

Montessori Pathways'

News

September 2015



“Under the urge of nature and according to the laws of development, though not understood by the adult, the child is obliged to be serious about two fundamental things ... the first is the love of activity... The second fundamental thing is independence.”

(“What You Should Know About Your Child”, Maria Montessori)

Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

What a great beginning of the school year we have had! A lot of new friends joined us this year. Welcome to Montessori Pathways family, dear friends!!!

I would like to say thank you to all of our teachers who worked hard to organize and prepare a great and friendly environment for your kids to help them have a smooth and exciting beginning of the school year.

I would like to introduce our Montessori Pathways Team this year:

- Ms. Alena – Head of School
- Ms. Amber - Elementary I-II Teacher in North Room
- Ms. Christine - East Room Primary Teacher
- Ms. Carole - East Room Primary Teacher
- Ms. Andrea - South Room Primary Teacher, Pre-K Extended Day Teacher
- Ms. Eva - South Room Assistant Teacher, Afternoon Pre-K/K Group Teacher)
- Ms. Karen - Kindergarten Extended Day Teacher
- Ms. Donna - Morning Arrival, Afternoon Teacher, Elementary Gym Teacher
- Ms. Susan - Kindergarten and Elementary Art Teacher
- Ms. Robin - Music Teacher
- Ms. Brittany - Dance Teacher
- Mr. Christopher - Soccer Coach

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*When the power of love overcomes the love of power
the world will know peace.*

Jimi Hendrix

On September 21st 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".



I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our **Fall Mums Sale Fundraiser**. We were able to collect **\$328.00**, 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.

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 90 mums was unloaded in a mere 15 minutes!



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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.

Although the weather had been tricky, we finally had a chance to meet and spend some wonderful time together on our school's playground during the **Ice Cream Social**.



Coming School Events

- **October 2 - Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day (North Room)**
 - *No School for School Day Elementary students*
 - *Child Care is provided for 4:15 / All Day Students*
- **October 13 (for South room) and October 15 (for East room) – 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!

- **October 22 - Picture Day**

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.

- **October 30 – Fall Activities Fun Day**
- **November 6 - 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*

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

Wow! It has been a busy start to the school year. Getting back into a school routine can often take a child several weeks or months. In a Montessori classroom, we look for *normalization* in the classroom. This means the child comes to school and into the classroom ready to work, knowing what he/she needs to do and choosing the path to get there.



“Wish for Peace” Flags
(Elementary Class Project – Decoration for International Peace Day Celebration)

This requires self-control, internal motivation, and the desire to master the environment.

Many metamorphoses occur during the elementary years from six to twelve years of age. Children move from the sensorial learning of the early childhood environment to abstraction of knowledge. The Montessori elementary environment continues to be rich in hands-on materials that utilize the hand-brain connection which is critical for learning. Materials are used to teach the concepts and practice the concepts as the child internalizes knowledge into abstract concepts. For example, skip counting with a bead chain ultimately leads to memorization of multiplication facts and the ability to do multi-digit multiplication problems on paper.



These are truly the “intellectual” years. The child’s appetite for knowledge is great, and she/he is capable of great efforts and sustained concentration. The beginning elementary child is on the threshold of being able to reason, a critical thinking and problem-solving skill for life.

Another significant change occurs on the social level. Not only does the child become even more independent and self-sufficient, but she/he becomes more social beings, as well as socially aware. We have been spending a lot of time in class discussing respectful behavior, appropriate self-control, and making good choices. Much of this process began in the early childhood environment. The child is also developing a moral sense of right and wrong, so now as the child gets older, he/she needs to learn to be responsible for his/her behavior and for her/his choices. Often this is not an easy task, and children need support, guidance, and encouragement from parents and teachers. The outcome is a confident, independent, and self-motivated child with an upstanding character ready to tackle the challenges of adolescence.



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As we move towards a normal routine, the children have been busy with big work, such as exploring the world from the “Big Bang” theory to the names of continents and oceans; a study of flags; reviewing previously learned concepts in Math and Language; practicing their penmanship; and little work, such as reviewing the sounds of letters, and understanding the need to write their name and the date on all of their work. The children are encouraged daily to do their best work the first time, neat and tidy, to avoid the need to rewrite the work. Order, organization, and neatness are very important at this age, plus the reward is individual pride in the work. Excitement is high on Fridays when we spent some time doing or observing experiments or special projects.



