

# Montessori Pathways' News

March



## Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

*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

March is the time of year when we, Montessori Teachers, have so much enjoyment in observing how our students are blossoming compared to the beginning of the school year or previous years.

I had a wonderful chance to observe a lot of cool things in the Elementary Classroom while I was substituting Ms. Bridget for a couple of days in March. Coming to the classroom in the morning, I offered all elementary students to start their day with the work according to their work plan.

*"But we usually start our day with the community meeting", multiple students said. (Consistency is very important for the kids)*

*"I am sorry, friends, but I am not sure if I can do it right now", I said.*

*"I can", our 4th-grader easily offered; "I can help", our 3<sup>rd</sup>-grader supported her.*

*"It would be so nice and helpful if you could do it, my friends", I agreed.*

You should have seen how seriously both girls took the responsibility in running the community meeting and how the other students respectfully joined the discussion.



*"It is too sad that Ms. Bridget is sick, but it is so much fun to self-operate and be a teacher" – our 3<sup>rd</sup>-grader concluded.*

It was just amazing to see our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders during the day. I remember them last year, when they were still learning how to plan their time properly to be able to finish their work plan on time, and asking a lot of questions and help to be able to complete their work. And this year they became great guides and helpers for our 1<sup>st</sup> graders, as well as for me.

Every time when I step in to the classroom to substitute, I am asking myself: "What am I doing here? Do they really need me?"

And Maria Montessori's words come to my mind all the time:

***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."***

*Who would live in a world that had fifteen seconds in one day? That would be silly.*

*But if there were, there would be no school. There would be no work to do. There would be nothing. There would be no activities to do.*

*It would be boring but there would be no such thing as a world that had fifteen seconds in one day.*

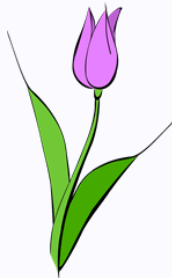
*It would be silly, silly, silly, silly.*

~ By Kelsey McGowan, 1st Grade

## ~ 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.





## Registration for the upcoming 2019-2020 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*

- 1) *Complete the Registration Form for Summer Camp and/or Re-Enrollment Form for the 2019-2020 School Year*
- 2) *Attach the Summer Camp registration (\$30) and/or School Year Re-enrollment Fee (\$50)*
- 3) *Include the 10% of annual tuition security deposit*
- 4) ***Return the paperwork along with payment no later than April 15, 2018.***

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 2019-2020 School Year.*

*Spots in each age level 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 2019 and 2019-2020 School Year on time.



## Self-esteem is the Foundation Principle of Success and Happiness.

*"Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on Earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."*

— Thomas Jefferson

Self-esteem is not a skill, but a characteristic, that needs stimulation to develop. Feeling good about oneself, isn't that the most important ingredient for a happy and productive life? **People who feel good and are proud of themselves achieve a lot!**

To name just a few related personal characteristics:

- Enthusiasm instead of detachment
- Joy instead of boredom
- Positive energy instead of apathy
- Contentment instead of jealousy
- Receptiveness to new things instead of aversion
- Readiness to contribute instead of feeling entitled

**Montessori education has the development of a good self-esteem as a core aim.** All other positive characteristics will follow. A child with a good self-image does not need competition to excel. They remain respectful of others, and at the same time exceed their own expectations!

To assist the development of a positive self-image:

- The teachers are in tune with the child's basic characteristics and learning styles
- There is an environment with multi-age ranges and therefore multi-levels
- Children are given opportunities to choose, to make decisions and to make mistakes
- Age-appropriate limits are set which give the message that your freedom ends where someone else's freedom begins
- Development of self-discipline, self-will and self-direction are nurtured,
- Age-appropriate independence is encouraged which grows competence and consequently self-confidence
- Opportunities for being productive and responsible members of the group are brought forward
- **Respect and trust** are the focal point of the relationship between the student and teacher

[www.international-montessori.org](http://www.international-montessori.org)

