

Montessori Pathways School News

February
2017

Notes from Head of School by Ms. Alena Baradzina

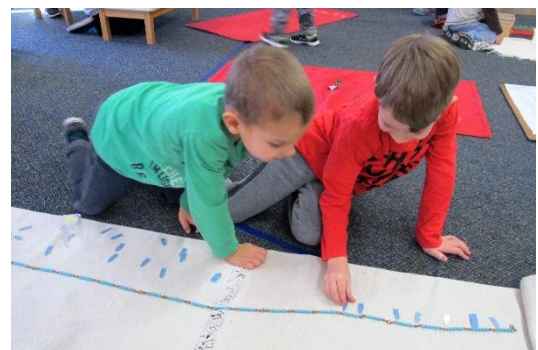
"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."

~ Henry Ford

The Montessori classroom is a place where teamwork and respect are continually fostered. During this time of the year, we are fortunately observing more and more team work in all classrooms.



Many of the students understand that they have to be very helpful and respectful to their friends, able to listen and hear them, and be open to suggestions while working together as a team. They learned this through real life classroom experiences.



Registration for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year has begun!

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

If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please

- a. *Complete the Re-Enrollment Form for the 2017- 2018 School Year*
- b. *Attach the New School Year Re-Enrollment Fee:*
 - *\$50 of Early Re-Enrollment Fee (before April 16) or*
 - *\$100 of Late Re-Enrollment Fee (after April 15)*
- c. *Include the 10% of annual tuition security deposit*
- d. *Return the paperwork along with payment no later than April 15, 2017.*

By submitting your 10% of the annual tuition deposit on time, you secure your child's spot at our school for the next school year, can lock in your child's current classroom, and any other special schedules and arrangements made with the school.

All families enrolling and submitting 10% of the tuition **after April 15th** will be considered "newly enrolled" families, and will be subject to a new enrollment fee of \$100.00 for 2017-2018 School Year.

Spots for all age groups, including Pre-K, K, and Elementary, are already limited and cannot be guaranteed - "newly enrolled" families will be enrolled on a first come, first serve basis.

Classroom and any other preferences will also be up to administrative discretion based on availability.

It is important that we know who is re-enrolled in the School Year as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate plans for hiring staff.

Students who are enrolled just prior to the start of School Year cannot be guaranteed a spot in the class.

Please do not wait until the last minute and help us and your family be successfully prepared for 2017-2018 School Year on time.

Click here to see: [A Montessori Morning](#)

[Montessori Madness](#)

[Part of the Africa Study Presentation](#)

Africa Study Presentation by Elementary Students

Another great example of teamwork was the preparation, organization, and hosting of the Africa Study Presentation that was done by our Elementary students this February.



Coming School Events

➤ February 21 – March 3 – Moving-On Weeks:

- ✓ Kindergarten Extended Day Class Visit Days for Pre-K Students
- ✓ Elementary Class Visit Days for Kindergarten students

➤ February 27 – March 3 – Dr. Seuss Week

➤ March 1 – Summer Camp Enrollment Begins

➤ March 2 (Th) at 6:00pm - Kindergarten Demo Class

During one hour, the Kindergarten students will demonstrate a short version of the Kindergarten Extended Day Class for Pre-K parents.

➤ March 2 (Th) at 6:00pm – Elementary Demo Class

During one hour, the Elementary students will demonstrate a short version of the Daily Work Cycle for current Elementary and Kindergarten parents.

➤ March 10 (F) at 10:00am - School-Wide Field Trip to “Madagascar - a Musical Adventure” at Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire

- ✓ Please remember that all **children taking the bus** should be at school **no later than 8:20 a.m.**
- ✓ The boarding time is **8:30am.**
- ✓ The bus will leave the school promptly **at 8:45am.**
- ✓ If you are driving to the play, please expect to arrive by **9:40 a.m.**
- ✓ **Please have you child wear the blue school shirts!**
- ✓ The school will be closed until noon the day of the field trip.

