



Montessori Pathways School News

January
2017

Notes from Head of School

by Ms. Alena Baradzina

The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six.

~ Maria Montessori

Since it's time for parents to make a very important decision about the future of their children, one of the events we had this month was our parent evening "**Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished (Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary Year)**", where Ms. Karen and Ms. Amber demonstrated the spiral nature of Montessori education, whereby the skills learned in the early years of the Montessori Primary class are studied at a deeper level in the Kindergarten and Elementary years.

They also explained why the Montessori Kindergarten year is not the beginning of Elementary education, but rather the final and crucial year of the 3-year Primary Education cycle.

It is important to keep this in mind when deciding where to continue your child's education.

Kindergarten and Elementary Demo Classes

After our Parent Evening about the Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary years, many of you expressed interest in observing our students in action. Considering that it is not easy for most of our working parents to come in for an observation during the day, we decided to do our **Annual Demo Classes** for parents whose kids will be incoming Kindergarten or Elementary level during the next school year, as well as for our current Elementary Parents.

Therefore, we would like to invite Pre-K parents to observe our Kindergarten Demo Class, and our Kindergarten and Elementary parents to observe the Elementary Demo Class.

Both classes will be presented **Tuesday, March 2 at 6:00pm** by Ms. Karen (Kindergarten Demo Class – in South room), and Ms. Amber (Elementary Demo Class – in North room).

Of course, these classes will not be possible without our students. So, we ask that all Kindergarten and Elementary students come back to school by 5:45pm that day to participate in the Demo Classes.

Here is a sneak peek of the Elementary class:

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!As0leUULPLGLgrlvQcOzdgHYu9dzCw>



The Beauty of Multi-Age in Montessori Environment

This month our young students had a chance to observe how the kindergarteners worked on building the 3-dimensional geometric shapes. Many cubes, rectangular and triangular prisms later turned into different buildings and animals. The kindergarteners were so excited and inspired by this work that our Pre-K friends decided to join them and work together.

One morning, one of our preschoolers came to me and said that he also would like to build a cube. I told him that I do not really know how to build one and suggested that he check with an older friend.

How excited I was when I finally found the cube made by my little friend!

This is exactly what we call the beauty of multi-age in Montessori environment!

3-D shapes made by:



Kindergarten student



Pre-K students



Preschooler (He made it!)

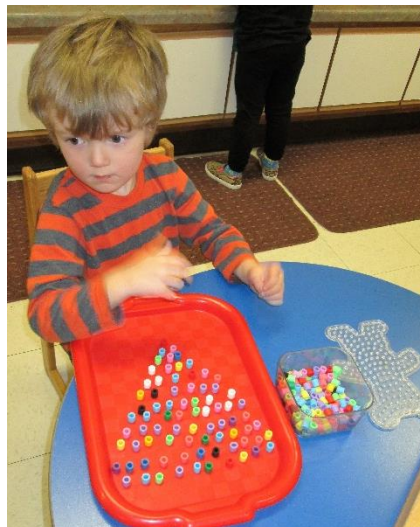


Give Them an Inch and They Will Go a Mile

One day I observed that one of our Pre-K students was laying out the big beads on a tray: one bead in the first row, two beads in the second, three beads in the third, and so on. When I sat closer to watch what he is doing, he kept counting ...78, 79, 80...

I was wondering what exactly is he doing since usually the students use these beads just for making animal shapes. The child was very excited to share his idea with me: "We have "The 100 Board" in our classroom, but I decided to build "The 100 Triangle".

Wow! I was just amazed and surprised! When I shared this observation with Ms. Karen, she said: "This is what we call "education"!"



Thank you!

During Winter Break we finally made the renovations in our North Room using the money collected during our Mums Sale and Equal Exchange Fundraisers. The renovation cost about \$5,000.00, and the \$2,000.00 that we raised were of course of great help.

Thank you to all of you who participated in both fundraisers!

We have changed the kitchen cabinets with counter and replaced the floor. Elementary students helped select the type of floor: according to their opinion, the color should be warm and welcoming and the finish of the floor should be not slippery. Hopefully they enjoy their new floor and kitchen!



