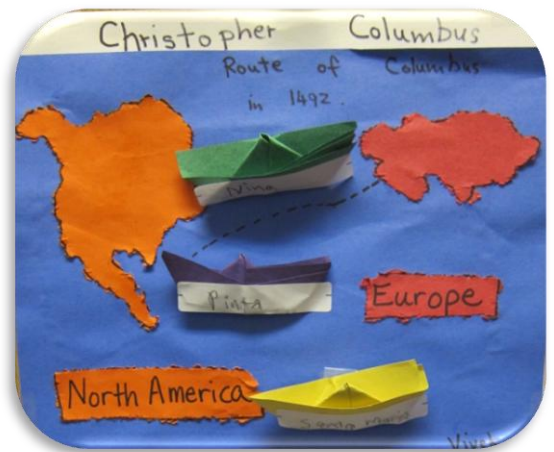


# Montessori Pathways'

## News

October, 2013



*“Route of Columbus in 1492”*

*3-6 class project*

*“One test of the correctness of educational procedure is*

*the happiness of the child.”*

*Maria Montessori*

### Notes from Ms. Alena



One of the most important events at school this month was the **Montessori Work Cycle for Parents**. We are glad that 17 families came to us that evening to see the classroom and materials, to ask and discuss some of questions, and to try to work with the materials. This evening was important not only for you as the parents, but for us as the

teachers also.

The typical questions that we usually have from parents are “*when my child will be able to read*”, “*why is he or she not counting up to 20 or 100 yet*”, “*I would like to see my child working with addition*”, “*send us some book to practice or some homework please*”.

It is so hard for us, adults, who were trained with traditional education from generation to generation, to understand (and I know it from my own experience too), that Montessori education is not some complicated way in teaching, but it is a philosophy that tells us: “*follow the child.*”



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For some reason we, adults, decided that we know what our kids have to do at the different stages of their lives and created a curriculum for them. However, we forgot that even twins are different, so how we can compare different kids even within the same age group and make them do the same thing at the same time?

It is so easy to ruin the most important thing that Mother Nature gave to our kids – the love to explore, discover and learn--by forcing their development.

This is why the Montessori education system is a 3 year cycle education on every level (3-6 years in Early childhood, 6-9 years in Lower elementary), where kids have a chance to get a lot of knowledge and skills during these 3 years, but everybody will do it at his or her own pace with satisfaction, while still loving the process of learning.

You can stop by the school any day and see how and what our kindergarteners or elementary students are doing now and, of course, they will blossom more by the end of the year.

*"Before elaborating any system of education, we must therefore create a favorable environment that will encourage the flowering of a child's natural gifts. All that is needed is to remove the obstacles. And this should be the basis of, and point of departure for, all future education.*

*The first thing to be done, therefore, is to discover the true nature of a child and then assist him in his normal development. "*

*Maria Montessori ("The Secret of Childhood")*

If you would like to learn a little more about it, take a look on article bellow.

[Montessori kids love to learn from the inside out](#)

The Montessori methods and practices used today emerged from her scientific observations of mentally slow and poverty-stricken children at a care center in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome. She learned much from studying these children and engineered a nurturing environment enhanced with developmentally appropriate, specialized materials.

Here are some guiding principles which are distinctive to the Montessori way and which make Montessori education so child-friendly and unique:



**Principle No. 1: Emphasize on the Process of learning, not the Product**

*"Education should no longer be mostly imparting knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities."* Children possess an intrinsic love to learn, to become lifelong learners.

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Focusing on the product of learning like a high-stakes proficiency test or semester exam will stifle a child's spontaneous and natural urge to learn.

Dr. Montessori would eschew today's practice of "teaching to the test," where the curriculum becomes a mile wide and inch deep experience. Instead, Montessori education spotlights the process of learning, rewarding a child's day-to-day efforts and improvements, no matter how small. Learning occurs in a supportive atmosphere of problem-solving, critical thinking, experiential learning, and ultimately, self-discovery.