➤ March 15 (Wednesday), 9:00am – 11:00am – 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.

➤ The Parent / Teacher Conferences for Primary Classes will be held by appointments on

March 16 (Th) – for South Room Kindergarten parents

March 17 (F) – for East Room Preschool and Pre-K parents
No school for Morning and School Day East Room students

March 20 (M) – for South Room Preschool and Pre-K parents
No school for Morning and School Day South room students

March 21 (Tu) – for East Room Kindergarten parents

Please fill out the conference schedule form and return it to school if you did not do so yet.

➤ March 27 – March 31 - Spring Break

The school will be operating for All Day students during Spring break.

News from the Elementary Class (North Room)

by Ms. Amber

It is hard to believe the school year is two-thirds passed. February was a fast-paced blur! It seems we still have far to go, yet we really have come so far in our studies this year.

The switch back to using a weekly work plan seems to be a successful change for most of the students. Yes, students have choices, but *not working or doing whatever they want to do* are not choices. The path to being self-controlled, self-motivated, and independent lies in work, and sometimes it is hard. I use the analogy of a baby learning to walk. Yes, the baby falls and it may hurt, but the baby tries again and does not give up. Students can be just as successful when they keep on trying and work hard.



If you are seeing work plans with little work initialed or checked off by the teacher, talk to your student about his or her work effort. The student cannot have the next presentation/lesson if adequate practice of a prior concept has not occurred. We need students to practice learned concepts and move forward in their learning. *Parents can help drive this learning process with frequent, gentle encouragement and with the consistent expectations that their student is at school to work hard to complete their school work.*

This past month, the highlight for students was the Africa presentation. Wow, what a fantastic job they did! It was amazing to witness the ideas, mentoring, creativity, teamwork, the increased confidence with public speaking, and the support of each other in a process like that. Thank you for being a supportive audience.



“We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit.”

~ Maria Montessori

It has been a tough month for attendance. How germs spread by coughing sneezing, nose-blowing, and using the bathroom was discussed. Students were shown the proper hand-washing technique, and the need for proper hand-washing has been repeatedly reinforced. This ties in well with the study of health and wellness. Please reinforce hand-washing outside of school, too.

The touch of spring-like weather set the tone for continued Botany studies, as signs of spring reinforce the learning. Animal studies will move from vertebrates to invertebrates. The health and wellness study will be completed. The water cycle and a bit of physics will be on the plan for this month. Then it is time to study Europe.



Daily writing will become a focus, as students work toward copying and/or creating proper sentences. The ideal outcome is composing as many paragraphs as the student's grade in school. (For example, third grade = 3 paragraphs. A paragraph usually consists of five to seven sentences for Lower Elementary, and seven to twelve sentences for older students.)



With so much going on in the Elementary classroom, you really must plan to attend Demo Night on March 2nd. This is a great opportunity to witness your student demonstrating a work cycle or two, as well as an opportunity for kindergarten families to see what happens in the Elementary classroom. Looking forward to seeing you then!

February Photo Gallery

Elementary Class



News from the Kindergarten Extended Day Class

by Ms. Karen

Well, first, what spectacular weather! Of course, it interrupted my plans regarding study of snow and snowflakes! Think we can do it later next month? Would you have thought NO snow in February in Northern Illinois!

In math, several children are finding multiple ways of expressing the same number. In fact, one child found more than 20 ways to compose 10. This kind of activity leads to flexible thinking and, eventually seeing connections.

For example: $2+5+3=10$, $6+4=10$, $2+2+6=10$.



Also, the 100 board is in demand at this time of the year. "Simply" putting all the tiles in order from 1 to 100 is the base. That itself is a challenge. But there are so many patterns to find once we have completed construction of numbers 1 - 100. One child was so excited "I found a pattern, I found another pattern, I found another pattern". Patterns are integral to understanding and enjoying math. And they are "easy" to see using this material.



