

Montessori Pathways' News

November 2014

Notes from Ms. Alena

We began November with a **school wide field trip to the Marriott Theatre** in Lincolnshire, where many of our students and parents enjoyed watching "The Wizard of Oz".

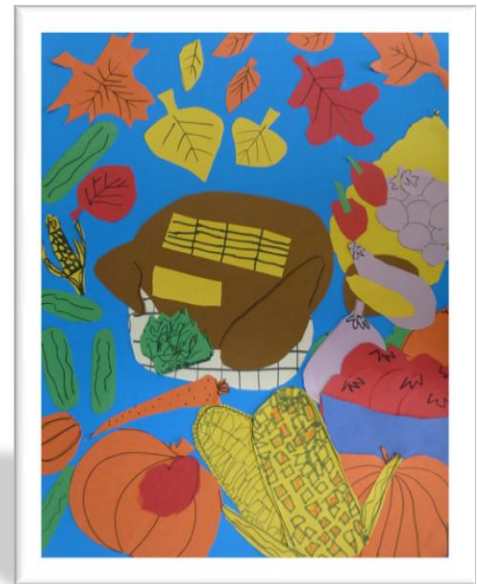
We would like to extend our gratitude to those of you who have taken part in our **Equal Exchange** fundraiser.

Together, we have raised \$1,500! This will be enough to replenish the rubber mulch on our playground and get a start on materials for the Upper Elementary program. We already bought The Fraction Skittles that help 4th-5th graders understand operations with fractions.

If your family participated in the fundraiser, please make sure that your children know you've helped their beloved school as well as small-scale family farmers and artisans around the world!

The Great Finale of November was the **Thanksgiving Celebration** at our school. The celebration itself was the final touch to a whole month of preparation and unforgettable spirit. The kids worked a lot practicing songs and poems and preparing costumes, decorations, and the Thanksgiving feast.

Thank you, dear friends, for being able to come and participate in our celebration, since the most important and enjoyable part of any celebration is sharing of all of our excitement with you!



"Thanksgiving Feast"
(Elementary Team Art Project)



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Coming School Events

- We invite all Montessori Pathways families and friends to our **Winter Celebration** on **Wednesday, December 17th 2014 at 5:00pm at The First Congregational Church in Crystal Lake.**
*The detailed information will be sent soon. Please RSVP by **Monday, December 8th.***
- **Winter Break** is **December 22nd 2014– January 2nd 2015.**
- Montessori Pathways offers **Winter Wonder Camp** for your children during winter break.

If you would like to sign up your child(ren) for **Winter Camp**, please return the registration forms, along with the payment, **no later than Friday, December 12th 2014.**

As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us via e-mail montpathways@hotmail.com

Warmly,
Ms. Alena

Notes from the Elementary Class (North room)

Mr. Matt

Hope everybody had a wonderful Thanksgiving.

On November the class continued our study of the parts of speech moving onto *adverbs and pronouns*. The pronoun was the first part of speech that doesn't add more information to sentences. Pronouns take the place of nouns and we learned how to use this to make our writing flow better. I also pointed out to the students that they already do this much of the time in their speech.

After learning about *antonyms* in October, we learned about *synonyms* in November. The children learned that synonym comes from Greek meaning "with the name" whereas antonym came from "against the name" in Greek.



In math the first graders continued to work with *dynamic addition* and are making steady progress with it. The first graders also began to learn *multiplication* as repeated addition. This is done in a concrete way to begin with where the child would have to get the same quantity multiple times and then add it all together to get a product.

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For instance, if the expression was 1213×3 , the child would get 1213 three times and then add all of it to get 3639. This shows them in a concrete way that multiplication is just repeated addition and really gives them a deeper understanding than just teaching them an algorithm to successfully multiply on paper.

The firsts also got introduced to *basic fractions*. The second and third graders reviewed fractions and began *adding and subtracting fractions with like denominators as well as multiplying fractions by whole numbers*.



The second and third graders were also introduced to *the concept of multiples and how to find common multiples of numbers*. This will be needed when working with fractions with unlike denominators. The second grade also began to work with the Checker board to begin *long multiplication*.

The class also made *a physical representation of one million* to give us an idea of how much larger it is than one thousand. This was in preparation to a presentation called "Infinity Street" which takes the children through the hierarchy of numbers from such as: thousands, millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, quintillions, sextillions, septillions and octillions (I stopped there but some children want to continue the work to larger numbers). We invited our younger friends from the Kindergarten class and this presentation was very impressive for them as well.



We added *a class pet* to our room this month.

Charlotte is a European garden spider, at least that's what our research tells us. I had caught her outside my apartment to show the class and when I was going to free her, the class decided we should keep her as a pet so we did and we have been catching flies to make sure that we keep her fed.



