



Montessori Pathways School News

September 2016

Notes from Head of School

by Ms. Alena Baradzina

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.

We, Montessori Pathways Team, really appreciate parents' help in being patient and giving us and your kids time for the beginning of school year transition and new students' adjustment.

Students have learned the names of their new friends and teachers, built a friendship, learned or reviewed the class and schools' environment, rules, and routine during September. Now they are ready for their exciting and satisfying journey and discovery.

Ice Cream Social



Everyone enjoyed meeting old and new friends and spending some wonderful time together on our school's playground during the Ice Cream Social.



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".



Hardy Mums Sale Fundraiser



We would like to thank everyone who contributed to our **Fall Mums Sale Fundraiser**. We were able to collect **\$460.00**, 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 100 mums was unloaded in a mere 15 minutes!



Children's Quotations:

- During dismissal time: "What is your car number?" - "It is 20 plus 5".
- Seeing a bee on the plant during the field trip at Countryside Nursery: "Look! I see a pollinator!"



Coming School Events

- **October 10 (Monday) – No School** (Columbus Day)
- **October 13 (Thursday) - 6:00pm - Elementary Parent Orientation Meeting for 5-day Trip to Nature Classroom in Lake Geneva, WI**
- **October 27 (Thursday) - 6:00pm - Montessori Fun / Educational Family Night:**
 - “Montessori at Home: Simplified”- workshop for parent
 - **Movie / Popcorn Night – fun night for kids.**

- **October 20 (Thursday) - 9:00-11:00am - 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 31 (Monday) – Morning - Halloween Costume Party**

* Parents are welcome to organize Halloween morning activities in the classroom

- **October 31 (Monday) – Afternoon - Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF – Kindergarten and Elementary students**

- **November 4 (Friday) - By appt. - East Room Parent / Teacher Conference Day**

- No School for Morning and School Day East room students.
- Child care is provided for 4:15 / All Day East room students

- **November 7 (Monday) - By appt. - South Room Parent / Teacher Conference Day**

- No School for Morning and School Day South room students.
- Child care is provided for 4:15 / All Day South room students

Halloween Party Guidelines:

The children are invited to come to school dressed in a Halloween costume. Each 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 participate in special morning holiday activities.

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.

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.

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.

News from the Elementary Class

(North Room)

by Ms. Amber



This year, one new resource used in the classroom is a small book titled *Word of the Day*. Students are very excited to learn and hear about a new (or not-so-new) word to enrich their vocabulary. One word that best describes the

direction of the classroom right now is **purposeful**. Are the students using purposeful movements, actions, and words? Are they doing purposeful work? Are they using their time wisely and with purpose? Even though school has been back in session for four weeks, not all of the children are back into a routine and this does not take into account days missed due to absence or illness.

Montessori used the word **normalized** to describe children who had begun to work seriously with materials. She observed normalized children as calm, content, compassionate, and responsible in the school classroom. That is our goal. Being purposeful will take us there. The process of normalization can take four to six weeks or sometimes longer, but most children do get there.

The Montessori six to twelve-year-old classroom has the benefits of older children mentoring younger children, guiding them on their path to normalization. That purposeful work is beautiful to see.

Our first word of the day was *sparkle* and it really describes the excitement children have when they figure out how to tie their shoes, remember the continents and oceans, complete a division problem, write a seven sentence paragraph, or witness an experimental volcanic eruption.

The students simulated our solar system and the difficulty of trying to rotate around the sun. Poor Neptune struggled to keep up with every half step that Mercury took around the Sun!

“The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, ‘The children are now working as if I did not exist’.”

~ Maria Montessori

Our trip to the local library was successful, and just a little damp. Next we have learned about plants at a local garden center. These chances to “get out” are very important, and provide purposeful learning opportunities to support the Math, Geometry, Language, Social Studies, and Science presentations and processes in the classroom.

We welcome Ms. Brigitte into the elementary classroom, as she will be teaching and assisting for a few hours each week. She will share her passion for books, reading, words, language, and science. Those are just a few of Ms. Brigitte’s favorite things.





September Photo Gallery

Elementary Class



News from the Kindergarten Extended Day Class

by Ms. Karen

In just a short time, has it only been a few weeks? We are already seeing the children becoming more independent which implies knowing where supplies are located, assuming responsibility for the environment, making more of their own choices, understanding the routines. Already, there has been a visible growth in choosing work and extended time on task. Choosing their work builds over a period of time as it requires a repertoire of works from which to choose. Initially, the child may have a few works with which he/she is familiar. The adult does presentations which expands the number of appropriate works from which to choose. So choice expands. Interests expand. Skills grow.