Coming School Events

➔ Registration for the upcoming 2017-2018 School Year has begun!

It is that time of the year when we begin assembling the classes for the next year. We also begin to plan our staff and curriculum for the upcoming 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 School Year Re-Enrollment Fee (\$50)
- 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 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.

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

➔ February 1 – New Families Enrollment begins

➔ February 3 (F) – Vision / Hearing Screening for Preschool – Kindergarten Students

➔ February 14 (Tu) – Valentine's Day at Montessori Pathways

*Parents are welcome to organize morning activities or presentations in the classroom

➔ February 20 (M) – No School (Presidents' Day)

➔ February 22 (W) at 6:00pm – Elementary Students' Africa Study Presentation / Elementary Parents Curriculum Night

➔ 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) (Tu) 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.

News from the Elementary Class (North Room)

by Ms. Amber

“That’s not fair!” How often have we heard that statement or even said that statement? Fairness was our character trait of the month, and luckily, we had several real examples of fairness to discuss. A valuable lesson for children to learn is how their behavior impacts others. It is easy for a girl to complain something is not fair, and then she turns around and does something unfair to another student. A boy complains another student plays unfair, but then he turns around and is a poor sport. A young person’s character is a work in progress and parents and teachers offer valuable guidance to the development of that character. Help your child develop their fairness character.

“Everything Africa” seems to be the tone in our classroom with maps, biomes, the ancient civilization of Egypt, artistic masks and huts, watercolor-painted animals, and so much more. We are only in the middle of the study, so we still have more to learn and discover! If you have ever been to Africa, we would love to hear about your travel experience. We hope to share our Africa adventures with parents when we are done.



For most students, the “hard-working January” was more talk than action. However, the classroom was busy and the students were engaged in work and in their social development. It was great witnessing students’ academic achievements and episodes of caring such as: trying long division with the “test-tube” division material; helping out younger students on the playground; asking if a student wanted or needed help with a challenging work; working together on maps and projects; offering advice on a better/different way to do a work; checking a younger student’s language card layout; complementing a student on a writing assignment; and saying please, thank you and excuse me.



“To consider the school as a place where instruction is given is one point of view. But, to consider the school as a preparation for life is another. In the latter case, the school must satisfy all the needs of life.”

~ Maria Montessori

Even though we are half-way through the school year, elementary students routinely hear the classroom expectations: stay on task, work hard, complete assignments, limit socializing, and respect others by **letting others do their work**. Conferences were another good time to stress the purpose of school and the importance of learning.

