



Montessori Pathways School News

November
2016

Notes from Head of School

by Ms. Alena Baradzina

“Children must grow not only in the body but in the spirit, and the mother longs to follow the mysterious spiritual journey of the beloved one who tomorrow will be the intelligent, divine creation, man.”

~ Maria Montessori

I believe that November is a month that not only begins the holiday season, but also brings the spirit of giving and sharing. Following the Montessori approach, we at Montessori Pathways would like to teach our students the importance of sharing, giving, and helping, which will let them continue to be proud citizens of a country that is ready to help people around the world in any difficult situation.

Kids are Helping Kids

Montessori Pathways' students began this season of giving with the **Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF** event. While collecting candy for themselves during Halloween night, many of our kindergarten and elementary students were also collecting money for UNICEF, the foundation that helps kids around the world.

You should have seen the kids' excitement when, after counting the money, they realized that together they raised **\$265.51**, which is more than double their original goal of \$120.

~Exchanging collected coins in Crystal Lake Bank~



~The check is ready to be sent~



This amount can cover basic health needs of more than 41 children for three months, immunize 147 children against measles for life, vaccinate 465 children against polio for life, and provide 64 packets of high energy biscuits for malnourished children.

Equal Exchange Fundraiser

We would like to extend our gratitude to those of you who have taken part in our **Equal Exchange** fundraiser. Thirty-six families of our students and teachers participated. *Together, we have raised \$1,550.00!* We did not reach our goal this time, but this amount will be a great help to renovate the kitchen cabinets, counter, and tile floor in the North room!!!

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



~Thank you for helping us help others~



Annual Community Harvest

"You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving."

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

We concluded November with a **Giving with Gratitude Week**, when kids and their families were able to donate food and other items to the **26th Annual Community Harvest**, which will benefit clients of the **Crystal Lake Food Pantry**. Together we collected and donated 576 pounds of food and other items. It was a great chance to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks for what they get, but also the importance of giving.

~Elementary students are helping to load the donated items~



Thank you!

- ≈ Thank you, parents, for all your help and support and for giving your kids a chance to feel the Thanksgiving spirit!
- ≈ Thank you to our Elementary students for helping to load the donated items for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry!
- ≈ Thank you, Marion Krause, Emily's grandma, for helping us deliver all donated items for the Community Harvest to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.



Children's Quotations:

We are thankful for:

- My family; my friends
- My mom and dad; my grandma and grandpa
- My dog; my cat
- My house; food; money; my crayons
- My bowling; Thanksgiving; Trick-or-Treating
- People who have a school
- Our Earth (wow!!!)

Coming School Events

- **December 14 (W) – 5:00pm – “Winter Holidays around the World”-** Winter Celebration at the First Congregational Church in Crystal Lake.

Please RSVP by December 5th.

If your child is an All-Day student, please pick up your child from school no later than 4:30pm that day.

- **December 19 – December 30 – Winter Break**

- 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 9th***

- **January 2 (M) – No School** ('New Year' observed)

- **January 3 (Tu) – School Resumes**

- **January 12 (Th) – 6:00pm - Montessori Fun / Educational Night for Pre-K and K Students and Parents**

- **“Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished – Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary Education”** – Workshop for Pre-K and K Parents.

- **Bingo / Pizza Night** – for Pre-K and K Students.

- **January 16 (M) - No School** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

- **January 16 – 31 – Returning Families Preferred Re- Enrollment Period**

- **January 27 (F) – Elementary Parent / Student / Teacher Conference Day**

- **No School** for School Day Elementary Students on Conference Day

- Child Care is provided for 4:15 / All Day Elementary students



News from the Elementary Class

(North Room)

by Ms. Amber

Gratitude is a feeling of gratefulness. Gratitude is something we model and learn by example. Children are not born saying thank you, but it is something they learn through practice. Grace and courtesy lessons in a Montessori classroom are part of the Practical Life experiences, and teaching children about gratitude is an ongoing teachable moment. The students realize all that they have and what they are truly thankful and grateful for, and expressed this verbally in class and on paper.

This month, students learned about the basic or fundamental needs of humans. This can be seen as one of Montessori's most important lessons. Humans, all humans, worldwide and throughout history have the same needs. We all work, share, or are dependent on others for our physical needs (nutrition, clothing, shelter, transportation, and defense) and spiritual needs (communication, religion, and culture/art/music). It was a great conversation discussing our needs and how they are met compared to those who struggle to meet their needs.

