

Montessori Pathways' News

*First week of school
August / September, 2011*

Notes from Ms. Alena



We successfully concluded our final weeks of Summer Camp with the help of *Treyson's mom, Tammy* (and her mom!) who came in to make a special blue Jello "ocean" with gummy fish and Cool Whip "waves" that the class enjoyed for a group snack.

Also, thank you to *Kellen's family* for the delicious homegrown peaches and to *Isabella's mom, Linda*, for coming in to explain the Russian culture and history of dolls (with a special focus on the all time favorite, the nesting dolls).

After our **final Art Show**, which the kids awaited with much anticipation and pride, the teachers of the school spent a week preparing the school for the start of the year.

During this week, we also had our **orientation meeting**, which many of our parents attended—thank you! These meetings not only serve as a chance for you to receive more information about the school and be on the same page as the teachers, but also to show your child that his/her education is important to you and you are willing to take some time off for it. We hope to see everyone at our upcoming meetings—please keep an eye out for further information!

We would like to **welcome everyone back to school** and send out a **warm welcome to our new school year students**: *Madelyn, Holly, Audrey, Sean, Alexandra, Julie, Miles, William N., Logan, Lazarus, Carter, Hayden, Riya, Ashlyn, London, Zavier, Addison, Lincoln, Aidan, Cole and Penelope*. We are all very excited to have you join our big family.

The first week of school has been off to a smooth start. The children are easily transitioning back into the school year routine. Even our younger and newer students, with the help of their older friends, are quickly acclimating to the new routines and rules. I'm sure that this is the start of a wonderful school year!

This is the first newsletter of many more to follow. Once per month, we will be sending a detailed **newsletter with photos**. Please find the time to look over these carefully. Many of the questions that we receive from parents are often answered in these newsletters. There will be news from each class. Please take the time to look over news from all of the classrooms as they not only include the daily happenings of the class but also information on the education and development of our students, explanation of different Montessori Materials and their uses/benefits, and other useful information.

The teachers will often use this as a time to communicate various achievements or upcoming events of the class, as well as make school wide announcements—please be sure not to miss this! We will also be including all upcoming school events (field trips, parent meetings, fundraisers, etc) in the newsletter. This will give you a chance to prepare yourself and your child for what is coming up in the life of the school and present some ground for discussion (rather than “what did you do at school?” ask “are the class peppers growing yet?”) Your child would like to see that you are involved in his school life yourself. Retelling how his day went is boring. Discussing it with you is not.

From time to time we will also be sending **individual pictures** to each family. Although it may be tempting to just list through them, please know that each picture can tell you so much more than what your child worked with that day. Treat this as a chance to observe your child.

Note what he is working with. How is he working with this material? Is there another child nearby to help or is your child the leader in this case? Who is he communicating with? Is he developing his social skills or concentration in this picture? Is your child observing the class? What is happening around him? What can you tell by looking at his face—is he confused? Proud?

Each picture is filled with priceless information about your child and you can see for yourself how he is working and developing. Please take some time to look over these carefully as well—you can even invite your child to look with you! He or she will be more than happy to explain what was happening and who that friend is!

Coming School Events

Our annual Mums Sale fundraiser is coming up!

If you are planning to buy some flowers to decorate your home, please hold off on buying any—we have already contacted the *Countryside Nursery* and will be getting the Mums in the 20's of September. The money will go toward improvement of the playground. You will soon see a new wooden train structure on our playground! More information regarding the sale will be sent out shortly.

In October, we will be having our first school field trip to the Children's Youth Theater.

In the past, our students have really enjoyed this theater troupe; we are looking forward to meeting with them again! We will be watching their production of the *Jungle Book*. Again, specific information about the field trip will be sent out soon!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Labor Day weekend and got some final Summer warmth!

Warmly,
Ms. Alena

Notes from the North Classroom:

Ms. Jocelyn and Ms. Christine



It was a great first week of school back in our classroom with a wonderful group of children! We were happy to welcome many old and new friends back for a brand new school year.

