

Montessori Pathways' News



December

Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.

~ Maria Montessori



Thank you!

Thank you, parents and kids, for your thoughtful Christmas gifts to our Montessori Pathways Team and for the many beautiful Christmas cards with a lot of wonderful wishes and very warm words!

Your understanding, cooperation, help, support, and appreciation are priceless for us. We could not go through such an unprecedented time without you!



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

Our Montessori Classroom always reflects diversity and connection to the world through hands-on activities. The children receive an opportunity to learn cultural foundations of other peoples and nations, respect their traditions and appreciate cultural differences. Maria Montessori was a truly passionate advocate for peace in the world. Promoting diversity, understanding, and implementing value of different cultures teaches children to accept and respect people and their traditions from all over the world.

Visual prompts, displays of symbols that represent different countries, and practical activities allow children to open up their minds and hearts towards someone who may be a little different and appreciate them.

This year we were not able to gather and celebrate the Winter Holidays together again. However, our teachers, with the support of our families, did their best to bring the holiday spirit to our school.

Ms. Joey and Ms. Kathy made a wonderful presentation about Hannukah to our Primary students. They loved learning more about this holiday and lighting a new candle every day was a great beginning of the school day for our students.

Undoubtably there was Christmas spirit present at school during the whole month of December. Listening to Christmas music, singing songs, decorating the school and classrooms, and working on Christmas gifts for parents were a major part of the learning process in December.

The favorites of the month were Winter Art for Pre-K, K and Elementary students, "Secret Santa" Day for Elementary students and tons of Christmas work and projects for primary students, visiting Crystal Pines Health Care Center by Elementary students and sharing handmade Christmas Card with the residents...

December was truly happy and festive for our kids!



I hope that everybody had a wonderful time during this holiday season. May everyone's New Year be filled with happiness, love, and prosperity!





Parents' Corner



Working Together

Independence is a major tenet of the Montessori philosophy, and yet, this does not mean children work solely on their own. In fact, working with others promotes independence, within the classroom as well as outside of it.

The Montessori classroom itself is set up to promote small groups and pairs during their work cycles. Instead of rows of single desks with chairs, you will find an assortment of tables or rugs: some long enough to accommodate large groups, others for four, some smaller tables or rugs for two... and sometimes children squeeze as many journals as they can fit onto a table in order to be together!



While working together certainly has a social draw – children begin their day by socializing with their friends and may choose to work next to those friends during a work cycle – there are many other benefits to working with another child. Children learn from each other, accept leadership roles in those works in which they feel confident, or step aside to allow a different child to be the expert in a different work. This is a confidence boost, and also a lesson in respect and community.



Some of us are quick with mathematics, while others are excelling in language; still others are the go-to artists or engineers of the classroom. This is particularly true of the Upper Elementary classroom, where the levels of independent work are higher, with a greater ability to see a project or idea through from start to finish. These children can often be seen bouncing ideas off one another, and gently arguing about how to go about one thing or another in the most efficient way.

In the Children's House (or Primary Class), children may choose to work on the same work next to one another, lending a helping hand to a friend who stumbles on a problem. Sometimes one child even helps redirect an off-task friend!

And here, there is much pride in being able to work out a problem without having to go to an adult in the room to solve it for them. The more children can effectively work together, the more independent they become!

Working together solidifies connections. Two children share their interests by researching a topic together, sharing knowledge, and building on that knowledge. In Lower Elementary, children research and give reports together. This process can take weeks or months, based on how quickly or slowly all members in the group move forward.

The mixed-age groups in the Montessori classroom (found in three-year groupings) also allow for a type of mentorship. The younger students learn an immense amount from the older children, not just socially, but academically as well.



Working together on such reports often leads to opportunities for conflict resolution, peer mediation, and learning how to speak up in a small group. Fairness (of huge concern to the Second Plane child) comes into play during small group activities, as the focus of a moral sense of order is forefront on the mind of a child aged 6 – 12. This opportunity also presents itself during shared jobs and during recess time.



Children receive much help in the collaboration process from the experienced Guides in their classrooms; group dynamics are often aided by mediation and careful observation by the adults in the room. In this way, Montessori children are learning how to work with others on a daily basis, a sure way to prepare them for adult life, both in work and personal relationships.

<http://www.montessori-blog.org/2018/01/25/working-together/>

[Click here to see more teamwork at Montessori Pathways](#)

COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS

in January

- ◆ **January 3 (M) - School resumes**
- ◆ **January 14 (F) - ELEMENTARY Parent / Teacher Conference Day (Virtual)**

The link to sign up for Parent/Teacher Conference will be sent on Monday, January 3rd.

No school for Elementary Students on Conference Day, January 14th.