# Coming School Events



Montessori Pathways



- ⇒ **April 1 - Classes Resume**
- ⇒ **April 1 - 4 (M-Th) - Elementary Class 4-day Trip to Nature's Classroom Institute in Lake Geneva, WI**
- ⇒ **April 5 (F) - Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day (North Room)**
  - ◆ *No School for School Day Elementary students*
  - ◆ *Child care is provided for 4:15 / All Day Elementary students*
- ⇒ **April 17 (W) at 12:15pm** - "The Magic School Bus" performance – Kindergarten and Elementary Field Trip to Raue Center for the Art in Crystal Lake
- ⇒ **April 18 (Th) at 5:30-7:00pm — Montessori Family Night: "Come and Work Together!"** – Parent / Child Work Cycle in Primary Classes (East and South rooms)
- ⇒ **April 22 - 26 (M-F) - Earth Week**  
Parents are welcome to organize morning activities or presentations in the classroom
- ⇒ **April 24 (W) / Rain Day – April 26 (F) at 9:00am—Spruce It Up! Doughnuts with Dad!**
- ⇒ **May 6 – 10 (M-F) - National Teacher Appreciation Week**
- ⇒ **May 8 (W) / Rain Day – May 10 (F) - Planting day! Muffins with Mom!**
- ⇒ **May (TBA) - Train Ride to Woodstock (meet moms for dessert)** – Kindergarten and Elementary students
- ⇒ **May 17 - 18 (F—Sat) - Overnight— Sleepover at School for Elementary Students**
- ⇒ **May 22 (W) at 5:00pm—End of the School Year Celebration at Crystal Lake First Congregational Church**
- ⇒ **May 27 (M) - No School (Memorial Day)**
- ⇒ **May 29 (W) - Last Day of School**





## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget



Dia Gut! Hello from Ireland!

Have your kids been coming home to talk about Ireland, leprechauns or gold? Have they performed a few Irish dance steps? Beginning at the start of March, I have been teaching the class a bit about Ireland. I shared the geography, the flag, a bit of history and the many symbols of Ireland. I read to them a story of St. Patrick and my own namesake, St Bridget. I read the folk tale of Fin McCool. We ate soda bread and listened to Irish music as well as sung songs. I even taught them a few Irish dancing steps and showed them a video of Irish dancers. It has been fun sharing a bit of Ireland with them.



Many students are asking for more and more for math lessons!!! I love that many students not only watch the lessons given to others (to review the old concept or to see what is coming) but have been eager to complete their own assignment at their own pace in order to move ahead. They have figured out that to advance, they must complete their answers correctly and use good work habits. Little sponges absorbing math work all over the class.



One of my favorite observations was of a first level student. She and a friend were learning how to use 2 new math charts to help with adding. The math charts are designed to show patterns, to practice facts and to master math facts in a fun alternative.

The first level girl noticed that the chart had a pattern to it. It is a finger chart where they put 2 fingers on the addends of the number. Then you move your fingers to the end of the chart and then skip your fingers to meet for the answer. If you skip and the fingers do not meet on a number, then you go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> row where they meet. She observed that if you added 2 even or 2 odds, they meet. If it is an odd and even, you have to go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> row. All on her own, she discovered this! This is why I love Montessori education. Kids come to their own realizations and see patterns and strategies that others may not see.



Montessori classrooms are communities, not just classrooms of kids. We are together for more than a year and become close companions. In order to do this well, we must learn how to listen well to each other and to speak our minds in a kind, productive way. It is a pleasure to sit back and watch kids solve problems. Often, I will hear a discrepancy and will sit back to see how it will get handled. A perfect example:

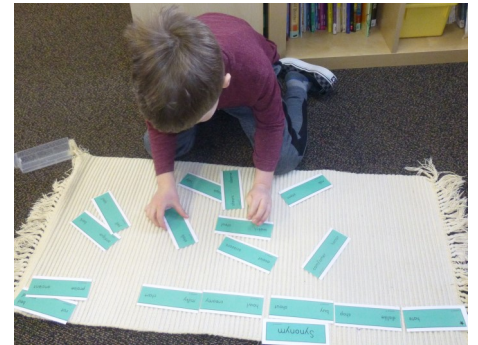
*Two kids are holding a hanger in which to hang a coat. Both claim it. Both are pulling. Both are arguing. Kids around them turn to tell them to quit fighting. Go get another hanger. Hangers are nothing to fight over since there are plenty. One student says "No hangers have names on them." Neither girl will give in. We all wait. One child gets up, hands a hanger that she had to them. Problem solved. We all give appreciation to the child who came up with the BEST solution. These scenarios happen often in the day. We learn so much from these "problems." It is so nice when I do not have to step in and another child can see a solution or become a facilitator of peace to the children.*

Now we are off to our nature education, Montessori overnight trip to Nature's Classroom Institute (NCI). Mrs. Alena and I will chaperon the kids on this 4 day trip in Wisconsin where they will take classes, meet other kids from other Montessori schools, enjoy nature hikes, bond with counselors, eat delicious, nutritious food and bunk together with their classmates. We are most excited!!!



# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class





## NEWS FROM THE EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN CLASS

Ms. Karen

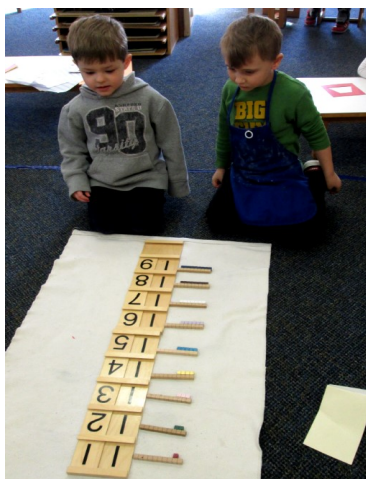


March was short but busy!!

The "moving on" week began in February, but continued just a bit into March. The Kindergartners all enjoyed their time in the elementary classroom with the "big kids". Since "big kids" is a relative term, the kindergartners also enjoyed being the "big kids" by hosting the younger children for their first full day visit to the Kindergarten Extended Day class! There was no shortage of "helpers" for our visitors!



We have talked about helping, ("the gift of giving") in other newsletters. Sharing is helpful in developing an attitude of extending oneself to another. When you bake, perhaps share with your neighbor. Or shovel their sidewalk (hopefully not till next year!). Sharing creates a feeling of caring between people. Ultimately, the grace and courtesy such as we practice in the classroom leads to caring compassion. We must be able to extend ourselves, to reach out to others, to see another point of view. Montessori emphasized grace and courtesy lessons. At this time of the year, we see many children helping each other, solving problems together, sharing (even their cookies) with others, and working collaboratively.



A highlight (actually at the very end of February) was to trip to the Prairieview Nature Center on the outskirts of Crystal

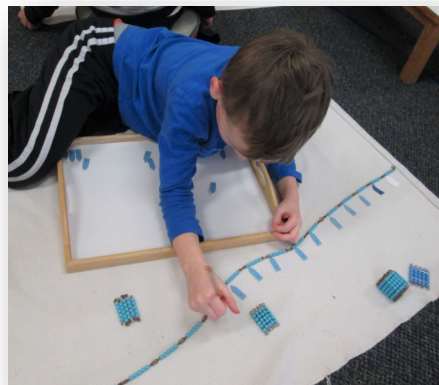
Lake. Although we had to revise the content of the trip a bit due to the conditions on the ground on the outdoor paths, the children were totally absorbed in the activities. The first was a Puppet Show, designed to follow up the indoor visit to our

school by MCCD on the topic of animals in winter. The children were riveted!. So many interesting facts. We did get outdoors near the end of the visit. A highlight because the children found actual animal tracks, seeds, nuts on the ground, and plants waiting for spring.