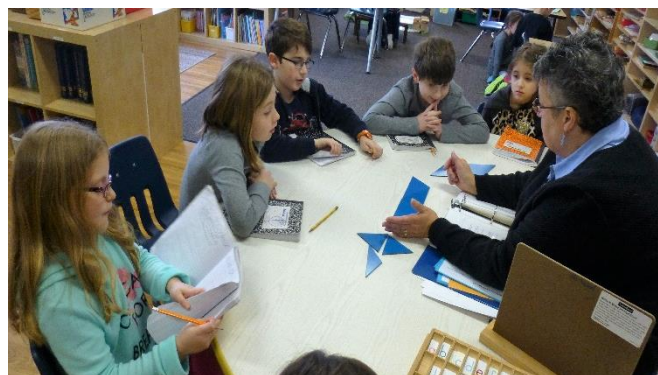
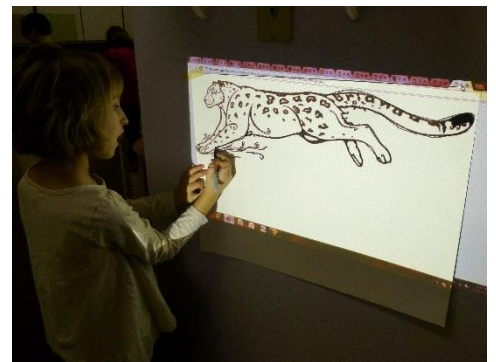
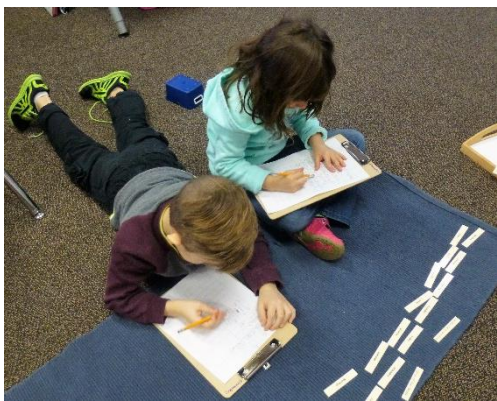
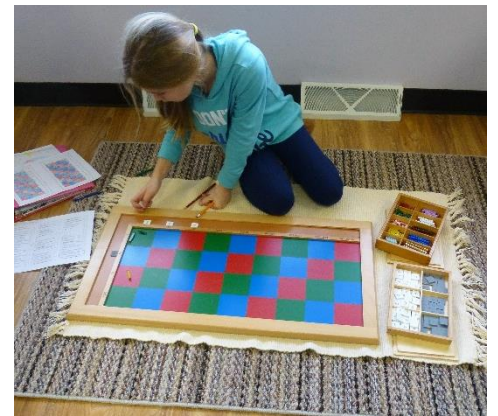
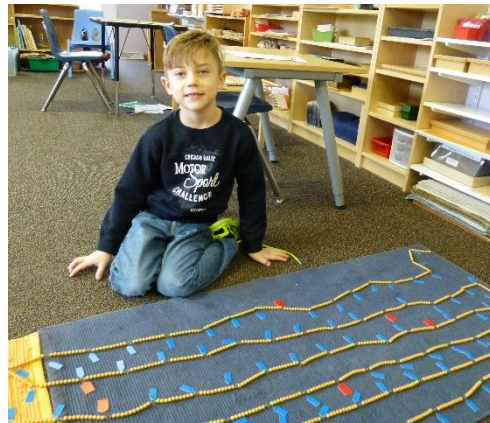


Now that goals are set, students have another set of tasks to accomplish by the end of the year. They were excited to choose a goal, and some were ready to begin before conferences! Many students were very disappointed to learn we would not attend the Nature’s Classroom Institute, but we will try again next year. This month we look forward to our Valentine’s Day celebration and a field trip to the Raue Center to see an acrobatic performance. ♥ Happy Valentine’s Day ♥



January Photo Gallery

Elementary Class



News from the Kindergarten Extended Day Class

by Ms. Karen

Don't the holidays seem like a LONG time ago? I must say it felt good to be back!

This month, we introduced Mozart and his music to the class. We told his story, gave some background, etc. Then we listened to a Mozart minuet. What a delight! Spontaneously the children got up and began dancing. Joyfully! We have played his music in the background this month.

Graphing. Our math was expanded by several special activities this month. A favorite was graphing M&M's. Hopefully, your child told you what we did since the M&M's were sent home along with the graph paper for recording.

It may look like a simple lesson, but for the children, there were many steps they had to organize, make sets determined by color, count and record. (along with refraining from eating the M&M's). So:

1. The children had to be able to read the color words. We reviewed that as a group.
2. They needed to cut apart the vocabulary color word page.
3. They needed to organize these words on their table.
4. They organized the M&M's, by color, under the appropriate word label.
5. Then they had to begin with the first color word on the graph paper. They were shown to count each individual M&M of that color which determined exactly the number of dots to be recorded. So, they counted and then entered the appropriate number of dots for the color on the matching line. (mathematically 1 to 1 correspondence --- a fundamental concept for this age).
6. Recount as a check and enter the numeral for each color in the Total Column.
7. Then they added the subtotals of colors to get the total of M&M's.
8. Finally, we checked to see that the overall total on the paper and the number of M&M's corresponded.

It is so fun when the children are capable of interesting, complex, multi-step works!

