

MONTESSORI PATHWAYS' NEWS

The First Week of School (August 26— 30, 2024)



Welcome to Montessori Pathways—
your child's home away from home!

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

We would like to welcome back all of our returning children and families and extend a warm welcome to all of our new children and families. August—September is always a time of excitement, yet with that comes anxiety and nervousness for many children. We will do our best to ensure the transition is as seamless as possible and to ensure that each child feels loved, respected and safe. A Montessori learning environment is like no other. Our main objective at Montessori Pathways is to provide a carefully prepared, clean, safe, and stimulating environment which will help children to develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills and ideas essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

Respect and courtesy in our Montessori school is the foundation for everything we do and each child will soon learn the following important skills:

- ◆ how to put their work away where they found it
- ◆ how to tidy up after themselves
- ◆ the importance of helping a friend in need
- ◆ the importance of respecting the materials, the teachers and each other
- ◆ how to tuck in their chair when they leave the table
- ◆ how to walk in the classroom
- ◆ how to be self directed and find their own 'work' and most importantly,
- ◆ how to be independent!



Each child will feel empowered at Montessori Pathways School and learn how great it feels to do things on their own! Each Montessori teacher is here to nurture, support and guide them each and every day and are committed to making your child's Montessori preschool, kindergarten, and elementary experience productive, stimulating and fun! We are honored that you have chosen our school and we are confident that this will be a wonderful year for everyone involved!

Montessori Pathways Team 2024-2025

Our experienced, enthusiastic, and outstanding teachers who will be helping your children become strong and independent learners, as well as responsible, kind, and helpful individuals:

- ◆ **Ms. Alena** – Director of Montessori Pathways School
- ◆ **Ms. Bridget**– Elementary I-II Teacher in the North Room.
- ◆ **Ms. Carole**—Elementary Assistant Teacher in North Room
- ◆ **Ms. Masha**– Primary Teacher in the East Room; Kindergarten and Pre-K Extended Day Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Laxmi** – Primary Teacher in the East Room
- ◆ **Ms. Kathy** – Primary Teacher in the South Room; Kindergarten and Pre-K Extended Day Teacher.
- ◆ **Ms. Urana**– Early Morning Arrival; Primary Teacher in the South Room; Preschool Extended Day Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Tina**—Late Afternoon Teacher / Substitute Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Ellen**—Late Afternoon Assistant Teacher / Substitute Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Lilly**—Music Teacher in Elementary Class
- ◆ **Ms. Suzy**— Art teacher in Elementary Class



Each month, we will be sending out a newsletter to let you know about everything that has happened at school, as well as to announce upcoming school events. We understand the parents' interest and curiosity about their child(ren)'s first few days at school, so we have prepared a short newsletter for the first week.

For most of our students, the beginning of the new school year was smooth and organized. Some of the children are returning students and are a great help for their new friends. Some of our new students had also attended our summer camp, which helped them build a strong relationship with the school, as well as learn the rules and procedures of the classrooms.

Our newsletters will contain information from each individual classroom, but we suggest that you take the time to read all of it. Oftentimes the teachers include helpful information, interesting recipes, and other tips to be used at home, as well as a greater picture of what is happening around the school.

These newsletters also serve as a starting point for conversations about school with your child.

I would like to extend our appreciation to the teachers, who spent a lot of time, energy, and creativity in preparing such a wonderful and safe environment for our students.

Many thanks to all of our families who actively support our school and team and help us to provide a phenomenal learning environment and opportunity for our students. We, of course, would not be able to make it without your help and support!

We are looking forward to getting to know each child and working with each family to make this year an accomplish one! If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at **815-459-6727** or via email montpathways@hotmail.com so that we can discuss things in detail. Have a Happy and Safe Labor Day!

A Poem for Parents: "Nothing"

(Author Unknown)

When children come home at the end of the day,
The question they're asked as they scurry to play is,
"What did you do at school today?"



