

# Montessori Pathways' News



## 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.

## Annual Community Harvest

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

~ Robert Louis Steven-

We began November with a **Giving with Gratitude Week**, when kids and their families were able to donate food and other items to the 32nd Annual Community Harvest, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Together we collected and donated **717 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.



*"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

## Thank you from the heart



- ♦ Thank you, parents, for all of your help, support, and participation in the kids' learning process, 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, all our families, for the privilege to help your children grow.

# Montessori Parent Night

Thank you to all of you who attended our parent night that was prepared and held by Ms. Masha and Ms. Kathy. It was an amazing chance for parents to learn through demonstration, presentation, and hands-on experience why Practical Life activities are so crucial in children's early stage development and how they prepare our children for their academic and life success.



## Parents' Corner



### ~ Process over Product in Montessori Classroom ~

It is not easy to be a Montessori Parent. Tolerating your child's shoes being on the wrong feet, sitting on your hands while they flip their coat thirty times before finally getting it on their body independently, and remaining unemotional but empathetic during meltdowns all come with the territory. Another aspect of Montessori that can be difficult to accept as a parent is the idea of valuing "process over product."

Most of the work a child does in their Primary class does not involve the creation of a physical product that the child can take home to show Mom and Dad, especially when they are on the younger end of the spectrum. Instead, the experience itself with the materials is what is important—not the completion of a worksheet, test, or other physical proof that a child has worked on a certain topic. That makes it tricky as a parent to know what your child is working on and how well they understand it. They are not bringing anything home for you to assess! And to make matters worse, when you ask your child what they did at school today, they answer, "Nothing."

[Click here to continue reading this article](#)





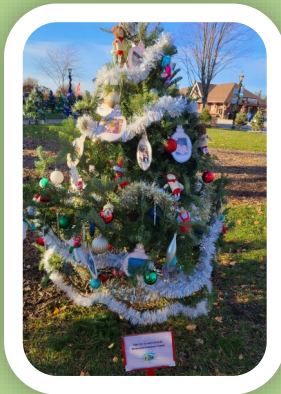
## COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS



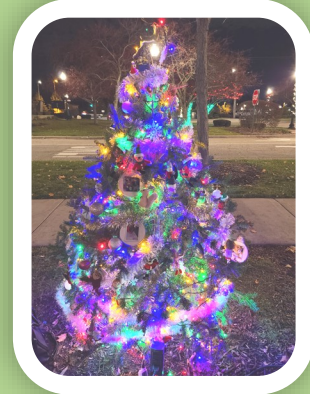
in December



### Christmas Tree Lane in Downtown of Crystal Lake



Montessori Pathways School loves to support Crystal Lake Downtown by sponsoring their amazing events. This time we are happy to participate in Christmas Tree Lane Decoration. Go and find the Montessori Pathways' Christmas Tree in CL downtown.



◆ **December 1—22—Celebrating Winter: Winter Holidays Activity Month**

◆ **December 4—8 ( M—F ) —Spirit Week at Montessori Pathways**

Every day of this week will be special. Kids and teachers are welcome to dress up according to theme of the day.

- **Monday—Montessori Pathways Day** (wear schools blue t-shirts on top of long sleeve shirt)
- **Tuesday—Comfy Day** (wear your favorite pajamas or any other comfy clothes)
- **Wednesday—Go Team! Day** (wear your favorite sport teams' jersey, t-shirt, and /or cap)
- **Thursday—My Favorite Color Day** - (wear anything of your favorite color)
- **Wacky Friday** (wear mix and match socks, mismatched clothes, make a crazy hair)

◆ **December 13 (W) —Caroling around the School** (by Elementary Class)

◆ **December 14 (Th) at 5:30pm —Family Reading Under the Stars Night** (Primary Classes)

◆ **December 18 (M) at 2:00pm - Montessori Community Service—Elementary Class Trip to Crystal Pines Rehabilitation / Health Care Center.**

Our elementary students will share a holiday season spirit with Crystal Pines' residents.



◆ **December 25 (M) - January 5 (F) - No school; Winter Break—Enjoy the Holiday Season!!!**

◆ **January 8 (M) - School resumes**



## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget



At Pathways, November is all about Gratitude. It begins with our food drive to deliver food to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. The elementary class not only donates items but we take a trip with the Kindergarten students to tour the facility to learn more about how our gift of nourishment is feeding not only our city of Crystal Lake but all of Mc Henry County. The students are always happy to see how much the food weighs that we donate but how much they also weigh.



