

Montessori Pathways' News

September 2014



“Rainbow Peace Dove”
(Kindergarten and Elementary Art Project)

“If education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it in the bettering of man's future.”

Maria Montessori

Notes from Ms. Alena

What a great beginning of the school year we have had! Although the weather had been tricky, we finally got a chance to meet and spend a wonderful time together on our school's playground during the Ice Cream Social.



I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our **Fall Mums Sale Fundraiser**. We were able to collect **\$252.00**, which will go toward buying new materials for the classrooms.

The participation of all of the students in the event is very important. The children were really excited about choosing the mums' colors and taking them home. The kids are very eager to be a part of school events. Therefore, we encourage participation in school events not so much for the event itself, but for the important feeling of community that they bring to the kids.

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A special thank you to our Elementary students, who helped unload the mums from the truck! The kids were so excited, helpful, and fast, that the truck with 65 mums was unloaded in a mere 10 minutes!

After taking most of the Mums home, the kids were so helpful and excited to beautify the Montessori Pathways' playground by planting the rest of the mums. *Thank you Ms. Natalia (Daria's mom) for coming and helping with planting.*

We concluded this event by getting together and singing our favorite songs. *Thank you Ms. Ambreen for playing the guitar for the kids!*



On September 22nd the children from Montessori Pathways School joined together to celebrate the ***United Nation's Annual International Day of Peace.***

Beginning in New Zealand and finishing in the Hawaiian Islands, the song "Light a Candle for Peace" was sung continuously for 24 hours by Montessori school children around the world. Our school was excited about joining the many other Montessori schools to "Sing Peace Around the World".



Please click this link to enjoy our children's singing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVG1e8ckZpM>
(This is a private video, which can only be accessed by our parents, who have the link).

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Coming School Events

- On **Tuesday, October 21, at 6:00 p.m.**, we will be holding our first Montessori Hands-on **Parent Evening: The Unique Montessori Math: I would want to be taught this way!**

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

- We will be having **Picture Day** on **Thursday, October 23rd**.

Please dress your child(ren) appropriately. If your child does not attend school that day, you can bring him/her between 9:00am -10:30am to take a picture. In this case your child will have a chance to be included in the class picture.

- The **Parent / Teacher conferences** will be held by appointments on
 - **October 24 – for East Room (Preschool and Pre-K)**
 - **October 24 – for North Room (Elementary Class)**
 - **October 27 – for South room (Preschool and Pre-K)**
 - **October 28 – for Kindergarten students**

Please fill out the conference schedule form and return it to school by Wednesday, October 15

- **Science Experiment Day** will be held by our Elementary Students on **Thursday, October 30**
- We will be celebrating **Halloween** at school on **Friday, October 31**.

The children are invited to come to school dressed in a Halloween costume. Each morning classroom will have a simple celebration which will allow time for each child to show off their costume and tell a little bit about who or what their costume represents. Afterward, each class will “parade” into the other class and sing a special fall song for their friends and then return to their own classroom for a regular morning.

Our children need consistency and routine even more so on exciting celebration days, so we will strive to make it special while maintaining a level of regularity for the children.

The School Day and All Day children will be changing out of their costume prior to lunch, so **please send a comfortable change of clothing and a labeled bag to place your child’s costume into.**

Children who leave at 11:45 will wear their costume home.

Costume Guidelines:

We highly encourage you to choose an age-appropriate costume with your child. As a Montessori school, we aim to operate within our philosophy of providing the children with real experiences that are beautiful and natural and encourage you to choose a costume that is based upon a person, thing or animal.

Some costume ideas include animals, community helpers, athletes and storybook characters. The most important feature of your child’s costume should be comfort, please make sure they can still independently use the bathroom and can sit and move with ease.

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Please note the following guidelines for costumes:

- No scary costumes
- No masks or headwear that covers the face
- No weapons or "fighting" props (swords, light sabers etc.)
- Please do not send any costume accessories that may be lost or damaged.

