

Montessori Pathways' News



October 2017

Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

"When a child is given a little leeway, he will at once shout, 'I want to do it!'"

But in our schools, which have an environment adapted to children's needs, they say, "Help me to do it alone."

And these words reveal their inner needs."

*~ Maria Montessori,
"The Secret of Childhood" ~*

October is one of the busiest months. So many things should be done and prepared. It was so easy to be overwhelmed and frustrated. But our teaching team continued to work hard and brought a lot of fun and memorable moments to the education process.

Nevertheless, we would like to say thank you to all of our parents, who are helping and supporting us with making this process even more interesting and organized.

Your initiative and cooperation with the field trips organization, Halloween Party preparation, participation in parent evenings, and bringing different presentations and activities to the class are always appreciated by the teachers and kids.

Montessori Fun/Educational Family Night



~We spent a wonderful time together talking about how scrubbing the table or cutting the carrot activities lead to achievements and how to implement the Montessori approach at home. ~



~ During the same evening our friends from Primary Classes enjoyed the "Rescues" movie, popcorn, and a fun night together. ~



HOW WAS YOUR DAY?

PARENT CORNER

After our Family Night one of our parents said that she was thinking about many helpful suggestions that she received during our Parent Evening and decided to research even more. She found one article that, in her opinion, might be very helpful for many of us and decided to share it with us. It is always appreciated!!!

"As a Montessori parent, figuring out what your child did all day can be particularly challenging. "How was your day?" is a particularly useless question, as it asks for a judgment of the entire day in a word or two (good, bad, interesting). "What did you do today?" won't get you far either. Even if your child was happily engaged in work all morning, she may still say she did "nothing" all day. And on the surface, it may even look like your child is doing nothing (which is of course far from true.)"

[Read more: https://www.thepreparedenvironment.com/blog/10-questions-instead-of-how-was-your-day](https://www.thepreparedenvironment.com/blog/10-questions-instead-of-how-was-your-day)



"It is not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."
~ Mother Theresa

Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF

Montessori education strives to create an awareness, respect and service for not only our immediate community, but the worldwide community as well.

The idea of peace education begins with young children learning to help others as a part of everyday life. As part of our commitment to providing the children an opportunity to participate in the service of others, Montessori Pathways Kindergarten and Elementary students are excited to participate in Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF.

It's a special opportunity for children in the U.S. to express themselves while helping others in need.

The participation in Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF is completely optional.



Kids are Helping Kids at Pathways



EQUAL EXCHANGE FUNDRAISER



Dear Montessori Pathways Families,

Thank you for participating in the Equal Exchange fundraiser! Generous contributions from 29 Pathways families helped us raise \$1,650.00 this time and \$898.02 from Hardy Mums Sale fundraiser with a total of **\$2,548.02**, which will be additionally used for the South Room renovation.

We greatly appreciate your support in helping us reach our fundraising goals! With your purchase, you have also helped support the authentic Fair Trade movement and the small-scale farmers who produced your products.

We hope you let your kids be involved in choosing the items/gifts, and discuss your decision to help with them. It is a very important lesson for them and a good chance to be proud of their parents.

We will distribute all ordered items to you as soon as they are delivered to our school.



Giving with Gratitude Week

(November 6— November 10)

As Thanksgiving approaches, we would like to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks, but also the importance of giving. Therefore, every year, we participate in the Annual Community Harvest, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.

We are asking that each family provide their child with a chance to go to the store with their parents to select and purchase 5-10 items to bring as a donation to school any day from Monday, November 6 through Thursday, November 9.

****The donated items will be delivered to Crystal Lake Food Pantry on Friday November 10. ****

~Please let us know if you could help with delivery.