Highlights so far include: “I did it!” when shoe-tying was mastered, “I did the whole thing myself” for parts of the flag, “I finished my work plan and I helped three other kids,” and “I remembered this from last year and I wanted to do it better this time.”

The joys of learning are numerous... get excited and stay excited. The children are. This year certainly will be!



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Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen

The Kindergarten Extended Day is off to a delightful start! At the beginning of the year, we have 3 primary goals: sharpen skills that will be needed in creating more complex works and projects this year (cutting with precision, gluing, organizing the papers needed to do the work). This can be done within the context of an interesting “art work”. The other skill which is emphasized is organization of materials when we do a work.



Several of the coming works (and even the completed ones), have multiple steps and require, for example, large paper, assorted colored papers, scissors, glue material, pencil, ruler, a place for the scrap paper generated during the cutting portion. Then pictures are organized on the paper to get a view of placement and how the finished product will look. A specific example was creating the living / nonliving poster. These activities usually incorporate one main “academic” idea. In this case, it was categorization of living and nonliving.

The lessons were designed to introduce a big, over-arching idea in several of the content areas. So we have done the beginning of mapping, a big idea in geography. We also did Land / Air / Water, another big idea. By introducing the big, foundational categories and ideas for each subject area, we give more meaning and grounding to the ideas that will follow in that category. We also began to talk about stars, galaxies, day and night, etc.



So, in science, we also did of the living, we categorize into plants and animals. This provides a base for further exploration into the science area.

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For math, we are providing experiences in working with the concrete decimal materials (one, ten, hundred, and thousand). This base must be laid to have a meaningful foundation for further work in the math area. Also a bit of history ---- there was a time of no numerals. They had not been “invented” yet, so how did people keep track of their positions (knots on a rope, stones in a basket).

The language area has focused on refining handwriting skills through the labeling of our work, through actual practice in penmanship, and through inset work which indirectly provides a way of the child becoming more skilled at handwriting.



In geometry, we begin with learning the vocabulary for geometric shapes and the 3 dimensional solids.

In history, we began with the time of no life. So, with many foundational lessons in place, we will continue to “grow” each area through further presentations.

Of course, equally important is the beginning of developing a cooperative community in the classroom, sometimes working together, sometimes one child helping another, sometimes just sharing our ideas in a group. And then attending to the grace and courtesy of being in a group: how to wait our turn for example, how to solve simple relationship “problems” that arises in a group, how to help another person, how to wait for help from an adult. With these fundamentals in place, we can move deeper into each area throughout the year. There is time for art, for reading aloud to the children, and, a favorite: our riddle of the day.

It has been a pleasure to have the company of these young people in this group: they are interested, cooperative, learning patience, AND we have fun doing it.



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

Ms. Susan

In September, the elementary class explored art techniques from cutouts to crayons to blending. First, they cut out a black banyan tree shape and glued it to white paper. Then, they used complementary colors to blend into the negative space between the branches. The next project built on these skills with a Georgia O'Keeffe style flower drawing, in which they explored blending different hues of the same color family, such as orange and red, or purple and blue. The class also practiced identifying famous paintings in an art game, and drew in their new Creative Arts journals.



The kindergarten class developed a multimedia summer scene with oil pastels, crayons, markers, and paper cutouts. They drew butterflies, flowers and other insects and plants, cut them out, colored them, and glued them on large blue paper. By using multiple steps, they learned how to place several small illustrations in a larger composition. They demonstrated excellent cutting and gluing skills. They also explored the monarch butterfly life cycle, and drew in their new Creative Arts journals.



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Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

Happy Fall to our East Classroom Families! It has been a busy and successful start to the new school year and we have already seen many great friendships form as well as getting comfortable with the new routines. Basically, we've been working on presenting work from the shelves and social skills!



"Happy Peace Day 2015!" (East room project)

It was great to have so many students returning from Summer Camp and they have been so helpful with our first year children - shoes, sweaters/hangers, showing how and where work is located have been observed every day. It is the beauty of the multi-age classroom.