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

It has been an exciting first month in the Elementary classroom. The first weeks in an elementary room are very different than traditional education or even the 3-6 classrooms. All Montessori Elementary classrooms begin the year with a series of "Great Lessons." The Great Lessons are stories that ignite the children's inner curiosity and provide the children with information linking them to things greater than they had previously imagined.



The First Great Lesson – *The Coming of the Universe*, gives the children an impressionistic simulation of the beginning of our universe. There are demonstrations to give the children a basic understanding of gravities role in the formation of stars,

the three states of matter and the comparative size of the Earth and our Sun.

The Coming of Life gives the children a timescale of just how long it took for the Earth to be able to house life and then how much longer it for complex life to arrive.

The Coming of Humans describes early man; we examined the human hand and all the advantages that it gives humankind. We looked at some stone tools and grinded grains with rocks like early humans did

The Coming of Written Language describes mankind's early needs to communicate with other tribes and showed early writing systems that were based on pictures as well as early alphabets which had symbols for each sound.



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The Coming of Numbers describes mankind's early need to count things and to communicate numbers to others. It showed that many early civilizations used tally marks to count things. The children also learned about different number systems with different symbols for 10, 100, and so forth.



Outside of the Great Lessons we delved into the *Kingdoms of Life*, specifically *plant kingdom*. We learned about the parts of a plant, how to care for plants, and the parts of a leaf and even planted some mums.

In Zoology, kids learned about Vertebrates/ Invertebrates and Internal Parts of a Fish (2nd and 3rd grades)

We began to study *African countries and biomes*. We learned about *the parts of an atom*.



In Language, we learned 2 parts of speech: the *article* and the *adjective*. The kids worked on *classification*. The 1st graders built *compound words* while the 2nd and 3rd graders discussed the *suffix* and its role in the construction of a word.



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In math, the 1st graders continued working on addition using more advanced materials. They were shown *2 Addition Finger Charts* to use for single digit fact work. This is a more abstract work than the Addition Strip Board which they were already using. It allows children to add any two addends from 1-9 using their fingers to converge on a sum based on what numbers they're adding.

The first graders also started using other addition materials like the *Addition Snake Game*, which allows them to add many single digit addends and works on their exchanging skills. They also continued their work with the *Stamp Game* and just began to add using the *Small Bead Frame*.



The 2nd graders continued their work with *dynamic addition* primarily with the *Small Bead Frame* and worked on some *multiplication* as repeated addition with the *Multiplication Bead Board*, which has the child build products by adding the multiplicand repeatedly, it also sets the child up to discover the Commutative Property of Multiplication.



The third graders continued their *memorization of multiplication* facts using the *Multiplication Finger Charts*, which work similarly to the Addition Finger Charts.

They got very comfortable with the *Checkerboard* for *long multiplication* for 1 digit multipliers, so they began to use it for 2 digit multipliers.

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The Checkerboard allows children to multiply numbers with products up to 100,000,000,000. It also lays the groundwork for them to multiply large numbers abstractly.

In geometry we reviewed *the basic concepts of point, line, plane and solid*. We also learned about different *types of quadrilaterals* such as, square, rhombus, parallelogram, rectangle, isosceles trapezoid and right angled trapezoid. The first graders learned the positions of a single line: horizontal, vertical and oblique. The third graders worked on the positions of two lines: parallel, convergent, divergent, intersecting and perpendicular.

We talked about *Claude Monet*, who was a founder of French Impressionist painting. After working with Monet Cards, the kids were able to choose their 5 favorite Monet works.

In the last week or so we have really begun to hit our stride as a class. The children are able to stay focused for the majority of the 3 hour work cycle. We have also improved our classroom environment by being

mindful not to disrupt others.

We've grown

more comfortable as a community and are better able to avoid conflicts and resolve issues that do come up faster. Socially, the children are no longer limiting themselves in terms of who they choose to work or play with. It is so cool to see how the kids are learning through teaching – a typical situation in the multiage Montessori class.