In the math area, the bead chain cabinet has become the "new" popular work. It has multiple purposes as it relates to both skip counting (multiplication) and to geometry. Essentially, it is an extended counting activity. Both long and short chains are constructed. The chains are constructed for each of the numbers 1 - 10. The children count and tag each set of beads on the chain. The short chains can be folded into squares. For example, the short chain of 5 has 25 individual beads, arranged in 5 groups of 5 beads. But, because of its construction, the short chain can be folded into one square. Thus, 5 squared is 5 sets of beads bars, each bar constructed of 5 individual beads ( $5 \times 5 = 25$ ).

The long chains can all be folded into squares which can be stacked. Thus, the long chain of 5 is 125 (a lot of counting), which is folded into 5 squares of 5. When stacked up, the 5 squares of 5 make a cube of 5. By counting and labeling each bead bar of 5, the child is skip counting (5, 10, 15, 20, etc. all the way to 125) which is the base for answers in multiplication. It also is the value for the cube of 5. All is done with concrete, hands-on, visual materials. The work is beautiful.

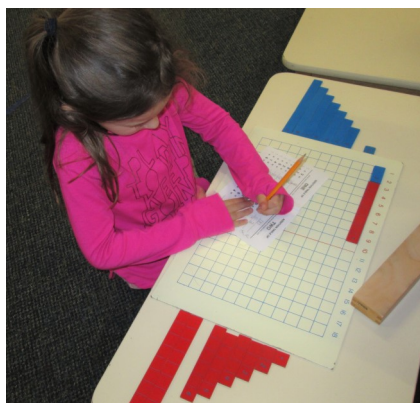


We so enjoyed the conferences with you. It is helpful for all of us following your child's development and progress and have a conversation together and feel connected.



# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## Kindergarten Extended Day Class





## NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

Ms. Jennifer



We've been inspired this month by the wonderful world of Dr. Suess, creating a 360-degree view of a Suess-ville diorama. It's been a really fun, colorful, and whimsical project that allowed us to explore the creation of something 3D, structural and textural, as well.



Students hand-painted the floor and wall of the diorama on chipboard, constructed vibrant flowers and a sunshine (from cardboard & foam shapes, pipe cleaners, pom-poms, and a couple of golf tees), and designed and painted their own Suess-house!



After the students examined some samples of Dr. Suess' artwork, I was so intrigued with the stories that supported the illustrated architectural details they came up with for their houses, such as stairways, slides, ladders, hidden doorways, and trap doors.



I also enjoyed the students' willingness to illustrate both the outside details, as well as the inside workings of their Suess-house. Their creativity knows no bounds! Love that!



They all did such a great job keeping all their project parts organized as the weeks went by...yes, we embarked on another multi-step endeavor right after our Treasure Book, but this time, I delayed the reveal of the model for a couple of weeks as they worked on various aspects of the project, so their anticipation and curiosity grew, keeping them motivated to continue and see it through to completion. It worked!

Not only were they WOWed at seeing what they'd been working on, but they didn't feel overwhelmed by its many details, since they'd already tackled half of the process. They also had a greater understanding of the construction involved in a 3D project of this nature because they recognized the parts they'd already dealt with. By the time we were ready to put it all together, they really understood the step-by-step process of constructing their Suess-ville diorama, and they were so happy with the outcome!



I couldn't be more proud of them! Their positive attitude and enthusiasm are contagious and inspiring! These are not timid artists...your kids! I hope that shows in the work they've been bringing home from art class. I really have so much fun working with them! And, I hope their art brings you as much joy as it brings me! Happy Spring!

## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



It is finally feeling less like winter and more like spring! We are seeing signs of life returning and the children have been noticing the changes in nature. Two of the kindergarten girls were working near the windows and noticed two robins flying back and forth to one spot in the tree. They concluded that they were building a nest and were very excited that maybe we would see some eggs or baby birds. While on the playground, we observed a robin using a puddle on the sandbox cover to take a bird bath. A group of us also heard a woodpecker pecking on one of our trees; inspiring a "bird hunt" around the playground trying to locate the woodpecker. Also, as soon as the last of the snow melted the children were pointing out the tiny little green sprouts of plants that have begun peeking out of the ground.