Dimension: Another math activity that was hugely successful (talked about at the parent meeting) was making 3 dimensional cubes from 2 dimensional paper. It was another multi-step project: assembling needed materials, tracing, cutting, folding, creasing, and taping. The children were totally engrossed. And then, because of the open nature of the Montessori classroom, they could extend that lesson into making other geometric solids independently. The children are still doing that activity on their own. With practice, they became (and will become) more and more

“Let the children be free; encourage them; let them run outside when it is raining; let them remove their shoes when they find a puddle of water; and when the grass of the meadows is wet with dew, let them run on it and trample it with their bare feet; let them rest peacefully when a tree invites them to sleep beneath its shade; let them shout and laugh when the sun wakes them in the morning.”

~ Maria Montessori

capable of such activities. Vocabulary included: 2 dimensional, length, height, width, corner, sides. It was engrossing to watch one child work an entire afternoon on trying to make a cylinder. No discouragement. Just experimenting!

Symmetry in art: our new art for this month: folding white construction paper in half, crease, then open the paper. Add paint (drops, lines, etc) to ONE side only. Then fold the paper in half again. Rub the top (to blend the colors). Open. A symmetrical shape. Both sides the same. Also, color blending as the paints we used were just the primary colors.

Voting as a solution: There were differences of opinion over what to do with a large nut that 2 of the children had found together, but disagreed on what to do with it. And then the CLASS realized: we could vote. So, we talked again about voting, about how the outcome would be accepted by the group, how each individual had one vote. It was neat to see such an idea emerge from the group itself!

Reading:

We are reading environmental labels as a group. Emphasis is on sounding out the word, blending the letter- sounds, and particularly using the first and last sound of the word as a help. Okay, we know it starts with “b” and ends with “x”. They are so excited when they figure it out.

Then we go back over the word and check that it matches --- yes: the whole word is s- p-oo -n. And the child gets the spoon to place next to the card. Soon, after we play with it more as a group, the children will be able to do the activity individually. It's a nice format to work first in a group situation since the children help one another. Less pressure and it helps each child in the group work with phonics.

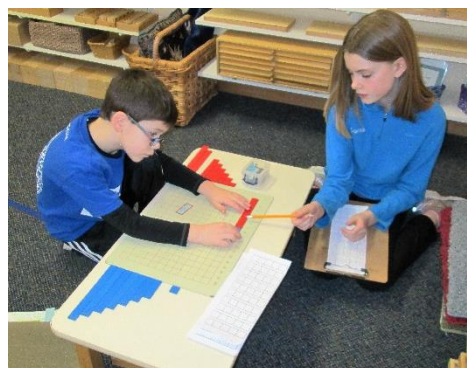
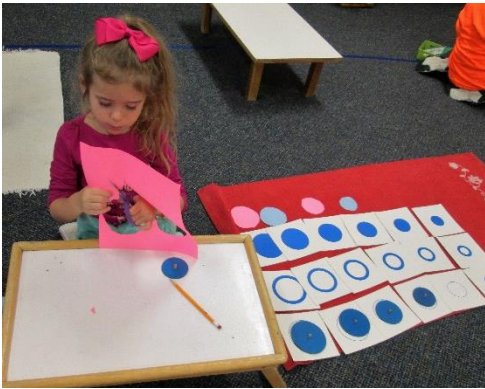
When we practice penmanship together as a group, we also practice the sound of the letter we write and we generate a long list of words beginning with that sound

How we ended today (Thursday): It is snowing!! The children were so excited --- catching snowflakes on black paper, on their mittens, on their tongues. And then they were amazed when the snowflake on the paper disappeared -- really! What joy!

Winter thought: “Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look at what they do when they stick together!”

January Photo Gallery

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



News from the Art Class

(Kindergarten and Elementary)

by Ms. Linda

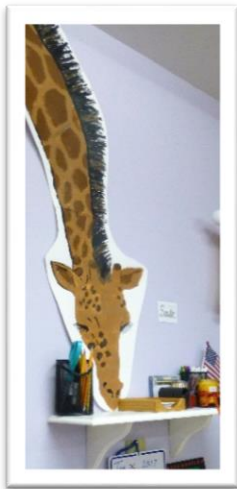
The students have had a busy month in art!



In the kindergarten class the students are learning about primary colors and how to mix them to get secondary colors. They created their own play dough rainbows by mixing their own colors. We will continue the lesson in color mixing with paints. They will be drawing and then painting some colorful fish.



