

Upcoming Events

Open House: Saturday, April 3rd 11 AM – 2 PM

Spring will fly by in the blink of an eye; summer is not too far off. It's time to start thinking about where our kids will attend this summer and next school year. We would like to take this chance to invite you to our Open House, where you can uncover answers to all of your questions, register for our theme based summer camp and next school year, as well as take advantage of our registration fee waiver.

Picture Day: Tuesday, April 6th

Start thinking now: wardrobe, shoes, hair. Detailed information will be sent 2 weeks prior to the picture day.

Vision and Hearing screening: Wednesday, April 28th

We will pass out the informational packet about the screening next week. The cost of screening is \$5.

Theater Trip: April TBA

We are planning to have a field trip to Marriott Theater in Lincolnshire to see the musical "Sleeping Beauty" in the middle of April. We will e-mail the details of the trip at a later date.

Planting Alert: Saturday, April 24th and Saturday, May 15th

Closer to the end of April and the middle of May we will have a planting fest. We will be asking families to donate their favorite flowers, as well as specific vegetables for our planters and gardens. We will be asking for a few people to lead the project. We need the garden-lovers to come out and let their talent shine.

Spring Break: March 29th – April 2nd

We would like to remind you that we will be having Spring Break from March 29th – April 2nd for the School Year Program students.

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Montessori Pathways School

March 18, 2010
Teachers' mini-news

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

Spring is here! Despite the snow on the ground, there are signs that life is awakening after its winter nap. The geese and birds are starting to fly north. We have been seeing and hearing more birds around the school yard lately. We're hoping for many warm and beautiful days in the near future. Spring is definitely in the air.

In our classroom, we have a new friend. We are very excited to welcome Hannah to our class.

In the math area, children are busy counting 1-10, 11-20, and 20-100. They are choosing the spindles, the sand paper numbers, the memory game, tracing and writing numbers, the ten's board, the hundred board, coin work and multiplication.

The past weeks, the three and four year olds have been presented with the Memory game in math. This work has two baskets; one containing eleven pieces of folded paper, each with a numeral from 0 – 10 on it; the other basket contains 55 identical, beautiful, round objects. After preparing the work area the child places the basket of objects in another area in the classroom. The child chooses a piece of the folded paper, reads the number (by themselves and doesn't tell anyone) and returns the paper to the teacher. The child goes to the objects, remembering the number, collects the amount and returns with the correct number of objects. This work reinforces the written numbers and remembering the quantity for one to ten. And it also helps the child realize that they don't collect any objects for zero.

Our Kindergarteners have been busy working on identifying coins. Here is a game that you could play with them at home to encourage what they are learning in class. At the end of each day, give your child the coins from your pocket/purse. Ask your child to identify the coins. For each correctly identified coin, your child can keep the coin. Or you may want to start with heads only and when heads are mastered, move to coin backs. (Say, "Pick up all the coins that are heads up and identify") As an extension to this activity, you may want to work with your child on what to do with their money. (Save it for college, donate it or put some away for the purchase of a big item)

In the Language Area, the children are busy increasing their vocabularies, learning about logical categories, working with the Sandpaper Letters, making marvelous Metal Insets, exploring beginning and middle sounds, building and reading words. It is a popular area. We should have a few new readers in the weeks to come.

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The author for the month is Dr. Seuss. March is Theodore Seuss Geisel's birthday. We celebrated Dr. Seuss' 106th birthday on Tuesday, March 2 by joining the other classroom for a reading of one of his books. The Cat and the Hat, Green Eggs and Ham, the Foot Book, Fox in Socks, One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish and There's No Place Like Space were some of the many books we enjoyed. It's always fun to read Dr. Seuss' rhyming books.

The younger children are working with many of the Sensorial Materials. They are so proud when they realize that they have mastered the material. They often decide to do that work many times that day. They are concentrating and growing in self-confidence. Our older friends continue to enjoy combining the Sensorial Materials and working with variations and extensions of the materials. They are all working with the Trinomial Cube and some are close to mastering it.

Art remains one of the most popular areas in the classroom. We have had to remind the children to do only one art project each day. Many children have been working on mastering scissors.