**Principle No. 2: Self-directed learning and self-discovery can happen in a "Prepared Environment" where the classroom, materials, and social climate are supportive.**

Maria Montessori once stated, *"These words reveal the child's inner self: 'Help me do it alone'."* Children are respected and permitted to work alone or in small groups at their own pace with materials they select from a menu of options.

This freedom of choice is far from permitting children to "do their own thing," since it operates within a set of age-appropriate ground rules based on Dr Montessori beliefs, such as respect for each other and for the learning environment.



**Principle No. 3: The teacher is a facilitator who inspires development of the "whole child"-physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.**



Dr Montessori remarked decades ago, *"We must observe the needs of a child...and respond to them with meaningful learning experiences."* That's why Montessori teachers are fully trained to anticipate, recognize and respond to "sensitive periods" where children make great intuitive leaps and certain types of learning undergo a sudden surge in eagerness and intensity. The teacher "strikes while the iron is hot," directing the children toward materials that fulfill their developmental needs.

Learning is based on individual developmental characteristics and needs, not on chronological age. *The Montessori way respects the child as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and concedes that each child carries his own internal, developmental alarm clock.* Different levels of ability, development and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design the curriculum.

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Children in multi-age and multi-grade Montessori classrooms move at their own pace. It would be foolish to establish a set age or grade cut-off date for a child to ride a bike. Likewise, Montessori classrooms do not dictate that all children automatically learn how to read simply because they've made 6 orbits around the sun. Some read by age 5, 6, or 7; others may need more exposure to Montessori literacy experiences to learn to read by age 8 or 9.



The teachers receive extensive training, personalized for each of four distinct age spans: infant and toddler, 3-6, 6-9, and 9-12. Children journey through these four developmental age periods in an orderly, sequential and predictable manner, but at varying rates. **Montessori teachers are sensitized to the fact that kids learn best when the time is ripe- not school time, but their own. They always listen for a child's inner clock to chime.**

<http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/5944/montessori-kids-love-to-learn-from-the-inside-out>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OM1Gu9KXVkk>

### *Coming School Events*

- The *Parent / Teacher conferences* will be held on **November 5 – November 7.**

*Do not miss it!*

- On **November 8<sup>th</sup>**, we will have a very exciting field trip to see *The Nutcracker play* in the **Marriott Theater in Lincolnshire.**

*Please remember that all children taking the bus should be at school no later than 8:30 a.m.*

*The bus will leave the school promptly at 8:45am.*

*If you are driving to the play, please expect to arrive by 9:40 a.m.*

*Please remember to wear the blue school shirts!*

- **November 18 – November 22** - “*Giving with Gratitude*” week

*The detailed information is coming soon.*

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

Warmly,  
Ms. Alena

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# Working with Montessori Materials

## Snake game in Elementary Math.

The Snake Game in the Montessori classroom has two variations. These variations are used for different levels of ability. The first presentation is usually geared towards six year olds. The second is used for practice of math facts.

The first presentation is called "Search for Ten." The child counts colored bead bars that are laid out like a snake (hence the name). When a child reaches ten they replace it for a ten bead bar. Eventually the entire snake will be exchanged for gold ten bars. To verify their answer the child uses the colored beads which the snake was initially made of and creates combinations of ten:  $7+3$ ,  $5+5$ ,  $2+8$ , etc. In doing this, the child is beginning to see the different addends that can be used to make a sum of ten.

The second presentation of the Snake Game is called the "Teen Snake Game." Here a child performs mental math instead of counting. If the first three beads used in their snake were a five bar, a four bar and an eight bar the child would perform the following in their mind:  $5+4+8=17$ . The child would then replace these beads with a golden ten bar and a black and white seven bar and continue on in the same process until the snake is once again golden. Verification is done in the same way as the first presentation by finding combinations of ten.



In our classroom, both the first and second year students have been working with the snake game using math task cards. Each card has an equation that is to be solved with the Snake Game material. For additional math practice, each card has a story problem on the back to solve.

