

Thank you

We would like to thank all of the families that were able to come and help us spread the mulch. With the help of Baker, LeGrand and Wagler families we were able to finish the job in no time. Kids love the new playground mulch and enjoy playing on it. We would like to remind you that on May 15th we will have our annual planting "Spruce it up" event. We would like to ask you to donate your favorite flowers, as well as some specific vegetables for our planters and gardens. We will be needing for a few people to lead the project, so garden-lovers come out and let your talent shine. Remember May 15th, at 10:00 AM.



Coming Events

Mother's Day Celebration, May 7th at 5:30 pm

We hope to see all of you there. Children have been working really hard to prepare this event for you.

Spruce it up: Saturday, May 15th at 10:00 am

Graduation Ceremony: Thursday, May 27th at 5:30 pm

Detailed information will be sent soon.

Registration for Summer Camp and 2010-2011 School Year

Good thing we have planned your child's summer for you! Camp registration is in full swing! Please remember to register early.

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Montessori Pathways School

May 2, 2010
Teachers' mini-news

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

What a wonderful start to Spring! The children enjoyed the weeks of beautiful weather. Spring brings excitement, yet calmness to our room. Not only is the natural world blossoming, but the classroom is full of positive working energy. With more fresh air we just all feel better.

The children were excited to get back to our outdoor environment. We asked the children "How do you know it's Spring?" We took a walk around our school to observe the many signs, like tender green sprouts springing up and the local birds returning from their southern vacation. The children observed the changes that the long winter caused to the playground and quickly grabbed their rakes and garden tools to clean up their yard and get ready for the spring planting season. We overturned many leaf piles to discover some baby centipedes, cicada larva, ants and worms. The extended day children even observed a hawk high in the tree tops behind the school!

The Sensorial area is busy as always. The older children have taken quite an interest in sharing their insights about the materials with their younger classmates. The adults in the room have to sometimes remind them that their younger friends will master these materials at their own pace. It is always a good time to talk about how people learn from their mistakes and how important it is to keep trying. They are enjoying the challenge it offers.



In the Language area many children were working with the Moveable Alphabet. They had a lot of help from their reading friends. All our readers enjoy labeling the environment by placing hand written notes throughout the classroom. (i.e.; table, chair, towel, door...) Those just beginning to read love the challenge of sounding out each letter and trying to blend the sounds together to see what mystery word has been written for them.

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They especially love this game and organize several friends to play it often. The children who have been reading for a while enjoy the challenge of really hard mystery words. They begin to discover sounds like "sh", "ch" and long vowels.

Our younger ones love working with the Metal Insets now. They are happy to choose this work almost every day. The older children are showing the younger friends how to do this work as well. All the children enjoy tracing the shapes. This work is to help the child acquire mastery of the hand when using a pencil and prepare the child for writing. The younger children are enjoying as well counting the Red and Blue Rods and connecting them with the numerals. Other children are enjoying working with the Short Bead Stair. The Short Bead Stair contains one red bead, two green beads, three pink beads, four yellow beads, five light blue beads, six purple beads, seven white beads, eight brown beads and nine dark blue beads. Each set of beads is strung together with wire. The child makes a triangle with the beads. Then the beads are matched to a set of numeral cards numbered one to nine. This work introduces the colored bead bar material and it helps the child gain familiarity with the color and number association. Math in a Montessori classroom is dynamic and enjoyable, a first choice of many of the students.



In Math the kindergarteners are beginning to work with the Short and Long Chains. The other children are so intrigued and love watching their friends work with this beautiful material. The long and short bead chains are counted; introducing skip counting, and preparation for multiplication. These chains are based on the square and cube of numbers, indirectly preparing them for future learning.

In Science, there are two areas the children have been exploring. Since the arrival of spring we have been studying birds and discovering that while all birds have feathers, not all birds can fly! This is a wonderful time of year to see many birds outside our windows. One student spotted an albino robin that frequently visits the school. You may have noticed that your child is recognizing the different sounds from many birds. We have been listening to the beautiful bird songs of the American robin, bluebird, cardinal, blue jay, chickadee, and hawk. Take a walk outside with your child, you may be surprised the bird songs they will be able to recognize.

