

Montessori Pathways' News

De**c**e**m**b**e**r



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.

~ Maria Montessori

Our Montessori Classroom always reflects diversity and connection to the world through hands-on activities. The children receive an opportunity to learn cultural foundations of other peoples and nations, respect their traditions and appreciate cultural differences. Maria Montessori was a truly passionate advocate for peace in the world. Promoting diversity, understanding, and implementing value of different cultures teaches children to accept and respect people and their traditions from all over the world.

Visual prompts, displays of symbols that represent different countries, and practical activities allow children to open up their minds and hearts towards someone who may be a little different and appreciate them.

Our teachers do their best to introduce different cultures to our students and bring the holiday spirit to our school.

After her trip to **South Korea**, Ms. Masha shared many interesting facts about this country with our Pre-K and Kindergarten students.



Thank you!

Thank you, parents and kids, for your thoughtful Christmas gifts to our Montessori Pathways Team and for the many beautiful Christmas cards with a lot of wonderful wishes and very warm words!

Your understanding, cooperation, help, support, and appreciation are priceless for us.

I hope that everybody had a wonderful time during this holiday season. May everyone's New Year be filled with happiness, love, and prosperity!



Ms. Kathy made a wonderful presentation about **Hannukah** to our Primary students. They loved learning more about this holiday and traditions.



Undoubtably there was **Christmas Spirit** present at school during the whole month of December. Listening to Christmas music, singing songs, decorating the school and classrooms, and working on Christmas gifts for parents were a major part of the learning process in December.

The favorites of the month were **Spirit Week** at Pathways, "**Reading Under the Stars**" family night, **Winter Art** and "**Secret Santa**" Party for Elementary students, tons of Christmas work and projects for primary students, **visiting Crystal Pines** Rehab Center by Elementary students and sharing handmade Christmas Card with the residents... December was truly happy and festive for our kids!



Parents' Corner



Working Together

Independence is a major tenet of the Montessori philosophy, and yet, this does not mean children work solely on their own. In fact, working with others promotes independence, within the classroom as well as outside of it.

The Montessori classroom itself is set up to promote small groups and pairs during their work cycles. Instead of rows of single desks with chairs, you will find an assortment of tables or rugs: some long enough to accommodate large groups, others for four, some smaller tables or rugs for two... and sometimes children squeeze as many journals as they can fit onto a table in order to be together!



While working together certainly has a social draw – children begin their day by socializing with their friends and may choose to work next to those friends during a work cycle – there are many other benefits to working with another child. Children learn from each other, accept leadership roles in those works in which they feel confident, or step aside to allow a different child to be the expert in a different work. This is a confidence boost, and also a lesson in respect and community.



Some of us are quick with mathematics, while others are excelling in language; still others are the go-to artists or engineers of the classroom. This is particularly true of the Upper Elementary classroom, where the levels of independent work are higher, with a greater ability to see a project or idea through from start to finish. These children can often be seen bouncing ideas off one another, and gently arguing about how to go about one thing or another in the most efficient way.

In the Children's House (or Primary Class), children may choose to work on the same work next to one another, lending a helping hand to a friend who stumbles on a problem. Sometimes one child even helps redirect an off-task friend!

And here, there is much pride in being able to work out a problem without having to go to an adult in the room to solve it for them. The more children can effectively work together, the more independent they become!

Working together solidifies connections. Two children share their interests by researching a topic together, sharing knowledge, and building on that knowledge. In Lower Elementary, children research and give reports together. This process can take weeks or months, based on how quickly or slowly all members in the group move forward.

The mixed-age groups in the Montessori classroom (found in three-year groupings) also allow for a type of mentorship. The younger students learn an immense amount from the older children, not just socially, but academically as well.



Working together on such reports often leads to opportunities for conflict resolution, peer mediation, and learning how to speak up in a small group. Fairness (of huge concern to the Second Plane child) comes into play during small group activities, as the focus of a moral sense of order is forefront on the mind of a child aged 6 – 12. This opportunity also presents itself during shared jobs and during recess time.



Children receive much help in the collaboration process from the experienced Guides in their classrooms; group dynamics are often aided by mediation and careful observation by the adults in the room. In this way, Montessori children are learning how to work with others on a daily basis, a sure way to prepare them for adult life, both in work and personal relationships.

