

# Montessori Pathways' News

March



*These children have free choice all day long. Life is based on choice, so they learn to make their own decisions. They must decide and choose for themselves all the time... They cannot learn through obedience to the commands of another. ~ Maria Montessori*

## Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

Getting more confidence by this time of the year, our kids are exploring many new things, doing more challenging work, and helping younger friends a lot.



Many students did a lot of map work as a part of cultural study, spent a lot of time reading books or journaling, doing deep study of plants and animal kingdom and creating booklets after that, are moving on to the next level of math discovery. Building and working on 2, 3, 4-digit numbers or exploring all 4 math operations are the most favorite works for many of our Pre-K / K students at this time of the year.



This time of the year, we observe a lot of positive changes and satisfaction in our kids. Way to go, our friends! Two more months of blooming!

## Elementary Class Visit Days for Kindergarten Students

During two weeks in February-March, our kindergarten students were invited to spend a morning in the Elementary classroom.

Our elementary students have created lovely invitations for their younger friends and personally passed them out to the kindergartners. The kindergarten students were so excited to know that they are very welcomed to visit our elementary class and that their older friends are looking forward to showing them around. Some of the kindergartners were constantly chatting with their classmates about it. On their visit day, they were so ready to explore the new environment.



It was interesting to observe growing leadership maturity in the Elementary class when our Elementary students were able to demonstrate their ability to make a presentation and help with work to their kindergarten friends, while successfully working with their own materials according to their work plan.



It was a very inspiring experience for our students. All Kindergarten students were very proud to be a part of their older friends' group, noticing a very welcoming and helpful atmosphere in the classroom.

## Parents' Corner

### ~Montessori and Freedom of Choice~

**One of the key features of Montessori homes and classrooms is that children have choices.** Most of us try to structure choices into the lives of our children. Even toddlers can play with this toy or that toy. They can wear their green pants or their blue pants. They can eat an apple or an orange for snack. They can decide to sit on mama's lap or daddy's knee. Life is full of choices. Why is choice important in schooling?

**Each one of us has our unique gifts and talents.** One of us may be a fast reader, another a math whiz, yet another has a talent for all things mechanical. One may be a swift runner while another is a great cook. We are not all the same. Nor are all our children the same.

You can take ten children of exactly the same age. They may be different heights, different weights. Their skills and capabilities may be vastly different. Some are early bloomers, some are late bloomers. **Some learn through visual input through what they see, some learn best by listening with their ears and some need to touch to learn.** They all learn but they may have vastly different tastes in what interests them and when they are ready.

*If these very different children go to the same traditional school and they have a teacher who lovingly offers them what the curriculum offers for that day, some are interested and ready for the new information and challenges, but some are not. The new tasks are just perfect for some, way too difficult for others and far too easy for others. It may be that some of the children are just smarter than others. But it may also mean that some are developmentally not quite ready for the tasks but in six months they would be perfect. Others would be a lot happier in the next grade up.*

**Maria Montessori understood all these learning differences and created an environment for children where they come in each day and choose what they want to work on.** At the beginning of their first year in Montessori they might choose between doing a puzzle, stringing beads, or looking at a book. Each day the teacher shows them new lessons and soon they have a larger choice. Eventually the choices include writing and reading, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with concrete materials. It includes biology and geometry, art, and music.

The free will of each child is gradually being educated. Each choice they have is constructive, developmentally appropriate, and interesting. Montessori's biographer E.M. Standing suggests that **freedom to choose is not freedom to do anything you want, but freedom to do the right thing.** For a child the right thing is what he needs to fulfill the next step of his development at any given stage.

When a child chooses his work instead of doing what he is told to do, he often develops a more genuine interest and learns to follow the direction of what we call the "Inner Teacher." The child begins to value the inner satisfaction he gets from doing the work that corresponds to his inner developmental needs and he is calm and joyful in his learning.

Not every child chooses to do every lesson. But that is OK. Each child chooses what he needs. There are multiple ways to teach essential skills, so a child who does not want to do one lesson, may choose another that gets him to the same goal.

But in Montessori, we realize that not every child reaches those goals in the same way or at the same time.

