of the skeletons of many animals for examination. The human skeleton is not scary! We all have one. What bones make up our skeleton and how do we put them together to make a human skeleton? The children ran to the mirror to find their ribs, clavicle and cranium. How many bones are there in a human body? 206! It prompted observations of the many bones of the

feet and hands, joint movement and a cute discovery that our patella or kneecap moves side to side.



After this presentation, a child fell on his knee on the playground. He pulled his pants leg up to check the area. I asked if he was bleeding and he said "NO, I am checking my patella." He gently pushed it side to side. He exclaimed "It still moves!" and off he ran.

Thank You for attending Parent- Teacher conferences! We had a perfect attendance record this year! Many parents asked how to occupy children at home while making dinner or completing a task. Well, the answer is Practical Life activities. As part of the Montessori Pathways community the children themselves care for the classroom because it belongs to them. This empowers them to feel like a contributing member within the classroom. It is a great privilege to be assigned a job. The children take pride in the job they are assigned.



It also works at home. Having a designated task or job helps children understand their role within the family and know they are a vital part. If you are making dinner your child can set the table, chop and prepare vegetables, pluck grapes from the vine half cherry tomatoes, clear and wash dishes, fold and sort laundry. The list is endless both inside and outside, raking, shoveling, weeding, gardening.... These activities help children develop their motor skills, refining both large and small muscle coordination.

A child may repeat a particular exercise repeatedly, perfecting their movements, gaining focus and developing concentration. Practical Life exercises are a precursor to math, language and reading. The tedious work of adults is a privilege, honor and necessity for children to become independent learners.

Thank you to our Halloween volunteers for making our special day wonderful and fun. We couldn't do it without all your help.

# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room



## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Laxmi



October has been incredibly kind to us with a long stretch of beautiful weather! We had the chance to hold outdoor Line Time with a great Animal Themed workout class led by Ms. Samantha, Cameron and Violet's mom!



Thank you so much for volunteering your time and energy. This month we transitioned to indoor arrival, so the early morning children have now been helping get the room ready for the day – taking down chairs, putting flowers on tables (and arranging more if they see it is needed), setting up dishwashing, making snack, and folding laundry. The returning students are taking great pride in teaching new friends how to handle these jobs and delegating tasks!

The East room has had beautiful sprinklings of fall all throughout the room thanks to the families who found and donated the specialty items. The children have been tweezing colorful kernels off of flint corn to refine their pencil grip, the colorful home-grown gourds are being lovingly scrubbed and used to decorate the room in a practice of sequencing, sense of order, and muscle refinement, while the larger pumpkin is used for the annual favorite – pumpkin hammering. The gentle “tap, tap, tap” of the mallet against golf tees in the pumpkin has been a background rhythm in the room as children take turns strengthening their grip, wrists, and bilateral hand use.



The children have also been preparing decorations for the Halloween party room in the art area! Hanging bats, dancing cats, pumpkin patches, friendly ghosts and, per student request, paper chains adorn the class. The final preparation was scrubbing, cutting, cleaning, and carving out the Jack-O-Lantern pumpkin! The children enjoyed taking turns to see, feel, and remove the fibrous strands and seeds of the pumpkin after spending the last month studying about the parts of and lifecycle of the pumpkin. The seeds were toasted as a special snack! The class worked together to settle on the perfect Jack-O-Lantern face for this year's pumpkin and carved it together, finalizing our decorations before the Halloween party. Thank you to all of our volunteers for your hard work in making our Halloween party so special for the East room friends!

Biology is also more October themed, with types of teeth out for National Dental Hygiene Month, as well as parts of a spider, parts of a bat, and the human skeleton. The “Parts of a...” books that children often choose to make are a small glimpse into the great work that came before. The Nomenclature Cards or 3 -Part Cards consist of a control card (picture with label), a picture card, and a label card. The “whole” card is set first, followed by the different parts. Youngest children lay the control cards in a row first, matching the pictures, and then the labels either independently or with help. The children who can read, however, set out the pictures as their first row, reading and labeling the parts next, and using the control cards last to check their work. If they choose to create a book, children lay out the black outline pages under each card (a practice in 1:1 correspondence), working to isolate the section to be colored and then labeled. Aside from the direct study of botany and zoology that comes from this lesson, children are practicing sequencing (an important language and math skill), great attention to detail, visual discrimination, memory, vocabulary, and executive function in collecting all of the pieces needed to get through this work!



