

Montessori Pathways' News



November 2017

"Children must grow not only in the body but in the spirit, and the mother longs to follow the mysterious spiritual journey of the beloved one who tomorrow will be the intelligent, divine creation, man."

~ Maria Montessori

Annual Community Harvest

"You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving."

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

We concluded November with a Giving with Gratitude Week, when kids and their families were able to donate food and other items to the 27th Annual Community Harvest, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Together we collected and donated **422 pounds** of food and other items.

It was a great chance to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks for what they get, but also the importance of giving.



~Elementary students are helping to load the donated items~



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

I believe that November is a month that not only begins the holiday season, but also brings the spirit of giving and sharing. Following the Montessori approach, we at Montessori Pathways would like to teach our students the importance of sharing, giving, and helping, which will let them continue to be proud citizens of a country that is ready to help people around the world in any difficult situation.

Kids are Helping Kids

Montessori Pathways' students began this season of giving with the **Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF** event. While collecting candy for themselves during Halloween night, many of our kindergarten and elementary students were also collecting money for UNICEF, the foundation that helps kids around the world.

You should have seen the kids' excitement when, after counting the money, they realized that together they raised **\$230.30**, which is more than their original goal of \$150.

This amount can cover basic health needs of more than 40 children for three months, immunize 147 children against measles for life, vaccinate 465 children against polio for life, and provide 64 packets of high energy biscuits for malnourished children.



Thank you!

- ◆ Thank you, parents, for all your help and support and for giving your kids a chance to feel the Thanksgiving spirit!
- ◆ Thank you to our Elementary students for helping to load the donated items for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry!
- ◆ Thank you, Marion Krause, Emily's grandma, and Eric Fistler, Samuel's dad, for helping us deliver all donated items for the Community Harvest to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.



PARENT CORNER

"Will My Child Be Ready for Public Kindergarten?"

While preparing for the Fall Parent/Teacher conferences, we came across this question multiple times in the parent/teacher questionnaires. I would like to touch on this subject.

The Montessori curriculum is focused on preparing students for the Montessori Kindergarten, so it is very important to understand the difference between Kindergarten in a traditional vs. a Montessori school.

In traditional education, kindergarten is the beginning of the elementary level, where children begin with the basics (sounds, numbers, colors, shapes, etc), since it is designed to accommodate those who have not attended preschool. These same concepts are covered at the beginning of the Montessori Early Childhood class (at 3-4 years of age).

The Montessori Kindergarten, however, is the final stage of the 3 year cycle of the Early Childhood Education.

Please remember that Montessori (Primary and Elementary) functions in 3-year cycles, the benefits and knowledge of which cannot be fully realized by removing the child mid-cycle.

The third year is crucial in culminating and solidifying the work of the previous years. If you've already allowed your children to enter the Montessori environment, give them the chance to complete the cycle of learning that they've begun.

The Montessori learning experience is cumulative: what a child learns in the kindergarten year builds on what was learned in previous Montessori years. The kindergarten year is the culmination of this learning when the child internalizes these early concrete experiences, building a strong educational foundation. The value of the first two years cannot be fully realized if the child does not continue working with the Montessori materials to complete the three-year cycle.

"Does Montessori Prepare Children for Traditional School?"

Click here to learn about it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gh11LXOgZF0&feature=youtu.be>

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber

"To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any power of control is to betray the idea of freedom."

~Maria Montessori~

G'day! Our study of the *Land Down Under* continues. Students are focusing on the biomes of Australia, and learning about plants, animals, and people who live there. Most students have already completed their Australia map.



The visit to the Burpee Museum afforded students a "fossils and dinosaur" experience. Since we were unable to visit the library last month, we spent the entire day learning more about dinosaurs in our classroom. Our biome study continues with learning the parts of a biome.

In the study of time, students will discover what past, present and future really means to them.



First year students continue work in addition, fractions, nouns, phonogram sounds. Second and third year students work on multiplication, math facts, grammar, dictionary use, and word studies.

Upper Elementary students are studying typing, parts of the atom, elements, and the process of plant or animal classification in addition to their Math and Language work. Daily writing is required for all students to build their skills and writing ability.



