

Montessori Pathways' News

October 2015



"When a child is given a little leeway, he will at once shout, "I want to do it!" But in our schools, which have an environment adapted to children's needs, they say, "Help me to do it alone." And these words reveal their inner needs."

~ Maria Montessori, "The Secret of Childhood" ~

Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

October brought to our community a very good test of endurance, patience, understanding, and mutual aid. Being able to go through all of it, we show our kids and teach them how to handle any unexpected and difficult situations in the future. We extend our appreciation to all of our families and teachers who were very supportive at this very difficult period for the school and helped all of us return to our regular schedule and routine in a very short period of time.

Before:



After:



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If you had no chance to help, but are still willing to do so, you are welcome to join us in participating in the unique **Equal Exchange Fundraiser**, which not only supports our school's endeavors, but also small organic farmers and artisan communities around the globe.

If you decided to participate in the fundraiser, please let your kids be involved in choosing the items/gifts, and discuss your decision to help with them. It is a very important lesson for them and a good chance to be proud of their parents.

With the help of our **Fall Mums Fundraiser**, we were able to order several new interesting and exciting materials for every classroom:

- ✓ Quick Sticks
 - ✓ Spice Grinder
 - ✓ Japanese Brush Painting Set
 - ✓ Petite Singing Bowl
 - ✓ New Clothesline Stand & Accessories
 - ✓ Maria Montessori Centenary Cards
 - ✓ Matter and Energy Activity
 - ✓ Mineral and Rock Starter Kits
 - ✓ Time Line of Life Fossil Collection
 - ✓ Upper Elementary Math Task Cards
 - ✓ Decimal Work and Task Cards
- ✓ Books: "365 Manners Kids Should Know", "The Peace Rose", "Thoughtful Living Series", "Grace and Courtesy Picture Guide for Children and Adults"

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this fundraiser!

Unfortunately, the **Fun/Educational Montessori Family Night** was cancelled due to the emergency situation, but we are still planning to hold it in November or beginning of December. The actual date will be announced soon.

"Will My Child Be Ready for Public Kindergarten?"

We came across this question multiple times in the parent/teacher questionnaires. I would like to touch on this subject. The Montessori curriculum is focused on preparing students for the Montessori Kindergarten, so it is very important to understand the difference between Kindergarten in a traditional vs. a Montessori school. In traditional education, kindergarten is the beginning of the elementary level, where children begin with the basics (sounds, numbers, colors, shapes, etc), since it is designed to accommodate those who have not attended preschool. These same concepts are covered at the beginning of the Montessori Early Childhood class (at 3-4 years of age).

The Montessori Kindergarten, however, is the final stage of the 3 year cycle of the Early Childhood Education

The Montessori learning experience is cumulative: what a child learns in the kindergarten year builds on what was learned in previous Montessori years. The kindergarten year is the culmination of this learning when the child internalizes these early concrete experiences, building a strong educational foundation. The value of the first two years cannot be fully realized if the child does not continue working with the Montessori materials to complete the three-year cycle.

Please remember that Montessori (Primary and Elementary) functions in 3-year cycles, the benefits and knowledge of which cannot be fully realized by removing the child mid-cycle. The third year is crucial in culminating and solidifying the work of the previous years. If you've already allowed your children to enter the Montessori environment, give them the chance to complete the cycle of learning that they've begun.

Lorna McGrath, Montessori Family Life, will explain more for you here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gh11LXOgZF0&feature=youtu.be>

Coming School Events

- **November 6 - Primary Classes (East room and South room) Parent / Teacher Conference Day**
 - *No School for Morning and School Day East room and South room students.*
 - *Child Care is provided for 4:15 / All Day Students*

- The deadline for our **Equal Exchange fundraiser** is quickly coming to a close. We hope you've had a chance to look through the catalog and pick something for your friends or yourself! If not, please remember that you are always welcome to donate directly to the school.

Private schools thrive from the support and donations of our families, as the tuition is only enough to cover the daily operations of the school. We depend on the support of our entire community to sustain our unique and progressive educational program. Every penny counts!

We are looking forward to using the raised funds to renovate the kitchen counters and floor in the other two classrooms, in order to make it fair for all of our students. We would like to thank everyone who has already submitted their orders.