For our new friends this first week was spent *learning the basics regarding the routine of our day to operating successfully within the classroom environment to choose, complete and put away their chosen “work”*. For the children who attended last year and summer camp, they were excited to see that many new and different activities were on the shelves for them to discover and explore right alongside familiar favorites.

Amazingly, we have already celebrated 3 birthdays in our classroom! *Happy 4th birthday to Parker, Happy 5th birthday to Kaitlyn and Happy Birthday to Ms. Jocelyn* (surprisingly, none of the children asked my age this year, so it remains a mystery!). Each birthday had a wonderful **“Celebration of Life” ceremony** and we look forward to celebrating each child’s birthday (or ½ birthday) in the same way this school year.

As the school year gets underway, please be sure to check your child’s blue bag as we will begin to send out **Sharing Basket** requests this upcoming week. Our hope is that you will shop for these items with your child in order for him/ her to feel a sense of pride and community for all items brought in to share with all of our school friends.

Finally, please feel free to call or email with any questions and/or concerns as they arise. It is easier for us to call you back after class time and give you our undivided attention, rather than chatting at drop off or pick up time when we are busy with the children.

Also, please take some time now to also think about **how you would like to volunteer** this school year (at home prep project, in school helper, snack preparation etc.) Let us know by dropping a note with your child or sending an email to the office, the children truly love it when you share a bit of yourself with them and their friends!



Ms. Jocelyn and Ms. Christine

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Notes from the South Classroom:

Ms. Karen and Ms. Ambreen



We want to extend a warm welcome to the new families and a warm welcome back to so many returning families.

Every year, we say that the children are happy to be back and that summer just flew by. It sounds like a cliché, but it is true. The children came in energetic and happy. It feels good to be back in the routine, adults and children alike.

We have had a wonderful first week!!!! This year, we have seven kindergartners who are truly a gift to the class. Along with Miss Ambreen and me, they helped the new children with their belongings, showed them where supplies are in the classroom, helped with simple lessons, and, in general, made the new children feel at home. What a great way to begin community.

This week we have focused on routines and organization: *how to take care of belongings, the procedure for changing to indoor shoes, how to line up and a number of other small, but important "how to" lessons.*

We wanted the children to begin knowing their new friends. We paired children up for work and play, organized outdoor activities (the weather cooperated perfectly), and began learning each other's names.



Grace and courtesy lessons played a large role. Examples: *how to wait, how to ask for help, use of please and thank you.* Grace and courtesy lays the foundation for the social interactions of the class.

Among the ongoing lessons of grace and courtesy are **the techniques of conflict resolution.** *How do we resolve small disputes? What do we do if feelings are hurt? What do we do if someone takes our work?*

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The classroom is like the "real world". The children are learning how to belong to community, state their problems, respect others and arrive at a mutually agreeable understanding.

Friday was a perfect ending with *Ava's birthday* celebration featuring ice cream cups. A delicious treat for a hot day! Hope you enjoyed the long weekend.

Looking forward to working together.

Ms. Karen and Ms. Ambreen

Kindergarten Extended Day News

Kindergarten is off to an amazing start! On the very first day of school the children were introduced to their **new weekly work plans**. As a Kindergartner, the work expectations and responsibilities are much greater and the Kindergarten work plan is a tool that I use to build independence in choosing challenging and meaningful work. Each child is exposed to activities in all areas of the classroom and needs to work with a variety of materials within a structure that ensures that each child has experience in all necessary academic areas.



In Early Childhood Montessori environments, the Kindergartners are the oldest and therefore the natural leaders of the class. The first week of school we spent a lot of time **discussing and modeling the rules and responsibilities of being a Kindergartner**: *how to be a good friend, how to use kind words and actions, how to offer help to others, how to act and talk in a respectful way to others*. These skills will build a strong foundation of excellent social and emotional skills, a necessity for high self-esteem and academic achievement.



In addition to all of the responsibilities of being a Kindergartner at Montessori Pathways, there are great perks too! The Kindergartners are invited to participate in **2 out-of-school field trips per month**.

