

Montessori Pathways' News

March 2016

"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



***"Festival of the Sugar Maples Memories"
by Elementary Students***

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

I would like to begin this newsletter with a huge THANK YOU to all of our teachers, parents and students for your incredible cooperation and help in preparing for our annual **Fun Fair Family Night**. The hit of the night was the Cake Walk, which was possible due to the cake contributions from many of our families.

The other hit of the night was live music from Mr. Anthony (Nora's dad). The Art Stations from Ashley, Sidney, and Max's families, Games from Gabriel, Bobby, and Mackenzie's families, Botany Station from Erin's family, and Science Experiment Station from Marius' family were also popular and busy this evening.



We were able to meet a lot of siblings of our students. Some of them are Montessori Pathways alumni. All of them were so friendly, well mannered, and cooperative. It felt like a big family.

The small item contributions are also much appreciated. It helped us prepare great goody bags for our young friends and was a wonderful conclusion for the evening. Thank you Montessori Pathways families and team – you guys rocks!!!

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While **celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday** this month, our friends from the Elementary Class had a wonderful opportunity to spend some time with their younger friends from the Primary Classes and read the stories to them.



One more excitement for our older kids in the Kindergarten and Elementary class was a trip to the **"Festival of the Sugar Maples!"** It was a lot of new explorations and a great hand-on experience for our students. Most of the kids came to the opinion that the maple syrup from Coral Woods Area in Marengo is the best!



I would like to conclude my notes with a **suggestion to our parents**. Please find 20-30 minutes in your busy life and read every newsletter from beginning to end. It does not matter that your child is not in one class or the other. All newsletters from all classrooms contain so much helpful information and explanations about what has or will happen with your child someday.

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For example, while one of the teachers is concentrating on self-discipline developing, the other is talking about building leadership and friendship skills, explaining about class problem solving situations, or giving suggestions about implementing the Montessori environment at home or practicing some skills at home without frustrations, but with the excitement of learning.

Reading our newsletters and exploring the additional information about Montessori educations will help you find the answers for many of your questions like:

- *"Why is there no homework in Montessori?"*
- *"Why is my child repeating the same activity again and again?"*
- *"How does scrubbing the table or baking cookies prepare my child for math?"*
- *"Why do we not see daily worksheets or projects in our child's bag?"*
- *"Will my child be able to read, write, or do math at the same level of his/her same age friend or cousin?"*
- *"Will my child be prepared for public school?"*

Our team spends a lot of time and energy to prepare monthly newsletters as a support for our parents. Hopefully, it does not go to waste.

Re-Enrollment Note

**** Registration for Summer Camp and the upcoming 2015-2016 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 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 fast this year. Therefore, we would like to remind you of the importance of re-enrolling by April 15th, rather than waiting until the last minute.

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

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

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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 15th** 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 2016-2017 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 2016 and 2016-2017 School Year on time.

Coming School Events

- **April 8 (Friday) - 10:00am** – **School – wide field trip to the performance "Cinderella... After the Ball" at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire**
- **Saturday, April 9 - 10am-1:00 pm** - **Open House.**
- **Friday, April 15 - Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day.**
 - *No School for School Day (8:45am-3:15pm) Elementary students*
 - *Child Care is provided for Extended School Day (7:45am-4:15 pm) and All Day (6:45am-6:00pm) Elementary Students*
- **April 18-22 – Earth Week**
- **April 20 (Wed) at 9:00am;** Rain Day – April 22 (Friday)– **Spruce It Up!: Doughnuts with Dads;**
Work with Dad and enjoy doughnuts together!
- **April 21(Thursday) - 5:30-7:00pm** – **Primary Class Parent / Child Night "Come and work together!"** (East and South room)

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!

As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us via e-mail
montpathways@hotmail.com

Best regards,
Ms. Alena

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Notes from the Elementary Class (*North room*)

Ms. Amber

It seems spring never comes soon enough, and the elementary children are certainly ready for spring even if Mother Nature is not. The excitement in the air could also be attributed to the upcoming spring break. This is a great time to get outside with your children and observe the signs of spring.

