



# Montessori Pathways School News

March  
2017

## Notes from Head of School by Ms. Alena Baradzina

These children have free choice all day long. Life is based on choice, so they learn to make their own decisions. They must decide and choose for themselves all the time... They cannot learn through obedience to the commands of another.

~ Maria Montessori

## Kindergarten and Elementary Demo Classes

The Elementary and Kindergarten Demo Classes were the most exciting part of February. Parents were able to get an idea of what the daily work cycle is like. Unfortunately, it is impossible to demonstrate all of the amazing and miraculous moments that we, teachers, can observe every day during just one hour. However, parents still witnessed the enthusiastic and hard work that the kids demonstrated even during the late evening.



We would like to extend our appreciation to all of our teachers, students, and parents who contributed their time, energy, and enthusiasm in preparation of, and participation in, our annual Demo Classes!

## Kindergarten Visit Days for Pre-K Students



During two weeks in February-March, our Pre-K students were visiting the Kindergarten Extended Day Class. At the same time, the kindergarten students were invited to spend a day in the Elementary classroom.



It was a very exciting experience for our students. Although sometimes nervous in the beginning, all of the Pre-K and K students were very proud to be a part of their older friends' group, noticing a very welcoming and helpful atmosphere in the classroom.



## Elementary Visit Days for Kindergarten Students

It was interesting to observe growing leadership maturity in the Elementary class when the Elementary students were able to demonstrate their ability to make a presentation and help with work to their kindergarten friends,



while successfully working with their own materials according to their work plan.



~ What can describe the kids' visiting experience better than the first two sentences in the Sentence Building Work ~

## Registration for Summer Camp and the upcoming 2017-2018 School Year is in full swing!

*It is that time of the year when we begin assembling the classes for the next year. We also begin to plan our staff and curriculum for the upcoming school year.*

Thank you to all of the families who have returned the re-enrollment application for the Summer Camp and the next School Year.

Considering that the value of and interest to Montessori Education and to Montessori Pathways School particularly continues to rise, spots at our school are filling up pretty quickly this year. Therefore, we would like to remind you of the importance of re-enrolling by April 15<sup>th</sup> rather than waiting until the last minute.

*If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please*

- a. *Complete the Registration Form for Summer Camp and / or Re-Enrollment Form for the 2017-2018 School Year*
- b. *Attach the Summer Camp registration (\$30) and/or School Year Re-enrollment Fee (\$50)*
- c. *Include the 10% of annual tuition security deposit*
- d. ***Return the paperwork along with payment no later than April 15, 2016.***

By submitting your 10% of the annual tuition deposit on time, you secure your child's spot at our school for the next school year, can lock in your child's current classroom, and any other special schedules and arrangements made with the school.

*All families enrolling and submitting 10% of the tuition **after April 15<sup>th</sup>** will be considered "newly enrolled" families, and will be subject to a new enrollment fee of \$50.00 for Summer camp and \$100.00 for 2017-2018 School Year. Spots are already limited and cannot be guaranteed - "newly enrolled" families will be enrolled on a first come, first serve basis. Classroom and any other preferences will also be up to administrative discretion based on availability.*

Please do not wait until the last minute and help us and your family be successfully prepared for the Summer Camp 2017 and 2017-2018 School Year on time.

## Kindergarten Team Work on Studying Henri Matisse



During this month, our Kindergarten students were studying the Matisse's major medium in the final decade of his life, when he began creating cut paper collages, or *decoupage*. He would cut sheets of paper, pre-painted with gouache by his assistants, into shapes of varying colors and sizes, and arrange them to form lively compositions. Initially, these pieces were modest in size, but eventually transformed into murals or room-sized works.

Our kindergarteners were very excited to work on similar projects. Then they decided to share their beautiful work with their Elementary friends.