*Please note that the deadline is **Tuesday, November 3rd.***

- **November 12** - Kindergarten and Elementary class will be going to see **CHICAGOBOYZ ACROBATIC SHOW** in the **Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake.**
- **November 13** - We will have a very exciting field trip to see **Seussical the Musical** 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 / December (TBA soon) – Montessori Fun / Educational Night:**
 - ***“How is Carrot Peeling Educational?”** – hands-on evening for parents;*
 - ***Story Reading / Pizza Night** - for kids*

Do not miss it! It will be a lot of fun to learn!

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- **November 16 – November 20 – “Giving with Gratitude” week**

As Thanksgiving approaches, we would like to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks, but also the importance of giving. Therefore, this year, we decided to participate in the 25th Annual Community Harvest, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Detailed information will be sent soon.

- **December 16 (W) – 5:00pm – Winter Celebration**

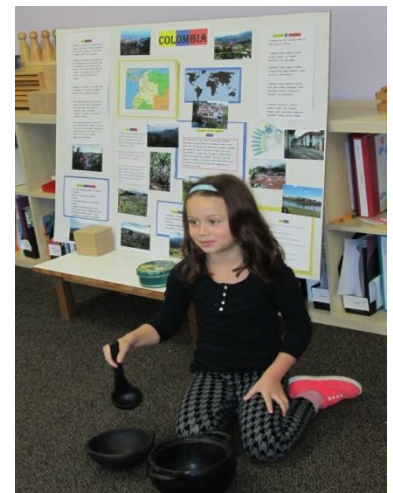
As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us via e-mail montpathways@hotmail.com

Warmly,
Ms. Alena

Notes from the Elementary Class (North room)

Ms. Amber

Fall is definitely in the air! Highlights for this month included: overcoming the challenges we faced with the “flood” at school, playing with leaves during recess, sharing U.N. country research projects, and watching third and fourth year students presenting “*Drama of the Archeozoic Ocean.*”

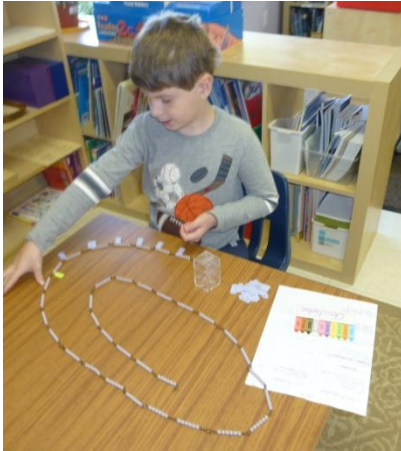


The elementary children have examined land and water forms, and are now exploring our home continent of North America through map studies and research. The study of time, along with fraction work, was a perfect introduction to the *Clock of Eras*, a visual display of the timeline of Earth broken down into eras. It is truly difficult for children to understand such long periods of time, but using a clock representation makes sense. The children have been spending time studying sounds and phonograms, a lead-in to both reading and spelling/writing. All of the students have been working on neatness: in their workspace, cubby, work, and in their writing. Being neat and organized is an important part of the overall orderly learning process! Plus, neat writing is legible writing, and writing neatly prevents having to redo the work.

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November brings our first *field trips*: a CHIGAGOBOYZ ACROBATIC performance at the Raue Center, and then to the Marriot Lincolnshire to see “*Seussical the Musical.*” Botany and Zoology studies will begin, and students will be doing more writing. The lower elementary children will continue clock and fraction studies, along with ongoing work in Math operations. Upper Elementary students will study fractions later, after completing the study of Multiples and Factors.



Parents often ask how they can reinforce the Montessori teachings at home that are learned in the classroom. Encourage your child:

- To be kind and compassionate, and concerned about her/his world and other living things
- To be independent, both doing things and figuring out things on his/her own
- To think of other possibilities by asking your child to come up with ideas or answers, rather than providing the answers. Your child may surprise you with creative thinking!
- To be responsible for her/his words and actions
- To help the family or community by setting up or cleaning up

Allow your child to make mistakes and learn the valuable lessons gained from those mistakes. Practice leads to mastery, in and out of the classroom.

Thank you to everyone who helped us in preparation of the Halloween celebration – the kids had a lot of fun and excitement!

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As we head towards the holiday season, consider keeping your child's schedule and routine as normal as possible. Of course children will be excited, but too much excitement is overwhelming. Children need the stability and continuity of an expected routine. It makes a huge difference in the elementary classroom.



Enjoy these beautiful autumn days!

Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen

Baking has arrived!!!!!! The children have been eagerly looking forward to the baking experience being introduced to the classroom. If your child brings home baking, you can enjoy the "cookies" and value the process involved - measuring the bisquick and water accurately, stirring, kneading, making the "cookies" and fully cleaning up while the "cookies" are baking.

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Total time on task---approximately 2 hours!!! We will add more details as the year progresses --- adding chocolate chips or cinnamon or sprinkles.

We continued the Geography curriculum, giving meaning to *maps*. Delightful weather helped. We gathered at the front of the school to analyze just what was in front of us and how to represent it. We noticed the street, sidewalks, entryway, benches for waiting, doors, the mailbox, the sign, the fountain, even the picture on the door reminding us that picture day is coming up. Then I drew a “map” which was terrific because we could play a game about how a map tells us where to go with “no words”! So, just by pointing, the child could look at the map and figure out “where the map tells you to go”. Then we took it a step further. We labeled the map with just letters. So the direction could be go to A or B or C etc. and your child knew exactly where to go. We followed up with each child making a “map” of their own, depicting the front of the school and its details (interesting which details the children noticed!). We are getting ready to delve more deeply into maps.



Continuing our study of *living / non living*, we looked in more detail at the plant world. Children drew a LARGE plant, labeling the main parts: stem, leaves, roots, veins. We planted a cutting in the classroom that I brought from home - (needs your positive thinking for it to survive!)



Another beautiful day allowed us to go outdoors for a session on drawing a tree -----right in front of us: i.e. ground line, roots underground, the trunk, branches, leaves. And then some children chose to do a BIG parts of the leaf drawing. We will still be continuing and expanding on those ideas.

Finally our **BIG LESSON!!!** “Stuff happens.” - Who expected the great “flood?” We would NOT have planned it, but you know what a valuable lesson. We can adapt. We can deal with something unexpected. We can figure out new procedures. And you know what? We are okay. Life goes on. And the more valuable lesson -- we can help one another. A special thank you to the First Congregational Church. Not only did they offer space, but they looked after us, were accommodating and did everything to make our stay comfortable. Thank you to the patience of the parents who had a “new routine” for pickup. A special thank you for those, who were able to go “out of their way” in resetting the classrooms on Sunday. We often “talk” about community. But this **WAS** community in action. Thank you. Could not have done it without you.

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Finally, I have been invited to return to the Montessori Institute of Slovenia to lecture on “The Development of Mathematical Thinking” and also to present the 3 - 6 Montessori math curriculum. While I was missing the children, I considered it a privilege to support Montessori in Slovenia. And I was comfortable leaving the Kindergarten children in the very capable hands of Ms. Carol.



So, I will see you November, when I return with stories and greetings from “across the ocean”. And I look forward to conferences together.

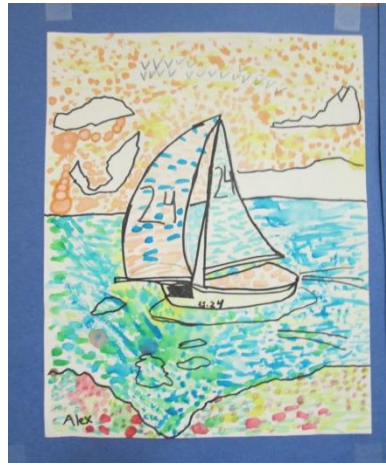
It has truly been a delightful month!

Notes from the Art Class (*Kindergarten and Elementary*) *Ms. Susan*

In October, the elementary class learned about Native American art and beading. They chose a symbol important to them, such as a butterfly, horse, or even car, and drew it in the center of a circle, making their own tribal shield. Then, they divided the circle into four equal sections, and used tribal patterns such as waves, dots, stripes and more to fill them in. Finally, they used watercolor and colored pencil to color, then strung beads on their finished artwork to decorate it.

Their artist of the month was *Van Gogh*, so next they learned about Impressionism and dot painting, and created a dot painting of a sailboat.

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Kindergarten class learned about the sea turtle life cycle, and painted an underwater scene with dolphins, sea turtles, and starfish. They used watercolor, and practiced good painting techniques including how to hold the brush and how much water to add to the paint.

Their artist of the month was *Andy Warhol*, so they learned about using multiple copies of the same image to create artwork, and created an oil pastel piece inspired by the artist. The kindergarten class also continued to draw in their art journals to express their own creative ideas.

