

# Montessori Pathways School

**November 17, 2009**  
**Teachers' mini-news**

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

Fall is flying by as the children enjoyed Halloween crafts and songs. The class as a whole is very well adjusted; they are familiar with our daily routine and are making good choices in their work. Some new choices include compound words, skip counting by 2's, 5's, etc., life cycle of the pumpkin, parts of a bat/spider and making/gluing paper chains (which we'll use to decorate our Thanksgiving Celebration!)

We are also refining some of our acquired skills extending work to a higher and slightly more advanced level - fine motor skills such as tweezing tiny objects, more difficult cutting projects, smaller beads to string are just a few. And of course, the always loved cooking projects!

We truly enjoyed our conferences with you all; your insight into your child's homelife was very helpful in how to better guide them in the classroom.

With the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, we are studying Native Americans and the rough lives of the Pilgrims. We are also making pinecone turkeys, and turkey cups to hold a special "Blessing Mix" snack. We will likely be sending home requests for some special ingredients that the children will need to prepare some special treats for our families at the Thanksgiving Celebration on Monday, November 23rd @ 1:00. Thank you in advance!

The children (and teachers!) are also busy and having fun in Music class with Ms. Nina on keyboard. We are learning Native American and traditional American and Thanksgiving songs - - we can't wait to perform them for you!

We also want to thank Mackenzie's mom for the gift of books for our classroom and to Connor and his mom for the delicious cinnamon bread and pomegranate (which we will open next week).

From our school family to your family, Happy Thanksgiving and we're looking forward to celebrating together.....

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

As the students continue to understand the concepts of quantity and number, they are also practicing the concepts of "more and less" and of course, addition. They have been using such materials as the stripboard, circle addition and bead bar addition. Several of the Kindergartners got really close to the exact amount in our weekly estimation of the jewels. The answer was in the double digits. We counted 62 jewels and some people had guessed 65 and others 55. After counting to find the amount the concept of division was introduced. Just to peak interest, we divided the jewels up to

see how many each of us would get if we all were fair. I can say all the students were really paying attention; Fairness is becoming more and more an important concept in the sixth year of development. We will get out the division board and other materials as the interest arises and other operational skills are mastered.

In preparation for the upcoming holiday and in keeping with the curriculum, the Kindergartners have been doing a unit on Native Americans. We are studying North American animals with Indian names, the different biomes and different habitats of Native Americans as well as the plants and animals from each particular biome. We are preparing an Indian village that will be on display for our Thanksgiving celebration. We also have been making applesauce and pumpkin bread and popcorn. We are planning to share our culinary talents at the Thanksgiving celebration.

The final "e" was introduced this week. I like to call it the "bossye" because it makes the first vowel of the word say it's name and then it is silent. Examples are "grape", "snake", "tape", "game" and "rake".

## **News notes from Miss Karen and Miss Ambreen**

We are enjoying a sense of the routine and also the unseasonal weather. Today, just to enjoy the outdoors, we organized relay races! A great time was had by all as we cheered all the children including the little "stragglers". Other outdoor games this week included the ever-popular Duck Duck Goose (will always be the #1 favorite) and London Bridge is Falling Down.

Leaves continue to play a part in the classroom work, both with leaf rubbings and with making books about leaves.

For the past weeks, we have enjoyed the Aesop's Fables. The favorite (you can guess) is the Tortoise and the Hare. What was really interesting was to hear a 5 year old applying the "moral" of Aesop's story to a real-life project they were working on.

### ***Building Competency***

Overheard during the classroom "clean-up time" as the children are making their room beautiful by caring for the environment and putting shelves in order. "We are only little kids and we can do everything in this room by ourselves!" That child knows the feeling of competency and he values what he and his classmates are able to do.

### ***How a Simple Art Project contains "hidden lessons"***

Our latest art presentation is simple folding of squares on the diagonal to form triangles. We use special paper which is "duet paper" ---one color on one side and a different color on the other side. But, the following skills and concepts are developed in the lesson: precise folding corner to corner, gluing, organizing the triangles in a pleasing format, the idea that folding a square on the diagonal creates triangles, and the following vocabulary: overlapping, diagonal, rotate, corner, duet, and 3-dimensional. Overheard in the classroom "I am going to do the 3 dimensional art."

## ***Birthdays this month***

We have the tradition of “telling” the child’s personal story on his birthday. This includes his mom and dad (knowing that they were not always his mom and dad!), other family members and any special events that happened in their life.

Parents are welcome to join us. The children traditionally bring in a snack to share.

### ***A Great Idea ! -----Thank you to a parent***

During conferences, a frequent topic of discussion was how to simplify a child’s home environment. For many children, too many toys are confusing and, according to research, actually lead to LESS involvement with the toys. So what to do????

Sometimes they are toys that relatives give, sometimes toys from birthdays, sometimes just toys. So we discussed having A FEW toys on a shelf at a time so they are easily manageable for the child. But what to do with the others? Of course toys that are outgrown can be donated. But sometimes since they were gifts, we are not ready to do that.

How about storing them in an organized manner? Enter one of the dads. How about a **TOY BANK** he suggested. Yes!! He is going to set up a “toy bank” in their basement. Then, he will set an **EXCHANGE DAY** to go to the bank and trade in toys the child has been using for “new” toys available in “the bank”. It is a thoughtful and fun way to help maintain order and simplicity. Best of all, the child’s interest in the activity will be renewed as she then plays with the “new” toys.

### ***More Thank You Notes***

The Leaf Collectors –Many families had their children bring in collected leaves they had dried. It is NOT too late.

Karyn Shatzer –Great photos of the Halloween picnic. We have to figure out a way to share them. Also for the cranberries we will be getting ready for Thanksgiving snack.

The Munter family ---cream cheese for our favorite snack

To everyone for your support and participation in the conferences over these past few weeks. We enjoyed talking with you and gained insight into your child and family. Thank you.