

# Montessori Pathways School

**March, 1 2010**  
**Teachers' mini-news**

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

The last couple of weeks have been productive and spent refining our previously learned skills. We have observed your children expanding their circle of friends as well as choosing more complex activities. For example, we have heard children resolving their own, as well as helping others, with conflict resolution ("We treat others as we would like to be treated."); the class feels like a family - love, conflicts, drama and all!

In geography, several children have dedicated their time and attention to the various regions of the United States, making a map and discussing the fact that we live in the Midwest and who we know living in other regions. It's been duly noted that many grandmas and grandpas live in the Southwest region - We wonder why??!

In math, some of the older students have been introduced to the Multiplication Board - I truly wish that math had been so logical (vs. abstract) and hands on when introduced to me. We understood the fact that multiplication is just adding groups of numbers one more time - thus, the children start to see a pattern emerge and can usually manage this quite easily. They physically add one more group to solve the equation and are excited when correct. (This work has lots of little red beads which are exciting to EVERYONE!)

Ahead with the approach of spring (YEAH!), we will talk about weather; rainbows, rain, wind and create some fun art projects.

We are looking ahead to scheduling conferences with you and will send a sign up sheet shortly - doesn't it seem incredible that we're already in the month of March?

Spring Break is March 29th - April 2nd and we're in the homestretch of the school year. It always goes by so fast!

Have a great week and thanks for being part of our community!

## **Notes from the Kindergarten Club: from Ms. Laurie**

**Hello and Welcome to March**

For the past two weeks, the kindergarteners have been studying "The Food Pyramid". As kindergarteners, children have a new understanding of their bodies and energy and how food works to fuel us. I chose to use the old model pyramid to study with the children as we talked about the different kinds of food and what

they do for us physically. We discussed the model was a pyramid and not some other geometrical figure. We thought it would be funny and maybe desirable to have a food rectangular prism. That way the cookies and cakes section would be just as big as the rest of the sections.

Our field trip to Jewel food store in Crystal Lake was probably the most exciting field trip of the year so far. The manager, Kathy Woods was a wonderful tour guide. Not only did the children go behind scenes in the deli, but they got to see meat being butchered, go behind the milk counter, and see sushi being made. The ice cream freezers seemed to be the most popular part of the tour. The trip culminated in a snack of the cookies the children got to decorate. The trip was fantastic and I think illuminating for the children.

We are continuing to do more and more written work in language and math. The children are learning to keep pace with their classmates due to a more traditional setting in the Kindergarten Club. Stay posted as we step up the pace of kindergarten class. Look for a new folder coming home, more papers and some homework.

We're in the home stretch to being first graders.

Thank you to all the parents for all of your cooperation and help. I love this age group and look forward to teaching them everyday.

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

### **Grace and Courtesy Can be Developed at Home**

In the last newsletter, we wrote an article on grace and courtesy. We focused on methods used in the classroom to develop habits of grace (harmony between body and mind) and courtesy (harmony between self and others). We offer specific lessons during the course of the day: how to carry a chair, how to wait your turn, how to line up, how to return the activity to the shelf so it is ready for the next person to use.

This time, we want to offer a few thoughts on specific ideas for developing grace and courtesy at home. Three of the most useful techniques are modeling, role playing and awareness of and respect for time.

Modeling is simply the adults using the behavior that they would like the child to develop. For instance, children are helped to learn to share by being shared with. But to increase the effectiveness of modeling, use words to explain what you are doing. "Yes, I would like to share my \_\_\_ with you. We can enjoy it together." At the same time, respectfully explain that some things are off limits. For example, perhaps you have favorite tools your child wants to use. Explain that those can be used when your child is older and more skilled. Also some of your precious items can be shared as the child becomes more responsible. Along the same line, perhaps your child has favorite toys or belongings he does not want to share. These can be put away when friends come to visit. His ability to share will grow and the circle of things willingly shared will increase.

Along the same lines, doing something together to share is helpful in developing an attitude of extending oneself to another. When you bake cookies, share a few with the neighbors or shovel their sidewalk when you shovel yours, just to create a spirit of neighborliness. Send simple notes to grandparents living out of town. Not to get something back. Not so neighbors will bake cookies and give you some. It is simply to share and to create a feeling of caring between people.

“Ultimately, grace and courtesy lead to compassion and caring. To live a fully human life, we must be able to extend ourselves, to reach out to others, to see another point of view. The evidence is that compassion and caring behavior contribute to our emotional health and leads to enhanced self-esteem and a calmer life.” Dahli Lama The Art of Happiness

### **The Food Dehydrator**

The food dehydrator is going strong. So far, we have focused on fruits: bananas, apples, grapes, strawberries, and pineapple. Children thoroughly enjoy the process of preparing the food for the dehydrator and the product for tasting.

We can always use fruits for this project. Some places like Joseph’s Market in Crystal Lake have a discount cart with fruits and vegetables. This would be perfect produce for our project.

### **Author of the Month**

The author this month, appropriately is Dr. Seuss (author of more than 40 children’s books). This month, we celebrate his birthday.