We also discussed how we can give back or give to others. Sharing is really caring, even a small gesture is welcome. This strikes a spark in their young minds when they participate in the food drive and load all the boxes, bags, cans, and jars into the cars to get to the food pantry. The Elementary students also had the opportunity to mentor a few Kindergarten students who spent the morning in our room due to conferences in the preschool classrooms.

Following a fun Halloween event in our classroom with games, crafts, and a snack, we had several other cultural experiences this past month: Crystal Lake Bank and Trust, Crystal Lake Public Library, the Hemmens Cultural Center to see *Willy Wonka, Jr.*, and listening to the book *Heidi* and then watching the movie. Students are also practicing for the winter celebration.



Weekly presentations continue in Language, Math and Geometry. It is important for students to keep current with their assignments, and balance their work and social needs. Elementary students are capable of, and should be, completing at least one to two Math or Geometry work activities, one to two Language activities, and part or all of a culture work **each day**. We are wrapping up our first monthly work plan and it appears to be a successful process. Talk with your student about her/his work processes, successes, and challenges.

"Children are not things to be molded, but are people to be unfolded."

— Jess Lair, author

The next few weeks will be very exciting for children, so keep their home time as routine and as calm as possible. We will be doing the same in the classroom.

Sadly, Ms. Brigitte has accepted a full-time position at Aurora University's Challenger Space Center. Although she was only in the classroom a few hours per week, the students will miss her insights and great books.



I am grateful to be an important part of your student's life!

November Photo Gallery

Elementary Class



News from the Kindergarten Extended Day Class

by Ms. Karen

Another busy month gone by! Below are just a few of many possible monthly highlights.

UNICEF: Halloween (doesn't that seem like a LONG time ago) gave us the opportunity to increase our awareness of the needs of others. We talked about the children of other lands who may not have sufficient food, water, shelter, education. Pictures, stories and a video. UNICEF became an exciting idea for our Kindergartners because they could see a real possibility of helping children of the world in a very specific and concrete way.

Our kindergartners saw they could make a difference. They could act on behalf of others. Maria Montessori believed deeply that if children are nurtured in body, mind, and spirit, they will guide humanity toward a more peaceful world. Every time children discover more of the world and their valuable place in it, a peaceful planet is one tiny step closer.

A related and fun activity was to take a walk to the Crystal Lake Bank downtown and exchange our coins for a check which we mailed to UNICEF from our school. Each child put a "bagful" of coins into the automatic coin counter.

Perhaps you noticed the **Unity Tree** in the hallway. Each child made one or more leaves to decorate the tree that they had painted. It illustrates a line in a song: "We are leaves of one tree", a metaphor for many countries of one world.

Voting really was a highlight of this month. Just as you went to the polls, your child "went to the poll" and marked his/her ballot and then put it in the ballot box. We talked about how voting works, how the idea with the most votes will be implemented by all, how voting requires registration (we had a list with all names to verify their right to cast a vote), how it is done in privacy so no one knows who voted for which idea. There was suspense and full attention as, one by one, each vote was recorded on our large class vote paper. The idea which won was: a popcorn party. So, the next day, we gathered around a colorful blanket, ate popcorn and listened to a story. Hopefully this connects as a "real life" lesson.



"The child can develop fully by means of experience in his environment. We call such experiences 'work'."

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Along with Halloween and Thanksgiving comes the **Veteran's Day** holiday. As a special event, we invited Mr. Jim from the American Legion to come and share a presentation of flag folding with us. Of course, it turned out to be much more. Within his presentation were interesting history facts (ex. there are over 40 different American flags ---- different number stripes, different numbers of stars, different colors). A beautiful flag folding presentation turns out to be a lot of geometry. We concluded with how to respectfully display of a flag. Thank you, Mr. Jim.



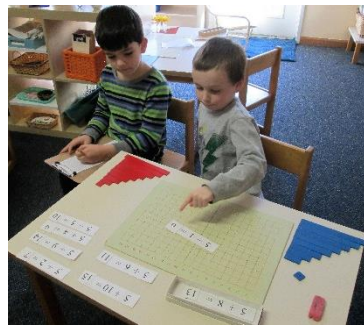
Thanksgiving preparation included **weaving** placemats to take home. On the surface, what looks like a simple activity turns out to be a complex activity requiring your child's full focus and requires the full limit of their concentration. With minimal help, the children became accomplished weavers. Of course, the idea of an alternating pattern in weaving is a mathematical idea we will encounter in many other works.

