

Montessori Pathways' News



When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength

-Dr. Maria Montessori

their eyes, taking care of themselves and helping each other, learning how to compromise living with roommates, and building a new friendship.

During this trip, our students learned a lot of new facts, built many new skills, tried different new foods suggested by their friends, made a lot of new friends from the other Montessori schools, and, the most important part of this trip, they spent most of each day in the forest and on the lake.



Exploring Nature

Notes from Ms. Alena



From the very beginning of life, it is vital to maintain the link between child and nature. To achieve this, we need to become aware of the importance of nature in our own lives, only then we will be able to share this wonderful world of miracles with our children.



Spending time in nature is a fully integrated sensory experience. Watching the sunlight bounce off of trees as they sway in the wind, smelling the plants and flowers around you, hearing the leaves crunch under your feet, feeling the cold dirt in your hands, and sometimes even tasting the fresh vegetables or herbs from a garden. Engaging with nature grounds us and reminds us of our connection to the environment. Nature provides a powerful tool for nurturing young minds.

The highlight of this month was the 4-day trip of our Elementary students to Nature's Classroom in Salem, WI. For the sixth time, our students were away from their families for 4 days (3 nights) in a row.



This national program of nature exploration brought to our students such a great experience of going in the path of rediscovery of nature, in the path of rediscovery of the world through



Thank you to all families who participated in our "Come and Work Together!" Family Night. It was so important for your children to feel that you are part of their learning journey.



Thank you, Parents!!!

“Parents are the ultimate role models for children. Every word, movement and action has an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parent.”

~Bob Keeshan



~ April was a fairly busy month for us. One of our very successful events was “Spruce it Up: Doughnuts with Grownups!” The kids were so excited to work together with their parents making our playground safe, nice, clean, and beautiful. ~



~ The Montessori Pathways team and students would like to extend our appreciation to parents for their tremendous help during the “Spruce it Up: Doughnuts with Grownups!” event. ~

Thank you, Students!!!

As soon as our Elementary students learned that one of their classmate families is going through a very tough time, they decided to do a Bake Sale Fundraiser to support this family.



The week was full of ideas, energy, and creativity.



Thank you so much to all families who supported this idea. What a great community we have!



Way to go , Montessori Pathways students!
You all are having such big hearts!

COMING SCHOOL EVENTS

in May

- ⇒ **May 2 (Th) at 5:30pm - Elementary Science Demo Family Night.**
- ⇒ **May 6 – 10 (M-F) - National Teacher Appreciation Week**

“Dear Montessori Pathways teachers, your passionate service have put our children in a position to succeed. The futures you have remodeled can never be altered. I couldn’t have asked for a better team in this school, for the love, patience, and passion that you bring to work every day. You make my job easy because you’re so wonderful at yours. Your profession deserves to be mentioned and appreciated every day. You are society builders. You are the celebrants of today. Thank you for your selfless service from the bottom of my heart “ ~ Ms. Alena Baradzina

This week is a great chance for our families to pass your warm and kind words to your teachers!



- ⇒ **May 15, Wednesday (Rain Day—May 17, Friday) - Planting Day / Pastries with Parents!**

Our students brought so much energy and effort helping their dads with spreading the mulch on our playground to make it nice and safe. Thank you, little friends!!!



Now it is time to add the finishing touches to our school's outdoor area and we invite all moms or grandmas to enjoy planting together.

It would be great if every child could bring one plant before Planting Day (on May13 (M) or May 14 (Tu)) to have a chance to participate in the creation of the Pathways' Garden.

Any perennial, annual, or veggie plant would be very helpful and appreciated.