There are the comments that Elementary kids brought to their kindergarten friends' attention:

- ≈ *Cool and Creative*
- ≈ *Interesting*
- ≈ *Beautiful*
- ≈ *Unique and Unforgettable*
- ≈ *Colorful*
- ≈ *Phenomenal*
- ≈ *Amazing*
- ≈ *Massive and Spirited*
- ≈ *Bright and Thrilled*
- ≈ *Awesome*



## Coming School Events

- **April 3 (M) – Class Resumes**
- **April 14 (F) – Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day**
  - ✓ No School for School Day Elementary students
  - ✓ Child care is provided for 4:15 / All Day Elementary students
- **April 20 (Th) at 5:30-7:30pm – Montessori Family Night “Come and Work Together!” –**  
Parent / Child Work Cycle in Primary Classes (East and South rooms)

Don't miss this very enjoyable evening working with your child in their special environment. When you arrive, you'll go to your child's classroom and experience with them a little of what their day is like. See what's changed in their day since the first Parent/Child Night!

- **April 17 – 21 (M - F) - Earth Week**  
Parents are welcome to organize morning activities or presentations in the classroom
- **April 19 (W); Rain Day – April 21 (F) at 9:00am– Spruce It Up! Doughnuts with Dad!**  
Work with Dad and enjoy doughnuts together!
- **April 28 (F) at 9:55am – “BODYOLOGY” 3-D Musical Show at Blizzard Theatre (Elgin Community College)**  
The Kindergarten and Elementary Students will be watching the amazing health show that explores the inner workings of the human body along with the health practices required to care for it.
- **May 1 – May 5 – National Teacher Appreciation Week**
- **May 3 (W); Rain Day – May 5 (F) at 9:00am – Planting Day! Muffins with Mom!**  
  
It would be great if every child could bring at least one plant on Monday, May 1 or Tuesday, May 2 to have a chance to participate in the creation of the Pathways' Garden.
- **May 5 – May 6 (F-S) – overnight – Sleepover at Montessori Pathways for Elementary Students.**

## News from the Elementary Class

(North Room)

by Ms. Amber

Individual success in a Montessori classroom can be measured in many different ways. This month: several students announced they had completed their goals; the elementary students shared in the responsibility of mentoring the visiting kindergarten students; five students completed their Europe map studies (in only two weeks) and were ready to move on to the research; two students

“Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.”

~Maria Montessori~

completed all of the cursive practice pages; nearly all of the students are remembering to always start a sentence with a capital letter and use end mark punctuation; one student was competently managing test tube division; and all of our students are now reading!

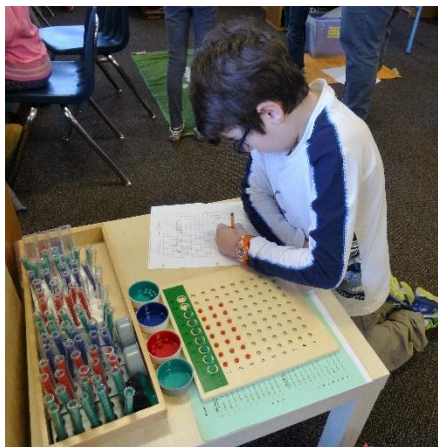
Wow! The students are building their successes with “I did it!” moments.

After Spring Break, our studies move into a deeper focus of Europe and explorers, Botany, simple machines, human body, and daily writing. Students will also assess progress on their goals prior to Parent-Teacher conferences.

“The essence of independence is to be able to do something for one’s self.”

~Maria Montessori~

Recently I attended the annual American Montessori Conference. It is amazing and inspiring to be in one place with thousands of other Montessori teachers, administrators, and parents attending classes and educational sessions. I look forward to sharing my new knowledge and techniques.



For example, keynote speaker Nicholas Kristof (a Montessori child and Montessori parent) stressed the importance of *getting a child on the right path early, getting a good education, and coaching a child to learn empathy*; things that are all part of a Montessori education.



Author, New York Times columnist, and world traveler, Kristof equates today’s lack of political will among young adults to their lack of empathy.