- ◆ **January 17 (M) - No School (Martin Luther King JR. Day)**

- ◆ **January 24—28—Spirit Week**

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** (kids and teachers are welcome to wear schools blue t-shirts on top of long sleeve shirt)
- **Tuesday—Pajamas Day**
- **Wednesday—Jersey Day** (kids and teachers are welcome to wear their favorite sport teams' jersey or t-shirt)
- **Thursday—Holiday Day** - (dress for your favorite holiday – no matter what time of the year it is!)
- **Wacky Friday** (all kids and teachers are welcome to wear mix and match socks, mismatched clothes, and/or crazy hair)

- ◆ **January 17—31 - Returning Families Preferred Re-Enrollment Period**

The new year arrives with new problems and questions for us. In the beginning of every year, the parents of 5-6-year-old kids have to make a very important decision – what is the next step for my child? Where should he/she continue his/her education?

There are two common things we hear every year from the parents.

The first one is a question “Will my child be prepared for public kindergarten or elementary?”

It is very important to understand that if we would prepare our students for traditional kindergarten, then we would not be Montessori, but the same conventional school where kids of the same age (but still developmentally very different) learn the same material at the same time based on the teacher's plan.

While offering a versatile learning opportunity to our students, the major goal of the Montessori schools is preparing our students not for public kindergarten or elementary level, but for real life, which more and more requires great thinking and organization skills, independence, initiative, creativity, ability to work as a team, and so on. We provide a child centered, multiage environment, where kids are learning at their own pace through a hands-on experience, exploring, discovering, making connections, and developing all necessary life skills .

It is important to understand that the Montessori Kindergarten Year is the final and very crucial year in the primary 3-year cycle of the Montessori environment.

The second thing that we hear every year from many parents is that “being in a Montessori environment during one or few years was enough for our child's development. It is time for him/her to move to a public school like most of his/her friends. He /She will be fine there.”

There is no “enough” in education and no bounds in a child's development. And being “just fine”- is this what we are looking for for our kids?

So, if you are still open to exploring all of the options and possibilities for your child's education, check your emails later for more information about what Montessori environment offers for the next level of your child's development.



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

"An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child's energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self-mastery."

~ Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

The curriculum in an elementary Montessori classroom is dynamic. The curriculum is a list of skills based on Illinois standards, but children can add to the curriculum when he/she is curious about a new topic.



The other part of Montessori curriculum is how the students engage in the learning. A new student to the classroom environment will learn vocabulary and how to do many skills with hands on materials and books to assist their introduction. (Example: what makes a triangle a triangle and what are the different types of triangles). Once the student has mastered the vocabulary and the basics of that topic (triangles), the student will move on to a different level of the topic. (Example: drawing and equilateral triangle, finding the incenter and orthocenter of the triangle). Finally, the student can then teach others or assist other students in their work.



This month, Aiden, a student who was new to Montessori in first grade and is now in fourth grade, gave his favorite geometry lesson to the first-year students. The lesson was The Relationship of Two Lines., also known as The Love Story. He taught them about parallel, intersecting, perpendicular, convergent, and divergent lines in a story format and was very engaging.

It was exciting for me to be a part of the lesson as just 3 years prior, he learned all these new words. He told it just as I would have taught it. This is the cycle- introduction, progress toward mastery and mastery.



The highlights of December study:

Geography: land and water forms, mountain biome

Life Science: Stems- parts of stem- internal and external, job and types

Geometry: 2 lines, triangles, and intro to polygons less than 10 sides and greater than 10

History: The Near East ancient civilizations- Assyrian, Babylonian, Phoenicians and Persians and intro to Ancient Egyptians

Physical Science: Kinds of Energy and Layers of the Atmosphere and the impact of atmosphere on weather

Reading: Biographies

Math: Fractions, multiplication, addition mastery

Language: Diagramming, parts of speech investigation, nouns and verbs together in a sentence- tenses

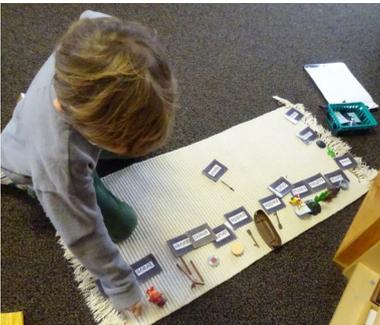
Writing: Finishing up stories that were started to create a class anthology of stories

Hope you received your monthly evaluations from your child. We will try to do evaluations every month.



DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



As this year comes to an end, I am amazed to watch our youngest citizens and what they have spent nearly 2 years doing during this pandemic. They go about their days with respect for others and wear their masks over noses, wash hands and remind others to do the same in a kind and courteous fashion. "Pull your mask over your nose. You don't want to get sick." Or "Wash your hands you just" It is spoken daily. It has become a routine part of their lives and the children do it with such care for each other. Reaching over to another with a gentle hand to pull up another child's mask over a nose like a care giver or parent would. It is now routine for the children. Kudos to all of them for being so adaptable.