- ⇒ **May 16 (Th) at 9:30am - Elementary Class Trip to Willow Crystal Lake to see “The Music Man” performance presented by CYT.**
- ⇒ **May 22 (W) at 2:00pm - Kindergarten Moving On Ceremony.** Kindergarten parents are welcome to attend.
- ⇒ **May 23 (Th) at 2:00pm— Six Grade Graduation Ceremony.** Parents are welcome to attend.
- ⇒ **May 24 (F) at 10:30 am—School-wide Final Picnic at Veteran Acres Park.** Everyone is welcome.
- ⇒ **May 27 (M) - No School (Memorial Day)**



- ⇒ **The Last Day of School is Wednesday, May 29th.**
- ⇒ **The school will be closed for Summer Camp preparation May 30—May 31.**
- ⇒ **The Summer Camp begins Monday, June 3rd.**

- ⇒ **June 3 – August 16 – Summer Camp (11 weeks)**
- ⇒ **August 19 - 23 (M – F) - No Class (2024-2025 School Year Preparation; Parents/ Students Orientation Days)**
- ⇒ **August 26 (M) - The first day of 2024-2025 school year (full schedule)**

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

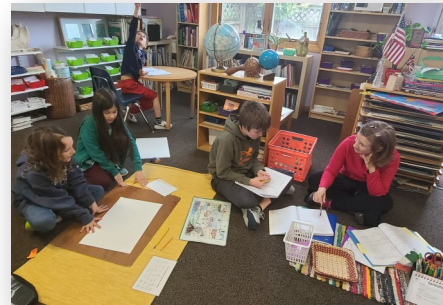
Research Presentations are an exciting time in the Elementary class. Each child selects a topic, locates books from the library and then makes a web of ideas that interest the child. Once the child finishes the web, a meeting with me happens and then the child writes the research on index cards and makes a visual.



Finally, the children practice together, in front of our class, to the primary kids and then to the parents. The students enjoy sharing the research and pictures that they prepared. It is exciting for me to learn new fun facts and to see the growth of each child from year to year.



Parent Teacher Conferences were enjoyable. I love connecting with everyone and working together to make every child have the best experience. Thank you for partnering with me and I am looking forward to ALL of my students returning next school year!



NCI, Nature's Classroom, is a magical place. From the time we arrive, until the time that we depart, the children are immersed in outdoor adventures. They are joined by other Montessori schools for classes and meals. They sleep as a class in a cabin with Ms Alena and I as the only chaperones. They eat incredible food. Ask any student, they will tell you this is true! Because it is Montessori based, there are many opportunities for choice and independence. No student wanted to leave, and they are begging us to switch from 4 days to 5 next year. This experience is one that all students remember forever.



Life Science is always a favorite of all elementary students, and this year is no different. We finished invertebrates and have been exploring vertebrates. Our most recent vertebrate, the reptile, included a visit with Elvis, my own pet turtle. He is no longer dormant, so we were able to see him move around his pool. But you have to be SO quiet, or he hides immediately in his shell.



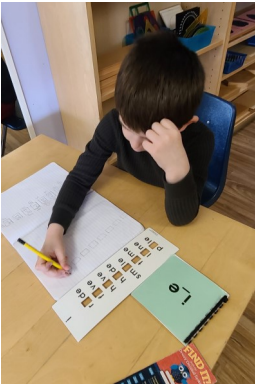
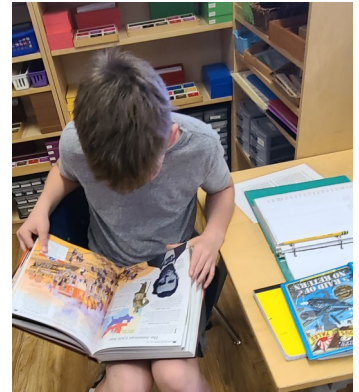
Earth Day is every day with us. But in order to remember all that we should be doing, we read books, did art projects out of recycled materials (Thanks, Ms Amy, our amazing volunteer!!!!), and thought about ways we can contribute today. We did activities every day that week.



We are preparing for our Science Night which is May 2! The students are SO pumped for this. We hope to see all there including our primary friends. All are invited.

APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP



Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

The warmer days that we have had in April have allowed us to get more creative with using our outdoor classroom. Some days we have focused more on physical development (learning to jump rope, racing, soccer, field hockey, jumping jacks, or good old dance parties), others on giving back to the planet (picking up trash in our community), or on the emerging spring.



We challenged our older students to describe Spring using their 5 senses and they had some fascinating interpretations of spring! The most common response where "Spring sounds like the loud woodpecker in our playground and spring tastes like ice cream." We also tried to line up in an S shape (for Spring) and, after successfully doing so with great practice of teamwork and coordination, witnessed our students spontaneously and harmoniously start singing the "Light a Candle for Peace" song from earlier this year. Isn't it lovely?



As our sunny and warm days turned to more wet worm weather days, we took time to explore worms! We were careful to bring them in with enough soil to keep them covered – did you know worms cannot be exposed to light for longer than an hour? Well, our Pre-K and Kinders know now! Our group was really excited to compare themselves to worms, from their lack of spines to how they move their bodies by contracting their muscles to the length of the longest worm in history (21 ft!) and, of course, extra excited to have the chance to hold the worms ever so gently.



Digging around in dirt for worms seems like such a core childhood memory, but how many of our children have had the chance to do so?! It was great to see that everyone at least gave the worms a chance, and some were even ready to adopt them as pets!

The signs of spring outside have been so exciting for our students to notice. Some noticed new grass growth on the playground, with very excited shouts of "LOOK! It's green!" Others noticed plants breaking through on the raised beds, remembering that we had chives and strawberries there during the summer and fall. Another group still had created a daily daffodil report. This has opened up interest in more "signs of spring" language work, journaling, creative drawing and creation of daffodils from shapes! Can you tell this group LOVES daffodils? We used this excitement to create the "Welcome" sign full of handprint flowers for the "Work Together" evening – it was a huge undertaking but with strong teamwork, we were able to finish it in one afternoon!

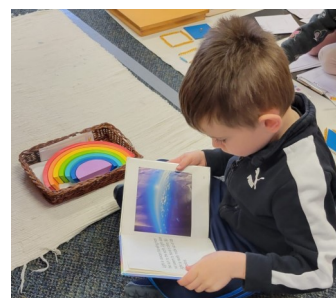
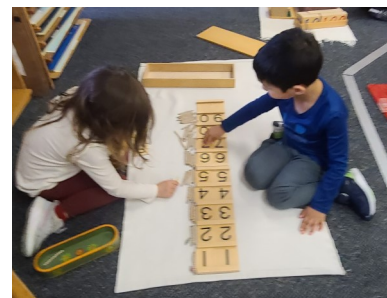
Perhaps the funniest exploration this month, however, was that of self-portraits. After a brief study of face proportions and location of facial features, we also discussed the creative ways with which artists like Picasso have approached creating self-portraits. This opened up the opportunity for some very interesting, and artistically freeing, approaches to the work.



Many of our students have been taking familiar works and making them more advanced for themselves. A simple mystery bag activity has become a practice in adjectives and writing as our Kindergarteners worked to create riddles for the objects in the bag. Some have taken the Magnetic/Non-Magnetic Work and turned it into a writing activity, drawing and writing each item down. Others have taken the challenge of finding other items around the room that they think will be magnetic or non-magnetic, and testing their theory. Others still have gone on a treasure hunt guided by reading more complex labels. Reading and finding "button" may seem like a simple task, but it really has our students thinking creatively about their environment. Where could I find a button? What type of work would it be used for? Who could I ask for a hint? These types of challenges prepare our students for the "out-of-the-box" and inventive thinking they will need to be successful in their future.

APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



The school year is coming to an end, and this will be the last newsletter. It has been amazing to see how much the children have grown, changed and learned this year. Some children joined us for the first time in September and did not know how to hang their coat, get a snack, or follow through on a work cycle. They have now become role models and can assist with hanging coats, zipping and even present how to do many works. The older Pre-K children are excited and ready to take on their new roles of being kindergarteners next year. They are the most productive children in the room presently. And of course, our Kindergarteners think they know it all. Surprise, there is always more to learn. They will find out soon!