We also have a Gratitude jar where all students write one thing that each is thankful for. Every day I pull out a slip to read to remind us the many ways we are thankful. Ms. Suzy tied into this concept in art class and each student made a gratitude tree. On each leaf, students could write things to which they are thankful.

Finally, on the Friday before Thanksgiving week, our class made a feast where the students were put into teams to prepare each dish with my supervision. We made ham and pineapple skewers, macaroni and cheese, pasta with marinara sauce, breadsticks and brownie mug cakes. The students set the table with tablecloths and we added our pinecone turkeys that we made in art and enjoyed our meals.



In addition to the spirit of gratitude and love, our community is working more fluidly. It is at this time of year, where students become more independent and are aware of their roles as teacher in the class as well as learner.



Students volunteer to help instead of waiting for others to help them. More work plans are accomplished and our writing time on Wednesdays has more authors sharing what they have written than before now. Emergent readers are gaining in confidence due to their practicing and accomplishing phonics lessons.



Our larger group activities have included lessons about roots, the Earth's atmosphere, reading clocks, nouns, diagramming prepositions, adjectives, multiplication, adding larger numbers, factoring, line positions and angles.



As a Practical Life activity, our students made a final touch in fall cleaning of our playground. Team work on sunny day is always fun.



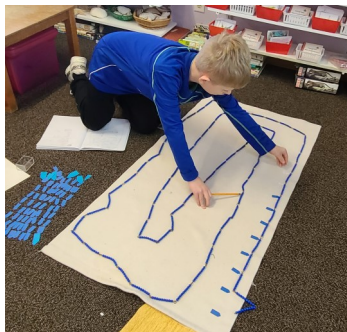
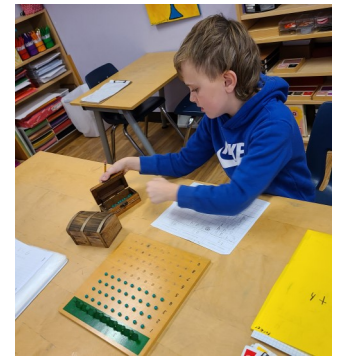
Finally, we are changing the focus of our physical education class. For the first three months we have been working on skills for playing sports such as kicking, throwing, speed, endurance, listening and eye to hand coordination. For the next three months, we will be doing yoga.





# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class





## PRE-K / KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP



Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy

When we asked our Pre-K and Kindergarteners what Thanksgiving was, one of the first answers we heard is "gifts!" This opened up a great deeper discussion of the importance of Giving with Gratitude Week, Thanksgiving, and the Mayflower Journey that we had during the morning hours. Our Kindergarteners also had the opportunity to visit the Crystal Lake food Pantry alongside our Elementary students! The afternoon has also allowed for more elaborate art projects of Autumn Leaf, Turkey and the Mayflower, giving children the chance to exercise their organization skills and patience. Before the last leaves fall, we have also brought in some of the large Maple leaves from the playground to practice leaf rubbing (a wonderful exercise in bilateral hand use) and discuss parts of the leaf in a very tangible way.





## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



November brings a focus to family, giving and being grateful for all we have. Giving with Gratitude week was exciting, the children were happy to be contributors to those in need. Many of the children were not aware people in our community needed food and even shelter. They were taken by surprise. Thank you for all your generous donations. This brought conversation about what each of us is grateful for in preparation of our Thanksgiving celebrations. The children have been discussing what each is grateful for. A few kindergarten children used the moveable alphabet to write about it. *"I am grateful for my family, cats and leopard geckos."*

The art area is bustling with Thanksgiving arts and crafts. The children made turkeys, pumpkins, and Indian corn. The dot painting with Q-tips and the cutting skills needed in these various activities are purposeful and to refine the small motors skills needed for writing.

Practical Life gives the children an opportunity to scrub a pumpkin, bake cookies and sort leaves by shape and color. They are poking turkeys and pumpkins. The children have enjoyed cutting green beans which are sent home in small baggies. You can steam these and serve them to your child with dinner. Get creative with them, throw them in a bowl of soup.