Later on in the elementary curriculum, the children will learn the Subtraction or Negative Snake Game as well as the Multiplication Snake Game. Both of these materials build upon the foundation laid with the Addition Snake Games.

*Ms. Katy*

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## *Constructive Triangles: Triangle box*

Material: A triangular box that contains:

- 1 grey equilateral triangle
- 2 green scalene right-angled triangles
- 3 yellow isosceles obtuse angled triangles
- 4 red equilateral triangles

The Constructive Triangles allow the children to explore the geometric possibilities inherent within several different types of triangles. This material develops the visual sense as children explore the many combinations possible to create a given shape.



In the triangle box, a large gray triangle serves as a model for a shape that can be built with combinations of the smaller triangles. The shapes are colored, which is a control for the child to easily put them together to make the larger form. Children are free to explore the many other shapes that these small triangles can create.

There are four other constructive triangle boxes, two rectangles and two hexagons that encourage children to build more shapes. The children are also learning vocabulary such as; isosceles, scalene, equilateral, acute, obtuse, and right-angle. The indirect aim of the constructive triangles is to prepare the child for geometry.

*Ms. Patty*

## *Spanish Materials in Montessori Environment.*

The main purpose of language is to communicate. Language in the Montessori environment is all the activities that encourage speaking, listening, writing and pre-reading/reading skills. The child's achievement of speech is a natural part of growing up. From birth to about age 1 - children are listening, watching and sensitive to sounds. At age 1 - 2, they are able to use simple words and at 2 -3 years, their vocabulary increases. This is the optimal time to introduce a second language into their experience.



In many dual language homes, one parent will speak only in English to the child, while the other parent (or grandparent) speak the second language. Children are able to discern the different sounds and able to understand and replicate this difference.

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We have incorporated Spanish language into our daily routine at school. It is available on a daily basis unlike previously, weekly lessons. This means we are able to relate it daily to the child, and include it on a more regular basis.

One example of this; we celebrated two birthdays with ice cream, chocolate and vanilla. Because one of our Spanish activities identifies *the flavors of ice cream*, the children were heard saying "I like "Vainilla" or "Chocolate" or "Fresa", (strawberry) the best. They were proud of the fact that they could speak the flavor of choice in a new language.

We offer *Spanish extensions of the Golden Bead Stair in math*, as well as in the Sensorial area with *color identification*. Additional work will be introduced in the months ahead.

Having these materials ready, everyday, offers a new experience with a familiar work, on a regular basis



*Ms. Christine*

## Notes from the Elementary Class (North room)

*Ms. Katy*



*Happy Halloween  
from Elementary Class!*

Another month has come and gone and the children continue to progress nicely through the curriculum. We began October with the *First Great Lesson* which tells **the story of the beginning of the universe**. This first story focuses on subjects such as the solar system, composition of earth, volcanoes, states of matter and other creation stories.



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So far this month we have researched volcanoes as a class and some students have begun researching planets.

We also performed a great deal of **experiments** that deal with *gravity, states of matter, composition of other planets* and many others. During an experiment on gravity one student remarked, “Ms. Katy, why are the objects hitting the ground at the same time?” The objects were a book and a pen being dropped from the same height. I replied, “Why do you think they are hitting at the same time?” To which this student replied, “Ohhhhh!” I also overheard a second year student say to a first year, “Why do you think this is happening?”

This month we attended **Yoga** each Friday. Through these four sessions, the children improved greatly in both their concentration and balance. Our Yoga teacher, Ms. Jenny, taught the children two different types of breathing called “Bee Breathing” and “Darth Vader” breathing. The children used their imaginations to create poses of favorite animals and a pose for each letter of the alphabet. It was a lot of fun!



Once again this year, the elementary class hosted the primary class for some **spooky science experiments**. The children performed experiments using slime, oobleck, squeezable bubbles and a dancing ghost. Thank you to Ms. Tonya (Piper’s mom), Ms. Tammy (Treyson’s mom), and Ms. Sally (Shawn’s mom) for assisting on this fun day!