When all returned from Spring break, the classroom was a buzz. We prepared for work with your child evening or as the children called it "Teach My Parents Works Night". The children choose what they would "like" to show you. Again, this is not a synopsis or culmination of their work for the year, rather a taste of their individual interests. They have all done so much more. A particular work may have been chosen because they felt comfortable presenting it, it was new, fresh, and exciting to them or an actual area of super interest. Thank you for all coming to support your child. We hope you had an insightful evening and know understand all the minute details your child must gather to complete an activity.

Movement is integral in Montessori and for all young children in general. They must remember all the items needed to complete a task and gather them accordingly. Take time and concentration to complete the task and return it pristinely to the shelf. I am proud of all our children for their participation in our "Teach My Parents Works Night"! It was different and unsettling for many as there were many large people/adults in our tiny classroom. Children especially have a hard time with change of routine. To their credit even the most reserved children overcame the change and pressed on to give beautiful presentations.

April was a focus on Earth Day as an extension of our yearly event "Spruce it up, Doughnuts with Grownups Day". For our celebration of Earth Week, we began with a group discussion at line time about what it means to take care of the Earth, why it is important, and what we can do to help. We read a "A Planet like Ours" by Frank Murphy and Charnaie. It discussed the uniqueness of our Earth and how we each have an integral

part to play as citizens of the Earth and that each animal also has part and "10 Things I Can Do to Help My World" by Melanie Walsh, which talked about conservation and simple things everyone can do to help. Each day we also read aloud books on recycling, gardening, composting, and of course on the emphasis of "reduce, reuse, recycle." For an Earth-related craft, we created Earth Day crowns. PreK K and K had a rainy-day gym class at the parking lot across the street. While we visited the children noticed all the litter and begged to clean it all up as they were all enthusiastic about cleaning the Earth and our neighborhood parking lot. We cleaned the train station parking lot, with gloves of course. It was very sad to see how much trash we collected. I am not sure about how much commuters love our Earth?

In the classroom There was a recyclable sorting activity in which the children could sort the recyclables into three categories: recyclables (recycle, compost and trash), compost and actual trash.

We planted the seeds from mini peppers as an impromptu lesson from the children's own experience. They were eating mini peppers and found the seeds in the middle. They asked if we could plant them and see if they would grow. We discussed as a class what a seed would need to grow, sunlight, water, and food from the soil. We planted our mini peppers seeds and 14 – 16 days later they sprouted. The children are all excited about nurturing and having our plants grow to bear the beloved vegetables.

Our group has come full circle and the older/ kindergarten children have been asking for "new works" out of the cabinets works. We brought out money, number words and a super cool mystery bag from the East room. The children were encouraged to write clues for each object in the bag. For example: *I am living, I contain seeds. I grow on a tree, I feel pokey and pointy.*

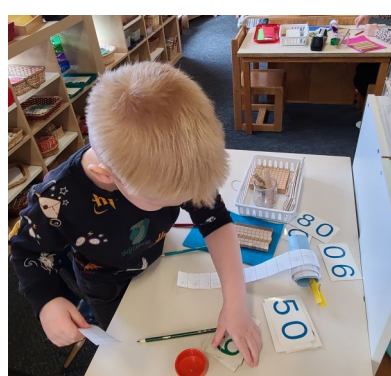


Thank you all for a wonderful year. Enjoy your children as they learn and grow and everyone, please read, read, read, and then have your child read!



APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole



After a much-needed Spring Break at home or during our Spring Camp, East Room friends have returned with a renewed energy and excitement for work! The buzz of the upcoming "Work Together" night made everyone that much more excited to explore various parts of the room, taking note of which materials they would like to share with their families. Children were so proud and excited to share that they would be attending the event and have the chance to share a part of their daily rhythm with you. Thank you, parents, for taking the time out of your busy evenings to join us. It truly meant so much to your children. Almost all of East Room attended – amazing!

It is hard to believe that April is already here and this is our final update of the year. But when we look back on how far our students have come, it is even more amazing to see how much they have accomplished in this time. Simple exploration of geometric shapes has progressed to using these shapes in creative ways, whether its to make a fish or to make a self-portrait! Observation of numerals and quantities progressed to exploring addition, multiplication, and 4-digit number building. Sound books that were new and blank in August are getting full and the sounds are being used to build words! Simple world maps have transitioned to in-depth continent research projects. Our students have blossomed with so much creativity, exploration, accomplishment, and pride during this year!



Of course, we cannot overlook all the growth in independence and community, either. Our early morning group is independently setting up the room each morning –taking chairs down, preparing snack, setting up dish washing, and ensuring pencils and materials are ready to go. There is a lot of problem solving, delegating, and negotiating that goes on during this time as they work together to ensure the room is ready and everyone's opinions are heard!

As we neared Earth Day, we had several discussions about the importance of taking care of our planet. We read "A Planet Like Ours" by Frank Murphy, which beautifully illustrated everything our planet offers us, and how each of our actions makes an impact. Some of our students were shocked to hear that our garbage doesn't just disappear once it's placed in a trash can –it ends up under the ground or in the ocean. Others were able to chime in that birds and dolphins could get stuck in the plastic we throw out. It is evident these conversations are happening in the home as well –thank you! The additional attention to our planet this month has made our

friends extra cautious to only take what they need, and use what they have!

We have also wrapped up our exploration of Australia and traveled to South America this month. We started off the exploration with a look at a wonderful collection of South American souvenirs gifted to our room by Audrey's family.



They were so fascinating for the children to see and really sparked an interest in this unit. While we explore the animals, plants, flags, and landmarks of South America on the Geography shelf, we are also exploring it in other parts of the room to create a more well-rounded immersion. We have been checking the temperature in different countries of South America during line time to compare to the weather here, making art inspired by mola textiles, exploring rhythm with different drums, and listening to various South American dance music (salsa, mambo, samba, etc) during lunch. And naturally, we have been exploring a bit of the Spanish language with works like fruits and colors in Spanish, and by switching the language of classics like Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes!

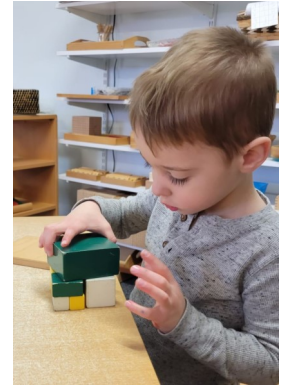
Our kids have been huge fans of Banana Dance recently, which wraps up with "Peel the avocado...Guacamole!" And though avocados and guacamole are more associated with Mexico than the rest of Latin America, we took this opportunity to do an avocado tasting. There was much debate over whether an avocado looks like an ovoid or ellipsoid (an observation that it is shaped like an egg got us on the right track— ovoid!) and whether it is a fruit or a vegetable. After we took out the seed in the middle, we pondered where avocados grow (Ground? Bushes? Trees!) and how those trees get there. Ah the seed! It will be a lengthy process, but we will be trying to sprout the seed to grow a whole avocado tree— check back in a few months!

As for the taste, we are happy to report that this is an avocado and guacamole loving generation! Everyone took a turn to mash the avocados and mix it with just a pinch of salt. We tried it on top of some baked pita crackers and it was a huge hit! This was probably our most successful tasting to date! Many of our friends excitedly told us about adding avocado on toast or in salads at home, while others had only seen it before. But most everyone tried and genuinely enjoyed the avocado, so make sure to offer it more at home!



APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



*"... the child always chooses something hard to do. This is something we would never have thought of."
~Maria Montessori*