Coming School Events



- ◆ **November 2 (Th) at 5:30pm** – Elementary Parent Orientation Meeting with Geoffrey Bishop, Executive Director of Nature’s Classroom Institute in WI, about the coming 4-day Elementary Trip to Nature’s Classroom in Lake Geneva, WI in April.
- ◆ **November 3 (Friday) - By appt.** - East Room Parent / Teacher Conference Day
 ⇒ No School for Morning and School Day East room students.
 ⇒ Child care is provided for 7:45-4:15 / All Day (6:45am-6:00pm) East room students
- ◆ **November 6 (Monday) - By appt.** - South Room Parent / Teacher Conference Day
 ⇒ No School for Morning and School Day South room students.
 ⇒ Child care is provided for 7:45-4:15 / All Day (6:45am-6:00pm) South room students
- ◆ **November 7 (Tuesday) - By appt.** - East Room Kindergarten Parent / Teacher Conference Day
- ◆ **November 8 (Wednesday - By appt.** - South Room Kindergarten Parent / Teacher Conference Day
- ◆ **November 7 (Tuesday) - 11:15am –3:15pm**– Kindergarten and Elementary students Field trip to Burpee Museum in Rockford for “Dinosaur and Fossil” Workshop
- ◆ **November 6 (Monday) - November 10 (Friday)** – Giving with Gratitude Week.
 Montessori Pathways students will be collecting food items that will be donated to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry to help families in need.
- ◆ **November 9 (Thursday) at 6:00—7:00pm** – Montessori Educational Parent Night: “ The Magic of Montessori Mathematics”
 * Child care will be provided per request.
- ◆ **November 23 (Th) - 24 (F)** – No School (Thanksgiving break)



- ◆ **December 15 (F) at 5:00pm— Winter Celebration**



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber

Routines are a funny thing. Children thrive on established routines: what to do, when to do it, what will be happening next, what are the expectations, and so on. However, it is difficult for children to learn a new routine, change routines, and stick to a routine. Consistency and repetition are the keys to success. In the classroom, we practice many daily routines starting with arrival, community, transitioning to working, presentations, lunch, and dismissal. Some six-year-olds are still in the *sensitive period for order*. They need their routines and the continuity and security routines offer. Learning to be flexible takes time.



Another benefit of routines is the outcome of learning **responsibility**. For example, presentations teach the student to be prepared by coming to presentations with pencil, presentation notebook, and work plan. The student also learns to be responsible for his actions, as he is expected to sit quietly, listen, and sometimes interact or take notes. Later the student responsibly completes his assigned work in a timely manner.

One routine children this age still enjoy is being read to by an adult. Montessori defined the *sensitive period for language* as birth to age six (sometimes longer.) As the child gets older, her vocabulary and language ability improve with **exposure to words and with practice**. It is important to keep reading to her, to help enrich her vocabulary and to improve her reading skill.



The focus this past month was working on establishing/re-establishing the routine of completing (at least) one Math/Geometry work, one Language work, and part or all of a

Culture work. The social aspects of a classroom can sometimes impact the work flow. It is important for all students to learn personal responsibility to avoid interrupting others at work, stay on task, finish work, and meet expectations. The work routine is supported and completed by making good choices. Older students take on a mentor role when they model expected behavior and encourage others to stay on task. Younger students are also repeatedly encouraged to ask older students for help rather than always wait for the teacher. The work routine is a thing of beauty when it is in action!

The United Nations presentations were amazing! Students were so excited to share their reports with kindergarten students, parents, and each other. Thank you to the parents who joined our presentation audience!



Australia looms large on our agenda with maps, research, and projects in Art class. In Math, first year students work on addition: four-digit addends using golden bead material and snake game addition with bead bars. They continue to practice writing their numerals and number words correctly.

Second and third year students work on all four operations with the stamp game material, as well as memorization of math facts for addition and subtraction.

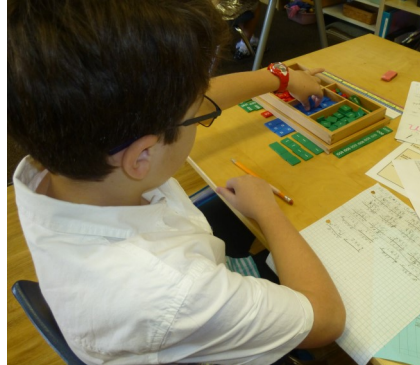
Upper Elementary started work on basic Algebra, in addition to math operations. Telling time, animals and plants, word studies, biomes, and building words and sentences are other work choices.

Writing will take on a greater focus. Younger students need to build endurance in terms of length of writing in one sitting. Other Lower Elementary students work on sentence structure and mechanics. Upper Elementary students work on the Seven Traits of Writing as they critique, edit, and refine their own writing. Autumn continues to be a busy time for elementary students!



OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Karen

The gift of giving:

The coming of Halloween is giving us the opportunity to increase our awareness of the needs of others. We have talked about children of other countries who may not have sufficient food to eat or clean water to drink. Those children are hungry and thirsty. When it is explained to our kindergartners, they can empathize. They want to help. They want to do something! Trick or Treat for UNICEF gives them that opportunity to actually make a difference, to contribute, to help in a meaningful way that is understandable to them.

So, we have been role playing Trick or Treat for Unicef this week. We are practicing an explanation for what exactly UNICEF is so they can explain it to the person who opens the door. So, we were talking about UNICEF, how to Trick or Treat for UNICEF, how they will collect actual money for the children of the world and actually make a difference.

At that point, several spontaneously said they would get money from their piggy bank to help! It was not my idea. It came from their heart. There is a reason Montessori said change would come through the child. A title of one of her books is "Education for a New World". She felt deeply that if children are nurtured in body, mind, and spirit, they will guide humanity toward a more peaceful world. Every time children are given an opportunity to express their generosity, the world is one small step closer to change.

Mathematical thinking:

In our daily lives, math surrounds us. Simply lining up to come in from outdoors is an example. Count off. How many people do we have in line? Who is first, who is last? If we turn the line around, the first person becomes the last person, the last person becomes the first person. What number are you in the line? Who is in front of you, in back of you? Is someone missing? How many more do we need to have our 10 kindergartners?

Geometry:

We have begun learning the vocabulary of geometric solids. We have begun with the ellipsoid and the square base pyramid. The beauty of Montessori is to give language with experience. Children can feel the pyramid,



feel the square base. They can feel the ellipsoid which has no flat sides. Two dimensional pictures of 3 dimensional objects just doesn't do it. A picture is a picture, a representation. But to hold the actual solid gives information to the child which enhances both vocabulary and understanding.

Keeping track:

Some classroom activities are so popular: baking, painting at the art easel, etc. In an effort to "be fair" to see that everyone has an opportunity, we have a chart in which we can notate who has already painted at the easel for example. Each name on the chart has 4 spaces per child. They may use them in any order: perhaps one child does easel painting 4 days in a row. His/her opportunity has then been exhausted until all the children "catch up". At that point, we can begin anew again. It is a meaningful way to present how charts work.

Part/whole relationship:

Part/whole is critical to understanding many concepts. In botany, we have just begun parts/ (after living/not living, plant/ animal).

We began with the tree. There is so much to see: the trunk, the branches, the leaves. And so much we do not see: the roots, the root hairs. Each part has a function. This kind of analysis will be applied to the leaf, to the flower, the root, to animal classes. It is meaningful detail that draws the attention of the child.

Field trip:

We are looking forward to our upcoming field trip to the Burpee Museum in Rockford. The exhibits can be a jumping off place for us to begin a new subject/topic

Speech pattern:

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away". Speech patterns are some of the building blocks in the music curriculum. We chant the pattern, clap the pattern, eventually read the pattern

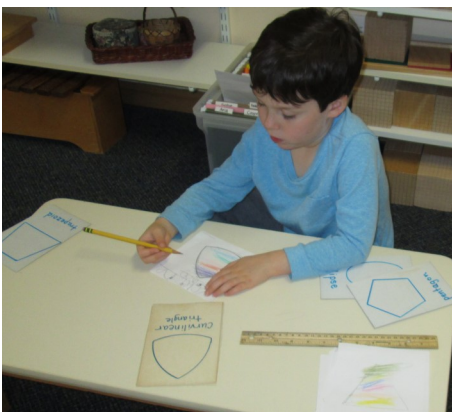
International Montessori

I have been invited to return to Slovenia to the Montessori Institute in Ljubljana to teach mathematical thinking and the Montessori math curriculum at the teacher's Institute. I am happy to go and grateful for the opportunity. At the same time, I will miss the "kinders". I will return to the classroom Tuesday, November 7th. They will be in very good hands with Miss Christine. Thank you Miss Christine.



OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

Ms. Linda

This month in art the kindergarten students have been working on fine motor skills by drawing, painting and using scissors. They drew and painted pumpkins and castles using oil pastel and watercolor.



This past week they assembled robots by cutting out shapes and gluing them together. They have great imaginations!