In the midst of all these special activities, we expanded the Practical Life area. We added independent art easel, ironing the fabric napkins, and baking (the MOST favorite). Since EVERYONE wants to bake, we have organized a chart of names. Once everyone has had a turn, we will begin again -- round 2. What all these activities have in common are: a complex organization, many steps to the activity, a reflection of real life (do you still iron?), and the activity takes the entire Extended day time. These are all skills that become increasingly important in the Kindergarten Extended Day. Many of the math, geometry, geography, and advanced sensorial activities require a full period of time on task.

So, the above are just a few of the highlights! It is a daily pleasure to see the children grow in skills, independence, and community.

November Photo Gallery

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



News from the Art Class (Kindergarten and Elementary) by Ms. Linda

In the kindergarten class, we started the month by finishing their scarecrows. They did a wonderful job with a guided drawing and finished by painting in watercolors.



We worked on another drawing project by creating cats and dogs done in the style of artist Ed Emberly. We also created some Thanksgiving turkeys. The children were given pipe cleaners and beads to create the feathers and we talked about making patterns with the beads.



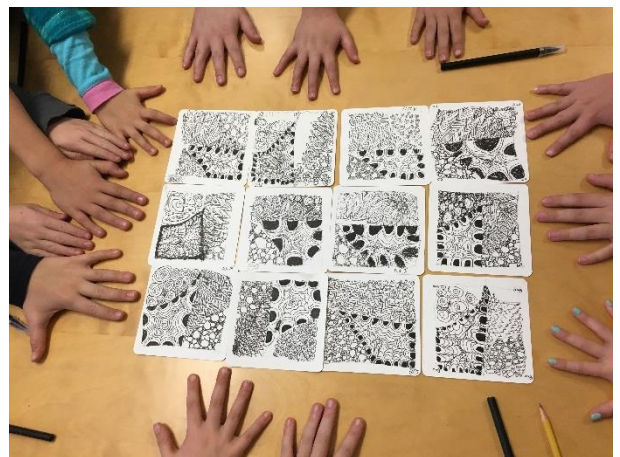
“Logic will take you from A to B.
Imagination will take you everywhere.”

- Einstein

In elementary this month, our work was all about patterns. We started the month by creating an aboriginal art style hand print. The students were able to see a piece of actual aboriginal art to use as inspiration.



We then moved onto Zentangle art for our next two projects. Zentangle is a meditative art form that uses repetitive patterns to create beautiful images.



News from the South Room

by Ms. Andrea

Things continue to move right along in the South Room and thanks to the beautiful but unseasonably warm weather, it's hard to believe that we are about to celebrate Thanksgiving. Recently we have welcomed a new student named Grace. She is 4.5 years old and she immediately fit right into our classroom of enthusiastic learners. The other children were amazing in making her feel right at home, showing her around, giving her lessons, holding her hand and being good friends. Welcome to the Montessori Pathways family grace (and family)!

During the last parent education night and during several of the parent-teacher conferences, a reoccurring theme was "how to give your children more responsibilities at home." I have been looking on Pinterest for some ideas for chore charts or responsibility charts that might help you at home. Here are two examples that I thought would be appropriate for this age group. You can choose tasks that you want them to do on a daily or weekly basis and have them work with you to create the chart. Then it is their responsibility to keep track of what they have done.



As we follow the children and constantly learn more about them, throughout the school year we are continuously adding new works to address what needs might surface. As the weather has gotten cooler and the children seem less interested in carrot cutting, we have added *cookie baking*.

We have also added more physical science activities: *magnetic/nonmagnetic*, *sink/float*, *translucent/opaque*, and *color mixing*.

To address the needs of those that need even more movement than the typical day allows, we have added some movement activities: *jumping from side to side*, *walking on a line while holding an egg on a spoon*, and *yoga* will be coming soon.

A lot of the children who are not quite writing numbers and letters fluently still have a need for *pre-writing activities* so we have added some *line-writing* activities in which they are able to practice their pencil grip and practice a variety of line types: *squiggles*, *zigzag*, *straight*, *looped*, etc.

“The hands are the instruments of man’s intelligence.”

~Dr. Maria Montessori

In December, we are going to be adding a whole new sewing curriculum.