Another popular activity: **division**. Yes, that is true! (Did **you** love division?!) But the Montessori classroom has a special activity that **GIVES MEANING** to the process. So, we can understand distributive division, even when it has a remainder!

"The environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct his own experiences."

~ Maria Montessori



In geography, we talked about and illustrated both strait and isthmus. We then got out our special, large geography book and looked for the straits and the isthmuses of the world. The children found quite a lot of them. Of course, in making their book, they wanted to illustrate it with drawings of people on a beach, boats going through the strait, etc. This is an introduction. It is always helpful for you to supplement geography lessons at home by getting out the globe and/or your geography atlas and look for the geographical landforms.

Matisse: our artist of the month. The children loved the story of Matisse, enjoyed the pictures he created simply using just a scissors. Popular because that art is accessible to the children. What fun to have colorful, playful, collage of shapes!

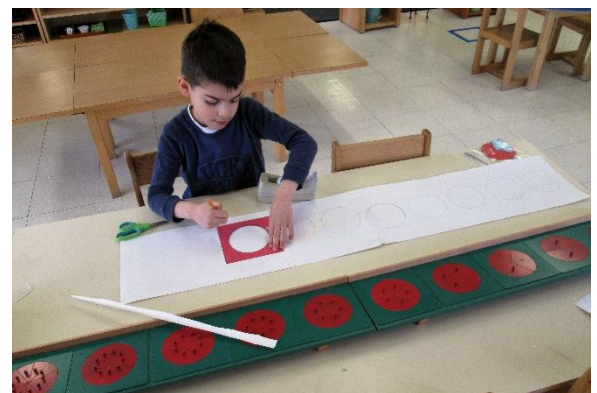
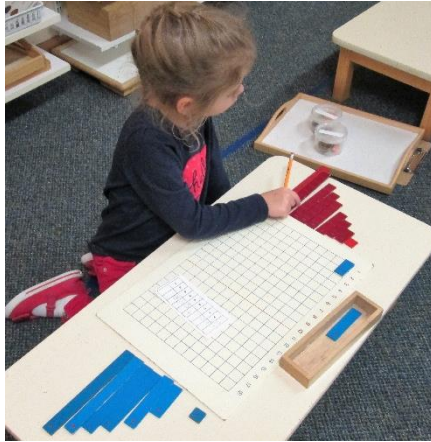
We have continued to enjoy the music of Mozart this month. Many of the children have chosen to make a book about Mozart as a final project. (Still dancing to his music).

Finally, although not much is final, there is **the** "mistake". When doing the land and water form demonstration for strait and isthmus, I thought it would be more interesting if we added food coloring to make the water blue. It was, **BUT**, I had not noticed that the design of the strait made it impossible to pour the water out of the land form without spilling. So, when I went to empty the isthmus, the blue-dyed water ran out all over onto the white rug. An interesting moment.

Silence. **BUT**, one of the children said: "We all make mistakes." It felt good that they could see that I also make mistakes. There must be a feeling in the classroom that problems are okay, that we can solve/fix them, that we can try new approaches or ideas. It all ended well as the blue dye came out in the wash with lots of bleach. We have to be able to try new ideas and know that sometimes they don't work as expected. That's okay. We fix the problem and go to continue our explorations.

February Photo Gallery

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



News from the Art Class

(Kindergarten and Elementary)

by Ms. Linda

Africa! This month in the elementary class we explored the art of Africa.

The students created African masks using collage and stamping techniques. We worked with the concept of symmetry to create masks that were balanced on both sides using cut paper. The masks were decorated with homemade stamps and paint.



The students also created three-dimensional Ndebele houses. The women of the Ndebele tribe in Africa paint geometric designs on their houses using bright colors. We used paper, markers, and "straw" to create our own version of these colorful homes.