The elementary students continued their study of the artist Matisse. They recreated Matisse's goldfish painting with some live models for inspiration.



Next, they will be working on some Australian inspired art. They will be using clay to create koala bears and eucalyptus trees.



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

Autumn has begun and the weather is definitely changing. The second month of school is almost over and the children have become very confident in their daily routine and are enjoying the flow of each day. The children now understand the schedule and are quite comfortable with one another as well as the teachers.

The children are clearly noticing the change in seasons and making many interesting observations about autumn. The children have been exploring the playground, collecting leaves in a variety of colors and shapes. Some interesting artwork has developed from their leaf collections, including rubbing of various leaves, as well as a strong interest in the botany cabinet (which holds insets of leaves from many different trees).

This month we have incorporated both autumn and Halloween elements into our classroom activities. Some children have been refining their fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination by poking out different seasonal shapes (autumn leaves, acorns, bats, jack-o-lanterns, and ghosts, etc.) or by using tweezers to remove corn kernels from a dry corn cob (if you've seen a bag of dry corn kernels come home with your child – they are meant for feeding squirrels or birds). Others have learned to hold a crayon flat in order to create a leaf rubbing.

Some of our practical life works have an autumn or Halloween theme. For a scrubbing activity in the practical life area, we are using a mini pumpkin. The soapy water is great for the development and strengthening of hand muscles, helpful in preparation for writing. This activity is also a great opportunity for organization; the children need to set out all the items they will need in the order they will use them, and then after the activity they must replace and clean everything so it is ready for the next child.

We are going to start our pumpkin investigation this week. First we will explore the outside: textures, bumps, lines, weight. Then we will open it up and explore the inside: textures, smell, etc. and we will introduce *estimation* and have the children make a guesstimate as to how many seeds they think will be inside. We will count the seeds, cook the seeds, and taste test the seeds. Then we will transform the pumpkin into a classroom jack-o-lantern.



We have been working on a poem with movement at line time:

*It was the finest pumpkin you had ever seen
It grew in my garden on the night of Halloween
I took a knife to carve the top
I scooped it with a spoon
I made 2 eyes, a nose so long, a mouth shaped like a moon
I put a candle in it, and quiet as a mouse
I crept up very slowly to a window in my house
I held my jack-o-lantern 'till my mommy cried "Oh Dear,
It seems to me a goblin is hiding very near"*

Please ask your child to recite this for you. It is amazing how quickly they remembered all the lines and movements to this poem.

With apple season here we have done taste testing with several varieties of apples. Each day at line time the children were introduced to a new variety of apple: they were asked to touch, look, smell and then finally taste the apple each day. Then on Friday we tried all four varieties again, and then voted on our favorite and created a class graph. The choices for which apple they "liked best" were: Fuji, Pink Lady, Granny Smith, and Golden Delicious. We talked about the math terms *least*, *most*, *more*, *less*. We also defined *voting* and *graphing*. It was a really fun way to explore apples and the children loved trying a new variety each day. We also added a new art project using marbles to paint an apple shape and then the children use their cutting and gluing skills to complete the project.

In the math area, many of the younger children have been working on 1-10 works, using different materials to strengthen the retention of both quantity and numeral recognition as well as the association of both numeral and quantity. While the older children have moved on to more complicated math works: *100 board*, *addition (with a variety of manipulatives)* composition of numbers and quantities up to 9999.

In the science area of the classroom, the children have really been exploring more in-depth works, namely Parts of Animals and Plants through 3-part cards and puzzles. Using these works they learn the nomenclature for the different parts of each animal or plant; so flower now becomes *corolla*, *calyx*, *stamen*, *pistil* and bird becomes *beak*, *wing*, *breast*, *feet*, *claws*, *tail*, and *head*.

This month we have also been focusing a lot on language work with the children, ranging from sound recognition, word building, rhyming words, etc. The sound table is always very popular. Even when it is not their turn, they love to stand around the table and watch the other children work on their sounds. We are also encouraging writing any way possible, including labeling drawings and paintings.

OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Andrea

This group of afternoon children continues to progress in their afternoon work cycle. Now that they have gotten the swing of things and know what to expect from the afternoon schedule, they enter the classroom ready to choose their activities with growing independence and confidence.