Both classes enjoyed a special Halloween art activity inspired by the artist *Romero Britto*, and created cutout pumpkin art decorated with dots, zigzags and stripes. This activity used a limited color palette and specific patterns, so they had to be creative in what colors and patterns they used for each section of the pumpkin. Both classes rose to the challenge and created uniquely decorated pumpkins.



Notes from the East Classroom:

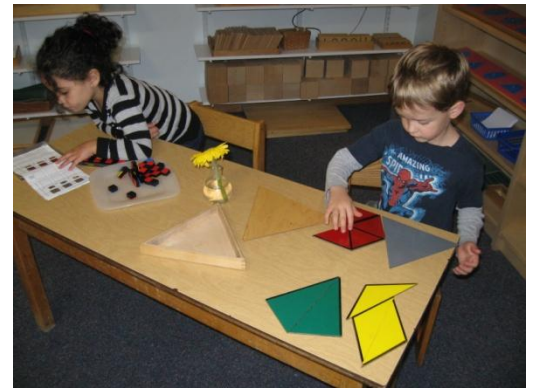
Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

What a month! I opened the school the Tuesday after the Columbus Day holiday to find the faucet running and our classroom flooded! Quickly, it became apparent that the mop and bucket were not going to be much help.....I cannot believe how everyone stepped in to get our classroom back up and running and so beautiful so quickly; thank you so very much to our administration, teachers and families for all of your help in a very difficult time. Our home away from home is wonderful and functioning like nothing ever happened at all! With sincere appreciation and thanks to all!

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Within the challenges that October has brought, your children continue to thrive and learn - we have celebrated Molly and Olivia's birthday - twins born on the 5th turned 5. We are working in Language acquisition (phonetic sounds) and solidification of numbers/association with the numeral and its concrete quantity. We keep daily observations of each child to track where their interests and learning levels lay.



We have studied leaves; their shape (margin), acorns, pumpkins and apples. The class enjoyed an apple tasting activity with McIntosh, Granny Smith, Golden Delicious; when asked their favorite the winner was.....all!! We subsequently made a wonderful and easy Apple Crisp that was a definite favorite:

- 4c. apples, peeled and cut into slices (Mcintosh/Granny Smith blend is excellent)
- 1tsp cinnamon
- 7 tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1cup of sugar
- 3/4 cup of flour

Butter a 8x8/9x9square or a pie dish, add apples; pour over blended cinnamon and water. Work together sugar, butter and flour until crumbly - the kids enjoyed using a pastry cutter for this. Spoon over the apples and bake at 375* for 45 min. Serve with vanilla ice cream if desired - YUMMY! (I promised I would send this to our parents!)

We spent a wonderful time during the preparation of a fun week of Halloween projects and many thanks to our parents who again have generously volunteered their time and supplies to support a fun day - THANK YOU!!!

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Looking forward to meeting with you during conferences and please fill out the information packet that was sent to you; it helps us in preparation for utilizing our conference time effectively - we want to make the most of it!

Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Eva

The second month of school has really flown by. The weather is changing and autumn has begun. The children have really settled into their daily routine and are enjoying the flow of each day. Now that the children understand the routine and are comfortable with one another and the teachers, more challenging Montessori work has become part of the daily expectation.



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This month we have incorporated both autumn and Halloween elements into our works. Some children have been refining their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination by poking out autumn leaves, bats, jack-o-lanterns, and ghosts. Others have learned to hold a crayon flat in order to create a leaf rubbing. The children have been exploring the leaves on the playground and choosing their own leaves for the leaf rubbing activity. We have used apples to create prints of pumpkins; a few children chose to make 5 pumpkins and a gate to go along with one of our Halloween finger plays.



Some of our practical life works have an autumn or Halloween theme and we will be working on the dissection of a leaf as well as the pumpkin life cycle. We also carved our pumpkin and investigated the inside parts, as well as baked and tasted the seeds. We had an apple-tasting with four different apples: McIntosh, Golden Delicious, Pink Lady, and Granny Smith. After tasting the apples we voted on which apple was the favorite: Granny Smith, and talked about the concepts of *most*, *least*, *more*, *less* and also what *voting* means.



We have been singing a lot of new line time songs and finger plays: *Five Little Pumpkins*, *The Finest Pumpkin*, *Autumn Leaves are Falling*, *Stirring a Brew* just to name a few. You can ask your child to sing them for you at home.