In the kindergarten room, the students practiced color mixing using paint. We discussed the difference between primary and secondary colors and how to create secondary colors. The students drew fish and painted them by experimenting with color mixing. We are currently working on a mixed media painting and collage inspired by Claude Monet's "Water Lilies"



News from the South Room

by Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

I want to begin by thanking all the parents, grandparents, and great grandparents who helped with the Valentine's celebration. From donating festive stickers, paper, and extra shoeboxes to preparing a delicious snack, to volunteering your time and energy working with the children on fun activities...the morning was a success and the children had such a fun time. So again, thank you very much!

This year we spent quite a few days working on the valentine mailboxes. It was a multi-step activity that involved painting, cutting, gluing, sticking, and overall planning of how the box was going to look. It was very interesting to watch how the children approached this activity; some were very thoughtful and strategic on how they wanted it to look and took a lot of time attempting symmetry with their sticker work. Others were very minimalistic and only painted with one color and put a few stickers. And still others were the opposite of minimalistic and covered the box with as much as they possibly could. One sweet moment happened when our kindergartener Annabelle asked if she could make and decorate a mailbox for her classmate Shivain, whom she knew was in India visiting family and would not be able to participate in the activity. She spent so much time making his mailbox look beautiful and it was such an affirmation of how much these children truly care about each other.

At line time, we have been talking a lot about *Days of the Week* and *Months of the Year*. We have a song for both and we are learning them in both English and Spanish. For the months of the year song, the children are invited to raise their hands and wave when it is their birthday month. It seems quite a few do not know their birthday month, so it would be helpful, if you might remind them from time to time, when their birthday is.

Days of the Week

*There are seven days, there are seven days,
there are seven days in the week.*

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

Thursday, Friday, Saturday.

Today is Wednesday, today is Wednesday.

All day long, all day long.

Yesterday was Tuesday, tomorrow will be Thursday.

Oh, what fun! Oh, what fun!

We started expanding our food preparation this Month. We added avocados to our cheese quesadillas...not everyone enjoyed this new addition. We also made mini pizzas with bagels...most of them did love this. In addition, we added apple cutting and orange juicing to our practical life areas. There is an element of *grace and courtesy* with both activities, along with carrot cutting: the child can choose to 1) make juice for just themselves or for a friend also 2) bring their carrots or apples home, eat them for a snack or share them with their classmates. More often than not, the children choose to share. This presents a great opportunity for some key phrases: *would you like...can I please have...thank you...you're welcome, etc.*

“The education of the senses has, as its aim, the refinement of the differential perception of stimuli by means of repeated exercises.”

~ Maria Montessori

Montessorians always talk about “following the child” and how we must always observe each child to know where to guide them next. I am also a firm believer in being a lifelong learner myself, and I often tell the children that they are all teachers and that I learn from them daily.

This month two children helped guide me in two additions to our classroom. First, we had added a playdough activity in which the children could strengthen their hand muscles by working with the playdough. One afternoon, Violet decided to take a few pony beads from the bracelet making work, and hide them in the playdough. Rather than tell her that the beads are a separate work and not supposed to be smooshed in the playdough, I stopped and watched her for a while. She was having so much fun hiding the beads in the playdough and then digging them out; it was like watching an archeologist uncover bits of an ancient civilization. When she was finished, I told her what a great idea she had and asked her to help me choose several small objects to become part of the work. This has become so popular and the children are loving the act of hiding and digging out the objects.

The second instance of learning from the child, came when Eleanor came up to me and started singing “Head, Shoulder, Knees, and Toes” in Spanish. I asked her where she had learned that and she said her mom taught her after watching a video. So, that night I went home, found a video on YouTube, and the next day Eleanor helped me teach the class the song at line time.

*Head, shoulders, knees, and toes,
Knees and toes.*

*Head, shoulders, knees, and toes,
Knees and toes.*

Eyes and ears and mouth and nose.