Children surprise us sometimes. As teachers, we often witness beautiful acts of kindness from children who really do not go out of their way to be kind. A perfect example occurred recently in chess class. It was the final class of the session, when some children are awarded trophies based on skill, points, homework, etc. A newer chess student, who did not earn a trophy this time around and was disappointed, was approached right after the class and congratulated on his effort by an older student with a lot of chess experience. The older student bolstered the confidence of the younger student with kind words of acknowledgement, recognition, and encouragement to "keep practicing and maybe you'll get a trophy next time." The older student even brought in one of his chess medals and awarded it to the younger student!

Disappointments can happen throughout life, but handling them is a skill that must be **learned**. As parents and teachers, we can coach and guide children through the process. We cannot protect our children from all disappointments, nor should we. Everyone needs to learn that life brings disappointments and joys, and handling both with grace and courage is a valuable skill to possess. These are opportunities for learning. Not everyone gets a trophy, nor do we always get the job we want, the winning goal, the best seat in the house, or the biggest fish. As adults, do we role-model positive ways to handle our disappointments? Do we point out examples when they occur, to teach our children how to respond in an appropriate, graceful, and courageous manner? Just as we encouraged our babies to walk (an analogy I repeatedly use in the classroom), we can coach our children to persevere, to never give up, to keep practicing, and "try, try again." Being a gracious loser is just as important as being a gracious winner.

We cannot stop all the tears, but we can teach our children how to bounce back and look forward to success in the future. That is a huge accomplishment, and one we hope they will share with others.



Coming School Events

- ⇒ **December 8 (F) 9:00am**— Elementary Students' Trip to Crystal Lake Library
- ⇒ **December 15 (F) - 5:00pm** – “**Flakes!**”- Winter Celebration at the First Congregational Church in Crystal Lake.
 - ◆ Please RSVP by December 4th.
 - ◆ If your child is an All-Day student, please pick up your child from school no later than 4:30pm that day.
- ⇒ **December 25 – January 5 – Winter Break**
- ⇒ Montessori Pathways offers **WINTER WONDER CAMP** for your children during winter break.

*If you would like to sign up your child(ren) for **Winter Camp**, please return the registration forms, along with the payment, no later than **Friday, December 8th***

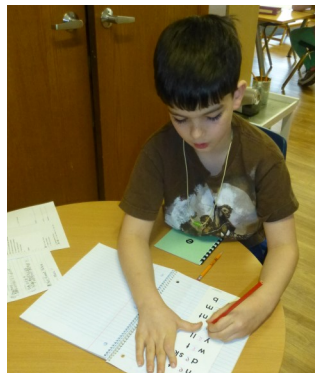
Note: The camp will operate if there are no less than 7 students daily. Otherwise, camp will be cancelled. The decision will be made by December 8th based on the number of applications.

If you are planning to enroll your child in Winter Camp, please return this form with payment on time.
- ⇒ **January 8 (M) – School Resumes**
- ⇒ **January 11 (Th) – 6:00pm - Montessori Fun / Educational Night for Pre-K and K Students and Parents:**
 - ◆ “**Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished – Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary Education**” – Workshop for Pre-K and K Parents.
 - ◆ **Bingo / Pizza Night** – for Pre-K and K Students.
- ⇒ **January 12 (F) 9:00am**— Elementary Students' Trip to Crystal Lake Library
- ⇒ **January 15 (M) - No School** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
- ⇒ **January 15 – 31 – Returning Families Preferred Re- Enrollment Period**
- ⇒ **January 17 (W) - 12:15pm**—**Kindergarten and Elementary Students Field Trip – “Step Africa!” Show** at Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake
- ⇒ **January 26 (F) – all day by appt.**— **Elementary Parent / Student / Teacher Conference Day**
 - ◆ **No School** for School Day Elementary Students on Conference Day
 - ◆ Child Care is provided for ESD (7:45am - 4:15pm) / All Day (6:45-am-6:00pm) Elementary students



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Karen

Gift of giving

Last month, it was the opportunity to Trick or Treat for UNICEF. This month, it was the children preparing a song about family to share with you.

We spend several days just practicing the song. Then the children worked all day this past week "framing" the song for you as a gift. They had to mark where each hole punch would go. Then they "laced" the card. Followed by putting in envelope, signing their card, and happily placing in the "going home" box. Opportunities that allow for children to

give of themselves are golden. We could list several "skills" or "skill building elements" of a project, but perhaps the most valuable is simply the opportunity to share, to give of themselves, to bring happiness to another.