Montessori gave a series of lectures about freedom of choice. She makes a powerful argument that the roots of tyranny are in adults forcing children to obey their commands. When a child spends his entire day, year after year, following the instruction of adults and has no right to follow his own interests, he may come to believe that his own interests are unimportant. He may come to believe that his thoughts are not as important as the thoughts of the adults who are teaching him.

*Montessori believed in discipline. But she realized that the way to reach it was by creating environments where children found engaging materials to use. When they are fully engaged in the work that appeals to them at their particular level of development, they become self-disciplined. You see in Montessori classrooms a group of three-, four- and five-year-olds hard at work. No teacher could command such discipline, yet the children freely give it to their own self-chosen work.*

Freedom of choice becomes a habit of mind. Freedom to explore your own thoughts and interests can open the floodgates to creativity, as it has with such Montessori alumni as the co-founders of Google, Wikipedia and Amazon.com – all Montessori graduates.

<https://ageofmontessori.org/montessori-and-freedom-of-choice/>





## REGISTRATION FOR THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR IS WRAPPING UP!



We would like to announce that we are finalizing our Re-Enrollment for 2024 – 2025 school year and registration for Summer Camp 2024.

Thank you to all of the families who have returned the re-enrollment application for the Summer Camp 2024 and/or 2024-2025 School Year. We are so ready to move on.

- *At this point, we are full for our Summer Camp.*
- *Our Elementary class is also full for the next school year.*
- *We have only a couple spots left in our Primary classrooms.*

We will be distributing these spots on a first-come first-served basis, and we have many highly interested new parents visiting for them.

It is your final chance to get a spot at our school by submitting your application and \$50.00 re-enrollment fee. The part time schedule must be approved by administration prior to re-enrollment since not all options are available now.

If you have already returned the registration form with the re-enrollment fee, please remember that your child is only considered registered once the 10% security deposit is paid and it is due April 15 or depending on your payment plan

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.

**Please note:** All families enrolling and submitting 10% of the tuition after April 15<sup>th</sup> will be considered “newly enrolled” families, and will be subject to a new enrollment fee of \$50.00 for Summer camp and \$100.00 for 2024-2025 School Year.

**Spots in Primary level 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.

**We opened a waitlist for our Elementary and Summer Camp programs.** The candidates for these programs might be accepted if a spot opens up.

We are looking forward for an amazing summer and next school year adventures!

### IN APRIL:



- ◆ **April 1 (M) - School Resumes**
- ◆ **April 5 (F) at 1:30—2:30pm - Elementary Students Research Presentation** (Parents are welcome to attend)
- ◆ **April 8 - 11 (M-Th) - Elementary Class 4-day Trip to Nature's Classroom in WI**
- ◆ **April 12 (F) - Virtual Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day (North Rooms)**
  - \* **No School** for all Elementary students **on Conference Day, April 12.**
  - \* **The link to sign up for P/T Conference was sent to all families on Wednesday, March 20**
  - \* **The Zoom link** for your virtual conference will be sent to you **on Friday, April 5.**
- ◆ **April 18 (Th) - Montessori Family Night: “Come and Work Together!” – Parent / Child Work Cycle in Primary Classes (East and South rooms)**
- ◆ **April 22—25 – Earth Week**
- ◆ **April 24 (W) / Rain Day—April 25 (Th) - Spruce It Up / Mulching! Doughnuts with Grownups!**
- ◆ **April 26 (F) – No School / Teachers Institute Day (Staff in service)**

## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

The kindergarten students completed their visits to our class, and we are excited to welcome some back for their second visit which is a full day visit in April.



find books, locate call numbers with a little support, ask the staff for assistance and were able to find research books for their chosen topics for our research projects.



We also wrapped up "Bring Your Parent to Work" Days. Both parents and students enjoyed showing off their parents and showing works in the class. Parents were eager to participate in lessons and do work alongside their child. We will definitely continue this as an elementary tradition next year.

They used these books to gather notes, draw pictures and are in the process of putting a board together. When we return from break, each child will present to the primary classes, our class and then to parents.