Since the holiday season is upon us, and as a way to connect home and school at this special time of year, we would like to remind South Room Parents of an open invitation for the month of December. If you would like to share a family tradition, holiday-related or not, you are invited to visit our classroom from 11:00-11:20 and share something special about your family with the children. Some examples from previous years: Christmas tree ornament collection, favorite book, gingerbread houses, Hanukkah latkes, Diwali- Festival of Lights, etc. If you are interested in participating, please email the school with a few dates that might work for you (November 29th – December 16th) and a brief explanation of what you will be sharing.



The children have been working on a poem to recite at Thanksgiving dinner, but in case they need a bit of help here is the poem:

Giving Thanks

First, we give thanks for
the food that we are given.

Then we give thanks for
the houses that we live in.

Also, we give thanks for
the sun that shines above.

But mostly we give thanks for
the people that we love!

Happy Thanksgiving!

We are looking forward to the next season in the South Room and wish you a very happy Thanksgiving! Thank you for all of your support!



November Photo Gallery

South Room



November Photo Gallery

Pre-K Extended Day Class



News from the East Room

by Ms. Carole

November usually brings much colder temperatures but thankfully, not as fast this year. We all have been so pleased with the unusual warm weather of the past few weeks. We all knew it wouldn't last forever. Alas, our normal November temperatures have arrived. So, bundle up with warmer coats, hats and mittens as we will continue to go outside and enjoy the crisp cold days ahead.

Our balmy November has given us an extended opportunity to collect a **variety of leaves**: Ginkgo, Hickory, Sumac, Maple, Oak and Red Bud. They were pressed and dried and made into 3 part cards. During line time, each leaf was named. We talked about their different margins, colors and shapes. We also named each part of the leaf; a stem, a blade and veins. Although leaves come in different sizes and shapes they are much the same, just like us. We have a leaf book at our quiet table to help further their investigation.

Another item from nature we introduced to the children was an **Osage orange**. Before the fruit was "unveiled" the children guessed what color it would be: "Orange", naturally. Would it be smooth or rough? "Smooth like an orange", of course. Could we eat the fruit? "Yes!" We all agreed. I think the children expected another tasting activity!! However, much to their surprise it was green, bumpy and only edible for some animals in nature. We went on to discuss how Native American Indians and early settlers used the fruit and the Osage orange tree's wood. This was quite interesting and fun at the same time. We left the Osage orange fruit on our quiet table as well.

November has also been a month about giving, "**Giving with Gratitude**". To prepare and help the children understand what this was all about we took the time to meet in our small classroom community. As we talked together we could sense the children taking to heart the idea of helping other children in our large community of Crystal Lake. The Crystal Lake Food Pantry was like a "free" grocery store where some families can go and select food that they need. We couldn't have done this without your help so thank you very much for participating.

Each child made a tissue paper flower as their way of saying thank you for helping them help others.

Individual works are continuing throughout the morning. To mention just a couple of areas that has shown much interest this past month are Language and Math.

Children have been very interested in learning their sounds and at times there are 3 or 4 waiting their turn with the sandpaper letters. Along with **learning the sounds** we also present **forming the letters** with either the sand tray or a chalk board. Once a child has mastered a group of sounds we then introduce them to the moveable alphabet and begin word building. It has been wonderful to watch this unfold in our classroom.

"Children must be taught how to think, not what to think."

~ Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist

Associating numerals and quantities using the counting rods, spindle boxes and memory game are some of the math materials presented. Children have been making pumpkin counting books as well as going on "number hunts" as a fun way to support this. Learning numerals and building corresponding quantities with the Teen and Ten boards have been presented as well.

Small group activities are quite engaging this month. It's not uncommon to begin with 3 or 4 children but end up with 6 or 7. We introduced the I-Spy material that helps build **phonemic awareness**. The children listen and find objects with a particular beginning sound. Once that becomes easy for them we focus on the ending and then the internal sounds.

Geometric solids are yet another material which is fun to work with a friend. The Cube, Sphere, Rectangle Prism, Cone and Cylinder are introduced through games and 3 period lessons. The children become so excited when they find the same objects in their classroom and match them to the solids on their rug.

We have seen the same enthusiasm when talking about **parts of a frog, fish or bird**. Just what is that lateral line on a fish, a bird's tail helps it balance on a branch, and the frog really doesn't have a neck? Our children are very interested in the world around them.