We all (children too) help to care for our environment. If we see something out of order, we fix it. If someone forgets to put a work away, we put it away. If supplies need refilling, we refill. We work together to create and maintain an environment of beauty, order and harmony. We all have a role to play.

In the curriculum area, we have worked on establishing the basic skills that are needed when doing more complex activities. This includes cutting, gluing and organizing. The projects that we have done emphasize the isolated practice of individual skills which are needed in combination to be successful in the more complex work. When these skills are not in place, it is a hindrance, a frustration for the child. It inhibits him from succeeding at more complex work.

So, emphasis on cutting with precision (straight line, curved line, intricate pattern). Gluing carefully, labeling our work, organization and sequence of activity.

Precision is necessary to succeed in math and, as the children become more product oriented, they are looking for satisfying results. So we fold precisely, but in folding a square corner to corner. We glue carefully, but in gluing our 4 sided shapes, we introduced the idea of quadrilaterals, an overarching idea that will then be analyzed into KINDS of quadrilaterals.

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

-Benjamin Franklin

Precision: necessary in the complex activities. So we work on writing **ON** the line, we **CREASE** the fold, we lay out the activity in order of the multiple steps required.

Biology/botany curriculum has been introduced beginning with *living/not living, plant/animal*. We are therefore learning to categorize ideas and to create sets. Those sets have specific characteristics. We begin with the whole and learn the component parts. These curriculum subjects continue throughout the year.

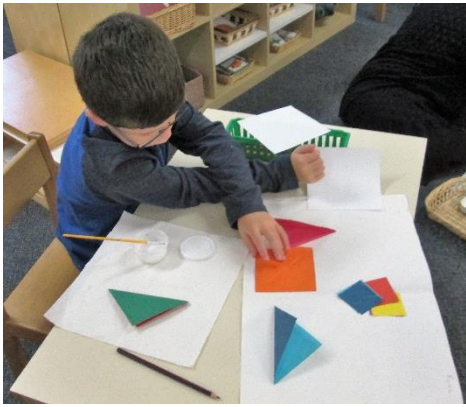
We have started working with the *decimal system* using precise and concrete materials. The children will be building on that experience by associating the concrete place value with the numerals that represent it. It leads to constructing 4 place value numbers.

Geography will be beginning, starting with *air/land/water* and then looking at maps and various *land/water forms*.

Finally, **on line**, we are practicing various rhythms and moving to them: walking, marching, tiptoeing, galloping, etc. It is a part of music that is based on the mathematics of music. We have added rhythm sticks and will continue to develop the pattern recognition, the beginning of reading note values.

Our **“speech pattern”** of the month is: “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try, try again.” It not only provides a rhythm for us, but carries a valuable message.

Discovery: one child was so excited that HE “discovered” that $3 + 4 = 7$ AND $2 + 5 = 7$. How could that be?! Does it only work for 7? Are there more combinations? Does it work with numbers other than 7? He spent the rest of the afternoon discovering number combinations, making equalities, experimenting with ways to make 10. At the end of the afternoon, he had such a sense of satisfaction, *“I discovered something new!”*



September Photo Gallery

Kindergarten Extended Day



News from the Art Class (Kindergarten and Elementary)

by Ms. Linda

We've had a great start to the school year in art class. Both classes started off working with lines and patterns by creating patterned elephants. We also discussed the use of complimentary colors as each student chose a pair of complimentary colors for their elephant and its back ground.

The kindergarten class has been practicing using shapes and colors by creating castles and shape puppets. We finished off the month by creating an autumn tree using warm colors. Look for the shape of their hands in the tree branches!



The elementary class did a directed line drawing and created some amazing and inventive dragons. We talked about color and the different ways we can use color in our art work. The elementary students are currently creating an art journal folder. Throughout the year they will be creating pages for their journals and at the end of the year we will assemble them into books.



News from the South Room

by Ms. Andrea

It's almost the end of September and things are moving right along in the South Room. The children seem to have internalized their new schedules and are able to follow the daily routine quite well at this point. Every morning we welcome happy and confident young people into the classroom, ready to begin a new day of exploration and learning. There has also been a shift away from heavy reliance on the teachers, and instead we are seeing children beginning to solve problems either by themselves or with the help of a friend. It's amazing to see this confidence and independence so early in the school year; we truly have a great group of children this year.



The younger children of the group are quite happy to begin their day in the **Practical Life** area of the classroom. This is the area where they are learning the skills necessary to be more self-reliant and increase their self-confidence.

The activities in this area are designed to strengthen each child's sense of Independence, Order, Concentration, and Coordination; four important elements that will serve them well in all the areas of the classroom.



The work they do in the Practical Life area emphasizes (1) *care of the self* (handwashing, food preparation, learning to use various utensils: spooning, tonging, tweezing, cutting) (2) *care of the classroom* (polishing, table scrubbing, etc.) (3) *care of the world* (plant care, gardening, weeding, etc.).