I'm so happy to get to work with this group of children and look forward to all the amazing discoveries and abilities that are sure to come.

Best regards,
Mr. Matt



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

Ms. Susan

In September, we created *Rainbow Peace Dove drawings* and *Rainbow Peace Dove sculptures* to celebrate International Peace Day! Students practiced patterning, memorized the colors of the rainbow, learned how to mix colors, and practiced using complementary colors. They have problem-solved how to paint 3-dimensional artwork.

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We also began our *Universe artwork*, using unusual tools (like toothbrushes!) to paint stripes on "planet paper", then cutting and gluing the planets to sheets of "starfield paper" we created separately. In this project students learned composition and how to use contrast.



Sincerely,
Ms. Susan

Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen, Ms. Christine

Well, this has been a fast month! And it has been such a good time.

Our primary curriculum focus has been on beginning the biology/botany curriculum. And so we began with the *categorization of living and non-living*. In the category of living, we have subdivided into the categories of plant and animal. That set the stage for the more in depth study of plants.



Primary focus was on *the parts of the plant and their function*. We began with observation of the entire plant, including the root system. This led to discussion of the function of the roots of a plant: hold the plant in place, transport water and nutrients to the plant and store food.

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It was a surprise to the class that we actually EAT roots of plants. Of course, they vehemently denied it (knowing that the roots lie underground) until carrots and radishes and sweet potatoes were pulled up from underground! So we ate radishes (hot) and cooked sweet potatoes (delicious).



We then *made a soup* with roots that the children prepared. This involved the children washing, peeling and cutting the potatoes, carrots and onions to put into the chicken vegetable soup. A hit with everyone. And we shared with the other students who stay for lunch (teachers too!).



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In math, we had such a good time unpacking the big box from UPS. A new set of fraction boards! These will be in almost continuous use throughout the year. We will be working with the denominators and numerators of the fractions --what do those numbers tell us? Then we can proceed to make fraction equivalencies and add and subtract fractions. An ongoing work which is supported by cooking ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup), snack (dividing the whole amount into parts), and daily conversations (half of the children have gone home).



Math also included a story (acted out) about the time there were no numbers, when people did not have the skill of counting, and the methods they employed to keep track of important things in their life (ex. sheep). Of course, that story was followed by one of Aesop's fables: The Boy who cried Wolf which the children enthusiastically decided to act out.



Outdoors has included social time, skill building time, and team relay games. Also, many children helped to care for the plants in our garden: deadheading, weeding, and watering (a favorite). We have enjoyed every moment of the beautiful weather.



Warmly,
Ms. Karen, Ms. Christine

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Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

Our first month as the "East Class" has brought us together with lots of new learning opportunities, fun projects and many new friends. The cooler weather has brought the challenge of hanging up coats on hangers, and the yearly challenge of zipping! The older children have been so helpful with younger students, and younger students are gaining confidence in their abilities to care for themselves and navigate the classroom environment. It is amazing to see a new child zip their coat for the first time and then, in turn, help a friend. This very simple act is creating self confidence and friendships within our class! "I did it!" is such a wonderful phrase to hear.



September also brought us to the **study of apples**: The Parts of, The Life Cycle of, the Tasting of, and later this week, we will make/enjoy apple crisp - yum! We will make apple prints, too. Thank you for sending in the various apple varieties for the Sharing Basket. Apple tasting and cooking are fun, class favorites!



Other events we have enjoyed this month were **celebrating "Peace Day"** on the 22nd. The children created pictures using blue and green dye in droppers onto the "Earth", and then added a white Peace Dove.

We discussed the first day of official "Fall / Autumn" and introduced some **leaf identification** activities.

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We also enjoyed **planting mums** in the playground planters and beautifying our outdoor environment as a class project. We noted that plants have roots, stems, leaves and flowers or fruit (sometimes, bees too :) - they grow on a vine or stem, but their growing season was over. Digging in the dirt was a really popular task - definitely have your children help clean out your planter boxes and gardens at home!