Geometry:

Further excursions into geometry: Yes, we do work on vocabulary development (please be prepared to reinforce new geometry terms). But the children are also practicing construction of geometric shapes using triangles. (Did you know that all straight sided shapes can be created using triangles?). This kind of activity gives them a chance to create and also to become aware of the of some principles of levels geometry through use of the materials.



Mathematical thinking:



Currently, the "hot" item in the math materials is the bead chain cabinet. It has many concept levels built into the material so it can be used in increasingly challenging ways over a period of time. At the moment, we are working on "short chains" representing the squaring of numbers. (contrasted with the long chains representing the cube of numbers). As an ex-

ample of the short chain let's use 5. The chain links 5 bars of 5 beads each. Therefore, we have a total of 25. Because the bars are linked, they can be folded into the form of a square. So we SEE that 5 fives is 5 taken 5 times (5×5) and it forms a square. So 5 squared takes on a new, clearer meaning. Don't you wish we had such math materials!

The curriculum:

From the above example, you can see that although your child is in the same environment daily, the environment "changes" for him as he/she is given new lessons to increase their repertoire or to increase the challenge of materials already presented. The environment "grows" with the child.

Field trip

Perhaps the most memorable aspect of the field trip was simply being surrounded by so many models and actual fossils of dinosaurs and other life at the time of the dinosaur which no longer exist. There is nothing like a model 10 x your size to make a lasting impression on you!

Parents:

I really enjoyed meeting you on an individual level at conferences and also as a small group at the evening presentation on mathematical thinking. Of course, this working together increases the effectiveness of Montessori in the life of your child and your family.

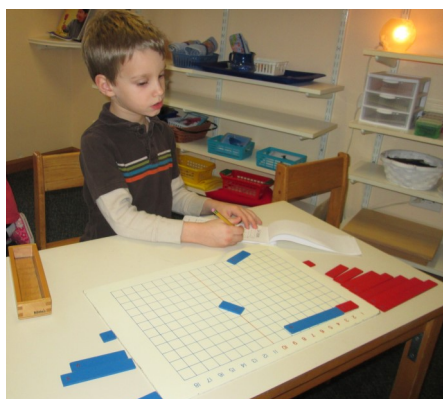
International Montessori:

Briefly, Slovenia was a wonderful experience. I was there teaching at the Institute for over a week. The energy of Montessori in Slovenia so alive and vibrant. Every 2 years, another 43 people enroll in the Montessori teacher accreditation program. Their "lab" school has come to include the high school years. Because Slovenia is such a small country, the hope is that Montessori will be a significant influence in its national educational system. Additionally, they are exploring the application of Montessori principles in work with the elderly and memory care patients.



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

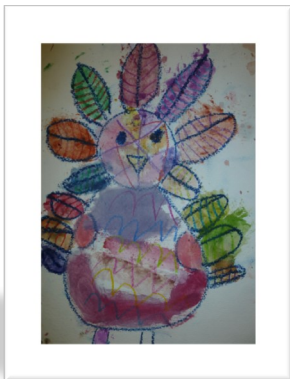
Kindergarten Extended Day Class



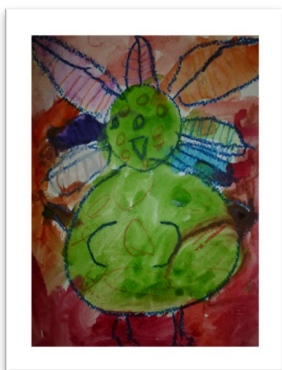
NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

Ms. Linda

This month in the kindergarten class we have continued to focus on directed drawing and painting to practice fine motor skills. The students have been making great progress! Ask them about their turkey painting.



In the elementary class, the students created a koala bear and a eucalyptus tree from clay to coincide with their studies on Australia.



Last week they were asked to imagine what would happen if the turkey did not end up on the Thanksgiving table and had a "Turkeys Day Out", they created some wonderful drawings and shared their turkey stories with their class mates.



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

This time of year is always a wonderful time to show gratitude for all that we have. Since it is a time of giving thanks, we would like to begin this newsletter by thanking all the parents who were able to help with the Halloween party. The children had such a fun time and we felt so lucky to have your help, your contributions and your time and energy. We would also like to thank you for your continued contributions for the *sharing basket*, we are so grateful for your generosity and the children are so proud to be able to provide the groceries for the week. We hope you all received your homemade pumpkin bread as a sign of gratitude for your food pantry donations. The recipe was quite simple and the children really enjoyed using the hand mixer and cracking eggs.