The older children use the Practical Life area in a different way; they do handwashing not for the activity itself, but so they can prepare snack for the whole classroom, they choose table scrubbing when they have gotten pencil or glue on a table and are preparing it for the next person to use, and sometimes they choose a Practical Life activity as a break and reset from the more academic work they are involved in. We have added a few seasonal activities in this area this month which include tweezing corn from a cob and leaf rubbing with the various autumn leaves we are finding outside. We will be doing more activities with leaves as the season continues, so if you find any special leaves while you are outside with your child, please have them bring them to school.

We have a lot of children that are learning to both recognize their name in print and how to write their own name. If you are interested in working with them at home on these two things, I would recommend Pinterest. There are a ton of very fun and creative ways to help them with their names. At school we are working on using the chalkboard to practice the formation of the letters in their names, as well as writing in a yellow marker and having them trace over in pencil.

If your child has not brought their **sound book** home yet, please look for it in their blue schoolbags this week. The idea is for them to learn their sounds at school and practice them at home with you. This is a great way

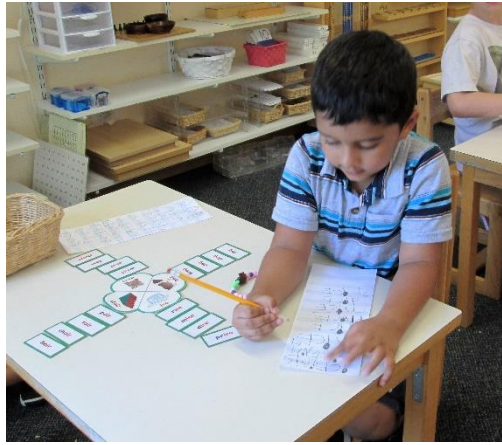
for them to share what sounds they have mastered as well as have another chance to practice the ones they are currently working on. When working on their sound books at home, please first ask them: "what sound does this letter make?" so they have an opportunity to recall if they can. If they are unable to recall the sound, then say: this letter makes the sound *mmmmm*. You can then trace the letter with your index and middle finger, always starting at the top of the letter, and repeat the sound it makes. Then have them trace and make the sound at least 2 times.

The **Sensorial area** of the classroom has also been a very popular spot for many of the children. I have seen many interesting patterns being constructed with the brown stairs and pink cubes. This area also lends itself to small group lessons. I have invited several groups of 3-8 children for lessons on various sensorial and geometry materials including: sound cylinders, color tablets, geometric solids, pink cubes and brown stairs, knobbed and knob-less cylinders, etc. This is a great way to engage several children at one time and also a great lesson on taking turns.

One game in particular, what I call The Color Game, the children have really enjoyed and you can easily do at home. All you need to do is use something that has several colors, a box of crayons for example, and then choose 8 or more (depending on your child's interest) and have them choose one color at a time and go on a color hunt around the house, choosing items of the same color and bringing them back to where you started, then moving on to the next color. This is a great game for movement, memory, and color recognition.



Overall, we have had an incredible first month of school and are enjoying getting to know your wonderful children. We are looking forward to more fun in the Autumn.



September Photo Gallery South Room



News from Pre-K Extended Day

by Ms. Andrea

The afternoon group of Pre-k children continue to show just how amazing and capable they are. They have already adjusted to this afternoon work cycle and enter the classroom confident with great ideas of what they want to explore that day.



It's incredible to think that just a few months ago, these children were the "little nappers" and now they are owning the classroom like "big kids."



This has also been a great opportunity for these pre-k children to observe the more advanced activities that the kindergarteners are currently working on. It seems to help inspire their own ideas as well as strengthen their maturity and self-confidence as learners.



News from the East Room

by Ms. Carole

Is it just me or has September simply flown by for your family too? It seems like school just began and now we are already beginning our second month! With the month of September being dry and mild, we've been able to begin our mornings on the playground. The children have enjoyed meeting up with friends to have short play time before we began our work inside.

Building community has been a central theme for us this past month. Meeting on the playground and coming into the classroom together has been just one way to begin building a community of caring helpers. Together, we help one another with shoes and or jackets; we take turns washing hands. We sit together and wait until everyone has been served before eating our group snack. Waiting can be so difficult, but we can do it with each other's help!!



Another topic discussed during our community time has been classroom rules. Through our grace and courtesy lesson these rules are mentioned and practiced. Some of these safety rules have been using walking feet, walking around and rolling up work rugs, doing our work on tables or rugs, receiving a presentation, carrying sharp objects, inside voices and of course using the bathroom. The common theme with every rule is respect for each other, themselves and the environment.