Birthdays we celebrated: Syllis, Nadia and Nora. We wish them all the best in the year ahead.

We are progressing in our evaluation of each, individual child's level of capability, understanding, interest and daily improvement. Solidification of phonetic letter sounds; number recognition and the ability to associate the quantity with a specific numeral, the ability to achieve success with multi-task directions/navigation of the classroom environment are all a work in process. We will share specific observations and work plans with you at our parent conferences in October.



Our East Classroom is off to a great start and the atmosphere of family and friends is emerging very well. Your involvement is important and we thank you for your support, as always. If you would like to volunteer for any special help, we would greatly appreciate it - there are always a million little things we could use help with!

We look forward to meeting with you in October for conferences and know that we are available at any time for your questions/comments/feedback.



Warmly,
Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

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Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Ambreen

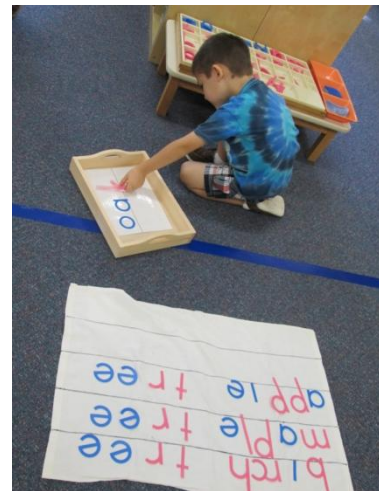
The month of September started with full zest and excitement as all my little friends joined back with their happy faces and big smiles after the long Labor Day weekend.

To help our new friends familiarize with the environment and with each other, we continued with our 'Get to Know' theme.

During the month of September, the preschoolers were given many presentations on practical life activities. The most popular among them were table scrubbing, dish washing, window washing, polishing, and necklace making.



The Kindergarteners were more focused on doing the big works like Addition Strip Board, Multiplication Board, 100 Board, Place Value, and word building.



During the second week, our focus was on the most popular crop of Illinois State - '**Corn**'. My friends in the South room were very creative in making beautiful corn art projects. As part of a practical life activity, the kids extracted kernels from dry corn ears and used them for spooning and for making popcorn for snack. The kindergarteners and pre-k kids took this as an opportunity to learn all about Illinois State and got inspired to study the map of North America.

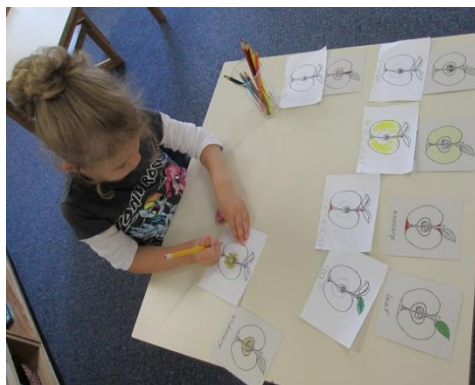
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The third week of September was themed on the ever smiling **Sunflowers**. During that week the kids admired the beautiful sunflowers, which led them to learn all about them and how they grow. The little artists were inspired to make the beautiful sunflower paintings with their fingers which looked very precious to me. All the kids enjoyed singing the sunflower song 'I'm a little sunflower'.



We were honored to host the celebration of the **International Peace Day**. Together with our friends from North and East room we lit a candle and sang the song 'Light a Candle for Peace' to show our support and solidarity with all the children of the world wishing for Peace.

The last week of September was our **'Apple Week'**, inspired by the story of Johnny Appleseed. We learned all about the parts of an apple, different kinds of apples, and we even tasted different varieties of apples. We concluded our week with an apple printing art project.



The most popular songs of the month include: *Yankee Doodle*, *I'm a Little Sunflower*, *Earth is Made of Land and Water*, and *the September Poem*.

Besides all the learning and exploring we also participated in lots of fun activities like doing dance movements and yoga on the line, use of musical instruments in our music lesson and learning Spanish words for parts of the body.