Easy Pumpkin Bread Recipe

Ingredients

- * 1 box white or yellow cake mix
- * 1 15-ounce can pumpkin puree
- * 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- * 1-3 eggs (see cake mix directions for amount)
- * Vegetable oil (see cake mix directions for amount)

Instructions

- * Preheat oven to 375 degrees and grease a loaf pan
- * Consult your cake mix box to find the amount of eggs and oil as directed on the box.
- * Combine cake mix, eggs and oil in a bowl and mix on medium speed until smooth and well-blended.
- * Add pumpkin and cinnamon. Mix on low until incorporated.
- * Pour mixture into prepared loaf pan.
- * Bake at 375 for 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Now that the weather has gotten cooler, we have started cookie baking as a *food preparation* activity again in the practical life area. We begin with the dough already made in pre-proportioned balls, so that the children can practice rolling out the dough and using the cookie cutters.

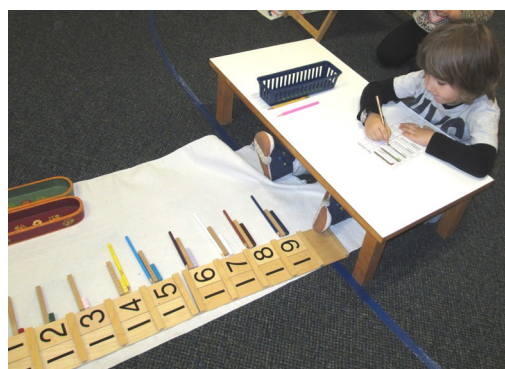
Later in the school year, we will have the children measure out the water and bisquick for their own portion of dough. The kindergarteners are already doing their own measuring in the afternoon with Ms. Karen; experimenting with too much water, not enough flour, etc.

Since the holiday season is upon us, and as a way to connect home and school at this special time of year, we would like to remind South Room Parents of an open invi-

tation for the month of December. If you would like to share a family tradition, holiday-related or not, you are invited to visit our classroom from 11:00-11:20 and share something special about your family with the children. Some examples from previous years: *Christmas tree ornament collection, favorite book, gingerbread houses, Hanukkah latkes, Diwali- Festival of Lights, etc.* If you are interested in participating, please email the school with a few dates that might work for you (November 27th – December 21st) and a brief explanation of what you will be sharing

Just a friendly reminder, the weather is changing and we would appreciate if your child has the weather-appropriate clothing needed to have fun outside, no matter the temperature. They will soon need a warmer coat, snow pants, water-resistant gloves or mittens (mittens are better for them to dress independently), hat, and water-resistant boots.

We have been working on more extended works and encouraging the children to choose “challenging work.” This is a very subjective term, challenging for a 5 year old will be very different than challenging for a 3 year old. We also have incorporated a “work in progress” basket for those longer activities that can’t always be completed during one work cycle and need to be carried over to the next day. The children are learning to go back and finish what they began working on the day before. Not all of the Montessori works have a paperwork extension, and we do not push that on any of the children. However, if it is something that the child is ready for, will be successful at, and asks for, we may find a way to incorporate some form of recording of the work using paper and pencil.



Sometimes, if a child is ready for more challenging intellectual work, but they are not quite able to write their answers clearly and independently, (for example in writing addition equations) we will ask an older child from the elementary classroom to come in and help the younger child as a transcriber. The younger child will read the equations with the answer they have gotten through their addition work, and the elementary child will write what they are read. It's a great community-building experience, in which the two different ages are able to work together, and the older child is able to feel confident in their skills of helping a younger child.

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

We are always working on community building. Specifically, we have been encouraging a new rule "ask three before you ask me" ("me" being the teachers). We are trying to remind the children to ask their classmates for help after they have tried themselves first. This has had quite a positive impact on their sense of community within their own classroom. It's great to see the children happily agree to help a fellow classmate in need, regardless of age; we have seen many instances of younger children helping older children. It also has proven helpful in building self-confidence in children that think they aren't able, and aren't inclined to see themselves as *helpers* or *leaders*. We can see the change in their demeanor when they are able to successfully provide assistance to someone in need.