Inside the classroom, we began the month talking about Dr. Seuss and his many fun contributions to children's literature. We were fortunate to have many parents available to visit our classroom and read their favorite Dr. Seuss books. Charlie's dad read *A Wocket in my Pocket*, William's mom read *The Cat in the Hat*, Hazel's mom read *Oh the Places You'll Go*, Max's mom read *Sneetches*, Parker's mom read *Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are*, and Jax's mom read *What Pet Should I Get*.



It is always a special treat to have parents visit in the middle of the school day, especially when they are reading a fun story. Thank you again for your time. If you were not able to make it for Dr. Seuss week, please remember that you are always welcome in our classroom. Just let us know if you ever want to visit and read a book or share a special craft or talent with the class. We would love to have you! In addition to the parents, we also had the elementary students read to our children in pairs. It was wonderful to see the "big kids"

read to our children, and everyone seemed to really enjoy it.

Throughout the year we are constantly working on the *grace and courtesy* element of our classroom community. The teachers are always doing our best to model the behaviors we expect from the children: speaking with respect, using an appropriate volume of voice, not interrupting, using polite words and manners, etc. We also rely on the oldest children in the room to model these behaviors for the younger children. Often, we find that the children need us to give them the appropriate words to express themselves, especially in times of disappointment or frustration. We are always striving for the most peaceful and kindest community that we can achieve. We appreciate your ongoing support in reinforcing such grace and courtesy at home as well.

It was great to see all of you at parent-teacher conferences. It is always so nice to be able to sit down and tell you all the wonderful things your child is doing at school and touch base with you about your expectations and goals for your children. Thank you for making the time to do just that. Please remember that even though we have the formal parent-teacher conferences twice a year, we are always happy to meet with you additionally during the school year if there is ever a need.



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



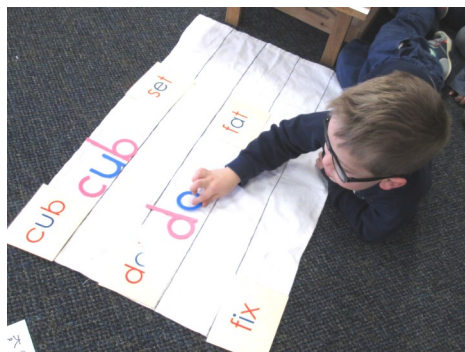


## PRE-K EXTENDED DAY NEWS

Ms. Andrea



Our little pre-k group just continues to grow and with more children there are more opportunities for partner work as well as more valuable social interactions with peers of similar ages. There is something about being among your peers that helps to push you to strive for more. We especially see that at this time of year when the children are clearly more self-motivated and/or inspired by what their friends are doing and really push themselves to do the next big thing. It has been very exciting to observe the level of work that these children are now capable of and the extensions and variations of the works that they are coming up with.





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Lorrie, Ms. Carole



### March comes in like a lion Goes out like a lamb

Time to put away our snow gear because spring is here (Keep your fingers crossed.) We are listening to the sounds of spring, the soft rains, the bird's songs and our songs as we begin to practice with Ms. Cynara for our spring program. We see the early spring flowers poking through once again. Warm breezes greet us as we step outside. It's a great time of year to identify the signs of spring in your neighborhood, park, or even your own backyard.

### Author of the Month

Our author this month is Margaret Wise Brown who has written many children's classics such as *Goodnight Moon*, *The Runaway Bunny*, and one of my favorites, *Home for a Bunny*. Her writings are lyrical yet address issues to which all little children relate. Quieting oneself for sleep, wanting to venture out on one's own, or finding your own special place in life. We want to encourage you to check out the authors' bins at the Crystal Lake Library. You will find a wide variety of her works there.