*Head, shoulders, knees, and toes,
Knees and toes!*

*Cabeza, hombros, rodillas, pies,
rodillas, pies,*

*Cabeza, hombros, rodillas, pies,
rodillas, pies,*

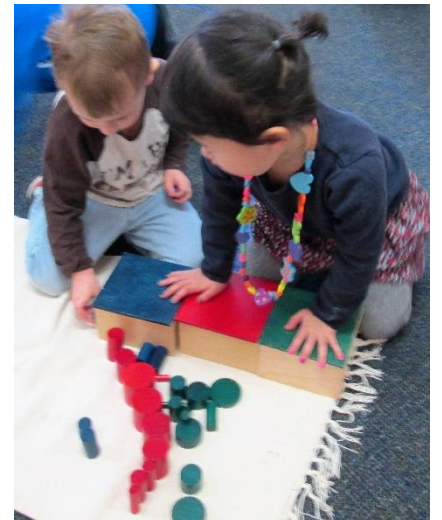
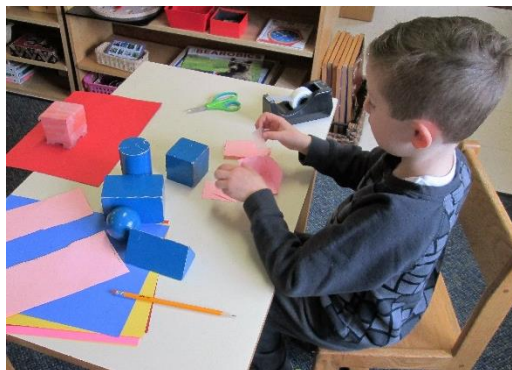
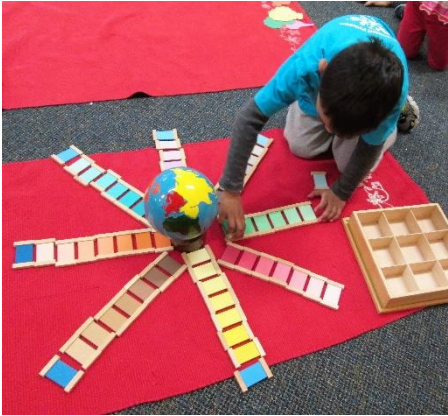
Ojos, orejas, boca, nariz.

*Cabeza, hombros, rodillas, pies,
rodillas, pies!*

As Montessori teachers, we strive to always “follow the child” and are learning from them constantly, but these two examples really struck a chord with me and made me reflect on the importance of respecting these little humans as valuable contributors to our world. I'm so very lucky that I get to benefit from their knowledge and understanding every day.

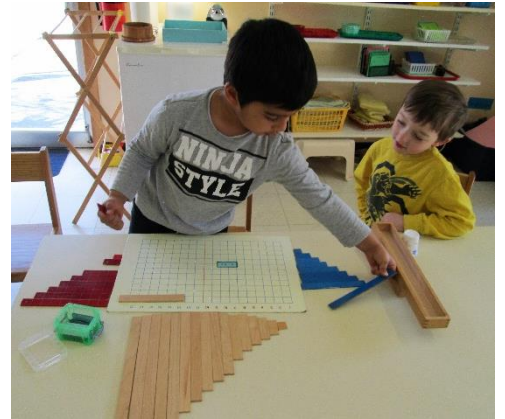
February Photo Gallery

South Room



February Photo Gallery

Pre-K Extended Day Class



News from the East Room

by Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

February brought many fun and interesting activities to our class. We enjoyed a citrus tasting activity thanks to Faye's family- Kumquats, Navel oranges, Mandarins and red grapefruit were tasted together as a line activity. No surprise that the Mandarins were the sweetest and the children's favorite! Thank you for sharing them with us!