<http://www.montessori-blog.org/2018/01/25/working-together/>

[Click here to see more teamwork at Montessori Pathways](#)

COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS

in January

- ◆ January 8 (M) - School resumes after Winter Break
- ◆ January 12 (F) - ELEMENTARY Parent / Teacher Conference Day (Virtual)
The link to sign up for Parent/Teacher Conference will be sent on Tuesday, January 2nd.
No school for Elementary Students on Conference Day, January 12th.
- ◆ January 15 (M) - No School (Martin Luther King JR. Day)
- ◆ January 16—31 - Returning Families Preferred Re-Enrollment Period



The new year arrives with new problems and questions for us. In the beginning of every year, the parents of 5-6-year-old kids have to make a very important decision – what is the next step for my child? Where should he/she continue his/her education?

There are two common things we hear every year from the parents.

The first one is a question “Will my child be prepared for public kindergarten or elementary?”

It is very important to understand that if we would prepare our students for traditional kindergarten, then we would not be Montessori, but the same conventional school where kids of the same age (but still developmentally very different) learn the same material at the same time based on the teacher's plan.

While offering a versatile learning opportunity to our students, the major goal of the Montessori schools is preparing our students not for public kindergarten or elementary level, but for real life, which more and more requires great thinking and organization skills, independence, initiative, creativity, ability to work as a team, and so on. We provide a child centered, multiage environment, where kids are learning at their own pace through a hands-on experience, exploring, discovering, making connections, and developing all necessary life skills without being stressed.

It is important to understand that the Montessori Kindergarten Year is the final and very crucial year in the primary 3-year cycle of the Montessori environment.

The second thing that we hear every year from many parents is that “being in a Montessori environment during one or few years was enough for our child's development. It is time for him/her to move to a public school like most of his/her friends. He /She will be fine there.”

There is no “enough” in education and no bounds in a child's development. And being “just fine”- is this what we are looking for for our kids?

So, if you are still open to exploring all of the options and possibilities for your child's education, check our coming January and February newsletters in for more information about what Montessori environment offers for the next level of your child's development.

- ◆ January 31 (W) at 5:30- 6:30 pm- “The Magic of Montessori Mathematics” - Students' Math Presentations for Parents (Elementary and Primary Classes)



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

"If we are among the men of good will who yearn for peace, we must lay the foundation for peace ourselves, by working for the social world of the child." ~ Maria Montessori

In an elementary Montessori classroom, the student changes from parallel (side by side) play with others to playing in a collaborative way with others. Thus, they learn strategies to play well together: being a good listener, helping those who struggle, teaching others new skills, speaking words to express one's feelings and pushing through comfort zones to try new things. This allows them to explore avenues to reach a peaceful place in their lives and in turn will flow into our world.

Some parents and students worry about what work plan the student is currently working on. Instead, the question should be: what lessons or help did you give today to someone in the class?



It is at this time of the year, where leaders begin to come forward and shy students find their voices. It is a time where students begin to get in their flow. At this time, it might be writing and reading. No worries because soon, it could be math.

The Montessori curriculum follows the passions of the child. I observe where their attention is and make sure that there are many opportunities to keep doing this type of work. I know this window is open and will soon close to let in another passion present itself. I enjoy watching students fly through work that they enjoy until they feel empowered.



In the academic areas, we have small group lessons where the older kids are encouraged to help give the lesson. This allows them to review their previous knowledge, gain confidence and develop the presentation style that each child will continue to hone throughout their lives.



We end this year with many group celebrations: our holiday party and giving the gift of song through caroling at school for our community as well as the senior center down the road. Our community has many things to be thankful for and one of these is the help of our friends.

Older students spend more of their time helping and teaching others instead of simply doing their own work. This empowers them to share knowledge and solidify concepts.



DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole



Despite being a short month, December was absolutely packed with activities, events, and phenomenal progress for our class. We greeted the month with the excitement of Spirit Week, which allowed our students to share more about themselves and find commonalities with new friends. The first day was extra special as this is when we set up our Christmas tree! Children helped sort, stack, and fluff the branches in the morning and then select an ornament or two to hang up during line time. This was a great chance to practice gross and fine motor control as they were so careful to not drop the fragile ornaments. Of course, we had to recreate the excitement and set up a mini tree to continuously decorate and redecorate in our Practical Life area as well!

In art, our class has had the opportunity to work on more complex projects involving multiple steps, such as cutting, and gluing trees, and then adding snow with a Q-tip or coloring, cutting, and gluing winter images. Everyone also created a beautiful piece of art to take home as a holiday gift, and we saw our students taking special care to select not their own favorite color for wrapping the gift but the color they thought the recipients would like best. Some of our older students chose to take on the challenge of creating a large mosaic Christmas tree to decorate our class with.

These trees nestled perfectly between the mittens our friends had decorated during our Reading Under the Stars night! Thank you to everyone who came and joined us for a reading and small re-enactment of The Mitten by Jan Brett. The mittens our friends found and decorated through the scavenger hunt have done a wonderful job of adding a wintry lair to our classroom this month.

Our Sensorimotor area has received a newfound interest with the addition of winter themed Rough and Smooth sorting activity, where children could sort familiar objects such as garland, snowflake, and pinecone. For some, this sparked an interest in word building these objects, while others turned towards the “Parts of a Christmas Tree” work to continue the theme. We have also seen more extensions with our knobbed and colored cylinders, as children begin to see how they are interconnected in their depiction of size.

Much progress has also been seen in math as many friends have gained confidence in their 0-9 numbers, with some creating their first counting books (be it with snowflakes, tree ornaments, or penguins), while others have progressed to mastering their teen and tens numbers. Others still have worked on odd/even, greater than or less than, and fractions. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the Montessori math area, however, is its ability to allow children in the Primary class to even work on concepts like addition, multiplication, division, subtraction, and four digit numbers. Yes, even in the midst of all the holiday cheer, these young minds were intrigued by division with a remainder and adding four-digit numbers! If you’re curious about the Montessori math materials, definitely come to our upcoming Montessori math night!

We have continued to develop language with different snowflake pattern recognition, which is a precursor for finding simi-

larities such as beginning sounds. Others have practiced their attention to detail and explanation of reasoning by finding the picture that doesn’t belong amongst a set of four wintry scenes. Many others still have been progressing in their sounds journey, always excited to see their sound books go home. Those who have mastered sounds have progressed to blending, and phonograms, which are the key to many words considered to be “sight words”. If there’s one thing we can ask of you during the holiday break, it’s to please continue reading to your children! A love for learning and a strong vocabulary are so crucial for their continued development.

Our culture and science area has seen the most interest in parts of a Christmas tree, reindeer, and penguin, as well as a study of animals that adapt/migrate/hibernate in the winter. This conversation was furthered on Line Time with the fun book of Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate? by Etta Kaner. Perhaps the most used activity, however, was the Winter Holidays around the World, which allowed us to look at Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Diwali, and Chinese New Year. We discussed these holidays during Line Time as well, noticing that each holiday focuses on lights in one way or another.



We wanted to address a phenomenal question on how social skills are used and learned in the Montessori environment. Though this warrants a Parent Evening of its own, the main takeaway is treating our children with the same respect and grace that we treat other adults. Children love to work together, especially this time of year when friendships have formed. We model and offer children the opportunity to help each other and find help amongst their peers instead of always relying on the adult. Grace and courtesy lessons guide our students in interacting with those around them—we work on asking for permission before giving a hug or offering to place a vase on a friend’s table, firmly telling a friend to stop something we don’t like and in turn stopping the first time, or simply caring for each other by helping set up the classroom’s dish washing station or lunch table. But of course there will be moments of friction and tension, and rather than immediately jumping in to take sides, we set up a space where the students in question can express their feelings to each other. Younger friends need some guidance, while older students already feel comfortable enough to ask a friend to join them for a conversation and maturely express “when you did this, I felt this way and it would make me feel better if you did this”. Our students are becoming incredibly well spoken and comfortable in expressing their emotions.

We hope everyone has a phenomenal holiday season and winter break. We can’t wait to see you again in the New Year.

DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



This December was longer than previous years due to the arrival of Christmas on a Monday. The energy and excitement were extremely high! We began our month with Spirit week. Each day holding a new expression of self for school, sports teams, favorite color day, Wacky day, and school spirit. The children were excited every morning to see what everyone was wearing!



We also had a great turn out for "Reading under the Stars". The children read with their parents, and then did an interactive rendition of "The Mitten" by Jan Brett. Each child was able to be a character in the story climbing into the mitten before it burst. A scavenger hunt with riddled classroom specific clues lead the children to the treasure box full of mittens under the tree. Maria played several songs on the piano and she finished with "We wish you a Merry Christmas". Parker Bates delighted us with his playing of Hot Cross Buns and a bit of Ode to Joy on the recorder.



For those children who were unable to make it we revisited "The Mitten" as a class to familiarize all with the event. The evening was enjoyed by all before the highlight of milk and cookies. Thanks to all who joined us. It was a fun evening. If you have not done so yet, have your child, send the decorated mitten (all received) back to school, we are displaying them on our wall as remembrance of the fun we had.



December was packed with a lot of fun projects for the holidays. We want to give a huge thank you to Ms. Urana for putting together our Holiday parent gift. You all know what the gift was by now. How about all the fine motor skills put into each gift. We were not sure the younger children could handle the tiny coloring with small thin markers in a 1-inch circle. They did and the youngest of our group made about 10! Attention to detail is what makes this possible, the young child finds the smallest things enchanting. We think they turned out beautiful and hope you enjoy your child's artwork magnets on your fridge for years to come.



All areas of the classroom added a holiday touch or two. The month was nearly all special projects. Language and Science held parts of a Reindeer, Snowman, Christmas tree and of a Gingerbread Man were added to our shelves.



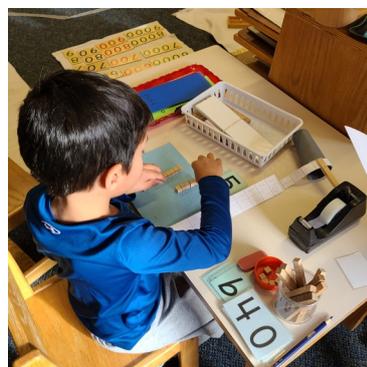
A few older children took the "Candy cane challenge" to see how many words they could create from the word candy cane. Hannukah was introduced. We lit a menorah and played the dreidel game. Other holiday related activities were set out in Practical Life, matching ornaments to the outline, spooning holiday gems, tweezing, and stamping. We read the story of the "Baby Gingerbread Man" by Jan Brett and some children made their own gingerbread friends.



We hope you have enjoyed seeing some of these projects coming home. Have a Wonderful New Year!

DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K / KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP



Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

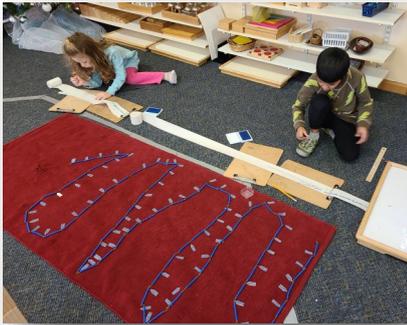
Our older students have been making great strides in their reading journeys, many starting to read their first words, while others are progressing through their Bob Books, and others still are taking on more challenging books still.



Of course December is also filled with plenty of music, and some of our students have tried to play Jingle Bells on the Montessori Bells, while others have been trying the glockenspiel.



The bead cabinet has been especially popular this month, allowing our students to work on skip counting and the building blocks of squared and cubed numbers.



And our more artistically interested friends have been cutting, gluing, poking, and punching out poinsettias, gingerbread men, winter lanterns.



Our afternoon has also been filled with friends building and adding four digit numbers, literally seeing and feeling how large these numbers are. This is always a work that gets others excited to try the same.



Some of our students also strung together a popcorn and cranberry garland with a needle and thimble, and others have taken their interest in painting to creating a color wheel. It has been a busy month full of excitement and we can't wait to pick up where we left off next month!

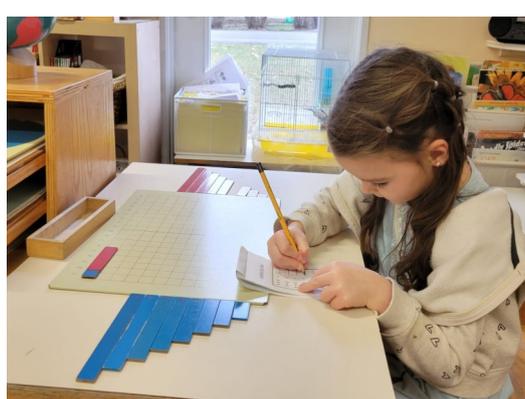


The month of December also brought a special presentation on South Korea after Ms. Masha's trip there, which had many of the students claiming they would like to travel there next.



DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



“An interesting piece of work, freely chosen, which has the virtue of inducing concentration rather than fatigue, adds to the child’s energies and mental capacities, and leads him to self-mastery.”
~ Maria Montessori