### Spring into reading

Just as flowers begin to bud in the spring, several of our older children are experiencing a budding in their reading skills. We are noticing spontaneous reading going on during the morning with the older children telling or reading stories to the younger ones. It began during Dr. Seuss week, when the elementary children invited two children at a time out into the hallway to hear a story. The children would take carpet squares to sit upon and listen to the stories. Now our kindergarteners are continuing the "read aloud" in the classroom.



We are finding the older children's exciting sense of accomplishment is affecting the younger children too. Just the other day one of our youngest came up to Ms. Carole with the sincere request, "I want to learn how to read!"



We begin the process with the **I Spy** game. This is a favorite that you can play at home too. We have a box of little objects like a hat, a flag, a nut, a pig. We lay the objects out and say, "I spy with my little eye something that begins with the sound PPP. Can you guess?" The object of the game is to make the child aware of the beginning sound of the words. When they can correctly identify the beginning sounds, we move to the ending sounds. After many opportunities to guess beginning or ending sounds, we ask them to find an object that has the sound "i" in the middle." Learning to hear the sounds in the different parts of words is key to the skill of decoding words for reading. It takes time to develop this skill of breaking words into their phonemes and blending them back together. Montessori realized that this absorbent time of life from birth to six is a sensitive time for children to develop language. She found that children around the age of 3 are very sensitive to sound and interested in playing these phonetic games. They lay a strong foundation for the later sand paper letter and movable alphabet work of the four and five-year-old.



### April is just around the corner

As we return from our Spring Break, we will be ready to dive into the month of April. We will begin seed planting to prepare for our spring garden. We will celebrate Earth week towards the end of the month with lessons on recycling and ways to care for our environment. A highlight each year for the children is working with their Dads to help spruce up our playground and outside environment.

### Thank you

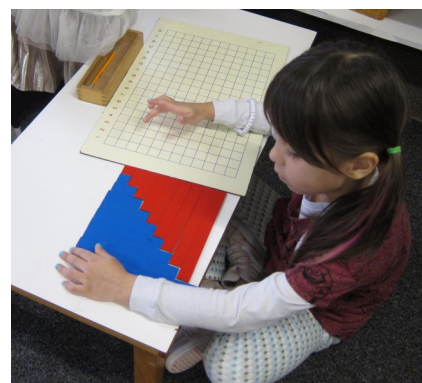
Finally, we want to tell you how much we enjoyed talking with you during conferences last month. It is always a joy to give you a little glimpse into your child's day and to celebrate each one's accomplishments over this past year!





# MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room





## NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON

Ms. Donna



Spring comes in March. This is the list of signs of Spring that we came up with and would be looking for in the days to come. Rain clouds, different birds returning, like the Robin, sounds of more birds, wind, daylight was staying longer, plants were pushing up from under the ground, the grass was turning green, more sun, and days were getting warmer.

Book we read: "The Leprechaun" - A story about a Leprechaun who was a shoemaker that was paid in gold for his shoes. Someone tried to trick him out of his money but instead the Leprechaun tricked him.



### Art:

- ◆ Painting a picture of Michael Finnegan using a fork to make his hair and beard.
- ◆ Paper plate rainbows
- ◆ Shamrocks; poking and coloring sheets
- ◆ Turning paper circles into chickens and other birds



### Games:

- ◆ "Find a Color"- toss the color cube, when it stops, find something in the room that would match the color that came up on the cube when it landed.
- ◆ Lotto Board Games - object of game is to be the first one to cover your card.
- ◆ "Dogie, Dogie, Where's Your Bone?" - We are getting better at not telling the dog who has the bone before the dog has a chance to ask a student if they have the bone.

### Math:

- ◆ Making shapes with a twenty-inch piece of green yarn, circle, square, triangle, rectangle.
- ◆ Counting how many on the card and put a clothespin on the correct number.



Movement: Balance Beam—walking across, balancing an egg on a spoon.

### Songs:

- ◆ "Michael Finnegan"
- ◆ "There is a color I can say that represents St. Patrick's Day" - say naming the letters: G r e e n, G r e e n, G r e e n (tune of Bingo)





## More Wonderful Moments at Pathways in March