I would like to share my most interesting observation of the month. On Friday, September 19th, we had our fire drill at 10:30 a.m. As soon as the alarm went off, the kindergarteners consoled the little preschoolers and helped them walk out of the classroom, hand in hand. This was an amazing sense of responsibility, leadership, and compassion.



I would like to thank all the parents and friends who participated in the sharing basket activity. I extend my appreciation to all our friends in the North and East rooms for helping us celebrate Peace Day.

My special thanks to Sophie Pan for baking delicious corn bread muffins for snack, during corn week.

I extend a special thank you to Daria's mom for taking a time out to help us plant the beautiful fall mums.

I look forward for the month of October, with exciting new fall activities.



Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen

Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

Ms. Ambreen

I would like to start with our September poem

*In September for a while,
I will ride a crocodile.
Down the chicken soupy Nile,
Paddle once paddle twice
Paddle chicken soup with rice.*

As it is said in the poem, we in the extended pre-k class took an exciting ride of learning and exploring throughout the month of September.



In Math, the kids learned identification and counting of numbers through Number rods and Cards and Counters. We learned how to make teen numbers by using the Teen Board. The kids were very excited to count numbers by twos, which inspired them to do simple addition and prepare for multiplication.

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In language, our vowel of the month was 'a', so we worked on making word families using this vowel.

In Science, inspired by our kindergarteners looking for the worms, we learned about living and non-living things.

Digging for worms outside in the dirt also encouraged us to learn about our planet Earth that is made of land and water and the air is all around.



The beautiful sunflowers in our classroom motivated us to learn about their life cycle. The pre-k kids also created awesome sunflower paintings using their fingers.



Inspired by Johnny Apple Seed, we learned all about apples and did an apple printing art project. The endless fields of corn around us and the beautiful prairie land motivated us to learn about our state of Illinois and the kids worked really hard on their Illinois posters.

Our recipe of the month is Chocolate Chip muffins, which my friends enjoyed baking and sharing.

The month of September is at its end, but our fun for learning will not end as we embark on a new journey of discovery for the month of October with wonderful fall activities.

Dear Parents, please review with your child all the work sent home in September folders.



Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen

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Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

Games played this month: Frog in the Middle (child is a frog and is stuck in the mud and has to choose a friend to help them out). Hickory- Dickory Dock (each child is given a number, when their number is called they run around the circle and come back to their place). Then we say the poem again. Hickory Dickory Dock, the mouse ran up the clock, the clock struck (number) and down he/she ran, Hickory, Dickory Dock



Science Experiments: 1. Blowing up a balloon on a bottle. We put vinegar into a soda bottle, baking soda into the balloon and then put the balloon over the opening of the soda bottle. When the baking soda mixed with the vinegar air bubbles form causing the balloon to expand. Several days later the balloon had lost all of its air.

2. Which mixture would erupt the most- cornstarch, baking powder, or baking soda? Most of the class predicted that the baking soda would erupt the most when vinegar was added to the mixtures.

They were correct.

3. What would happen if you had three glasses, two paper towels folded into fourths, water with yellow food coloring and water with blue coloring? One glass had the yellow water and one glass had the blue water and one glass was left empty. One end of the paper towel was put in the yellow water and the empty jar and the other paper towel was put into the blue water and the other end in the empty jar with the other paper towel. The children knew that if you mixed yellow with blue you would get green. We had a yellow jar of water and empty jar and a blue jar of water. Our empty jar with the paper towels did turn green.



Art: We made apple stamping with the ends of wine corks inside of an apple stencil, painted a picture with orange that we made by mixing yellow paint with some red paint, made applesauce cinnamon dough and stamped a pumpkin into the dough. The ornament smells wonderful!

New Works: Flannel board stories - Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Five Monkey's Swinging in a Tree and Along Came an Alligator as quiet as could be.

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Play Acting: Little Miss Muffet: each child got to be Miss/Mr. Muffet as well as the spider.
Large motor skills: we worked on skipping, galloping, and marching.

*Best regards,
Ms. Donna*