We have continued to work on our **grace and courtesy** in the classroom. We are working on being quiet in the hallway when preparing for gym as the Kindergarten and Pre-K students are in class at that time and the “nappers” are napping. Each day there is improvement. Some second year students have also been partnered up with first year students to serve as mentors.



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So far it has worked really well for both the first and second years providing a helper for the first years and a sense of responsibility for the second years.

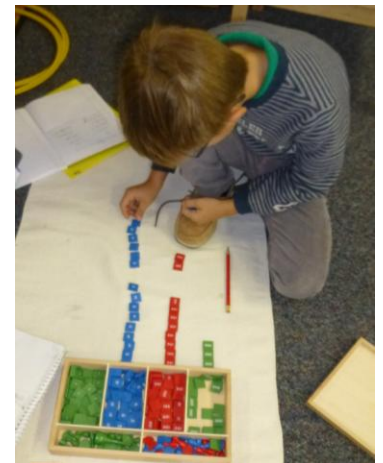
In November we will hear the remainder of the Great Lessons which include The Beginning of Life on Earth, The Coming of Humans, The Story of Communication and The Story of Numbers. We will also finish up a few experiments we have left that are connected to the First Great Lesson.

A small sample of lessons this month:

**Math:**

**First Grade:** Money Work, Addition Facts, Polygons Math Task Cards (Snake Game and Golden Bead Addition), Measurement

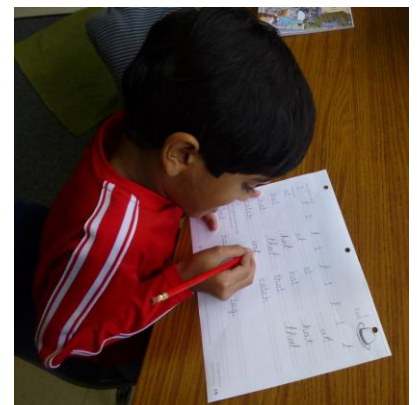
**Second Grade:** Math Minute Sheets, Dot Game Addition, Bead Bar Addition with a focus on the order of operations (introducing parentheses), Math Task Cards (Addition Facts)



**Language:**

**First Grade:** Sight word spelling, Blue Series Work (blends and digraphs), Noun Works, Beginning Research Writing, Compound Words, Reading Practice

**Second Grade:** Sight Word Spelling, Plural Nouns, Green Series Work (long vowel words), commas, Noun Works, Writing a Paragraph, Developing a Plan for Research, Reading Practice, Compound Words



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**Botany:** Parts of a Leaf, Types of Leaves, Types of Roots, Parts of a Root



**Geography and History:** Parts of the Earth, Advanced Landforms, Landform Command Cards, Parts of a Volcano, Temperate Forest Biome of North America



**Art:** Fall Tree Painting using observation.



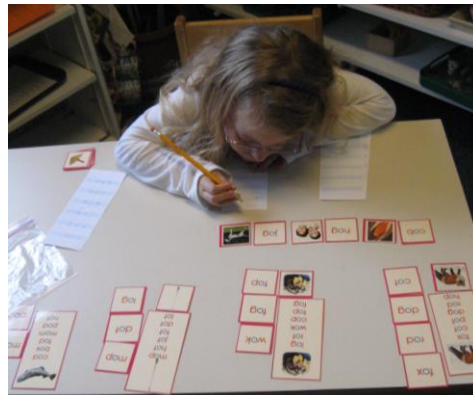
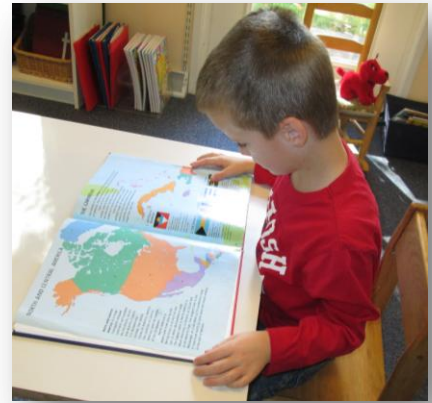
*Ms. Katy*

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## *Kindergarten Extended Day News*

The kindergarten classroom has been busy this month! We began the month learning about *Christopher Columbus and his voyage* to the New World. This discussion sparked an interest in geography which motivated several of the children to complete their first *puzzle map of the world*.