In biology we learned about *the parts of a spider* (because of our new pet). We also learned *cnidarians* which are very simple animals and the first phyla of invertebrates we have learned about. They have very simple bodies but they also have nematocysts which are stinging cells that paralyze their prey. The most recognizable members of cnidaria are sea jellies and box jellies.

In history, the students continued their work with *The Time Line of Life*. *The Clock of Eras* and *The History of the Months* materials were presented as new works.



In sadder news the classroom pet Pangaea died late this month. We think that the cold weather may have been the cause of death. The children created letters, poems and or pictures for Pangaea and we had a short ceremony and buried him outside along with these last tributes from the class.

We also talked about *basic ideas of music* this month, such as *tempo and rhythm*. We worked on keeping time and finding the beat in music. Also, as many of you know we worked on food preparation for our Thanksgiving celebration. The children really enjoyed this and did a very good job reading the recipes and doing the appropriate math we needed to change the recipes (quadrupling one of them).



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Overall, November was a great month and it was wonderful to see many of you at our celebration which the children worked so hard to prepare for.

*Best regards,
Mr. Matt*

Notes from the Art Class (*Kindergarten and Elementary*)

Ms. Susan

In November, the art class explored Aboriginal Australian art with dot paintings of koalas, kangaroos, snakes and other creatures. During this activity they learned about Australian animals, aboriginal art, complementary colors, and using patterns and line.

In another activity, students made Thanksgiving decorations of food and historical hats using colored paper, scissors, and glue. They learned about working together as a team to create art, and discussed what foods are traditional to eat in different cultural feasts.

For the holidays, students learned to make artwork in 3D with sewing projects such as sewing holiday pockets to hold cards, or constructing fabric ornaments. They designed their own decorations to put on the 3D objects, and worked with needles and yarn to put them together. Thank you, and hope you had a great holiday!



*Sincerely,
Ms. Susan*

Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen, Ms. Christine

Time still has not slowed down! November went by in a flash!

Since our last newsletter, we had the opportunity to apply our Practical Life skills to real life. We spent one afternoon collectively making applesauce. In addition to actually doing the various individual tasks, we worked through and then reviewed the process. What did we do first, next, last and so on. One of the benefits of this large undertaking (applesauce for the school) was the chance for the children to work together to make a product. We had apple washers, dryers, corers, and slicers on the way to our last step of cooking the apples in the crock pot. And the next day, everyone had a chance to run the cooked apples through the food mill and add the cinnamon and sugar. A hit all the way around. PS--- it was also a science lesson. What happened to the apples when we added heat and a little water?



And we made garlic bread for the school lunch. The children are so delighted to be able to share the results of their efforts. Montessori stressed the need for cooperation and building of community. From her point of view, the development of the individual is for the purpose of serving others. It begins when the children are young. That is why she had such a conviction that the world can/will change through the children. They are the hope, the future of mankind.



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Science continued with the sink and float experiment. Often children will choose to record their results ---- either with word lists or pictures. In addition to the science component, the experiment requires categorizing which is a foundational mathematical thinking skill that needs to be developed.

Geography moved on to lake and island: both experience and definition of the terms.



In language, we introduced the "sh" phonogram (non-phonetic combination of letters) and made a LONG list of all the words we could think of with that sound.

We also talked about the Indian/Native American population --- how the tribes lived such distances from one another which led to a communication dilemma. They had different languages and, therefore to communicate, they invented some signs for the concepts they wanted to express. The class really enjoyed making their Sign Language Books.

Of course, much effort and enjoyment went into the preparation of the Thanksgiving presentation. It again required the effort of all the children in the school community. Cooperation, concentration and practice were required to reach a goal. Children were so happy to prepare the decorations for the room and the food for the celebration. How wonderful to see everyone working together!

And a special thank you to YOU who attended and made the day such a pleasure. There would have been no celebration in the absence of an audience.

Our most recent celebration: the first snowfall!!!!



Warmly,
Ms. Karen, Ms. Christine

Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

Hello to our East Classroom Families! This month has flown by and your children are showing leadership and responsibility within our classroom. Every morning they pitch in with folding laundry, filling dish washing water, feeding the frog, watering/polishing plants, preparing snack for their peers, and so many other little housekeeping duties; I truly hope you encourage their participation in taking care of small chores at home because they seem so happy and satisfied with their accomplishments at school - Surprise! :)



We have enjoyed learning about Native American and Pilgrim life. We created Pilgrim hats and Native American headdresses for our Thanksgiving Celebration. We thank you so much for contributing ingredients to share and prepare for our "Feast". The children practiced learning the songs with great enthusiasm and we hope you enjoyed the presentation.



Although it is still relatively early in the school year, we have seen growth with each and every child; whether it's with zipping their coat, writing skills, navigating the classroom (making a choice of "work"), solidification of math facts, expressing their thoughts/feelings - it feels and works like family! The children help each other learn and succeed in their daily life; please remember that you are always welcome to observe at any time.