In the elementary class students began the month by creating beautiful African masks. They worked with the concept of symmetry to create masks that had the same elements on both sides. Then they created their own stamps to print unique patterned backgrounds. Currently they are working on creating three dimensional models of Ndebele houses. These are brightly painted homes done in geometric designs by the women of the Ndebele tribe in Southern Africa.



News from the South Room

by Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

It's hard to believe that we only have four and a half months left of this school year. The time has truly flown by and the growth of the children is so evident in their daily activities.

There have been some questions regarding *show & tell*, specifically does it exist and what can the children bring. I think it is important for each child to feel that they can bring something special from home and share it with their friends. However, there are a few parameters that I would like to address. Please, no toys. Instead some suggestions would be: a craft or something special that they made themselves, photographs, books, a souvenir from a recent trip, something they found in nature while on a walk, etc. Also, instead of the child just grabbing something random on their way out the door, it would be great if they could plan it the night before, and go over some talking points with you about their chosen item - *Why is it special? Where did they get it? Did someone give it to them as a gift? What's happening in the photograph? What's their favorite part of the book (you can even bookmark their favorite page)?* They are invited to bring an item anytime they would like, however it would be nice to space it out a bit, maybe once or twice a week, and not every single day. Just to give an opportunity for other children to share as well. If you have any further questions regarding this topic, please feel free to email.

In the *practical life* area of the classroom we have been introducing some new activities to help promote further internalization of *independence, coordination, concentration, and order*. We have introduced soft clay: this activity not only helps strengthen hand muscles in preparation for writing, but we have included a plastic knife to help the children learn to hold and cut.

We do use butter knives at lunch time, and have found that many children do not know how to properly hold a fork and knife in order to successfully cut their food. We have also introduced some fine motor activities that require a lot of hand-eye coordination to transfer beads from a bowl to small spiked objects. We have two versions, one with larger beads and one with very small fuse beads that they can then iron to create a decoration.

We also have introduced animal scrubbing, in which the children can choose a small plastic animal to scrub.



“Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity which is derived from a sense of independence.”

~ Maria Montessori

This has been a very popular activity as many water works tend to be, but it is very important for self-organization as there are many components to this activity that have to be set up in order of use. This sense of self-organization is so important for the Montessori classroom as well as for life in general. When the older children start working on more complex works, like maps for example, they need to be very organized with how they set up their work space so they can accurately recreate a map that may have tens of countries.

The *45 Layout* has continued to be a very popular activity in our classroom. This is a great partner work because it takes a long time to do as well as a lot of space to do it. There are essentially 4 columns of numerals and matching quantities: 1-9, 10-90, 100-900, and 1000-9000. Once the child has matched each column of numerals with their corresponding quantity from the *bank* they will have two large rugs with 45 unit cubes, 45 ten bars, 45 hundred squares, and 45 thousand cubes, hence the name *45 Layout*. Maria Montessori was an amazing mathematician and this is such a great hands-on, concrete, tactile and sensorial way for the children to see the growing quantities as they build this work. One unit cube is exactly one tenth of a ten bar, one ten bar is exactly one tenth of a one hundred square, and a one hundred square is exactly one tenth of a thousand cube.



It is a beautiful work to observe and the children are able to see and feel the difference between the quantities. It's also another great opportunity for the children to work as a team and offer help to their friends, as it really takes a long time to put the work away, often classmates will offer to help those who worked on it.

Once children have mastered this work, when they choose it again, I often challenge them by asking them to clean it up by putting all the odd numerals and quantities away first, and then the even, and vice versa.



At the art easel, we have been talking a lot about primary and secondary colors, and the children have an opportunity to explore with color mixing, using the primary colors to make secondary colors, and most recently adding white to make lighter shades of paint. It's been quite sweet to hear the children excitedly say "I just mixed blue and yellow and it makes green!" Or, "did you know that if you add white to red, you get PINK!"

We have also been encouraging more opportunities for the children to take care of their classroom. We have various cleaning activities such as: window washing, dusting, sweeping, scrubbing of tables, chairs, stools, etc., polishing, and plant care. It's very important that the children see themselves as capable of caring for their own classroom and materials.