**The language area** continues to be used on a daily basis. Many of the children are working with blends ( sh, th, ch,) and silent “e” words. They are using cards/objects with the moveable alphabet to build words. They may extend this work by using the words to write a sentence. This leads to the discussion of what is needed in sentence writing (capital letters, periods, etc.).



**In math**, the children are working with advance works of short and long bead chains to practice skip counting. They have also been working with place value (ones, tens, hundreds, thousands) as well as exploring number patterns with the 100 Board.



**In the Sensorial area** of the classroom, friends are working with the constructive triangles. They are learning to make shapes such as: rhombus, parallelograms, and trapezoids which can be made from the different triangles (isosceles, equilateral, and scalene).

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**In science**, we have been pumpkin investigators! We used our estimation and math skills to determine the height, circumference, and weight of our pumpkin. We cut open the pumpkin and counted the seeds. We also used descriptive adjectives to describe the outside and inside of the pumpkin. Orange, hard, bumpy were a few of the words that described the outside of the pumpkin. Words such as gooey and slimy described the inside of the pumpkin. We discussed what types of foods that can be made from the pumpkin and even tasted some of the pumpkin seeds!



We completed a pumpkin coordinate graph worksheet. This activity requires students to use coordinate pairs to correctly color in the squares of the grid to reveal a Jack-o-Lantern. Students learn to

identify ordered pairs using letters and numbers to define a space. It is critical that students learn that the horizontal name precedes the vertical name in ordered pairs. This makes it easier for students to expand this skill to coordinate pairs that name the intersection of two lines.

Unfortunately our trip to the fire station was rained out twice. Due to the firemen's training schedule and remodeling of the fire station it was not possible to reschedule. I am happy to announce that in addition to the all school field trip to the Nutcracker; our kindergarten class will be visiting the Crystal Lake library for a tour and story time.



I look forward to meeting with each of you during the parent/teacher conferences in November!

*Sincerely,  
Ms. Patty*

## Notes from the South Classroom

*Ms. Patty, Ms. Ambreen*



*Happy Halloween  
from South room!*

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October has been a fun filled month of learning. The children have settled into the routine and have been busy exploring the many materials of their environment.

**In practical life**, the children have been refining their skills of self care. When the child arrives at school, it is their responsibility to switch into their “inside” shoes and to hang their coats. For the child, being able to zip a jacket is a very important step in becoming independent in the classroom. The dressing frames in the Montessori classroom allows the child to practice the dressing skills of zipping, tying, buttoning, snapping, and even using a buckle.



*“Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which is derived from a sense of independence.” -*

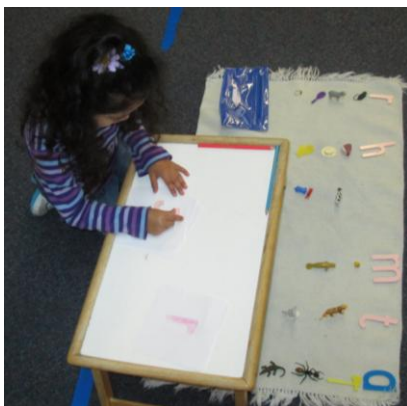
*Maria Montessori*

During our **line time**, we have been reading and re-enacting the book, “The Little Old Lady Who Wasn’t Afraid of Anything” by Linda D. Williams.

In the **language area**, the children are able to sequence this book and then color and make their very own book to take home. We have also been learning the “Chicken Soup with Rice” poem for the month of October.

***In October I will be host  
To witches, goblins, and a ghost.  
I will serve them chicken soup on toast.  
Whoopy once, Whoopy twice  
Whoopy Chicken Soup with Rice.***

In language, the children continue to learn sounds with various materials: sandpaper letters, initial sound boxes with objects or pictures. When the children have learned the sounds (a, m, t, r, c, h) they can move toward word building simple 3 letter words (mat, cat, rat, and hat).