The children are also exploring colors and how new colors can be made from red, yellow and blue by mixing them. It's often a surprise to mix yellow and blue and find out that you've made green!

The classroom also celebrated St. Patrick's day this week. We searched for rainbows, leprechauns and pots of gold and of course there were many green shamrocks coming home.

Sometimes we say to the children, "Think about what you are doing. Be responsible. Make the right choice." Thinking is very important! We need to think about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how we are doing it. We need to make good choices and do what is right. Choices we make affect other people. When we make a bad choice there is a consequence and that consequence should teach us not to make our mistake again. We talk about what is happening and why we always need to treat one another with kindness and respect. Each day during line time we are asking the children who helped or did a nice thing for them today. Please consistently reinforce with your child our classroom rules of keeping our hands to ourselves, speaking with an inside voice, and walking feet when inside.

Parent/Teacher Conferences have begun. Thanks to all the parents that we have met with, it's always nice to be able to sit down and talk about the precious children in yours and our life. We will continue conferences Wednesday, March 24, 2010. Please give us a call or come inside to schedule your conference. We look forward to seeing you.

Thank you to the parents who attended the Discipline class and for taking the time out of your busy schedule. A special thanks to Franklin (Ethan's dad) for explaining his family's way of discipline. If any parents want more information or have questions about the meeting, please contact us.

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Thank you to Addison for bringing to class her African Dwarf frogs. The frogs were contained in an EcoAquarium, a balanced, self-cleaning ecosystem environment. The elements allow the small aquarium to be self cleaning without chemicals, filters or aeration. The African Dwarf frogs were once native to the Congo region of Africa and will live three to five years.

And last we would like to thank Sophia, Mackenzie, and Claire for the special treats. The children have enjoyed these delicious snacks.

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

Conferences

We look forward to time together with parents this Friday evening and Saturday morning and afternoon. We are aware that there are still some conferences to be scheduled. We are adding a late afternoon/early evening time to our schedule the week of March 22nd. We will be contacting you personally to arrange the conference time for your child.

Direct from Portland

Greetings from Portland, Oregon. I attended the national convention for the North American Teachers Association this past weekend. It was the largest NAMTA convention ever held. The emphasis was on the unique role Montessori education can play in our quest for world peace. With over 20,000 schools in over 125 countries, it is perhaps time that Montessori has matured and is now a strong, dynamic, multi-cultural, global influence for peace. We heard from people who had helped develop schools in Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, IDP camps in Kenya, Russia and so many other countries.

Over and over, peace was described, not as an absence of war, but as preservation of the human potential, a vision of education for life, the capacity to face a conflict and overcome differences, the ability to practice in communication in conflict situations. We are global citizens of an undivided earth.

Montessori education model is based on respect for the other. We offer the child many lessons in grace and courtesy, practical lessons needed to be a thoughtful member of the classroom community. Montessori education provides tools needed for practical problem solving, flexible thinking and seeing another's point of view. It includes a curriculum in which differences are seen as interesting and something that adds to our life, not as something that generates fear. In this way, Montessori is not only an education, but it becomes a practice.

Montessori develops opportunity for the child to exercise choice, and offers many options for purposeful work. This purposeful activity leads to inner discipline and that leads to clarity. Montessori education promotes peace, based on respect for the other and skills to work together to resolve differences and live in harmony.

Among the books written by Maria Montessori is *Education for a New World* in which she clearly states that the hope for a new world order based on peace rests with the child. She was nominated 3 times for the Nobel Peace Prize and frequently spoken at the International Peace Congresses.

Our Mathematical Mind

The development of the mathematical mind begins at birth. From age 0 – 6, the child is developing skills and tools for thinking. During this period, the child has an “absorbent mind” which will create all the powers it needs to do the work of the mind for the rest of his/her life. This mind works without effort. It absorbs the totality of the environment. It classifies, quantifies, discerns patterns and creates relationships. It develops the skills of counting and language.

This work of the child is based on active, hands-on experiences in the environment. The adult needs to provide an environment in which this work can take place. The Montessori environment is carefully planned, organized, ordered so that the child’s mind can develop its thinking skills.