March is also Women's History Month, so we learned about a different woman each day during our morning meeting.

We always sing songs and learn a bit about Ireland as St Patrick's Day is in March. I share a bit about the history, geography, storytelling, and culture of Ireland. Kids enjoyed a gold coin, Irish Soda bread and some Irish music. We also did some Irish dancing moves.

Finally, independence is also improving in each child's work. Students are working ahead on math, language and their reading. I have observed more students completing the work needed to accomplish and move on to a new lesson. Writing has improved as well with both spelling, flow and punctuation.

Making choices independently and knowing how to do the work is a huge accomplishment for many. Helping others and teaching others is when one can really see growth in children.



Research is a huge component of the elementary Montessori classroom. Children are eager to know more, more, more about everything. Many will write quite a lot of research; others will write the minimum of facts (however old you are!). It is a joy to begin to observe topics that they love and want to spend deep dives into these topics.

Since we have been going to the library all year, the students are now mostly independent from me at the library now. I love that they can navigate the library, use the computer to



We are getting excited and preparing for our yearly trip to Nature's Classroom Institute. Then finishing the year in grand style.



# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class



# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



Hello everyone from the South Room, March is supposed to come in like a lion and go out like a lamb. It seems it came in like a lamb and well, out like a lion! March brings us Spring. We took a walk around to observe any signs of Spring. We found quite a few and most of them are right in front of the school.



We saw a magnolia tree with fuzzy blossoms, buds of green sprouting from the soil, daffodils and crocus beginning to bloom, green grass blades between the brown winter grass, buds on the trees and bushes. The children in the Pre - K and K group drew pictures of their observations of Spring arriving.



We began our month celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 4th and exploring his literary contributions. We read a different Seuss book daily. Our first Seuss book was *Green Eggs and Ham* read by Ryan Davis.

The children made a version of green eggs and ham with paper plates and well green paper eggs and ham. This book in addition to Rachel from our catering company, Beyond Green, has inspired a few of our picky eaters to "Try it, try it..." We haven't had positive results yet, but at least they are trying new things!



Colin MacDonald read *Hop on Pop* a favorite for all. Mike Burney read *The Lorax* and the children made Truffula trees with popsicle sticks and Tissue paper.



Mickey's Mom, Erin, read *There is a Wocket in my Pocket*, so the children made the cutest "Wockets" to put in their Pockets. A huge hit! Thanks, Ms. Urana, for that crafty fun craft! Thank you to Gianna's mom for reading *The Sneeches*. It taught us we are all the same. None needs to change for another to accept them. We also had Cat in the Hat crafts, a paper plate Cat in the Hat, a nose, and whiskers mask! What a fun week. All the rhyming leads to many new word families which are rhymes being explored. What a salute to a great children's author. We love you Dr Seuss!



In the classroom the Art area is blooming as well. We have flower and egg crafts. Practical Life is a pastel canvas with egg tweezing, spooning, and tonging. Sorting spring items, eggs, flowers, and bunnies. In Math the children count eggs and carrots and matching the quantity with the symbol and stamping to create books. The older children are using the eggs and carrots to do simple addition problems. Language and Science have brought us parts of the rabbit and to color, match, label and to make books. These activities are in our science area but also offer vocabulary and writing practice as well.

Academically the older children have moved to skip counting with the chains and hundred board, and the multiplication bead board.

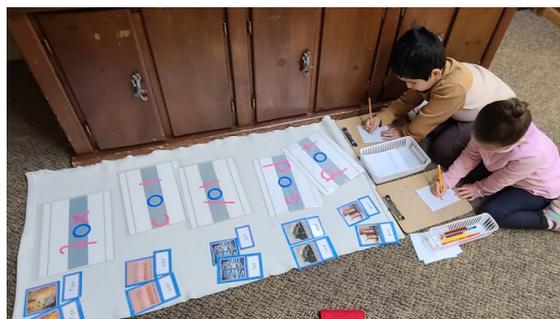
Thank you to everyone for attending our parent teacher conferences. It was a nice opportunity to see all of you and give you an opportunity to see how much each child has so much progressed this year.