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The big event in our classroom has been the arrival of the butterflies. The children are anticipating the hatching since the day the eggs arrived. We have learned that the adult butterfly lays an egg, and the egg hatches into tiny larva (caterpillar). The caterpillar eats and grows, attaches itself to a twig and forms a hard outer shell (pupa = chrysalis). The pupa is often camouflaged to hide from predators. Inside the pupa the caterpillar changes into a butterfly. The fully adult butterfly emerges from the chrysalis. We also learned that the adult butterfly only lives for a short time. Butterflies cannot eat solid food; they can only drink from their straw-like mouth. The children are asking everyday if the butterflies have emerged. We are waiting patiently, because in a couple weeks the butterflies will emerge from the chrysalis. We can't wait!



All this butterfly talk has encouraged the children to work on the "Parts of the Butterfly" work. Everyone still loves working with the "Parts of" work. The younger children know how to match the cards and are able to stay with the work long enough to color a picture or two. They even try to copy some of the words. The older children are able to do this work on their own with little or no direction from the adults. They generally like to work with one of their friends while using this material.

In the Geography area many children are finishing maps of North America, America, South America, and Africa. This time of year there is always a great interest by the children to finish their map work. The children are also interested in learning about animals in different continents. One child is writing the names of all the fifty state capitals on their United States map. The floor is constantly filled with children working on continent maps

All the children are becoming more confident and self-directed in their work. They are a joy to be with each day. Their enthusiasm and energy is renewing.

Our trip to the Marriott was a lot of fun. The children really love seeing a live theater play. The Marriott Lincolnshire is a perfect venue because of where the stage is positioned, the children can see perfectly. I'm not sure what I enjoyed more, the play or watching the children watching the play. It really was a magical experience for them to experience.

Remember to check your child's bag. Please make sure they have a full set of clothes. Also, make sure to look over your child's paperwork with them. They are very proud of pictures, sounds, and other papers that come home. Remember to review those incoming letter sounds.

The children have been working diligently on the Mothers Day Celebration. They can't wait to sing and perform for all the Moms and families. We look forward to celebrating all the wonderful Moms. See you Friday!

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

Classroom Activities

They're here!!! Yes, the butterflies have arrived. Rather the caterpillars have arrived and will soon be spinning their chrysalis. And, after waiting, we get to see butterflies emerge from the chrysalis. Last year we actually saw the process as it happened! Up close! So now we are in the waiting period, patience required. Of course, it looks like nothing is happening. And then the butterflies will struggle to emerge! We will have a ceremony to release them outdoors. It is special to see "nature at work" in such a personal way.

Art: Our newest activity is making the "god's eye". It requires patience and a bit of coordination. But how the children love it! Winding the yarn around and around. It is a work that encourages patience, patterning and repetition. Sometimes, children have worked the entire morning to make one beautiful, patterned, lovely "god's eye".



The older children have been "planning their work" for the following day. They love to walk in the next morning all organized and ready to go. By planning, they think about what they like, the teacher can insert personal lessons, and we talk about having a variety of activities, etc.

Also we take advantage of this time to do simple science demonstrations ---- perhaps your child has shown you the demonstration: keeping a paper towel dry while it is submerged under water, turning glass with a cardboard on top upside down and the cardboard does not fall off. Perhaps they have spoken of the drops of water added to an already "full" glass of water (189 drops), or maybe they have talked about mixing liquids (some don't mix). We have also demonstrated magnetic and non-magnetic and sink and float. Those activities are in the classroom for the children to repeat and follow up with a poster demonstrating their results.

Of course, we have spent time preparing for the Mother's Day program. We hope you can attend on Friday evening. It is truly a gift your child has been preparing for weeks. We will enjoy a special evening together with refreshments to follow the children's program.

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An Everyday Work from the Shelf

In a Montessori classroom, the children are encouraged to choose a material that is attractive to them, one that draws their attention and interest. These materials have richness and depth. One such material is the beautiful geometric cabinet, a material found in the sensorial area of the classroom. The material consists of a wooden cabinet with 6 drawers containing a total of 32 geometric insets (shapes) and their corresponding frames. The purpose is to introduce your child to plane geometry.

The beauty of the material is inherent in the design which allows the child to work each drawer as a simple puzzle. But, as with all Montessori materials, as a child becomes familiar with them on a simple level, he/she can work the same materials at an increasingly complex level. In this case, a series of 3 part cards for each drawer are added to the work. The cards can be sorted, matched and sequenced. Then, many children choose to make books or even charts of the shapes. They get their construction paper, trace the shape, cut the shape and glue it to their poster. The final step is to label each shape on the poster.

The following vocabulary is basic to the beginning language of this work. It can also become more complex after the child learns the basic foundation vocabulary: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, names for the six polygons of 5 to 10 sides, the curvilinear figures (quatrefoil, oval, ellipse, curvilinear triangle) and the quadrilaterals (trapezoid, parallelogram, and rhombus). By adding variations and extensions to a work, it is interesting and challenging to the young children and to the older children.