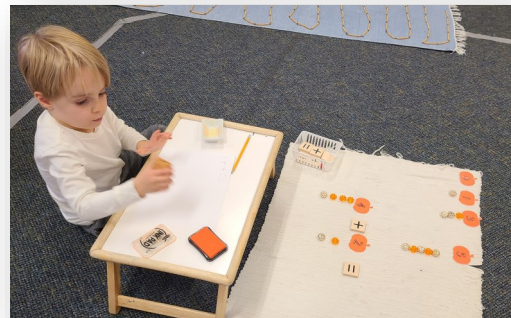
We have once again involved the children in snack preparations for the entire am and pm snacks, such as cutting broccoli, cauliflower, and grapes.



For lunch preparation children have been rolling napkins with silverware for our lunch tables. We brought back baking. Baking is a multistep half of a morning activity. It builds fine motor skills, concentration, and attention to detail. The children must wash their hands, gather the baking supplies, measure, and make the dough, roll out the dough, cut the cookies, decorate them, place them on the baking tray, wash, dry and put away their dishes. They finish by writing their name on a label, affix it to the bag and place the cookies in the bag. Whew!



The children are enjoying pumpkin and acorn counting in math area. The older children have begun addition with the bead materials. They sort the beads by quantity and build 2 bead stairs. They then get their equations, either in book form or assorted equations. The beads are used as an intermediary step to help the child to memorize addition facts through repetition. If your child brings home any sort of "book" or paper have them read it to you to reinforce the concepts presented.



The 45 layout is an introduction to the decimal system. The children enjoy the enormity of the work. It is laying out units from 1-10 next to the numerals. Laying out the tens from 10 - 90 again with the ten bars. One ten bar is 10, 2 tens make 20 etc. The children count the units in a one hundred square and find a one hundred square is the same as 100 units. Again, they lay the numerals and corresponding quantity for each numeral 100- 900. For the grand finale the thousands are laid out from 1000 - 9000 with the corresponding numerals. The result is a huge work and confidence in ability.



Language provides the children the opportunity to match 3-part cards, one master card with a picture and the word, one card with the picture only and lastly a card with only the corresponding word. There are cards for each of the animal families as well as plants and geometric shapes. The children are currently enthralled with parts of the turkey and scarecrow. Many children just take these out and learn the names of the various parts. The teachers can write the words for younger children. Others are in a Sensitive Period to write the names of the parts and color the matching picture making a book. The children were introduced to the voyage of the Mayflower and their interactions with the indigenous people of the United States. The first Thanksgiving was a celebration of a great harvest after a long difficult year. Happy Thanksgiving to all. Have a relaxing and safe holiday.



# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

**Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole**



November has brought the giving spirit to our class! Giving with Gratitude Week presented an opportunity to discuss the upcoming Thanksgiving holidays, giving thanks, and giving in general. Our students were surprised to hear that others in our very community, even other little ones just like them, go without having much. When we read the list of most requested Food Pantry items, they were especially shocked to hear basics like toilet paper on the list. One of our students first brought up the fact that each of us could bring even a little bit, and that would help a lot - a sign that these meaningful discussions are certainly happening in the home as well! Each child thought of something they would like to contribute to the Food Pantry, and one of our students was so excited by her two boxes of donations, that she requested to share it during Line Time. We have a beautifully kind-hearted class. We hope to keep the spirit of giving alive not only through the upcoming holiday season, but throughout their lifetime!

This month has also brought an increased interest in the food pyramid and nutrition. A common theme we heard across conferences is a hope for confidence in our students in trying new foods. Our catering serving, Beyond Green, provided a hands-on lesson in the different food groups, eating the rainbow, and building a balanced plate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. To understand the difference between fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains and protein, we discussed where foods come from, which brought up a wonderful insight into the child's mind when asked "where do eggs come from?" Bet you would never guess that the answer our friends came up with was "shells." The lesson concluded with a taste test of colorful fruits and vegetables, and a wonderful phrase from Ms. Rachel - "Please don't yuck my yum." So as our friends took the chance to try some new tastes, they also remained respectful if something wasn't to their personal preference, seeing and knowing that others might still enjoy it.

To go along with the presentation, we introduced our own shelf work of building the food pyramid and sorting foods based on food groups. And though we talked about all foods giving energy, we also discussed how some foods, like fruits and vegetables, can give us more important vitamins and minerals than other foods, like donoughts or ice cream. Some of our students have now requested the opportunity to create their own food pyramids and look through magazines to find examples of each food group-it is far more difficult to find an example of a category than to sort pre-selected items, and a welcomed challenge by many!