'Tis the season for caring and sharing. Our friends have been very busy with many holiday projects. The children stenciled snowflake tiles with Q-tips and paint. Each made a reindeer card for their family. Stamped wrapping paper for their own gift and wrapped it themselves. They also made a few different wreaths, snowman with popsicle sticks, candy canes, garland, reindeer, snowflakes, gingerbread cut outs and various decorations for our classroom tree.



In the spirit of giving many made 'gifts' and cards for their classmates and handed them out. "Hey, I didn't make this. It was in my folder but it's not mine.", was heard often. Then another would say "I made it for you. It's a surprise gift". The Pre-K and K group had a few more advanced projects, painting a "Let it Snow" canvas and making clay pot sparkly snowmen. I hope you all enjoyed these projects as much as we enjoyed making them. The canvas painting project brought cheers of, "This is the best day ever!" from all involved.



The children put together our classroom artificial tree and decorated it beautifully. Sadly, they also worked together to take it down before our break. It was joyful to see them collaborating to remove the branches. If one was stuck, another child would brace the tree and pull hard to get it out. They matched the various branch sizes, rubber banded them and loaded them into the box. A few boys taped and fastened the box.

They then worked as a team to carry the large box to the hallway. So cute!



Practical Life was full of holiday themed activities for all from tweezing, spooning, and sorting beautiful holiday objects. In the math area the children enjoyed counting trees from 1-5 and punching them out to match the quantity to the numeral. One of our kindergarten children remembered it from last year and did it again even though he can now count and recognize numerals into the thousands with ease. Last year he did it at the very least 20 times, he loved it so much! He just had to do it again.

Another favorite is an ornament counting work to match ornaments to the corresponding amount on a tree from 1-10. These tiny pom poms are laid on each tree using tweezers. The children colored the tree and added their own sticker ornaments. Remember, 1-10 is a total of 55 ornaments and 55 stickers! That's a whole lot of fine motor skills in one work.

The language area has a holiday outline with corresponding cut outs to match, trace, and color and if you are ready, write the words for each shape. The children used the metal insets to make holiday themed creations a star from triangles, an ornament from a circle.



The children also enjoyed parts of a gingerbread man, reindeer, and parts of a Christmas tree. Remember to have your child "read" you these books or any other "books" when they come home. It reinforces language and beginning reading skills.

We discussed other celebrations this holiday season. Introducing the story of Hannukah and lighting the menorah. The dreidel game was fun for all. Happy Holidays and a very Happy New Year everyone! Stay safe and healthy.



DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM



Ms. Joey, Ms. Carole

With the holidays upon us, the children have had fun sharing their own family customs, traditions, and celebrations, and though stories and crafts we have enjoyed learning about some of these unique festivals. We began with Hanukkah also known as the Festival of Lights and lit a candle on the Menorah for each of the eight days as we sang a lovely song Miss Kathy taught us called "Through my window". Some of the children made Menorahs, and we learned how to play the dreidel game.

- The control card has the picture and the name
- The object card is just the picture
- The label card is just the name.



After laying out these cards the children then have the opportunity to color, label and create their own books. Many of the children are excited and have shared that they now have their own libraries at home, so please remember ask your child to share what they have learned!



We read "The Miracle of the First Poinsettia" by Joanne Oppenheim and Fabian Nigrin a traditional tale and a wonderful introduction into some Mexican customs and culture. We learned the poinsettia is native to Mexico and decorates homes around the world every Christmas. We then named and labeled parts of the poinsettia.

In practical life the children enjoyed transferring jingle bells, sorting snowmen, and building a gingerbread man.



And it wouldn't be the holidays without having fun learning parts of the Reindeer or Caribou... and the gingerbread man! I'm sure you wonder at times why parts of the gingerbread man? It's all about introducing our children to matching, vocabulary, sequencing, reading, writing, classification and more.

The art area was very busy and full of fun crafts for the holidays, from sparkly snowflakes to paper plate gnomes, twin reindeers, and craft stick snowmen, just to name a few. But most of all the children loved creating your gift. Each one is so unique. They carefully chose the stencils, colors and carefully painted their snowflake just for you!



In the Montessori classroom we use 3-part cards which are designed to help the child work by themselves using the control card to check their work.

This month we had 3 birthdays. Ariz and Presley are now 3 years old, and Bane is 5, Happy Birthday!!! Enjoy your time with family and friends this holiday season and have a wonderful New Year.

DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



“The satisfaction which they find in their work has given them a grace and ease like that which comes from music.”

—M. Montessori,
The Discovery of the Child.