Practical Life and Sensorial areas are popular with your children but we are also introducing phonetic letter sounds, handwriting and basic Math functions/number recognition as well.

We are gaining a sense of where each child is on the educational level and will continue to work individually and in small groups - we look forward to parent/teacher conferences in November to network with you and share our observations.



In Practical Life, children are enjoying apple cutting and carrot peeling (a great way to learn a routine and hone hand strength) - we will introduce "Baking" activity shortly; a popular and favorite work! Pouring water (and cleaning up the spills!), tweezing, sorting, transferring objects, manipulating locks are activities for working on fine and gross motor coordination.



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In Sensorial, choosing a rug or table for a work and then working on grading, sequencing, organizing work is a daily activity.

We have enjoyed an apple tasting activity - Granny Smith, McIntosh and Golden Delicious apples were enjoyed, and the Parts of an Apple were introduced and then offered as a Botany activity in Science.



A big thank you to our Sharing Basket contributions which help daily with tasting and snack preparation activities!

Your children have been so helpful to each other, setting lunch tables, folding laundry and being kind and considerate to one another - we are looking forward to a very creative and year of growth ahead!

Ms. Carole and I encourage you to let us know of any concerns or change in your child's routine - it is important that we are on the same page daily. We are so glad you are here and are so proud of each child's progress. Look forward to seeing you at Parent Nights!

Thank you for being part of the Montessori Pathways Family!!



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Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Eva

Wow, the school year has really gotten off to a great start in the South room. It's amazing to think that we have only been in school for a few weeks.

We began the school year with a focus on community building and an emphasis on grace and courtesy. We reviewed general classroom/school/playground ground rules and why we have rules in place; to make sure everyone is safe and happy at school and is able to learn their best throughout the day.



“Rainbow of Peace”
(South room team project)



We worked on learning each other's names through line time songs such as: “Ickle me, tickle me, bumble bee. Will you say your name for me?” and “Where is Jimmy? Where is Jimmy?” (to the tune of *Where is Thumbkin*). We also played name games, such as “Who's missing?” in which all the children hide their eyes and I choose one of them to tip toe away from the group and hide out of sight, and then the group has to figure out who is missing from the line. I also have heard a lot of, “what's your name again?” But it seems like, overall, most of the children know each other's names now.

The beginning of the school year is also a time for a variety of whole group presentations; both to introduce our brand new friends to the Montessori materials as well as refreshers for the returning students. We've covered a lot of works this first month, from some of the basics like hand washing, how to blow your nose with a tissue, how to wait for help from a teacher, how to carry and unroll/roll a work rug, to the ever more complicated works such as the multiplication board and word building with the moveable alphabet.



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The most popular work this first month has definitely been the gorgeous metal insets, as I'm sure many of you have seen different traced shapes coming home. At first glance you might think that your child is merely tracing a stencil but they are learning a variety of skills with this work: how to organize the work on their table, how to hold a pencil with a proper pincer writing grip, the names of the different shapes (oval, ellipse, square, triangle, circle, curvilinear triangle, quatrefoil, rectangle, trapezoid, pentagon), as well as an introduction to geometry that they will see in the sensorial area, and an opportunity for artistic creativity.



Food preparation is another area that has attracted many of the children this past month. Every morning and afternoon the children are expected to help prepare the snack for the class. We have had many enthusiastic helpers cleaning, cutting, and serving strawberries, bananas, apples, cantaloupe, honeydew as well as delicious fresh cucumbers from Chloe Harris's garden.

The children are learning to use a variety of kitchen tools: cutting boards, knives, apple corers, colanders, tongs, vegetable peelers, etc. We have also introduced the choice of a sprinkle of salt, pepper, or garlic salt on their cucumbers. We are introducing carrot peeling and chopping this week, so you may notice little baggies of carrots coming home. We allow the child to make the choice of serving the carrot they prepare to their friends or taking it home to eat later. Quite often they are so proud of their skills that they prefer to show and share at home. We will be starting baking in October when the weather is a bit cooler.