We have had several celebrations this month as well. Our first birthday for the month was Sonal's. She turned 3 years old. We learned that she loves anything and everything pink. Sonal joined our classroom in November and has an older brother named Shivain. Welcome to our classroom, Sonal!!

We have a new 4-year-old too. Joey also celebrated his birthday in November and learned that he has been to Poland and loves the big tractor his Grandpa owns.

Sam is our newest 5-year-old. We look forward to celebrating his special day and learning new things about him too. Happy Birthday to all our November birthday friends!!

Our last celebration for the month was all about **Thanksgiving**. We all participated in preparing for our celebration. Some children made turkey roll ups, others made muffins or cleaned and prepared the grapes and strawberries. We all helped shake the whipping cream to make butter. It tasted so good with the corn muffins. While we ate our yummy food, we shared the following poem with the children and listed all the special people and things we are thankful for. Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa, brothers and sisters, friends, family, baby kittens, pets, hamsters, meatballs and bowling balls were just a few of the children's thoughts.



September Photo Gallery

East Room



News from the Late Afternoon Class

By Ms. Donna

November has been an exciting month with the election, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving. Some of our students wanted to have an election. All names of the students were put on a ballot. They then voted for the person that had helped them the most. Most of the students voted for themselves but a few voted for others in our class.

VETERANS DAY: We learned that a Veteran is a person who has served our Country in one of the following branches of service: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. A big THANK YOU to our parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and great grandparents who have served.

THE LEGEND of the DREAMCATCHER: Native Americans of the Great Plains believe the air is filled with both good and bad dreams. According to legend, the good dreams pass through the center hole to the sleeping person. The bad dreams are trapped in the web, where they perish in the light of dawn. Historically, dreamcatchers were hung in the tipi or lodge and on a baby's cradle board.

THANKSGIVING: Another, Thank You goes out to all who were able to bring in items for the food pantry.

The Pilgrims left their home on a boat called the Mayflower in 1620. They landed at Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts. They did not have much food that winter but in the spring, Squanto one of their new friends showed them how to plant corn and other crops. Sometime between the middle of September 1621 and November 9th 1621, the Pilgrims had a feast. There were 51 Pilgrims and 90 guests. They ate turkey, fish, squash, wild berries, corn and cornbread. The festival lasted for 3 days. They ate a lot and played games. This Thanksgiving we will be eating many of the same types of food that were served at the first Thanksgiving. We will be with friends and family. In our classroom, we were able to set up two wigwams to find out how it was to live in a small space.

ART: salt clay shapes-- after they dried we painted them

Coffee filter turkeys-- markers were used on the filter then sprayed with water and then dried with a hair dryer--then paper legs and faces were added



Dream Catchers -- yarn was wrapped around a circle with slits, feathers and beads were added

Native American boy or girl picture--five parts to each figure were colored, cut and put together



GAMES: Take the feathers off the turkey- you roll the color cube and take the pipe cleaner feather off the turkey. When all feathers are off you roll to put the feather back on.

Feed the Turkey- a paper bag turkey with a large mouth is hungry. The player rolls a die and the number that comes up is the amount of acorns you can put in his mouth. Game continues until all of the acorns are out of the dish

MUSIC: chairs were set up in a circle, instruments were then placed on the seat of the chair, students were facing the chairs, when the music began you picked up your instrument and played while walking around the chairs as the music played. When the music stopped, you put your instrument down and moved forward one chair. When the music played again you picked up the new instrument and marched until the music stopped etc. We had bells, a set of bongos, rhythm sticks, sand blocks, triangles, tambourine, cymbals, and shakers

SCIENCE: Dancing Popcorn-- mason jar, water, baking soda, popcorn and vinegar Mix water and baking soda add popcorn (does the popcorn sink or float) then add some vinegar (does the popcorn sink or float or dance)

OUTDOORS: We were able to be outside for some of November, but as it got darker earlier it also got colder.

BOOKS:

" My First Thanksgiving" by Tomie dePaola

"The Story of Thanksgiving by Nancy Skarmeds

"The First Thanksgiving" by Dana Stewart

"Thanksgiving Mice!" by Bethany Roberts

"Thank You, Thanksgiving " by David Milgrim

"The Best Thanksgiving Ever!" by Teddy Slater

"Bear Says Thanks" by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

"The Very First Thanksgiving Day" by Rhonda Gowler Greene