Next: how the Montessori sensorial materials help the child to think and specifically develop mathematical skills.

Classroom Activities

Like most everyone, we too have been looking forward to the spring time: snow melting, birds appearing, green showing up again. We are celebrated rainbows with a special story and rainbow treat. We have gotten ready for St. Patrick’s Day, decorating the room and making shamrock art projects.

In other art, we have been creating “nests” for the birds and talking about their return to this area. Several children have already spotted their first robin. Art has also included a “Still life” art activity (see displayed in the hallway) and a mosaic art project. Easel painting is a favorite of almost every child

We have added many new plants to the room, including a shamrock plant. The children enjoy caring for them, watering them and cleaning their leaves. We all love to see new growth.

In geography, we have talked about lakes, islands, archipelagos and system of lakes. In history, we have begun the clock work. In language, many children are reading or excitedly approaching reading. We have been working on non-phonetic components and puzzle words.

Children have baked muffins for snack, and in the afternoon, have been making banana bread and applesauce. Busy! And it smells so good.

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More and more often, we are hearing children exclaim: "I know how to do that!" and we are seeing the results, both in their confidence and in their assistance to each other. It's a beautiful thing!

Notes from the Kindergarten Club: from Ms. Laurie

Kindergarten question of the week: Are frogs and toads reptiles or amphibians? This is the perplexing question as we continue our studies of animal classification. Reptiles and amphibians have been the focus as we will continue on as we explore the world biomes and habitats. Thank you to Addison for bringing in her African Dwarf frogs. We were all interested and excited to have some real frogs in the room!

The kindergarteners have new plastic "take home" folders. Besides finished work, permission slips and any homework, use the folders for any specific communication to me.

Along with their vocabulary, the kindergarteners have been practicing blend words. Some of the words: frog, skunk, play, stay, grass, glass... You get the idea. When reading with your children, point out the "consonant blend" words. This will help them focus on sounding out and learning new words rather than just using memorization.

We also have studying coins and their value and the money vocabulary. We have learned to identify pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters and used coins to add and subtract. On Thursday, March 18, our studies were further emphasized with our trip to Home State Bank in Crystal Lake.

We are excited about the spring season and warm weather.

Notes from the Afternoon Class: from Ms. Laurie and Ms. Terri

As the springtime approaches we have been doing new spring crafts and activities in the afternoon class. Following our mosaic work (using patterns with colored one inch squares), we did fruit arranging for a fruit still life. We explored prepositions while choosing which cut-out fruit went "in front of, next to, behind, or on top of" another fruit. Our still life art is on display in the front corridor. Come see!

After reading The Little Seed by Eric Carle, we made flower pictures with rectangles and squares which we cut into petals and circles. Our cutting skills have really been improving.

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This week we made robins for the room as well as to take home. We cut out a body part and wings out of brown paper and added an orange breast, eyes and beak, using our scissors once again. We cut five strips of green and brown "grass" to make a 3-D nest which we stapled to a paper. The birds are now nesting and soon we will have robin eggs.

Our newest biome is a desert. We made tan for the sand using our primary colors with white. The sky was made with blue and white tempura paint. We once again had so much fun taking turns painting the desert scene. The "Kindy's" have enlightened us with their knowledge of desert animals, especially reptiles like snakes and lizards. We add our favorites to the biome every day amongst the cacti we have already "poked out" and taped on the desert.

As far as afternoon snack, we are still enjoying our carrot cake, banana bread and applesauce. We use simple recipes that children can follow and each day there are at least 2 snack helpers who make and prepare the snack.

We also prepare a snack tray for the nap room so when they have finished their naps and we are all back together their snack is waiting for them. Popcorn is another favorite.

We have enjoyed popcorn with National geographic educational movies. The latest were about desert animals and their babies, reptiles and the land conditions and adaptations of animals in the desert. Did you know reptiles are cold-blooded and sit in the sun to get energy? They really don't eat much. Gerbils are from the desert? Leopard Gecko babies have stripes at first but no spots?

We are always learning! If you have any movies, books or animals that you would like to share in the afternoon class, please do. We like to share!