And the answer they give
Makes you sigh with dismay.
"Nothing, I did nothing today!"



Perhaps nothing means
That I worked with *Pink Tower*, counted to ten,
Or studied about *The Parts of Flower*.
Maybe I painted or learned to tie my shoe;
Or discovered what happens when you mix red and blue.
Maybe I learned to tuck in my chair and put my work away,
Or maybe I learned to be kind to a friend while I was playing outside today,
Maybe my scissors followed a line and I mastered to write my name.
Maybe I learned some sounds or numbers or learned to play a new game,
Maybe I made a craft or sang a song from beginning to end,
Or maybe I learned to play with a special, brand new friend.

When you're in preschool
And your heart has wings,
"Nothing" can mean so many, many things.





COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS



- ◆ **September 4 (M) - No School in observance of Labor Day.**
- ◆ **September 6 (F) - First Friday Nature Class at Veteran Acres Park in Crystal Lake for Elementary Students**
- ◆ **September 6 (F) - Back to School Picnic at Veteran Acres Park—5:30-6:30pm**
We welcome all of our families to meet each other as well as our wonderful team! Let's begin this school year together!
- ◆ **September 20 (F) at 11 a.m.,** children from Pathways School will sing "*Light a Candle for Peace*" in celebration of 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" will be sung continuously for 24 hours by Montessori school children around the world.

Our school is excited about joining the many other Montessori schools to "Sing Peace around the World". It is a chance to connect our regular lessons of encouraging the children to treat each other with respect and dignity. To show compassion, patience, and kindness to others are values nurtured in the Montessori environment as the children work together each day for a peaceful classroom. In the words of Maria Montessori, "*The child is both the hope and promise for mankind.*"



- ◆ **September 24 (Tu) - Mums Sale School Fundraiser.**
Thanks to many of our families during previous years' fundraisers, we were able to replace some furniture, change the carpet around the school, update the floor, kitchen counters and cabinets in all rooms, and renovate our playground. This year, proceeds will go to support the teachers' Wish Lists to renew and update the Practicla Life Areas in their classrooms. If you would like to participate, **please return your order forms with payments no later than September 6th.**
- ◆ **September 25 (W) - Fire Drill**
- ◆ **September 27 (F) - Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day (North Room)**
 - * No School for all Elementary students
 - * During Elementary Orientation Meeting, most parents voted for virtual P/T Conferences for elementary class.
 - * The link to schedule your virtual conference will be sent to you on Monday, September 9th.
 - * The link for Zoom P/T meeting will be sent on Monday, September 23rd.



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS (NORTH ROOM)

Ms. Bridget, Ms. Carole



"It is interesting to notice that where life is simple and natural and where the children participate in the adult's life, they are calm and happy." —Maria Montessori

And we're off!! The first week of the year has begun and Ms. Carole and I are beyond thrilled with the new class of 20. Everyone is motivated, happy, making friends and learning routines. The experienced students have been great helpers to the new students. All feels peaceful and calm.



Montessori determined through her observations that children ages 6-12 are storytellers and enjoy collaboration. Thus, her lessons and materials require a lot of storytelling and collaboration in the Montessori elementary class.

This week has been full of storytelling:

"Me Bags" brought by the kids and me to tell about us as people- our interests and what makes us unique

The Great Lessons of Maria Montessori: bring to life the coming of the universe, the coming of life, the coming of humans as well as the stories of the beginnings of language and numbers.



I began the year with Montessori's first Great Lesson which she called "The God with No Hands" which shares the story of how some people believe the universe came to be. We talked about this being a folk story, mythology, and all cultures have this type of storytelling about things they did not

understand. How did all we see come to be in existence? We then learned about the scientific notion: The Big Bang. Ms Carole, Parker, Vadym and I told the story this year.