The Native Americans presentations were all beautiful.



The perfect conclusion to bookend this study was our **“Festival of the Sugar Maples!” field trip**. The students learned about maple syrup and the role that Native Americans played in its history. It was great hearing our students share their knowledge with the guides!



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To close out the month, the class engaged in *March "Mapness,"* as students were expected to complete all unfinished maps before we move on to a study of the United States. This is a timely opportunity to learn about the U.S. government and elections. Plant and animal studies are in full swing, and we will use the warmer weather to make our own observations.



Until late May, students will be working on a Young Author writing project, an autobiography. A packet will go home in the Blue Folder, as students may need a parent's help with answers to some basic questions about themselves.



Maria Montessori's philosophy considered a balance of freedom and discipline. This is demonstrated every day in an elementary classroom as children learn to handle choices and responsibility within the framework of freedom and discipline. You can help at home, by working with your child on managing age-appropriate responsibility and choices, and practicing self-discipline.

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Help your child think about choices by asking questions, rather than giving answers. Use practical, everyday opportunities for learning. For example, allow your child to get dressed on their own with a little guidance on appropriate clothing choices for school: prepared for outdoor activity, freedom to move during physical activity or floor work, bottoms that actually cover their bottom while working on the floor, and no distracting accessories such as watches, scarves, or jewelry.



Another example is setting limits on activities such as screen time (TV, video, computer, iPod, phone, etc.) and expecting the child to learn to be responsible for ending the activity on time. Use a timer and have the child make a plan before the screen time for what he or she will do when the screen time ends such as play outside, draw a picture, walk the dog, or read a book. Acknowledge her or his ability to manage the limits (self-discipline), just as you acknowledge his or her ability to manage freedoms and responsibilities.



Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences are Friday, April 15th. This is a great opportunity to wrap up the year with a discussion of progress, goals, and an outlook for next year.

Ms. Amber, along with over 4,000 other Montessori professionals, attended the recent American Montessori Society national conference. "Montessori Principles, Values, & Perspectives" was the theme, and it proved to be an excellent opportunity to recharge her Montessori batteries, make valuable connections, and refresh her knowledge, along with learning a few new things that she looks forward to using in the classroom in the future! It reinforces two of the sayings she shares with her students: "You are never too old to learn" and "learning never ends."



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Kindergarten Extended Day News

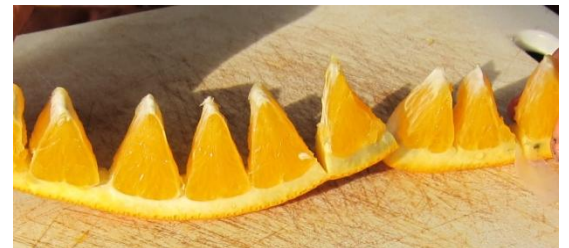
Ms. Karen

Well, looking back, in so much of what we did, food was a part of the lesson. Let's begin at the beginning.

By now, at this time of the year, the children's problem solving skills and thinking have evolved. So, from time to time, we pose an invented (or sometimes a real) problem to solve. So I told a story of Laura and Mary (from Little House on the Prairie). I set the background (no stores, etc) and set up the problem. Basically: the neighbor gave Laura and Mary each a cookie. But they had a little sister. How could they share with their little sister and be fair? 1. Did they have a mom? Yes. Then they could cut each cookie in half. They would have 4 halves and each person could get a half. 2. Skip mom! They could cut each cookie in thirds and each person would get $\frac{2}{3}$ of a cookie. 3. Did they have a dad? Yes. Then they could cut one cookie in fourths. The girls and mom each got $\frac{1}{4}$ of a cookie. But dad could have a whole cookie because he works hard chopping wood. A simple "problem", but many ways to solve it!



Along those lines, we sliced an orange to look at the inside of it. Beautiful segments are surrounding a white center. Actually the children marveled at the beauty of it. Then we sliced the rind of the orange and laid it out flat. (SEE PHOTO) I asked the children what it reminded them of. Alena and I ask that you think of what the orange reminds you of. The children's answers are at the end of this section (do not peek until you try).