Here is sneak preview for the fall: *in September* we will be visiting the **All Season Apple Orchard and The Living Land Farm** and *in October* we will be touring the **Crystal Lake Fire Department and the Crystal Lake Library**. More details and permission forms will be sent out soon to all Kindergarten families.

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The Kindergarten portfolios have already begun! I will be collecting and compiling each child's work throughout the school year in order to create a comprehensive portfolio of your child's Kindergarten year in our classroom. When you receive your child's weekly work plan home every Friday, you may not receive a finished work product, don't worry, I have it and am saving it for your child's portfolio! Every Kindergarten family will receive portfolio of their child's year at the Kindergarten graduation in May. Looking forward to a wonderful year!

Ms. Jocelyn

Notes from the afternoon classroom:

Ms. Terri



The first week of school has been busy in the afternoon class. We have been enjoying **outdoor play**, **playing T-ball**, and the nice cool sand in the **sandbox**. In the classroom, we have been **reading books about harvesting vegetables**, our favorite is *Tops and Bottoms*. It is about a lazy old bear and a very clever rabbit.

We have also done a **garden vegetable artwork** this week. The children learned the names and shapes of different veggies as they traced and cut them out of colored construction paper.

Next, we drew a crate and cut an opening in it to hold our vegetables.

We had fun **making green and orange playdough**. As we kneaded the warm dough it became cooler and smoother.

For **baking** this week, we shredded *two cups of zucchini* and then made bread. We also enjoyed many delicious fruits as part of snack each day including; cantelope, bananas, apples, and pears. We also **take time each day to care for the environment** as we return our work to proper place on the shelf, roll up our rugs, feed the bird, water the plants, etc. The year is off to a great start as the children are learning to become good workers in the classroom.



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Ms. Katy

The first week of school has gone beautifully. I have the pleasure of spending the afternoon with "the nappers," as the children refer to themselves. The first week has been spent establishing the routine for the school year. At 3:30p.m. the children are woken up, although some have already awoken at that point. The children fold their blankets and place them on their cots. They are then reminded to put on their inside shoes and use the bathroom and wash their hands to prepare for snack. After they return, each child has the responsibility to carry their cot, with my help, to the closet.



When all the children have completed this portion of their preparation we sit on the blue line in the classroom. I have been taking turns asking the children to select a friend to bring to the snack table. When all the children are seated, our beautifully prepared snack (thanks to the "non-nappers") is served. We sing our snack time song and enjoy our snacks.

Following this the children return to the blue line in the classroom for some **stretching to wake up our bodies, a story and on**

some days a game or project. This week we focused on *learning one another's names* and the importance of our own name. We also *played a game that involved locating items in the classroom by color*. When we have finished, the children are given *the responsibility of making the room look beautiful* and prepared for the children the following morning. We then get ready to spend the rest of the afternoon outside for some fresh air and to await the arrival of family. I look forward to focusing on the care and respect for one another throughout the course of the school year with the children as well as sharing good times and laughter!



Ms. Terri and Ms. Katy

Gym notes by Ms. Donna

This year in Gym class we will be working on how to have fun, build self-confidence, problem solving, cooperation, trust, motor and listening skills.

We began with a game called *This is my friend*, one child would hold up the arm of the person standing next to them and say "This is my friend" the child with the arm up would say his/her and hold up the arm of the next child. At the end we all took a bow.

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A new version of *Duck, Duck, Goose*. Instead of sitting in a circle we stood and walked in place while the IT child said "duck, duck etc. then goose. The goose then had to try to catch the person who said goose and at the same time the rest of the children had to continue to walk in place. So everyone was able to be moving at the same time.

We tried our luck at throwing a soft ball to our partner. Our underhand throws are very nice and we were catching a lot of the throws.

Some of the classes played *Leap Frog*, where they would straddle jump over a person.

The Kinders played a game called *Cat and mouse*. The cat tried to catch the mouse the remaining players were in a circle if the mouse went through them they had to hold their hands, the cat could not leave the circle and had one minute to catch the mouse. The players in the circle helped the cat by making escape route smaller.

Sincerely,

Ms. Donna