Activities in our **Practical Life Area** center on caring for their environment. Plant care, polishing, window washing and dish washing are helping them become aware of the classroom needs. Washing their own hands before food prep, cutting an apple or carrot and bringing it home to you (which they love to do) are some of the self-care activities that are being done. Helping a friend find something in the room, or by asking a friend, who may be sad, "what can I do to help?" are just a couple examples in which we are learning how to care for each other.

Children have been working daily in other areas as well. In the **Sensorial Area** the children have been working with

"These very children reveal to us the most vital need of their development, saying : 'Help me to do it alone!'"

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

the following materials: The Pink Tower, Brown Stairs and Cylinder Blocks - which help children visually discriminate various dimensions. The Color Boxes - naming and matching color pairs. The Construction Triangle Boxes – creating new geometric shapes from smaller triangles and The Geometric Solids. Vocabulary building is an important part of this activity.

It's been especially sweet to see the excitement in their faces as we learn the names of the Geometric Solids during our small group presentations. The small group lessons are quite popular with our younger friends.



Children have also been completing science and language booklets with the 3 Part Card Materials. Each set of science cards highlight parts of an animal or plant. As the cards are placed on a work rug we name and briefly discuss the purpose of each part. Once that is done they may make their own booklet to take home. We have observed a great sense of accomplishment when children complete this work.

Some older children have been learning about continents plus creating their own continent maps.....

We are currently assessing and observing each child's understanding of sounds *and math as well*.....

At the end of our morning we come together to sing songs, play little games, or discuss important matters as they

arise, plus say goodbye to our morning friends. Our classroom has been a buzz of activity throughout this past month and truly fun. Friendships are being made and children are developing skills to assist them into more and more independence as the year continues on.

During the last week of September we had an apple tasting activity. (Yum Yum) The children absolutely loved tasting a variety of apples. We tasted golden delicious, gala, mackintosh and honey crisps. Without doubt, honey crisp was the apple of choice and the clear winner. To go along with our apple theme we learned songs and the names of many different types of apples, plus had fun creating an apple craft.

We want to say “thank you” for your contribution to our first sharing basket of the year. It’s just another small way of building community – we couldn’t do it without your help.



September Photo Gallery

East Room





News from the Late Afternoon Class

By Ms. Donna

GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Acted out the stories of "Goldilocks and The Three Bears" and "The Three Little Pigs". Each of these stories were acted out several times with the children taking on different parts.

Read -- "Germs Are Not for Sharing" by Elizabeth Verdick; "Who Took the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?" Illustrated by Viviana Garofoli. We then sang the song. "Stories For All Seasons" by Eric Carle (Rooster's Off to See the World, A House for Hermit Crab and The Tiny Seed)



Science -- Measured our pet Iguana and put him in a container of water. He was 7 3/4 inches on day one. Day two he was 12 inches and a week later he was 15" long. He also had grown in width. Day 1, 1", day 2, 2" and a week later 3" wide.

Learning about our five senses using our eyes, hands, ears, mouth and nose. We felt objects in a bag and had to guess what we felt and then put the object on its matching shape. Some of us were correct and some of us were fooled.

We smelled bottles with a cotton ball inside of them. One was peppermint, one was lemon and the last one was cinnamon. We learned not to put our nose close to the bottle in case the smell was too strong. We used our hand to wave over the bottle to bring the smell up slowly. This was called Wafting.



We listen to the sound of pennies being put into a jar. The (IT) person could not look at the pennies as they were being put into the jar. After they heard the word stop, they would then say how many they heard go into the jar. Then they would count to see if they were correct. Next month we will finish learning about sight and taste and then make a book.

We discovered if you mixed cornstarch and slowly add the water together in a pan it looked and felt hard when you would touch it. But when you were able to grab some in your hand it would begin to drip from your hand when you held your hand over the pan. We also felt the cornstarch and it felt soft before we added the water.



Before any on us felt the mixture we all said how we thought it would feel. A special effect happen (The mixture becomes hard, the more pressure you apply to it. It looks like a liquid lying in the pan, but when you press on it, it hardens and feels like a solid). Everyone was surprised that it felt hard and then began to slip out of our hand and back into the pan

Art-- On a piece of paper make a drawing of a line that can cross over its self (like a scribble design) then using watercolor paint over the line remembering to stop and use a different color each time the line intersects with another line. Happy Fall picture. Children ripped apart paper that reminded us about fall colors and glued the pieces on their tree.



Free choice activities-- shaving cream design, dinosaurs game, stamping works.

Gym activity-- march in place (quietly) jog in place (slowly and then fast) and toss a ball to another person etc. When everyone has had a turn try to remember who you tossed the ball to and repeat tossing the ball to everyone again. We did it three times in a row.

We have spent a wonderful time together!