Monday, September 21st was "International Peace Day" and we celebrated by learning the words and sign language to *Light a Candle for Peace* and singing outside with the whole school. The South room made a whole class mural, the children created a rainbow with their handprints above the earth. We also traced our handprints to make a peace dove. In addition, we had many discussions at line time about what peace means and how we can be peaceful. Since then, I have overheard many children saying, "That's not being peaceful" or "I think I need to sit down and be quiet and peaceful."

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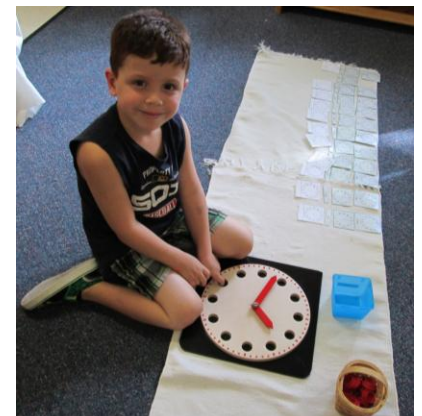
Overall, we have had a really wonderful start to our school.



Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

Ms. Andrea

After the Pre-K friends enjoy their outdoor recess time, we head inside to the South room to continue our Montessori day. Sometimes the children have a work that they need to complete from that morning's work cycle or the previous day, and this is a great opportunity to do so. Because this is a smaller group of older children, this is a special time for group presentations from Ms. Karen and I.



It's also a perfect time to introduce very challenging and in-depth work on a more individual basis. In the afternoon, the pre-k group is very hard at work and it's a chance for the older children from the East and South rooms to work together. During this time, the children also prepare the afternoon snack, set the tables, and serve snack for those children that stay a bit later. It's a very nice way to end each school day.



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Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

We are now into our routine. Wake up, cots put away, use washroom, have our snack, listen to a story, pick an activity, older students arrive around 4:15 and they pick an activity, around 4:45 we clean up the room, use the bathroom, get our outside shoes and blue bags and head outside.

Art: variety of options: such as cutting paper, coloring, gluing our cuttings, making a tree by tracing our hand and arm and adding apples using aluminum foil rolled into a ball and placed in red paint and then stamped on the tree, making two or three zig zag lines and painting with two different colors making a design, making our Peace Bird by putting dots of paint on our bird using the top of a new pencil.

Songs: A Ram Sam Sam

Story: Usually about different animals



Learning about our five senses: eyes, ears, nose, taste and touch.

For ears we listened to how many pennies were dropped into a mason jar.

For taste we had a piece of black paper and it had a teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of sugar - they looked the same but our tongue told us that they were different.

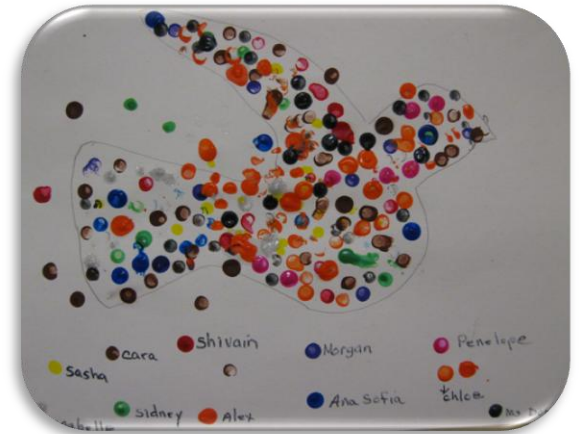
For eyes we looked at the pictures in the books.

For nose we smelled a jar that had cinnamon in it.

For touch we had to figure out what was in the bag.

Activities: Magnets, animals, train, Mr. Potato Head, books, shaving cream, farm, marbles, cars, art, sand, puzzles, moving small items from one bowl to another.

Outside: balls, T-ball, cars, swings, monkey bars etc.



“Peace Dove”
(Afternoon Group Project)

Games: Whose Missing (a child is chosen to hide under a blanket then another child has to figure out who is hiding), Doggie, Doggie, Where's your Bone.

Science: Growing a lizard - We have been measuring our pet lizard each week. We have been amazed at how big he has become. Now we are watching him shrink back to his original size.



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There are so many cool pictures and great moments I would like to share with you, my friends. But I afraid that it will make our newsletter endless. Please check your emails for a set of pictures of your child(ren)'s daily activities soon.

*Best regards,
Ms. Alena*