Next was the Second Great Lesson: The Coming of Life. I tell this story of the new beginnings of life once the Earth cooled, and life was able to happen when water appeared. There is a timeline showing many creatures that came to be. The Field Museum has an excellent exhibit about this called Evolving Planet. We will continue with the other 3 as the week progresses.

I gave everyone a math lesson, language lesson, and we had our first book groups. We had writing time, silent reading, music, art, physical education and Game Monday.



I have also shared through storytelling some notable historic legendary characters: Gaea from Greek Mythology, Don Quixote, Beowulf, Gilgamesh, Aladdin from Arabian Nights and the introduction to the Canterbury Tales. The kids cannot wait until I finish the books to peruse the text and pictures in better details.

It is a great place for working together and telling stories. I hope that they are coming home to tell you some of our stories of recess, works accomplished, new lunch items, new lessons and read aloud. Enjoy every story with your child.



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



Our first week of school was very busy and exciting for all! We began our days outside, socializing and enjoying the expansive playground. Some children engaged in group games while others chose to run and explore the equipment. The group games allow new children to meet others and feel welcome. It is very important for each child to feel safe and welcome in our community. A sense of security is essential to success outside of the home. In the South Room, none of the new friends shed a single tear! However, a few returning students were sad summer was over and were a bit weepy?



Our very first lesson was classroom division or finding your teachers. Fortunately, most of the returning students and our summer camp friends knew right away which room they belonged in. We sang our classroom chant: "We are the South Room the mighty, mighty South room" and were echoed by the East Room friends. So, we repeated it a bit louder. We then played 'Follow the Leader', with the teacher as a leader and addressed the rules of the playground equipment on our tour of each individual piece. Our returning "experts" had a chance to show the others how to use the equipment, name the areas and give safety rules of each stop on our tour. A few times a story was tossed out about safety rules and what happened when someone broke them. It was dramatic.

We then went inside in pairs, a younger/ new friend with an experienced friend and learned how to enter the building. The children learned to exchange their shoes, put on inside shoes, wash their hands, have a drink and finally assemble on the line. We reviewed how to sit on the line with our legs crossed and our hands on our knees. No one wants to get stepped on. All hats are hung on a hanger until we again return outside. We were also able to introduce how to hang a jacket on a hanger and hang it in our closets. Whew that was a lot to absorb already! By day 2, only a few children needed reminders of where their classroom gathers. The South room gathers in the gazebo and the East room on the benches. By day 3 and beyond we were experts!

At the beginning of the school year there is both an early morning and post work cycle line time. The morning line time is very short and informative and full of basic presentations. We sing songs about community, friendships and name songs. I am sure you have heard a few of them. These songs strengthen the sense of community and help each child to feel a sense of belonging within the group. Our formal les-

sons began with carrying a rug, rolling and unrolling a rug, as well as how to walk around a rug and within the classroom. We use walking feet, inside voices and gentle hands. Safety is the most important rule in our room.



Lessons on Grace and Courtesy are also given. We did quite a bit of role-playing as older children modeled how to ask for help, how to wait, and how to watch another child. Everyone enjoyed having at least one turn to model different lessons. Small group presentations are given with 5-6 children; to give experiences of the different activities or works as we call them (they are the "work" of the child) in the room. The small group lessons presented are not just for the small group itself but also for others who watch from nearby and across the room, absorbing the information shown.



Work time began and everyone was excited to choose work. During the work cycle individual children are given more specific lessons catered to the child's age group. These lessons will continue throughout the year both individually and in small groups and build upon one another, laying the foundations of each child's classroom experience. As the weeks progress the children become more confident each day. Repetition is key to each child's individual success. Taking the time to master each activity may last from a few days to a few months depending on the child. Each interaction with a material brings new aspects, defines the content and refines the child's experience. We expect the children to repeat activities until they master them and move on.

As our first week wraps up, we would like to stress how happy we are to have a wonderful group of friends who are beginning to form friendships and cooperate to help each other learn. It will be a wonderful year! We have no doubts about it!