Happiest of Birthdays to our newest 6-year-olds, Leo, and Eva, thank you for sharing your story with us.

Until next time, April Showers

# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room



## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole



Button sewing has become one of the most favorite Practical Life activities. Aside from the very practical skill of learning to sew on a button, this is also a phenomenal use of fine motor skill, concentration, and sequencing. Once our students have mastered the up and down motions of sewing with a button, we will be ready to progress into stitching and doing more complex projects!



As our older students continue to progress into more advanced math activities such as multiplication, division, and four-digit number building, many of our younger students have progressed into using the colored math beads. You may see variations of the same "red 1 bead, green 2 bead, pink 3 bead.." works coming home from your child. Know that it is important for our children to become incredibly comfortable with the colors associated with these beads early on. The colors remain the same in all Montessori math materials that they will continue to use for building teens and tens numbers, and later do math operations like addition and multiplication with. The familiarity they're building now will allow them to very quickly identify that the golden 10 bead and white 7 bead together in front of them are 17. And that to multiply  $3 \times 3$ , they just need to find three of the pink 3 beads, and see the completed square of 9. But these quick and important calculations are possible after the important work they're doing now of associating the numbers, beads, and colors together.

Many of our students have also become interested in the Geometry works in our room. The Geometric Cabinet serves as a great precursor in preparation for writing as well as a tactile way to see and feel the different shapes. Shapes are grouped together by circles, rectangles, triangles, polygons, curvilinear figures, and quadrilaterals. Some children are just getting familiar with the basic shapes, while others are learning the difference between a hexagon and heptagon, or an equilateral triangle and an isosceles triangle. Other students are exploring the Constructive Triangle Boxes, which present different opportunities to create shapes like a triangle, square, parallelogram or trapezoid, all from different triangles. Children especially love to trace and color or trace, cut, and glue these together.



Others still have been excited by the Geometric Solids, which let students see, feel, recognize, and name the solid shapes like sphere, cylinder, cone, ovoid and more. Of particular interest is the chance to go on a hunt around the class and find the different shapes all around the room! This really gets our students thinking creatively.

It is always fascinating to reflect back on the wave of interest that came to our classroom during the previous month, and seeing that, without a doubt, there is indeed a pattern. How fortunate that our children are in an environment where they can ride that wave of interest fully and delve deeply into a topic on their own timeline, before finding a new idea to explore!

March had given us a false sense of hope that Spring was actually here early! The start of the month had us reminiscing Summer Camp Days, with much more creative play happening outside. We saw a resurgence of creative builds with our infamous "blue mats," as well as some dance parties and rounds musical chairs becoming crowd favorites. We have quite the Macarena dance crew in the Pre-K and Kindergarten group!

Children were quick to notice signs of Spring popping up around our playground. Some noticed new grass growth on the playground, with very excited shouts of "LOOK! It's green!" Others noticed plants breaking through on the raised beds, remembering that we had chives and strawberries there during the summer and fall. We are patiently waiting to see if they're really growing there again. A group of students noticed the leaf buds on branches slowly opening up, bringing the much awaited greenery back to our playground. And another group still has created a daily daffodil report. After taking note of the very first daffodils to bloom outside the South Room window, children have been keeping track of and alerting us whenever they see a new one bloom. With all this excitement, the afternoon group took time to be outside and look for other signs of spring and work on making a picture of all the signs they see in March.

Many of our students have been taking familiar works and making them more advanced for themselves. Some have taken the Magnetic/Non-Magnetic Work and turned it into a writing activity, drawing and writing each item down. Others have taken the challenge of finding other items around the room that they think will be magnetic or non-magnetic, and testing their theory. We have tried to find objects for each sound of the alphabet, and items for different shades of turquoise. Others have gone on a treasure hunt guided by reading more complex labels.

Reading and finding "button" may seem like a simple task, but it really has our students thinking creatively about their environment. Where could I find a button? What type of work would it be used for? Who could I ask for a hint? These types of challenges prepare our students for the "out-of-the-box" and inventive thinking they will need to be successful in their future.

# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room



# MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



*"The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence."  
~ Maria Montessori*