In Practical Life, we continue to offer activities to challenge and engage fine motor skills. We have also observed some new and creative uses of materials in our Sensorial area, as well.

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Math and Language are the main subjects of focus in the classroom on a daily basis. In Language, we continue to work with individual letter sounds and blends for pre-reading readiness. Beginning letter recognition, rhyming sound lists and word building are tasks we undertake daily at your child's appropriate level. Phonograms and their patterns of speech are also being introduced where applicable.



Number recognition along with associating the correct and corresponding quantities are also being reinforced. Use of the teen and ten boards for solidification of math facts are worked with daily as your child is ready for the introduction of a further concept.



This month, we introduced "Parts of a Turkey", and we observed many creative replications of this format!

We celebrated Carter and Isabella's birthdays and the class enjoyed looking at their baby pictures and special Birthday snack.

December will be a busy and exciting month and we can't even tell you what joyful excitement we feel within the class - we will decorate our Christmas tree, practice our Holiday Celebration songs, craft for our families and just really enjoy the spirit of the season.

Wishing you all the best at this wonderful (and busy!) time of year!

Warmly,
Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

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Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Ambreen

November marks the beginning of the most anticipated holiday season. It is the month of Thanksgiving, the traditional American holiday, which has been celebrated for centuries. It reminds us of the story of the pilgrims who came to the Newfoundland 'America', in 1620 on the big Mayflower boat.

Inspired by this great holiday, we in the South Room dedicated our entire month towards Thanksgiving projects and learning. The kindergartners and pre-k worked on the map of North America, and studied all about this great continent.

The most popular math activities during this month were the multiplication and division boards and addition with pumpkins. The kids also learned about the parts of a turkey, and did a lot of word building.



The most popular activities among the preschoolers were the zipper frame and the pumpkin tong activity. During this month, we introduced two new cutting activities, the spiral and zigzag cutting. In art, our entire class participated in making Thankful Turkeys and Indian corn.



The books that were read during story time were "*Franklin's Thanksgiving*", "*A Comfy, Cozy Thanksgiving*", "*The Mayflower*", and "*A Turkey for Thanksgiving*".

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On Friday November 21st, we had our Thanksgiving celebration. The kids worked very hard for it. From songs to decoration and the special snack, everything was prepared by them with love, and they all shined that day. I am so proud of each and every star in my class. Congratulations to all of you. I extend my deep heartfelt appreciation to all parents and families who attended this event and participated in our sharing basket activity. I hope everybody had a very happy Thanksgiving!



Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen

Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

Ms. Ambreen

November, the month of being thankful and giving thanks, has been a very busy month for all the pre-k students. They were eagerly involved in the preparation of our Thanksgiving event. They practiced their songs and worked hard on making decorations.

In math, the pre-kindergartners worked on different geometry shapes and made their beautiful posters. They learned how to count by fours and worked on the short bead stair. They were presented with the introduction of the decimal system.



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In language, our vowel of the month was the sound 'e', and so we worked on the letter families with this vowel. In Science, we studied about the parts of a fish, parts of a turkey, and the life cycle of corn. In geography, inspired by the story of the pilgrims, we were motivated to learn about the continent of North America. In art, we created our beautiful paper weaved mats, Indian corn, Thankful Turkeys, and favorite fruit paintings.



Parents, please review the November folders with your child. Wishing you all a very happy Thanksgiving, I would like to end my November newsletter with a poem:

*In November's gusty gail,
I will flip my floppy tail,
And spout hot soup all day.
I'll be a whale,
Spouting once, spouting twice,
Spouting chicken soup with rice.*

*Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen*

Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

Games played this month:

"The Turkey Needs A Seat" - an exchange game where it (the turkey) calls out two names to switch places and the turkey tries to get to one of the open seats before one of the persons called gets to the chair. The child left standing becomes the new turkey.

"Don't Get Caught With The Two Turkeys"- the children sit in a circle, one small turkey bean bag is passed around the circle, after three children have passed the turkey another turkey is put into play and tries to catch the turkey in front of it.



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The fun begins when the turkeys have to change directions. You don't want to be the person who ends up with 2 turkeys at the same time.

"Hide The Turkey".

Facts about owls that we learned with kids:

- Many owls eat small animals like mice and rats.
- Owls have sharp claws called talons.
- Many owls go out at nighttime.
- An owl is a type of bird.
- An owl's call sounds like "Whooh, whooh, whooh!"

Story: "Owl Moon" written by Jane Yolen and Illustrated by John Schoenherr.

Art: An owl on a painted bare black tree with a chalk background and a painted moon.

An owl mask or puppet.

A painted tube owl.

Made a large turkey and added feathers with what we were Thankful for.



New Works:

- Jumping frogs (you push down on the frog and hopefully it jumps into the pond, or jumps the farthest).
- Find the things hiding in the clear jar of corn by turning the jar slowly (10 frogs and many other bugs).



*Hoping you had a wonderful Thanksgiving,
Ms. Donna*