We practice the same skill in various areas of our class. After matching the color tablets, a child is invited to find objects around the room of each color. After a presentation of the different geometric solids, students can find objects around the room that remind them of each shape - the globe for "sphere" or a bell for "cone." In language, we challenge students to find objects that start with the sounds they're practicing or to select a few objects in the room to build a descriptive sentence with. With all of these extension activities, children are solidifying their learnings by widening the scope of objects they're categorizing from a couple preselected items to their entire class.

As they search for the right color, shape, or sound, they're categorizing one by one each item that's in front of them - "this plant is green, this book is a rectangular prism, this brush starts with 'b' ." It is a playful way to master the concept they've been working on!

Meanwhile we saw the introduction of the "Parts of a Turkey" work on our Zoology shelf, and the first question our students had was about the turkey's snood. And though it may sound silly, letting our children know that we don't know something (like the function of a snood) is also an important lesson in continuing to be lifelong learners. Rather, we model problem solving and searching for answers together, and share the information we find. And if you too are now curious about a turkey's snood, it is an indicator of the bird's mood and can change color and orientation!

The turkey has of course made its way to our art and Practical Life area as we approached Thanksgiving, adding a new point of interest to important skills such as cutting and gluing a turkey, buttoning on the turkey's feathers, using their pincer grasp to line up and match colored buttons on the tail, and of course, creating handprint turkey cards to take home. We have spent time discussing everything our families do for us that we are thankful for, how we can help take care of our families, and other things our students are thankful for. Some of our children made a banner for what then became a Wall of Thanks, covered in leaves of notes of everything our community is thankful for!

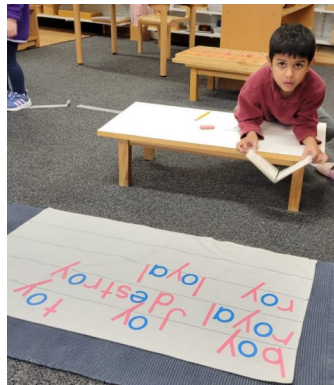
We have introduced two new Practical Life activities to our shelves this month as well - coffee grinding and green bean trimming. Our students were incredibly excited to hear about the coffee grinding, each claiming they're making it for their parents. Grinding the coffee with mortar and pestle is no easy feat and requires much concentration, strength, wrist rotation, and will power! In turn, they're met with the wonderful aroma as each bean is crushed. Green bean trimming has introduced the use of a colander and knife, working in trimming off the ends and cutting the rest of the bean into fourths. Each presents a new challenge in gross and fine motor skills! Those who attended our Parent Evening on Practical Life now know the importance of these motor skills for writing and the many other skills being developed in these seemingly simple activities. Thank you everyone who took the time to attend!

As our students progress in their academic journeys, moving into building four digit numbers, addition, blending sounds to read, word and phrase building, making maps, learning about monuments or sink vs float, we often see children go through waves of finding an area of interest to focus on for quite a while, before completely changing their interest. After weeks of deep concentration in mathematics with addition and four-digit number building, a child completely changes interest to the science area, creating every "Parts of..." book available-their interests have changed, and our environment is set up to support and foster it rather than demanding that they complete a certain amount of minutes in each area daily. In this way, each wave of exploration is deeper and broader than when the adult dictates when to study what.



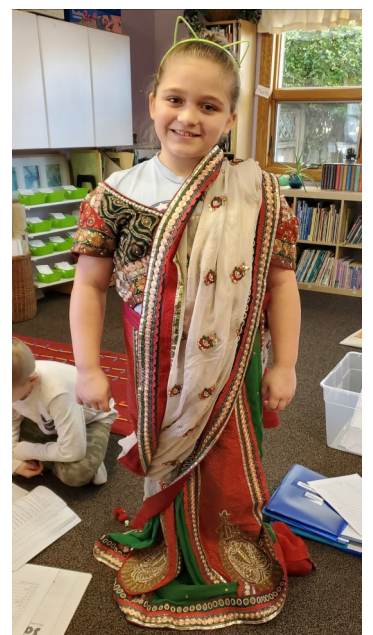
# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room





## MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



"The land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth." – Maria Montessori