We have been getting a lot of *show-n-tell* items coming to school recently. This is great! It really provides an opportunity for the children to work on their public-speaking skills; addressing the whole group at one time. It also gives them an opportunity to share something special from their home. It's also a tool for parents to encourage a hesitant child in the morning..."*don't you want to share this for show-n-tell today?*"

Just a few guidelines: we would appreciate no toys or items that show violence in any way, we encourage: crafts (anything made at home), photographs, artwork, books (if it's a longer book please help your child find their favorite page and mark it with a bookmark), maps, souvenirs from a trip, something from nature that they found on a walk.



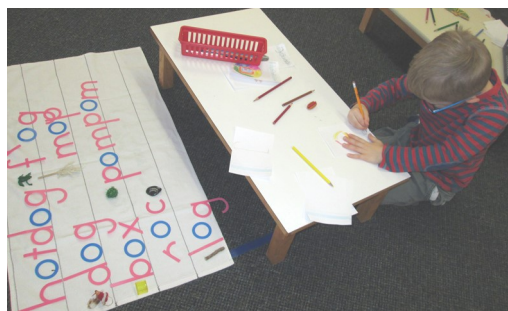
In addition, it would be really helpful if you could practice with your child, the night or morning before: have them go over a few important talking points for their chosen item. We also talk a lot about the difference between a *question* (means you want to know something more), a *comment* (you have something to say about the item), and a *compliment* (you have a nice thing to say about the item). There is no limit to how often or what days they can bring *show-n-tell* items, as long as it is meaningful to the child. If you have any questions regarding *show-n-tell* please email the school.

We are having a wonderful time in the South Room and are moving right along into December.



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Andrea



The afternoon Pre-K children continue to make strides in their abilities to navigate the second work cycle of the day. In particular, Ms. Karen and I have been focusing on self-control: choosing works and staying with that chosen work for the whole time needed to complete it, sitting by their work and holding up their hand until a teacher is able to attend to them, staying quiet and attentive for longer/ more complicated presentations, waiting patiently for their turn with a teacher. They have been very successful in practicing these new skills which will undoubtedly help when they become kindergarteners.



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

The month of November has brought colder temperature, falling leaves and excitement (running to the window type of excitement) to see a few snowflakes floating down from above. Not to mention the holiday season quickly approaching. "We have our Christmas tree up!", "So do we!!" and "First it's Thanksgiving, then it's Christmas and then it's my birthday!" I think it's safe to say emotions are bubbling up and are even becoming a little contagious. I'm thinking about putting my tree up too :)

During community time this month we played games, read stories, presented art activities, celebrated birthdays and talked about several different topics. "Giving with Gratitude" week was a special time. We talked about the needs of some families and how the Crystal Lake Food Pantry helps by providing a "free" grocery store. We emptied a grocery bag filled with items as an example of things to donate. As we were discussing how we can all help a little boy raised his hand, "Ms Carole there is a store in Crystal Lake where everything is a dollar; that might be a good place for them to buy food." Another child, "Ya, I know of a store like that too." What was so endearing about this conversation was, as we were presenting a problem, they voiced *their* solution to help families too. The hope of becoming a community of helping friends is taking root. As a way to say "thank you" for helping them help others each child made a gift. They were very excited to decorate their own gourd and bring it home for you.

A variety of fall leaves were introduced during line time. We named and matched pictures of several different types; drawing their attention to the various margins of each leaf. Oak leaves have lobed margins, for example. Some of the children traced and made posters of the leaf shapes. Parts of a Leaf science cards and a Fall Tree gluing activity has been available in the classroom too. On our quiet table we placed a binder of pressed leaves for further discovery; along with a magnifying glass, of course.

Lastly, we have been reading Thanksgiving books at the end of the morning. We have introduced the Pilgrim's journey on the Mayflower and their first Thanksgiving. Bringing out the globe, we talked about where the Pilgrims began their journey and where it ended. We now understand a ship, not an airplane or spaceship brought them to America. Also, how the Native American Indians helped the Pilgrims when they arrived. We have an activity on the shelf where the children can retell the story with a friend if they choose.

We are so encouraged to see the children greet their friends with hellos and smiles as they arrive. Some of our children are coming into the room with an idea while others enjoy time with a friend before they choose their own individual works. We've observed friendly conversation while drawing a picture, cutting apples or carrots.