Then we had 2 sessions of voting. Why vote? How voting can solve a problem? What the rules of voting are? It seemed very appropriate since we did one of them on the day that we adults all went to the voting polls. This was the second time we voted. This time, the question on the voting ballot was: *Do you prefer an extra play period outside or a popcorn party?* Since the children had experience with voting, we did not have to explain the process. Each child received a ballot. They went to the voting "booth", marked their ballot and put it in the ballot box. Each child got an "I voted" sticker (compliments of our voting booth helper when I went to vote. She loved the idea of the children voting.). We then got a large chart ready to record the votes. We dramatically opened each ballot, marked a tally, and then counted the votes to determine what we would do. (Ask your child).

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Egg salad! Thank you all for contributing the hard boiled eggs. Of course, the children loved coloring them. So much fun, conversation, ideas, and trading colors. It took all of an extended day period. But on a previous day, we made egg salad with some of the eggs you sent.

Lots of steps. 1. Wash hands. 2. Crack the egg and peel. 3. Put the egg through the egg slicer. 4. Mash the egg with a fork. 5. Put the mashed egg in the bowl. (Repeat 3 more times). 6. Then each child added salt, pepper, mayonnaise. 7. Then taste what we made. It was delicious. That was an *almost* unanimous decision.



Finally "Festival of the Sugar Maples!" field trip was terrific. They showed us how sap was collected and boiled in the Native American days, in the days after the Europeans arrived with new tools and how it is done now. The McHenry conservation Guides were so good at explaining! They were clear, took their time, showed each step, and best of all EACH child had the opportunity to do the steps involved in gathering. It was a wonderful afternoon and we lucked out with the weather.

PS: One of the guides was a graduate of the Montessori School! Small world.



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There is so much more from decorating the Easter bags to curling the ribbon on them (not easy!) to beginning flash cards and on it goes. It is a wonderful group!

From the children: “To me, the orange looks like”

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Teeth | 8. Shark fins | 14. The equilateral triangle box |
| 2. Shark teeth | 9. The metal inset | 15. Cheese |
| 3. A tiara | 10. A dragon | 16. Teeth marks |
| 4. Mountains | 11. Lipstick after you take the top off | 17. Triangle vases |
| 5. Pyramids | 12. The triangles on the skirt I am wearing | 18. A cookie cutter |
| 6. Spikes on the back of a dragon | 13. A flower | 19. An ice cream cone |
| 7. A fence | | 20. The bottom of a heart |

How many did you get???



Notes from the Art Class (Kindergarten and Elementary)

Ms. Linda

This month in art we discussed the difference between 2 dimensional art and 3 dimensional art. The elementary and kindergarten classes both enjoyed creating 3 dimensional paper sculptures. They cut colored construction paper into different sizes and shapes. Then they "sculpted" the paper by curling, folding, rolling, and gluing their pieces on to a cardboard base.

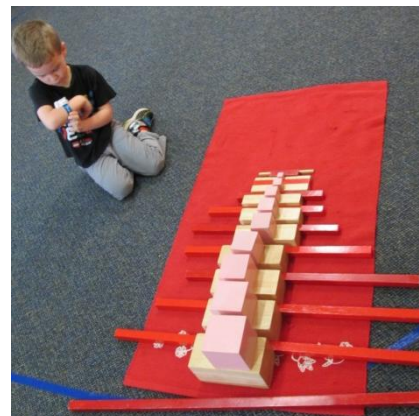
We also learned about the difference between representational and non-representational art. Both classes are in the process of creating a non representational art piece. They began by creating an abstract painting. The next step was to collage on top of the painting. Our final step to be completed this month will be to cut and reassemble the painting to create a whole new piece of art!



Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Eva

Another month has come and gone in the South room we have seen and done so many wonderful things! The sensorial area has been a great place for many of the children to explore variations and extensions. When previously they have used one material at a time, now they have begun to combine multiple materials to create new intelligent designs. It's been really cool to watch them plan and execute their ideas. Sometimes they don't quite work out because a cylinder or rod is not quite balanced, but they use their problem-solving skills to try another way, and the end result is very interesting.