We learned about groundhogs, also known as woodchucks and the story of seeing their shadow on the 2nd. Some of the children made their own pop-up groundhogs and we also worked on Parts of a Groundhog.

Thanks to our parent volunteers Eva Bar, who shared a craft with our class, Allison Doud who also brought in a craft. Also, many thanks to Jackie Radeni and Gina Formella who made our Valentine's morning a huge success! We love having our parents help in the class and your kids do, too!



It was an amazing experiment to have the children all participate in planting an Amaryllis bulb, which was brown and looked dormant. Every day the children watched it for growth. Finally, after a week, a tiny green sprout appeared. We then measured it weekly and boy did it grow! One surprise though, the flowers were white and not red like on the package!



“Montessori taught me the joy of discovery... it showed you can become interested in pretty complex theories, like Pythagorean theory, say, by playing with blocks. It’s all about learning on your terms, rather than a teacher explaining stuff to you.

SimCity comes right out of Montessori... if you give people this model for building cities, they will abstract from it principles of urban design.”

~Will Wright, Computer Game Designer and Original Designer of The Sims



We will celebrate Dr. Seuss birthday this month and look forward to our helpful parent volunteers again.

A new student Jacek joined us this month and we all welcome him to our classroom.

Supposedly the groundhog did see his shadow which is believed to mean 6 more weeks of winter - we were able to play outside with no coats a few days last week.

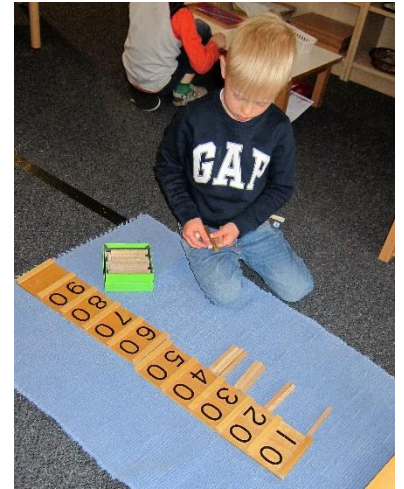
We will celebrate 7(!) birthdays next month - some are on the same day!

We thank you for a great month and look forward to more friendship and learning in March!



February Photo Gallery

East Room



News from the Late Afternoon Class

by Ms. Donna

We learned about George Washington. He was our first president. The camera had not been invented so pictures of him were painted by artist. His face is on our dollar bill.

We learned about Abraham Lincoln. He was our sixteen president. When he was thirty the camera was invented. His pictures were taken by a camera. His face is on our five-dollar bill. He was born in Indiana and moved to Illinois.

ART:

We made a ground hog picture with the sun shining so, he did see his shadow.

We had 2 fish heart pictures

We poked out "head pictures" of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln and glued them to a red, white and blue background

We traced a felt heart and then decorated it



NEW WORKS:

Animal Sound Bingo: We would listen to a tape if your card had the animal that would make the sound we heard you would cover it with a paper circle. The first student to cover four in a row was the winner.

Balance beam: walk across, walk while holding an egg on a spoon and not dropping the egg



SCIENCE:

Our question was –"What would happen if you mixed equal amounts of water and vegetable oil together?" Four students said they would not mix and eight students said that the oil and water would mix. So, we poured 1/4 cup of water and 1/4 cup of vegetable oil together and mixed them. We saw bubbles and then as we watch, the water went underneath the oil and the bubbles began to disappear.

MUSIC:

Song/Game - "Valentine, Valentine, do you have a letter"? While in a circle one student would walk on the outside of the circle while we sang the song and then drop the Valentine behind someone just before the song ended. That child would then deliver the Valentine to someone else as we sang. etc



BOOKS:

"A Book of Hugs" by Dave Ross

"The Biggest Valentine Ever" by Steven Kroll

"The Valentine Express" by Nancy Wallace

"Snow Valentines" by Karen Ruelle

"The Best Thing about Valentines" by Eleanor Hudson