The children have become more independent and confident in making their own work choices than earlier in the year as well. Of course, we must have a "volume check" at times ... we're all just having too much fun!

Our younger children have been busy in the 0-9 math material. They are learning numeral recognition with sand paper numbers, counting quantities with the spindle box and the counting rods; as well as matching the rods with the sandpaper numbers. We have been going on "number hunts" counting quantities of various objects and matching quantities to the sand paper numbers. These are extensions to help master their understanding of one-to-one correspondence and number recognition. Children who have mastered the 0-9 material have been working with the teen and ten boards, working on simple counting using the strip board and red/blue table rods and the 100 Board, to name a few. The decimal system is also a work that some of our older children are working on. They have been introduced to the name of each category and the quantities associated to each one.

Sounds are being learned and sound books are coming home. Please look for their spiral sound book in their blue bags. Each child is so proud of the sounds they are learning. We reinforce their sound acquisition through beginning sound games, matching objects or pictures with letters and sound hunts. When a child has mastered several sounds they are introduced to the moveable alphabet and begin word building. Some of our older children are beginning to write simple stories and illustrate their work. We have a few budding readers who are borrowing books from the classroom to share with you too.

The Sensorial material continues to be an area of great interest. Children are grading the Pink Tower, Brown Stairs and combining them together to create a very interesting design. The direct aim of the geometric cabinet is to visually discriminate form and introduce language. Children are also working with the colored cylinders and recreating a pattern with or without pattern cards.

After much anticipation and asking; yes, baking is now available in the classroom!! During the first couple weeks we want to make sure everyone has had at least one turn. We have a list to help us along. We have assured everyone that they will have more turns as the year continues.

During our final week before Thanksgiving the children prepared for a "mini" Thanksgiving Celebration by baking muffins, making butter and preparing fruit. We shared our food together, read a book and talked about things we are thankful for. Moms and Dads, Grandma and Grandpa and pets came up often.

It's been a very busy and fulfilling month....what a joy and pleasure it is to work with your children. Hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving!

NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS

Ms. Donna

Activities:

- ◆ Veterans Day is a public holiday held on the anniversary of the end of World War 1 (November 11) to honor US veterans and victims of all wars. It replaced Armistice Day in 1954. We learned about five branches of service, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. When talking with the children it seems that most of their grandparents and parents served in the Army. Thank You for keeping us safe.
- ◆ In 1620, 102 people sailed from England to America on a ship called the Mayflower. They landed in what is now Massachusetts and called their new settlement Plymouth. The Native Americans helped them learn how to plant crops. In 1621, 52 Pilgrims and 90 Native American friends celebrated their survival with a three-day harvest feast. They ate seafood, turkey, deer, vegetables and fruit. This became known as the First Thanksgiving. In 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed that a day be set aside each year for Thanksgiving and praise "Turkey Day " is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November.

We learned that:

- * Most owls go out at nighttime.
- * An owl's call sounds like "Who, Who, Who!"
- * An owl is a type of bird.
- * Owls have sharp claws called talons.
- * Many owls eat small animals like mice and rats.

Songs:

- * "Gobble, gobble - says the turkey"
- * "Soon will be Thanksgiving Day"
- * "Will you eat me?"
- * "How you treat me"
- * "I'll quickly run away."



Games:

"Little Bug, Little Bug hiding under the little rug. Who do you think it is?"

One child hides under the rug and another child leaves the room. When they return they try to guess who is under the rug. A paper bag turkey, acorns and a die are all you need for this game. The turkey has a large hole in his stomach where the children put in the number of acorns rolled on their die. The first one to use up all their acorns is the winner.

Art:

- * Owls made from paper
- * Owls made by rubbing a crayon over the paper which is on top of a large owl
- * Turkeys made on a paper plate
- * Scarecrows made from paper
- * An acorn on a leaf made from paper
- * Thankful Book



Music:

- * Dance / Movement
- * Monkey in the Middle
- * Color song
- * In and out the Windows



Books:

- * "The Best Thanksgiving Ever" by Teddy Slasater
- * "The story of Thanksgiving" by Nancy Skarmear
- * "The First Thanksgiving" by Dana Stewart
- * "Bear Says Thanks" by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman
- * "Thank You Thanksgiving" by David Milgrim
- * "My First Thanksgiving" by Tomie dePaola
- * "Brain Quest" Questions and Answers



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

More Wonderful Moments at Pathways