There has also been a lot of building of three dimensional shapes. The children have used cubes, rectangular and triangular prisms, and cones in many of their geometric works, now they are building their own out of paper.

In math the division, multiplication, and addition boards have been very popular. Also the 45 Layout has been constructed almost every day this month. Word building to create stories and labeling the classroom have been very popular as well. It's always interesting to see what the children choose and why.



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Socially, it seems that there have been a lot of changes this month, with regards to whom the children are choosing to work and play with. There have been a lot of new friendships made, and older ones seem to have gotten stronger. We continue to use the term *role model* as a way to encourage desired behaviors and the new 5 year olds have definitely begun to embrace their roles as the “older” children in the classroom who are teaching the 3 and 4 year olds. It’s always heartwarming to see children naturally help one another and look out for their peers.



I just wanted to say that it was great to see all of you at parent-teacher conferences. It’s really nice to have a chance to sit down and tell you all the amazing things your child has been working on. Because there is not always a lot of paperwork product that comes home showing exactly what your child might be working on, it’s nice to have the opportunity to show you some of those works and explain where your child is at in their learning process.

Several parents asked **what you can work on with your child outside of school**, especially with spring break and summer coming up. Working on sounds and numbers at home is always something you can do. One work that we have in the classroom that you can adapt to your home is “labelling the classroom.” This can be done in many ways with just a stack of post-its or some strips of scrap paper and tape, here are a few ideas starting with the very basic and progressing in difficulty:

- 1) Sit with your child and have them use the sounds they know to label items in your home with just the beginning sound: “t” for table, “r” for refrigerator, etc. If your child can write it independently, great, if not, you can write it with a yellow marker, or lightly with a pencil and have them trace over your letters. Then they get to go tape it to that item.
- 2) Another option, slightly more challenging, is using just the end sound: “p” for lamp, “r” for chair.
- 3) If your child is a bit more advanced, have them sound as many letters of the entire word as they can hear: table might be “tabl” or drawer “drwr.”
- 4) You can see if they can hear the middle vowel sound: “a” for table, “o” for stove, and “e” for bed.
- 5) Some children want to know the exact spelling; in this case, you can write the whole word table and then have them copy on another paper. Or use the tracing method with the yellow marker.

Anytime you can encourage your child to write letter or number formations is great practice. Most children love to draw and color, you can get them a special notebook and some interesting writing utensils and have them “write” in their journal. Perhaps what they write may look like scribbles to you but it’s all prewriting practice.

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You can also work with them to label different parts of their drawings with some label stickers. Again, letting them work at their own ability level and without the pressure of it being spelled “right” this offers them more time holding their pencil with the pincer grip and using their own knowledge of the sounds and shapes of their letters and numbers.

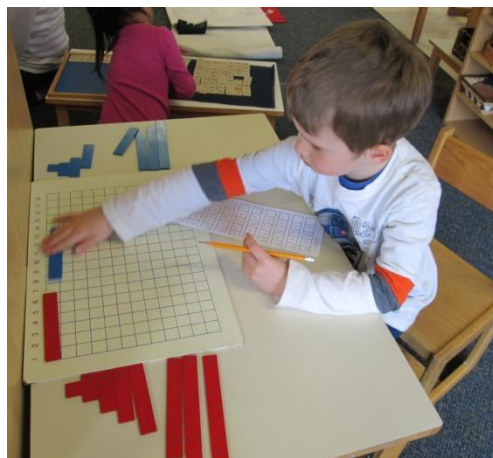
For counting and numbers, they can count just about anything in the house and do the same thing as with their sounds, have them sort their toys by similar attributes and then count them and label them with the number: *25 red Legos, 15 blue Legos, etc.* A helpful source for more ideas of games you can make at home is Pinterest. If you search Montessori Language At Home or Montessori Math At Home you should be able to find some creative things you can do at home to enrich what they are learning at school.

We had what I am hoping is one last chance to play in the snow on the playground. Spring is here and we are planning many cool outdoor learning activities for April and May.



