

Montessori Pathways School

February 2, 2010
Teachers' mini-news

Notes from the Classroom: from Ms. Christine and Ms. Cindy

As we welcome the new month of February, we're hoping to see more sunshine and experience more outside time. We have noticed the days are getting slightly longer and this means spring is coming - we are always the optimists!

January flew by and we welcomed a new student, Mikael to our class. Your children have been so welcoming and helpful in making him feel at home-we have some nice friendship and leadership skills emerging. As we have all settled in and regained our routine since the holiday break, it has been rewarding to observe the children making choices in navigating the classroom. A recent surprise was the apple seeds we put in the refrigerator back in October when apple tasting, sprouted; therefore, we planted them in pots and we currently have 9 future apple trees to plant this spring! We have repeatedly explained that it will be a several years before the trees produce fruit.

Some of the work that is happening in the classroom is mapping the regions of the United States, i.e. Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Midwest, etc. Words that don't follow the phonetic rules of word building like "should" , and how a silent "e" at the end of a word makes the vowel say it's long name. We are working, challenging, observing your children in preparation for spring conferences in late Feb./March.

In the math area, some of the children are adding the value of money in both coin and paper. This adds a special lesson in not only addition, but in multiplication ($10 + 10 + 10 = 10 \times 3!!!$) as well. Circle addition equations with higher level thinking skills (and less guessing!) are part of our morning routine, too.

Upcoming events for February are celebrating Chinese New Year; we'll make dragons and have a mini-parade along with fortune cookies and practice using chop sticks. We will discuss the tradition of Groundhog's (aka a woodchuck) Day and the fact that they hibernate and what a shadow is.

More info will come with regard to Valentine's Day which is actually on Sunday this year but always fun for the children, and a great occasion to celebrate and have fun.

Hope everyone has the Cinderella play on their calendars; the children ask almost daily when we're going!

Also look ahead to upcoming parent/community meetings - we look forward to sharing information and touching base with our Montessori families.....

(please let the groundhog not see it's shadow!!)
(that means early spring!!!!)

Notes from the Classroom: from Ms. Laurie and Ms. Terri

During the last week of January have continued our studies of the Polar Regions, of the Arctic and Antarctica. We have seen just how cold these regions can get even for polar bears. Our classmate, Addison, brought in an educational DVD that we enjoyed with popcorn later in the day. Thank you Addison!

As usual, we have integrated our language and math with our scientific studies of the biomes and the life there. Our handwriting and vocabulary have revolved around animals and characteristics of the Polar Regions and we have added and counted in various ways during our discussions in class.

We have begun the further study of animal classification of animals. We discussed the characteristics of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and insects. We had a special "in-house" presentation of the traveling animal show from Randall Oaks. Ms. Catherine was our guest and keeper of the animals. She did an excellent presentation and explanation with an emphasis on reptiles, insects and birds. Frankie the duck was a special favorite. He seemed to be a particularly calm duck who was interested in the 100 board. Besides Frankie, you may have heard about the skink with the blue tongue, the hissing cockroaches from Madagascar, and a white corn snake from Florida. Montessori is all about "the real thing", that is going from concrete to abstract. We are lucky to have had such a presentation from Randall Oaks Traveling Animal show.

Our studies of the penguin, our own classroom canary, (named Canary) as well as Frankie the duck have piqued an interest in birds. So, the classification of birds will be our next emphasized subject of study. This week, Ben's mom, Sharlan, will be bringing in some beautiful birds for us to enjoy and learn about.

The kindergartners will be moving into multi-syllable words and how to "break them up" and "sound them out". In the Math area, we will be focusing on "skip counting" and multiplication. So if you hear about "the chains", understand that we are talking about numbers.

This winter has been a great, despite the cold and I think this is due to your wonderful children who are so eager to learn! Thank you to parents for your enthusiasm and cooperation.

Notes from the Classroom: from Ms. Karen and Ms. Ambreen

This Time of Year

It feels so good to be back after the busyness of the holidays. During last two weeks, the classroom has a nice feel of independence and industriousness to it. Words we love to hear: “I built these numbers all by myself; I can zip my coat without any help; I know how to write the words all by myself; I know what I want to do”, etc.

Montessori has such a solid content curriculum: language, math, science, geography. But it also works toward building very strong competency base. With skills in place, with practice in problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, organization and time on task, it is a joy to see the children developing into such capable young people.

That Wonderful White Stuff

The kids love it. A chance to play in the snow. We took full advantage of it on the warmer days. Thank you to several kids who brought in “snow block makers” and “snow ball makers”. Of course, “angels in the snow” is ever popular.

Please help us by making sure your child has school shoes that he/she leaves here. Also, they need to have snow pants, boots, etc. for outdoor play every day. Some families prefer to leave snow pants here. Otherwise, your child can simply carry them to school. They do not have to put them on in the morning and wear them. Also helpful: clearly labeling your child’s clothing. (All black snow pants look alike!)

We also took time to read “A Snowy Day” -----Ezra Jack Keats wonderful book. That was topped off with hot chocolate.

“Reading can be a road to freedom or a key to a secret garden, which, if tended, will transform all of life.”

Katherine Paterson

Real Life Geography

Both Ambreen and I took real pleasure in sharing our trips; she returned from Pakistan and I returned from Thailand. The world is becoming a much smaller place! We delighted in getting out the globe and sharing just a little highlight or two from “the other side of the world”.

Real Life History

Martin Luther King Day always gives us a chance to tell a history story that many of us witnessed and lived through. The story emphasis is on commitment, on

understanding that one person can make a change, on hearing that there are peaceful ways to solve a problem. And gratitude! We all have benefited from his legacy.