Another keynote speaker, Jessica Lahey, shared her insight into the importance of children developing *autonomy, competence, and connectedness*; three critical skills for success in adulthood. A record number of young adults into their 30’s are still living at home because they lack these skills. (The Montessori classroom is a ripe environment to cultivate these skills.)

As parents, we often interfere in the development of these skills by being directive and controlling. We mean well. After all, parents are supposed to protect their children, but *we really do need to let our children fail*, so they learn from their mistakes and learn to overcome failure.

The adages of “pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again” and “if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again” are sayings we, as parents, need to remember and instill in our children. We need to let go, let them fail, and let them learn from it.



If our children are to become independent, empathetic, competent, self-motivated, world citizens, we need to encourage them to be strong and persevere. I recommend Lahey’s book The Gift of Failure to all parents and teachers.

“The environment itself will teach the child, if every error he makes is manifest to him, without the intervention of a parent or teacher, who should remain a quiet observer of all that happens.”

~Maria Montessori~

# March Photo Gallery

## Elementary Class



# News from the Kindergarten Extended Day Class

by Ms. Karen

Well we **finally** had some snow which made for a sensible setting for art and science! (Do you remember all those warm winter days?)

We filled (packed) snow into a quart jar and simply observed. Of course, YOU KNOW what happened. The melting of the snow was relatively expected by the children along with good explanations and insights. But the surprise was how little water it produced compared to the volume of the snow in the jar!

Children, through exploration, discovered how much longer their giant snowballs that they made on the playground lasted when placed in a shaded, protected spot. They were still there the next day.

Also, led to fun activity making snowflakes (hexagonal of course). Miss Amber came in as a welcome guest to demonstrate and one of the elementary came in to assist the kindergartners through the multi-step folding and cutting process.

Now we will be looking forward to exploring spring and all that it offers: new life, budding flowers/trees, warmth, longer days. So fun!



The field trip to the ChicagoBoyz at the Raue Center was phenomenal. In addition to being mesmerizing because of the incredible athletic/gymnastic ability of the Boyz troupe, it offered an interesting discussion upon returning to school. What did the "boyz" in the troupe have to do to become so excellent? Answers: "Practice really much", "Never quit until you can do it", "Be strong", "Exercise". Interesting. Those comments are applicable whenever we run into challenges! The children's favorite stunts: when they jumped over the pyramid with children on top of the pyramid, when they jumped over the man standing on the shoulders of the other men."



"The child has a mind able to absorb knowledge. He has the power to teach himself."

~ Maria Montessori

This month, among other lessons, we went back to the fraction board and explored multiple ways to make  $\frac{1}{2}$ . The advantage of the Montessori materials is that you can actually try placing various combinations into the  $\frac{1}{2}$  inset and see/experience what works.  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{6}$ ,  $\frac{4}{8}$ ,  $\frac{5}{10}$ . That led to the CHILDREN'S observation of the patterns (denominators: 2,4,6,8,10 which is the pattern of even numbers. It also led to the observation that as the denominator increased, the size of the fractional part decreased. It is this physical "experiment/experience with the materials that give the children UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCESS. Many of us experienced math only as memorization without the actual handling of and experience with the materials. Montessori said: "What is sand and seashore without experience." Experience gives meaning.