We look forward to seeing everyone at the annual Back to School Family Picnic, on Friday September 6th at 5:30 pm. Bring a picnic or just join and meet your fellow parents and play some games. This is our chance to chat and get to know each of you better! See you there!

NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole



Happy Back to School season, East Room! We have hit the ground running this year. Most of the East Room students had attended Summer Camp for at least a few days, if not most of the summer, and it really shows. Thank you, parents, for helping your child's transition be so smooth.

Our mornings outside have allowed friendships to blossom. Students were eager to see each other again after their break and to share summer stories with everyone. With so many familiar faces coming back from summer camp, welcoming our new friends to the community was a seamless transition – it's hard to miss home with so many activities and games around! In just one week, we have created obstacle courses, played basketball and air soccer, taken care of our garden, and cleaned up after a storm!



We wrap up the mornings by resetting the playground, splitting into the two classes, and focusing on reviewing some school rules. To keep us all safe, we spend the first weeks emphasizing the rules and expectations of our community. It is so encouraging to see how many of our students have remembered them throughout the summer! We "Followed the Leader" around the whole playground, stopping to learn and remember the safety rules of each activity – not a single one stumped the East Room friends!

Inside, we start the school year with morning meetings, where we are learning each other's names, how to exchange shoes independently, roll and unroll rugs, carry a chair or a table, get snack, and clean up after snack.



In an environment with so many options and much freedom, it is that much more important to ensure the boundaries and expectations of the room are set and clear – we have prepared an environment with *freedom within limits*. The first weeks are all about establishing these limits in our community and learning how to respectfully remind others of them. Our returning students have been gracefully guiding our newer friends through the many transitions and expectations of the day.

As our morning meetings wrap up, we hear many requests to "please go get a work out!" Our students are eager to get back to learning and exploring! Do they choose to slowly ease back into the pace of the school year? Absolutely not! We have already had cookie baking, table scrubbing, polishing, world map making, word building, tens number building, wood sanding, cloth washing, and sewing, just to name a few, in full swing from day one. We are a busy room this year and we love to see it. I cannot emphasize enough how helpful time in summer camp was with this transition. Children *returned* to a familiar environment, are acquainted with the routine, and pick up right where they left off!



After our morning cycle wraps up, we straighten the room together and move to Line Time. This is our chance to move together, practice balancing, gross motor movement, dancing, singing, rhythm and, of course, ending with silence. We finish each morning by making silence. We work together to find control over our bodies and mind to create a peaceful silence together. This is a chance for children to practice mind-body connection and control, self-regulation, and to give themselves a much-needed reset. You would be amazed by the control our students have to create this beautiful silence, how long they can stay in this moment, and how much calmer they are afterwards. In the meantime, a group of students is also helping set up our lunch tables. Draping tablecloths, putting out cloth napkins, silverware, glasses, flowers, and candles for each table. We take great care in preparing a beautiful and inviting space for lunch. These children are simultaneously practicing their analytical skills, problem solving, and one-to-one correspondence, but we will touch on these concepts in later Newsletters.

We eat lunch as a community, still using this time to practice grace and courtesy in asking for seconds or politely declining them, using a napkin at the table, and being open to trying new foods. It is always interesting to see how our classroom's taste buds evolve throughout the year! Children then clean up after lunch, including washing their silverware and dishes, shaking out the tablecloths, sweeping the floor, and ensuring the chairs are pushed in ever so gently without making a sound. They can absolutely be practicing the same skills in the home with you!

The school year has started with a buzz of excitement and enthusiasm in the room, and we look forward to working with you to maintain that excitement in our students throughout the year! Even as the "honeymoon phase" of back to school wears down and we enter the gloomier and rainier seasons, if we remain positive and upbeat, so too will our children. We are looking forward to working together for an amazing year up ahead!

PHOTO GALLERY FROM THE KINDERGARTEN AND PRE-K EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Masha





MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



In August