Our Geography curriculum is still exploring Asia, and this month was the long awaited Asian fruit tasting. Our weekly Elementary mentor helped lead the tasting experience by providing a lot of interesting information about the fruits – Korean pear, lychee, dragon fruit, starfruit, and Korean melon. A lot of interesting discussion as we checked where these fruits come from on the map (those who recently worked on map of Asia were able to help identify where these places are!) and why these fruits have these names (the dragonfruit looks like it has scales was the East room consensus).

And while each child has been exploring the various curriculum areas at their own pace this month, language has definitely been a big focus for most as many children have the goal of becoming readers. And reading, in the Montessori environment, comes from writing. A lot of study of phonics, sorting words by beginning sounds, sounding out and composing first CVC words, and moving into phrase and story building for others. With all that hard work, we have had several new emerging readers, while the current reading children have been challenging themselves with scavenger hunts around the room and an environment labeling work, where we inadvertently get into more complex spelling patterns while sounding out words like “addition board.” Continue reading daily with your children to keep this spark and drive in language exploration going!

# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room



## NEWS FROM THE PRE-K / KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP

Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy



The many beautiful leaves that started falling in October also prompted a child-led creation of "The Leaf Show" as they call it now. Once we are done cleaning up the playground and gathered in the gazebo, anyone who has found a special leaf during recess walks (or dances) around, slowly showcasing their find. The other children have a blast being an engaged audience, with waves of impressed "oohh...ahhh" filling the air, followed by claps. It is a small tradition and routine that this group has created for themselves and is incredibly precious to observe each day! Other lessons this month are below and best experienced through the picture links!

**Art lessons:** Pre-K explored color mixing and the creation of secondary color through primary colors in their color-mixing caterpillar. Kindergarteners delved into the Element of Art of Color with a warm and cool colors study along with the study of symmetry in their city landscapes.



**Group Cooking:** Pumpkin Pie! First we needed to clean and scrub the pumpkins, and cut them down to cook down in a slow cooker, before making our own pumpkin puree with mashers. Then came the fun of assembling the crust and pie. A multi-day process that was worth the patience.

**PE:** Thank you to Ms. Carmela, Bria and Myla's mom, for leading a great circuit for our afternoon group that was equally exciting and challenging to make their bodies stronger!



**Science:** The Fish Study was the talk of the school! We read about different fish facts first, before bringing out our fish to study for the day – the smoked mackerel. Children were interested in its stripes, the location of its fins, gills, and whether it had teeth or not (we could check and see that indeed, the mackerel does!) We then opened it up to find the vertebrate – many of the afternoon children had been working on vertebrate vs. invertebrate or a skeleton work, and could make the connection between the mackerel's vertebrate and their own spine. We saw its connection from the skull all the way to the tail. The vertebrate was then available for a "rubbing" art exer-

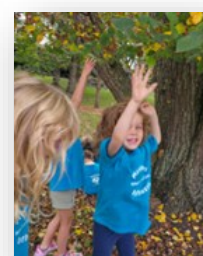
cise, alongside a fish print making art that used rubber fish replicas. Children also worked on parts of a fish books or drawing their favorite types of fish, while Kindergarteners worked in groups to build sentences about the facts of fish that we had read about. We rounded out the day by tasting some of the mackerel with a small piece of bread, with many of the children becoming huge fans of smoked fish as a snack!



**Group Lesson:** We started diving into some true Sight Words with the Kindergarten children who are comfortable blending and reading phonetically. It is important that this skill is solidified before memory driven sight words are introduced to not send the message that reading is based on memorization! We practiced reading and writing the sight words, and the children now know where to reference them for their own writing as well.

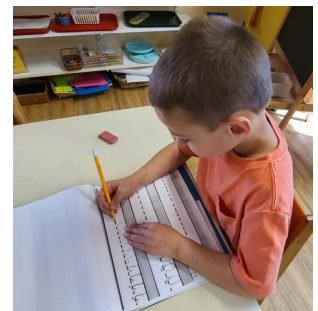


**Hike:** This month's hike focused on the signs of fall as children took note of all the things that changed between now and the last time we went on our hike. They noticed the sound, feel, and smell of the crunchy leaves, the feeling of the cooler wind, the pumpkin growing on a neighbor's yard that used to be green and turned orange, and, an interesting observation, the fact that Halloween decorations are only out in the fall time! Once we arrived at the park, children collected beautiful leaves and either checked with friends who recently worked on Types of Leaves study or our Leaf Chart to see which leaf they discovered. The highlight may have been playing in the long branches of the Willow Tree (or the sad tree, as one of the kids called it) and seeing a turtle perched on a log in the pond!



# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group



## MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS