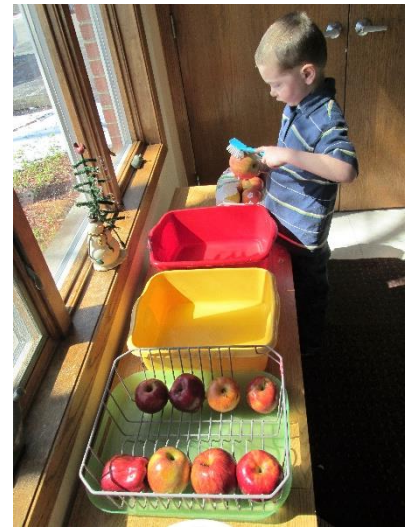
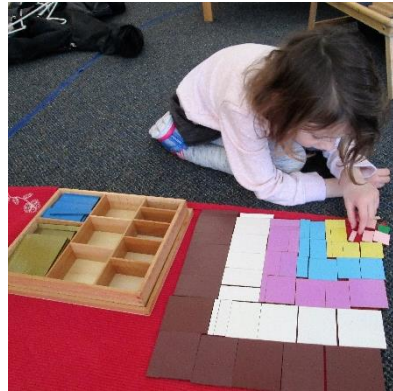
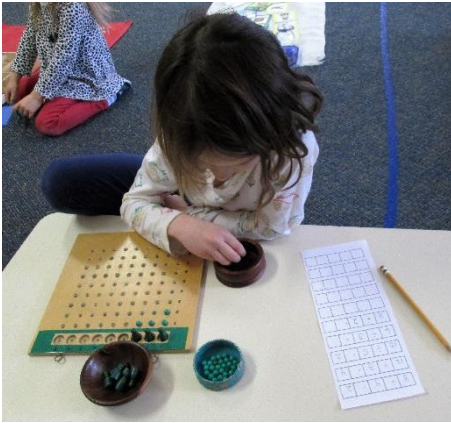
Favorite work of the month: Metal Insets. This is a set of 10 geometric shapes. The frame is one color, the inset shape it surrounds is a different color. Because of their precise measurements, some shapes can be inscribed in other shapes. One shape can be rotated one or several times. By using or combining those techniques, an unlimited number of interesting designs can be created, often encompassing new geometric shapes within the pattern. The spaces are then filled in by choosing various colors from 15 - 20 colored pencils.

The children are concentrated and absorbed in this interesting, artistic, geometric work. It is not uncommon for them to spend an hour or more on one intricate design. At its most complex, it reminds one of Middle Eastern art with its complex symmetry, geometry and design. The children love it.

We finished with constructing a more complex 3-dimensional shape. We began awhile back with the cube. We had 3 dimensional constructions blossoming. This week we added the tetrahedron, a more complex construction and we made it on a larger scale. Let's see where the children take that.

# March Photo Gallery

## Kindergarten Extended Day Class





# News from the Art Class

(Kindergarten and Elementary)

by Ms. Linda

This month in art, both elementary and kindergarten looked at the work of Austrian artist Gustav Klimt and created their own works inspired by his art.



The kindergarten students created their version of Klimt's cat, using chalk, with white and gold paint.



The elementary class used Klimt's "Tree of Life" as inspiration for their own beautiful trees.



Earlier in the month the elementary class created paper mosaic scenes inspired by "Pezzetino", a book by Leo Lionni.



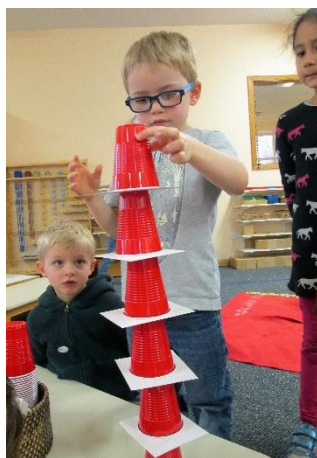
Kindergarten class also worked on outer space paintings created with crayon and watercolor resist and experimented with patterned paper, creating collages.



# News from the South Room

by Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

The month started off with a celebration of Dr. Seuss and his many literary contributions. Each day we read a new Dr. Seuss book and talked about some facts about the man who was Dr. Seuss. In the art area, we added a *Cat in the Hat* craft in which the children cut and glued strips of red and white paper to create a tall hat. For snack one day, we made *Cat in the Hat* fruit kabobs made of alternating slices of strawberries and bananas and a final large marshmallow for the cat's head.



In the sensorial area, we had a *Cat in the Hat STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)* challenge using red solo cups and small squares of poster board: the idea was to build the tallest "hat." We then created a graph to record each attempt and the children were able to see each other's progress. The class was especially delighted to learn that Dr. Seuss's first name was Theodor, just like their classmate Theo. It was a very fun week, and the children were quite entertained whenever I would get

tongue-tied reading his books.

At line time this month we began more taste-testing, this time tasting a variety of fruits. Each time we tried a new fruit, we

1. Passed the whole fruit around for the children to hold, smell, feel, etc.
2. We talked about where the fruit was originally grown and where it is grown today and found these countries on our globe.
3. Next, we talked about the origin of each fruit's name.
4. Then we made observations about what the fruit looked and felt like.
5. Next, we made predictions on what we thought the inside might look like once we cut it open.
6. Last, we looked at the inside and then smelled and tasted the flesh.



"The instructions of the teacher consist then merely in a hint, a touch—enough to give a start to the child. The rest develops of itself."

~ Maria Montessori

We started with one of the most unique looking fruits, dragon fruit. Although both the outside and inside of the fruit are very striking, it was a bit of a disappointment to learn that the fruit was quite bland once we tasted it.

We then moved on to mango, which almost everyone really enjoyed. Then kiwi, which was a bit too tart for some of the children, but they were fascinated by the fuzzy outside and bright green inside. Although most of the class had eaten pineapple many times before, it was interesting to have them hold, feel, and see a whole pineapple before we opened it. We all learned that it was so named because it was thought to resemble a pine cone. We then tried papaya, which we all thought smelled stinky, and most of us, really did not enjoy.

The last fruit we tried was guava, which despite its pale color and chewy seeds, most of the children really enjoyed. It was fun to watch even the pickiest eaters try something new, and especially great to see their own surprise when they realized that they liked what they were tasting.

This month we had a very special visit from Mary Van Opstal (aka Marius's mom). Mary joined us at line time to introduce the class to atoms. She read us two picture books which explained the concept of how we and everything around us is made up of atoms, and went further to define and illustrate protons, neutrons, electrons, nuclei, and energy. She then explained how electrons create energy and demonstrated this using both a battery and a solar panel to create enough energy to power a fan.



The children were very engaged in this lesson and made a lot of great connections to what knowledge they already had and asked very intelligent questions with regards to atoms. One child seemed quite amazed that our bodies are made of atoms and went on to ask what happens when we die and if our bodies are still made of atoms then.

It was also very interesting to hear their ideas of what a scientist is/does...one child responded that a scientist makes potions, while another said that a scientist looks for and digs up dinosaur bones.



It was a very educational visit and we thank Mary for taking the time to visit and teach our class about atoms. We look forward to her next visit and what we will learn then.



In general, the children continue to progress in their choices and activities during the work cycle. We have added clothes washing to our practical life area, and the children seem to enjoy using an old washboard and the satisfying feeling of wringing out a towel and watching all the water flow out.



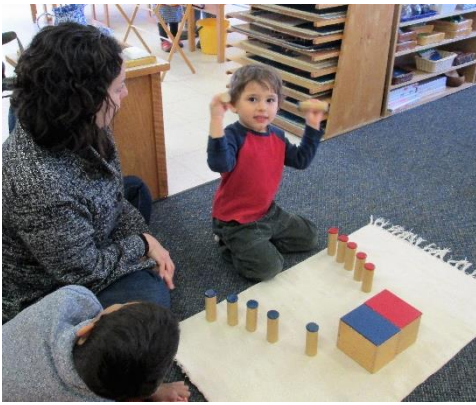
We are always working on our *grace and courtesy* and recently I overheard one of the politest arguments between two boys. The first child wanted the second to do something and he responded with "no thank you" and then the first child replied "yes please" and this went on for a good two minutes with several "no thank you" and "yes please." It was quite adorable.

It was great to see all of you at parent-teacher conferences; it's always nice to be able to sit down and tell you all the wonderful things your child is doing at school.

We hope everyone has a relaxing and fun spring break. We look forward to the last two months of this school year and have a lot of exciting things planned.

## March Photo Gallery South Room





# March Photo Gallery

## Pre-K Extended Day Class



# News from the East Room

by Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

Happy Spring East Room Families!

It has been a busy and productive month. We celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday with the help of John Paul's mom, Colleen - she brought the book "Myrtle the Turtle" and the children were captivated! In addition, they were treated to a fun turtle stacking game in groups of nine which corresponded with the theme of the story-very creative and appreciated by all!



We have introduced several new "works", one of which was magnetic/nonmagnetic and it has been so interesting to watch our students explore our classroom to find which items fit into each category.



March was a very busy birthday month: Faye (4), Enzo (4), Bella (4), Sanjana (4), Morgan (5), Kendal (5), Cecy (4)!!!! literally we had such fun looking at their beautiful baby pics and enjoying special celebrations of their stories - thank you.



*"A child who has become master of his acts through long and repeated exercises, and who has been encouraged by the pleasant and interesting activities in which he has been engaged, is a child filled with health and joy and remarkable for his calmness and discipline."*

*~Maria Montessori*

In addition, Ms. Carole had a special event in her family's life.....a new grandson, Kane, (he's her first grandchild!!) and she was able to spend some time in Georgia with her daughter to welcome him and help. She couldn't be more proud and we are so happy and excited for her!



We were also very happy to have Fiona's grandma, Annette, come and share a story and activities with our class - it is wonderful for your children to see your involvement and interest in their classroom. Please always feel free to come and share whenever you can!

Even though we only have an official conference day 2x/year, we are always available to discuss anything with you at any time - it was very nice to connect with you and share our observations together.

# March Photo Gallery East Room



## News from the Late Afternoon Class

by Ms. Donna

We learned that on March 17 which is known as St. Patrick's Day everyone could be Irish for the day. The Chicago river was turned green for St. Patrick's Day. Lots of people are in parades and many people enjoy eating corn beef and cabbage and most people wear green.

Spring arrived on Monday, March 20th. We saw several robins looking for worms and noticed that some of our flowers were pushing up through the dirt.

### ART:



Salad spinner shamrocks -- Paper cut to fit inside of a salad spinner with the shape of a shamrock drawn on the back of the paper was placed in the spinner, shamrock side down. Paint was added to the top of the paper. Then the spinner handle was turned fast or slowly. The paper was then removed and when it was dry the shamrock was cut

out and glued onto paper.

Hanging rainbows with clouds-- children cut out the rainbow colors and stapled them together and then added cotton balls for clouds along with ribbon to hang them.

St. Patrick's Day sun catcher

Rainbow paper chain with a pot of gold at the end  
Shamrock color sheets (different designs)

Picture of a rainbow with round circles that the children could put garage sale stickers over the circles and then add cotton to the clouds.



### GAMES:

"Leprechaun Walk" -- When the music stopped the children would stop by the closest shamrock and pick up the gold coin that was sitting on the shamrock. New coins were put out and the walk would continue.

"Knock, Knock, Who is There" -- the children would say Leprechaun using a strange voice.



### NEW WORKS:

Fuse beads; Dinosaur memory game ( finding two of the same dinosaurs that matched

### OUTSIDE:

Now that it was getting lighter out and warmer we were able to go out and play hockey.

### SONGS:

To the tune of BINGO: "There is a color I can say that represents St. Patrick's Day"; (Say each letter name) GREEN, GREEN, GREEN. Repeat verse and instead of saying each letter you clap for the G then say REEN , Clap then say REEN, Clap then say REEN

BOOKS: "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle

We wrote our own version of the book as to what the caterpillar ate. He ate cheese, cake, an apple, donuts, leaves, banana, peanuts, nachos, popcorn, hot spicy tacos, cheese burger, a dragon and a pig's tail.