Pre-K Extended Day Class (Photo Gallery)

Ms. Andrea



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Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

Happy Spring, Families! We have noted the days are getting longer, Robins have been sighted along with green grass and sprouting plants. Hopefully winter is over although if we send snow pants home, we will surely need them.



The children had so much fun with our Family Fun Fair - thank you to our classroom parents who truly made our East classroom a destination to be enjoyed that evening! Our parents set up fun activities not only in our classroom, but the overflow of volunteers and creativity extended into the whole school! Everyone appreciates your enthusiasm and willingness to make this event a success for us all! We also thank our cake bakers and suppliers for the ever popular cake walk items; pretty much everyone went home with something.

We celebrated the birthday of Dr. Seuss with many books and stories. This was a good opportunity to learn about rhyming words and the pattern of words. Some of our class' favorites; "Put Me in the Zoo" - they loved how the animal could juggle his spots; "Cat in the Hat" - they all promised they wouldn't let the cat in the house with mom not home! We even created our own "Cat in the Hat" art project that you all hopefully enjoyed.



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On March 8th, we heard it was "National Pancake Day"! IHOP was giving away pancakes for free but we felt that we could have more fun by making our own....so we did. As a line activity, we made the batter - each child taking a turn to add ingredients and stirring. We were lucky enough to have beautiful morning weather so that everyone could spoon their pancake into the skillet on the little patio outside. It was a very busy snack day!!



St. Patrick's Day brought activities of shamrocks and a brief story of leprechauns and the "Pot of Gold" at the end of the rainbow - true or a "myth"? We then studied the fact that a rainbow does not have an end - it is circular, and in addition, revisited the seven colors of a rainbow and what weather pattern allows us to see one.

As March comes in "Like a Lion" and supposedly "Goes out Like a Lamb", we have made windsocks and suncatchers - hopefully you are enjoying both - we are voting for the suncatchers!

We continue our daily work cycle with each child as a small group or individual. Much growth has been observed with writing, language/phonetic sound acquisition as well as math solidification skills. We hope you all have a sense of where your child is as discussed at March Conferences - thank you for your involvement and time.



Our children enjoyed celebrating the birthdays of Penelope, Kendal and Morgan this month - sharing photos and their birth stories are interesting and fun for the whole class!

With the arrival of Spring, we are looking forward to planting/seeds and a plant's life cycle - identifying various plants and projects to acknowledge/track their growth. If you have any project or idea that you would like to share with the class, please let us know! Your ideas and creativity are always welcome!

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Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

March was a very busy month. We began with celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday by reading many of his books. St. Patrick's Day had us making lots of shamrocks. Signs of spring were popping up everywhere. Easter found us making eggs and rabbits. We found lots of rabbit tracks in the snow from our last snow storm. The snowflakes were so big and very pretty. We had a surprise visit from a rabbit that left colored eggs in their shoes while they were sleeping.

ART:

- Decorated a paper sock
- Shamrock rubbings
- Leprechaun card made out of our hand print
- Painted on wax paper with shades of green and a little white, poked out a shamrock to make a frame for the wax paper art
- Origami rabbits
- Is it a rabbit or a duck picture?
- A truck dot to dot picture
- A color by number butterfly



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GAMES: Die, paper, and pencil. We rolled the dice to add features to the face of the Lorax .

SONG: I'm a Little Leprechaun Dressed in Green

SCIENCE: "Two small cups and a ping pong ball": Place the ball into one of the cups, put the other cup close to the first cup and hold so it touches, then blow down on the first cup with the ball and watch it pop up and out into the other cup. Yes, it does work.

"Soak Raisins in Water": Fill two glasses with water. Add two Tablespoons of salt to one glass and stir until the salt dissolves. Now drop some raisins into both glasses. Check after an hour. What do you think will happen to the raisins?

OUTSIDE TIME: We were able to enjoy some days outside. T-ball and scoops were popular.



*Thank you for
your time!*



"Today, just take time to smell the roses, enjoy those little things about your life, your family, spouse, friends, job. Forget about the thorns -the pains and problems they cause you - and enjoy life."

QuotesGratitude.com

~ Bernard Kelvin Clive

*Now relax and
enjoy your life!!!*