*Five little pumpkins sitting on a gate,
The first one says "oh my, it's getting late"
The second one says "there are witches in the air ha ha ha (witch cackle)
The third one says "well I don't care"
The fourth one says "let's run and run and run"
The fifth one says "Halloween is FUN!"
"oooooooooooo" went the wind and out went the light
And the five little pumpkins rolled out of sight.*

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This month we have also been focusing a lot on language work with the children, ranging from sound recognition, word building, and so on.

You will soon be seeing your child's "**sound book**" come home. It is a small spiral notebook where we write the sounds or words that your child is currently working on at school. If it comes home with your child, please practice with them and then send it back to school with your child.



The children are very excited to be learning their sounds and words and it's important to carry that enthusiasm home and have that home-school connection, especially when it comes to reading. Also, any time you can incorporate sounding things out (driving home and pointing out different things and saying the beginning sound "look a Fire Station... ffff fire sssss station) or if your child really enjoys drawing, have them label their picture using the sounds they hear (*bird* might be *brd* and *cat* might be *kt* right now) but instead of correcting them let them use what they know to build their confidence and independence in writing which will only help with their reading skills.

The children have really been exploring more in-depth works, namely *Parts of Animals and Plants* through 3-part cards and puzzles. Using these works they learn the nomenclature for the different parts of each animal or plant; so flower now becomes *corolla, calyx, stamen, pistol* and bird becomes *beak, wing, breast, feet, claws, tail, and head*.

In the math area, many of the younger children have been working on 1-10 works, using different materials to strengthen the retention of both quantity and numeral recognition. While the older children have been working on the 45 layout (in which they layout 45 ones, 45 tens, 45 hundreds, 45 thousands and they can visually and tangibly see and feel these quantities growing as they complete the work) and also addition and multiplication boards as well as the bead cabinet, exploring math in a variety of ways and making connections from previous work.

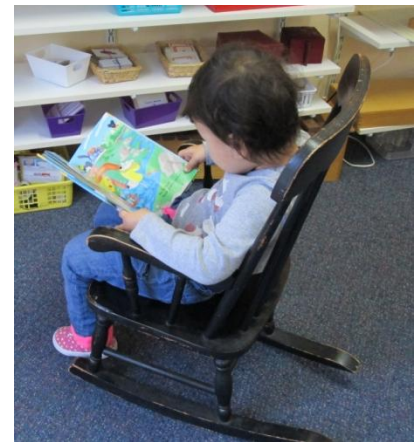


Overall, we have had another wonderful month in the South Room. We want to say thank you for your generosity and timeliness on the Sharing Basket, it has been very successful and the children seem to really enjoy when it is their turn. Also, we appreciate your help in preparation of a fun Halloween celebration and are grateful for your contributions and time volunteered.

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We would like to say a quick welcome to our new friend Austin who has just joined our class. We are enjoying getting to know him more each day.



Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

Ms. Andrea

The afternoon group of pre-k children has really gotten into a productive rhythm. After taking care of their hallway responsibilities, which they take very seriously (they are the last group to come in from the playground and they are responsible for making sure the closets are organized and the hallways are tidy), they transition into the classroom for an afternoon of challenging work. This has become a time for the older children to really explore the classroom as well as learn the discipline it takes to choose a work and stick with it until completion.

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What they practice in the afternoon, they model for the younger children during the morning work cycle. They have also begun to give one another presentations of work they themselves have mastered. It has evolved into a very collaborative work time for these older children.



Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

This has been a great fall. The children and I are hoping to enjoy being outside for many more days.

ART: Christopher Columbus ship made from our hand print.
 Gray squirrel with a movable tail
 Acorn on a leaf
 Halloween stamping

SCIENCE: The children enjoy sink or float. We gather objects from our room and then tested which ones would sink and which ones would float.

NEW WORKS: Small cars, Magnets; farm, seasons, circus, fairy tales, Flannel board. Small dolls.

STORIES, SONGS, POEMS: Christopher Columbus Sailed with Three Ships
 Knock, Knock, Trick or Treat
 Five Little Pumpkins Sitting on the Gate
 The Fire Fighters Ring the Bell



GAMES: What's Missing (objects are put on a tray, they study the objects on the tray, the tray is cover and an object is taken away, a child is then asked to tell what is missing); Doggie Where's Your Bone

OUTSIDE: Baseball and shooting baskets. The color game (a color is named and they go and find something that has that color).

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Celebrating Halloween -

The Feast at Montessori Pathways School