In the *food preparation* area, we are trying to introduce new foods and skills. We have been using our spreading skills with cucumbers and hummus. We have also been making cheese quesadillas and adding a *grace and courtesy* component. One child invites a friend to have snack and they prepare and serve the quesadilla to them. This has been very interesting to watch. One afternoon, one of our friends chose to do carrot cutting, and when he was done he asked if he could share them with his friends. So, he put the slices on a plate and walked around the room offering each child a carrot. It was such a nice moment to see this child kindly sharing his carrot as well as see the other children light up with surprise to a little unexpected treat.



For Chinese New Year, we discussed that this is the year of the Rooster and Amelia's mom, Tracy, came in and made a yummy treat with the children. Here is the recipe in case you wanted to make them at home.

Thank you, Tracy, for your time and idea!

Honey Cornflakes Cups (Honey Joys) Recipe

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. honey
- 50 grams unsalted butter
- 150 grams cornflakes gently crushed to smaller pieces
- colored sprinkles aka jimmies or hundreds-and-thousands



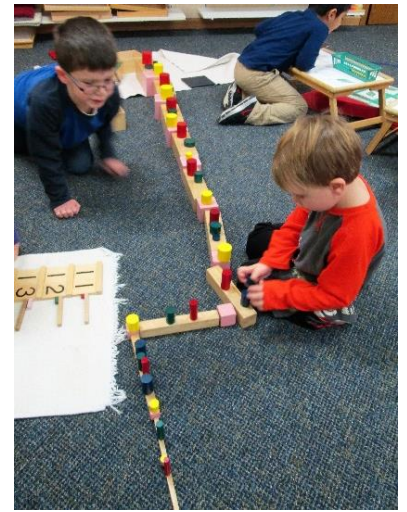
Directions:

1. In a saucepan, melt butter and honey over gentle heat, until the mixture is frothy.
2. Add crushed cornflakes into the honey butter mixture and stir to coat the cornflakes evenly.
3. Spoon cornflakes into individual mini baking cases and top with colored sprinkles. Bake at preheated oven of 150°C for 10-12 minutes, or until the cornflakes turn a darker shade of golden. Once cooled, store them in an airtight container.



January Photo Gallery

South Room



January Photo Gallery

Pre-K Extended Day Class



News from the East Room

by Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

*"Oh, Mr. Sun, Mr. Golden Sun;
Won't you please shine down on me!"*

These are words from a song that a child started singing while we were getting ready to play outside last week. It has been rather gloomy outside lately so, we decided to bring a little sunshine indoors.

As a class, we determined that it was too cold to begin planting anything outside yet so we did inside. Together we planted an Amaryllis bulb, with hopes of a beautiful red flower in a few weeks. We all agreed that plants needed soil, water and a warm place to grow. We prepared the soil, planted and watered the bulb and placed it on a shelf by a window. Every week we have been charting how many inches our Amaryllis bulb has grown (the first estimation was anywhere from 3in to 100in). Now that would be one impressive Amaryllis!! New travels fast in the classroom when a child notices that the plant has grown taller. One little boy stood with a ruler in his hand for some time, "I'm watching the bulb grow!" he said with excitement.

Paper Whites were also planted. We planted them in a clear vase using small pebbles, with hopes to observe their root system as it develops. Along with the Amaryllis and Paper Whites we also have Daffodils, Tulips and Hyacinth bulbs. In a few weeks, we hope to have pops of color throughout our room. There are different works in the classroom that support these activities such as sequencing the Amaryllis bulb and parts of a root.

Another activity that we did was baking with a small group of children. The first time we baked pumpkin muffins. We talked about the importance of washing our hands, listing and gathering the ingredients and following the recipe. It was a great way to talk about sequencing, introducing the names and how each baking utensil is used. Conversations went from "that looks gross" to "wow that smells really good!" Coming together at the end of the morning to taste the muffins was the best part, naturally. This was so much fun for the children that we will be selecting new "Baking Buddies" soon.