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**In math**, we have introduced *graphing, estimation, and prediction* into the classroom. Our first estimation jar activity was a huge success! The children estimated the amount of Halloween rings that filled the estimation jar. Each child was able to view the jar of rings and then make a “guess” on how many rings he/she thought were in the jar. Each child’s estimate was written down and we then counted only half the jar of rings. Each child was then given the opportunity to change or keep their number.

After counting the jar of rings, it was determined that each child could receive 4 rings each. Every month we will fill our estimation jar with different objects and continue to practice our estimations! *The more often the children take a guess at “how many” items are in a pile, jar, or basket then actually follow up with counting the items – they begin to get a feel for the estimating process. The estimated numbers gradually become more closely aligned with the actual numbers.*

Before painting our pumpkins on Fall Harvest Day, we counted and graphed each one from smallest to largest. We also determined which pumpkins were considered small, medium, or large.



Ms. Ambreen and I would like to thank all the parents that helped us with our **Fall Harvest Day** projects. We made a variety of fall crafts and enjoyed muffins for snack! We are looking forward to our Halloween celebration. Thank you to the parents that continue to provide snacks and flower arrangements for our classroom!



Vishrut and Audrey celebrated their birthdays this month! *We celebrate a child’s birthday by inviting the child to hold the Continent Globe, which represents the Earth where we live, and they walk around the birthday candle, which represents the sun.*

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*The children walk around the candle the number of times equivalent to the number of years since they have been born and they walk counter-clockwise because this is the direction the Earth travels around the sun. Afterwards, we have a special treat.*



We would also like to welcome Ms. Jennifer to our classroom. Ms. Jennifer is attending Mid-West Montessori Teacher Training Institute (MMTTC) to receive her 3-6 Early Childhood AMS credentials. She is completing her internship in our classroom. Her son, Quincy, is a student in the East classroom.

We look forward to meeting with each of you during our Parent/Teacher conferences in November.

*Sincerely,*

*Ms. Patty and Ms. Ambreen*

### **Notes from the East classroom:**

*Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi*



***Happy Halloween  
from East room!***

It's hard to believe we're only two months into the school year - your children are very much into the classroom routine and are making good choices in the "work" they choose. With the cooler weather, hanging up coats on hangers has become a new skill, and we encourage our parents to help practice this at home as well. Please check the zippers on their coats because some of them are very difficult to zip, and it is frustrating for your child when they want to become self sufficient.



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We have introduced many new activities/work into our classroom this month:

**Practical Life:** *Pouring water*- messy at times, but helps the children learn to concentrate, coordinate their hands and eyes, slow down their movements, and problem solve if a spill occurs.

**Sensorial:** Identifying the *10 geometric solid shapes* and matching labels. Believe it or not, this is a pre-geometry introduction and uses language and hands on knowledge and discrimination of each, individual form.

We have also introduced the *Color Tablets* with their names *in Spanish*, and it is amazing how the children have learned them so quickly. We extend this activity by asking the children to find something in the classroom that is "*Rojo*" (*red*) or "*Azul*" (*blue*); they have fun looking for items and then they get to invite a friend to find something in Spanish, too.



**Math:** We now have the *Golden Bead Stair* work available *in Spanish*. This entails matching 3-part cards, writing the numerals 1 - 10 and writing the names of the numerals in Spanish. Many of the children are already familiar with counting to 10 in Spanish!

We continue work with number recognition and associating that number with a quantity of pumpkins this month. *The 100 board, addition equations, and introduction to multiplication board* have been introduced as well.



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**Science:** We have matching picture cards showing an *object from the "Past"* such as a corded telephone or camera with a flash cube (haha - remember those!), and matching it to the *"Present"* which shows the current product. It is understandable that many children don't know what a record player is or that bicycles used to have one big wheel in front with two, smaller, in back!

We also have added objects to classify as *"Magnetic"*, or *"Non-magnetic"* which is a fun activity and we try to guess which items will fit into which category.