Education is a process which develops spontaneously in the child. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in experiences in which the child acts on his environment.

Maria Montessori



Sequence of the Power of Two



Binomial and Trinomial Cubes

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Notes from the Kindergarten Club: from Ms. Laurie

For the last two weeks, the Kindergarteners have been in high gear preparation for the end of the school year and upcoming first grade. We have gone on field trips, started a new biome of study, the rainforest, and practiced the Mother's Day performance of "The 3 Piggy Opera" in addition to songs for kindergarten graduation.

Our academic studies of language and math have been practice in the abstract in order to enforce our morning classroom work. That is, we have been doing a lot of writing, and dictation as well as worksheets for math. In language, we have continued our basic study of grammar by introducing the sentence. Every sentence contains a noun and a verb. The first word in a written sentence has to be capitalized. At the end of a sentence there is always some punctuation, usually a period. After some practice identifying nouns and verbs in sentences, we will look at the different types of sentences: exclamatory, interrogative, and declarative. We are practicing sentences through dictation and writing as well as reading. In reading we have started comprehension passages.

We review "sounds" like "oo" words through dictation and singing "Apples and Bananas." Ask your child to sing the "Apples and Bananas" song. It can be kind of amusing. Handwriting has improved greatly as well as listening skills and word study comprehension.

In Math we have been learning subtraction. This operation for some reason is the most difficult for children to grasp. However, our kindergarteners have taken it on with ease and interest. Comprehension of course is critical at this point. The mathematical concepts of addition, multiplication and subtraction are reviewed consistently. Memorization is not necessary or recommended at this stage of their development. Practice with and without materials like beans or bead counters and the "chains" is essential.

On Wednesday, April 21, Kindergarteners took a special trip to Georgio's restaurant in Crystal Lake. It was a beautiful spring day and we got to walk to the restaurant. When we arrived there, we were given a tour of the kitchen. We met the staff and saw the huge ovens and the pizzas in the process of being made. Our host was Eric and he was especially gracious. We got to make our own pizzas and enjoy them all together for lunch. Thanks so much to Franklin Diaz and Pam Suerth for chaperoning on the trip. I had a great time and the children behaved with proper manners. Good times!

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We will continue to practice our academic and social skills until the end of the year. The kindergarteners are living up to being the big kids of the school. They have been listening better to directions as well as focusing on their works. They are becoming more and more aware of themselves in relation to their outside community. Thank you to all you wonderful parents for the good guidance and help you give to them. They are a great group of children!

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

Our final and last biome study of the year is the tropical rainforest. Some of the animals are the superlative of the animal world. Sloths are the slowest moving mammal, and the anaconda is the largest snake. Toucans are of special interest along with the jaguar. Whereas desert was a flat, sandy and barren, the rainforest has 3 levels. The highest level of the rainforest is the very tops of tall trees called the canopy.

Turns out this is where most of the animals in the rainforest hang out. Most of the animals never even touch the ground. It's Howler monkeys, parrots, toucans living the high life!



One of the students pointed out that the Rafflesia is a carnivorous plant. It is big and actually traps insects and eats them. The plant life in the rainforest is lush and certainly not to be outdone by any other.

The Three Piggy Opera is fast approaching. We made the stick house by painting the house with stick colors of Tempera paint. We collected real sticks outside and Ms. Terri attached them to the house with her hot glue gun-cool. We are currently working on pig masks and a wolf mask. We have listened to rehearsals and are ready to lend our voices to the kindergarteners in the wonderful musical.



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Besides our regular afternoon activities such as art projects, baking, story time, snack, outdoor play and games, we also do daily environmental care. Plant watering, bird feeding, flower arranging and shelf straightening are all included. The children are responsible for their classroom and are very proud of making it beautiful.

Parents, please help to reinforce this at home as your child picks up their toys, straightens their bed or sets the table. Children are very capable and need to have these lifetime skills reinforced at an early age.

Success at small tasks or chores instills a feeling of accomplishment in your child. The feeling of accomplishment instills confidence.

Thank you again for the fruit for the Dehydrator. The strawberries, pineapple and bananas and apples were wonderful. We are anticipating a new fruit flavored adventure with the mangoes that Kegan brought in.



Also, a special thanks to the parents who helped with our new rubber chip mulch. What a big job. It looks great!

We have a great community here and all of your contributions enhance your child's experience here.