"To teach details is to bring confusion; to establish the relationship between things is to bring knowledge."

~ Maria Montessori

This month we have had 2 birthday celebrations. Ellie turned 5 and John Paul turned 6.

We learned that at 1 year old Ellie loved watermelon and began humming; she hasn't stopped. In fact, we can often hear Ellie softly humming while baking or coloring. Speaking of colors her favorites are pink and red. I think she still loves watermelon too. Ellie has an older sister.

John Paul is very interested in the moon and Saturn. When he was younger he had moon inspired birthday celebrations, one even included an astronaut suit he could wear. John Paul's favorite food is bacon and likes many colors - blue, orange, red and green to name a few. John Paul has 2 younger brothers and an older sister and brother.

We also want to welcome Finnegan to our classroom. He is 3 years old and is eager to explore and make new friends. Two older classmates took Finnegan under their wings explaining the classroom and giving him presentations. He enjoys washing windows, caring for our plants, play dough, puzzles and of course snack time. Welcome Finnegan!!

Individual baking continues to be very popular. So much so that we made a baking list, that gets longer every day. It can be hard to wait at times but they understand the process and eagerly read the list to see when it will be their turn.

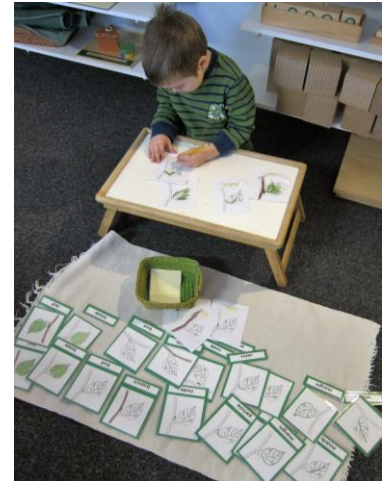
Snowman art has been a fun activity in our art area this month. Depending on their skill level a snowman was cut or poked out and then decorated as they desired. Their creativity is fun to observe.

We may have some budding architects in the making. We have observed 2 or 3 children creating intricate designs using the pink tower, brown stairs, red rod, and colored cylinder together. Quite impressive!!

Sink and Float is a very popular activity this month too. Just this past week we observed 2 friends reading a sink and float book. As they pointed to each picture they asked, "Will that sink or float?" They continued with their own experiment using the small objects in the work. To keep this activity fresh and interesting objects are rotated often. Hmm, maybe we will try small vegetables next week.

One of the last things we did together was have a lesson about the Chinese New Year. We read the book Lucky New Year, made Chinese Lanterns and shared a small snack together of tangerines and fortune cookies. Although it has been a little grey and gloomy outside, yummy smells from baking and a lot of joyful activity has been happening inside. Your children make learning fun!!

January Photo Gallery East Room



News from the Late Afternoon Class

by Ms. Donna

We celebrated Chinese New Year on Friday, January 27th. This year is called the year of the Rooster.

ART:

Paper mittens, white paint on foil made into a winter scene (snowman and trees), made a melted snowman, worked on some Chinese Characters, ("Little", "Water" and " Fish"), and a fire breathing dragon.



SCIENCE:

Pieces of pipe cleaners were put in a liter bottle. Then magnets were used to move the pipe cleaners around inside the bottle by holding the magnet under the bottle. We also put the pipe cleaners on a clear plastic tray and moved the pipe cleaners on top of the tray by running the magnet under the tray.



BOOKS:

Brain Teasers, questions are asked and the students would give their answer

"The Hat" and "The Mitten. We tried to remember the order of the animals in the story.



MUSIC:

Listened to a tape and played our rhythm sticks to the music. We played high, low, fast, slow, front and back.

STORIES:

Listening to a tape called story the "Squeaky Door" we added the following motions thunder (hit our chest), rain (slapped our thighs), fireworks (put our right hand up and spread our fingers and then put our left hand up and spread our fingers) and a squeaky door (made with our voices).



NEW WORKS:

Pink Moon sand.
Scrabble and Apples to Apples

GAMES:

Hokey Pokey, Musical Chairs and Doggie, Doggie Where's Your Bone.