Since Halloween is just around the corner, we have added *Parts of the Spider, Bat and Skeleton* to our 3-Part card works, too.



Some October activities we have enjoyed as a class are *tasting a variety of pears*: Anjou, Bartlett and Bosc - which are all pears, of course, but offered different tastes, textures (juiciness!) and color.

We have observed *different leaf shapes* and enjoyed leaf rubbing with crayon.

We *celebrated Columbus Day* with a story about Christopher Columbus and his journey that led to the discovery of America. Some children made a map with Europe (Spain is where he departed on his journey) all the way across the Atlantic Ocean to North America, and of course, three ships called The Nina, The Pinta and The Santa Maria.

We celebrated SIX birthdays this month: Happy Birthdays went to *Cate, Chloe, Cara, Molly, Ashlyn and Madison J.!* We had fun celebrating with you and wish you all the best year ahead!

Thank you so much to our families who brought Sharing Basket items. Your children enjoy knowing they brought something delicious and/or useful to share with the class. We use every item and really appreciate your generosity.

Another BIG thank you to our parent (and grandparent!) volunteers who helped with our Fall Celebration last Friday.



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We enjoyed having you with us and putting together crafts and school scarecrow with the children. We will host another day in November to celebrate Thanksgiving, so if you're available and didn't get a chance to sign up at orientation, just let us know.



We are looking forward to spending time with you during conferences, and sharing observations and progress of your child next week!

*Sincerely,*

*Ms. Christine & Ms. Laxmi*

## Notes from the Pre-K Extended class:

*Ms. Ambreen*

October, the tenth month of the year, began with the falling leaves all around us, which inspired us to focus on fall this month.

During our recess time, the pre-kindergarten kids were intrigued by the different shapes, colors, and types of leaves. This led us to *study about leaves*. We learned about simple and compound leaves, parts of the leaf, and the different shapes of leaves, along with their names.



The large number of pumpkins surrounding us also encouraged the study of *the life cycle of a pumpkin*.

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**In Math**, through our Cards and Counters, we learned about odd and even numbers. We collected leaves and counted them by twos. We used our Ten Board and learned to make numbers beyond the teen numbers. In the last week of October, we did some simple addition with objects.

At the same time, **in Geography**, we learned about the 7 continents and made a world map. On October 11th, we celebrated Columbus Day by reading the book "Follow the Dreams," a story about Christopher Columbus and his discovery of the water route from Europe to America in 1492.

**In Language**, our vowel of the month was 'u,' so we worked on word families using 'u' combined with other sounds.

Lastly, the **art area** offered paintings of beautiful autumn trees and leaf rubbings with crayons.

*Dear Parents, we ask that you please review the October folder with your child.*

*The recipe of the month* for October is 'Blueberry muffins'. In honor of Christopher Columbus, who sailed the ocean blue in 1492, we stirred, mixed and baked delicious blueberry muffins, which our pre-kindergarten kids really enjoyed.



*Sincerely,  
Ms. Ambreen*

### Notes from the afternoon classroom:

*Ms. Donna*

Art projects: a record player, paper plate and markers were used in making a *paper plate design*, the paper plate was placed on the turntable, the player was then turned on and a marker was placed near the center of the plate where the design began, other markers were added. I don't know who had more fun the person making the plate art or others watching then create their work.

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*Orange paper was cut into a jack-o-lantern by listening and following the story directions.*

Another story art project was *The Tale of a Black Cat*. We also did a version of "Brown Bear, Brown Bear what do you see?" using Halloween characters.

A "Hey Diddle, Diddle" word card game was played.

Several flannel board stories were also told, *The Three Bears*, *Mother Ghost and her 5 little ghosts*, and a story about a *Rainbow*.

Also, *Little Mouse, Little Mouse, Hiding under the little house*, which one did he choose game was a favorite as well as *Doggie, Doggie, Where's Your Bone* game.



We still love our outside time. We go out earlier because it is getting darker out.

*Best regards,  
Ms. Donna*