Even if it is not their morning classroom, they have works in progress that they are able to continue from the previous day. This has also been a great opportunity for small group presentations on the many variations and extensions of the sensorial materials.



As part of our ongoing effort in grace and courtesy and overall growing responsibilities to care for self/others/environment, the pre-kindergarteners help the school by taking care of the main hallway and closets.

After they come in from the playground and exchange their shoes and hang up their coats, they help organize all the closets by straightening the shoes and hangers, as well as collecting any stray wood chips or rubber mulch that have landed on the hallway carpet. They collect these in the very special "mulch bucket" and then when the bucket gets full, they return it to the playground. They take this cleaning task very seriously and are very proud to have this job to themselves.



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

Fall arrived with weeks of beautiful warm weather, but now cooler temperatures are finally here and the result is a more challenging level of self-care. Practicing how to zip new fall jackets, tying and fastening shoes (and boots, eventually), putting on hats and mittens are a daily work in process. These activities build coordination, concentration and independence. The sense of accomplishment and positive feeling of "I can do it!" is invaluable to the children as they continue to work in all areas of the classroom.

As the school year progresses, our classroom is constantly changing to meet the developmental needs of every child. By the end of October, we are working on increasing skill levels and provide independent multi-step processes that lead to critical thinking and problem-solving opportunities. As the children grow and develop, classroom work is monitored and adjusted in order to provide challenge and variety.

This month brought an opportunity of a tasting activity we enjoyed together during group line time - Pears! We looked at the physical differences and tasted a variety of pears which included Bosc, Anjou and Bartlett. Opinions varied but everyone enjoyed this activity - thank you to Joey's family for supplying the delicious pears!

We have already observed your students watching, as a friend, who is presented with a new work, is then eager to try it for themselves. As more materials are presented in Math and Language, the children are continuing with letter sounds, phonetic word building, and phonetic reading. Interest in working with numbers and math materials is exploding too! We all appreciate Faye's mom, Ms. Jackie, taking time to visit biweekly and moving the class forward with language sound acquisition - Thank you!



The Science area of the classroom has been a wealth of information on seasonal topics such as Leaf Identification, The Life Cycle of a Pumpkin, Parts of a Bat/Spider and What Animals Hibernate/Migrate or Acclimate and why.

The Art shelves are filled with opportunities to pin poke-out pumpkins and leaves (which help to strengthen pencil grip and fine motor skills), create Autumn Handprint Trees, 5 Little Pumpkins Sitting on a Gate (also a favorite fall song

we sing on the line)! In addition, the children are enjoying Halloween themed activities: dressing up and talking about their costume, crafts and games. Thank you to our parents for taking the time to make our Halloween exciting and fun!!

Practical Life has brought Pumpkin Hammering (hammering golf tees with a mallet into the pumpkin, and then removing for the next friend), Pumpkin Carving (making a jack-o-lantern), Pumpkin Seed Tasting and Pumpkin Muffins for snack. Your children are also honing their precision and fine motor skills with tweezing kernels from Indian corn- which is great to share with the squirrels at your house!



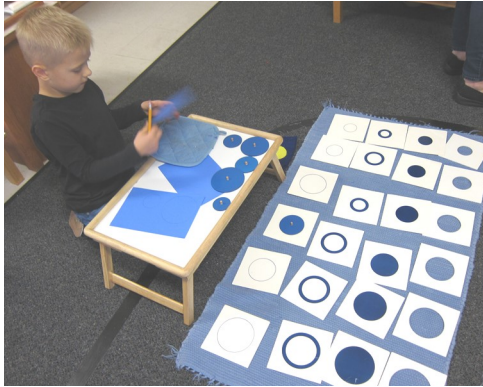
Lessons in Grace & Courtesy are encouraged daily, as well. Most of our students want to help and participate in activities that support the classroom needs; folding laundry, setting lunch tables (which we now enjoy with beautiful candles!); we are learning to wait and take turns and be respectful of the various tasks to maintain a clean and respectful environment at school.

We are very much looking forward to meeting with you during upcoming conferences. It is always a pleasure to create a solid home ad school connection, as we all work together to provide the best for your child. Please remember that we are always available to answer questions or discuss any issues that you may have.



OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS

Ms. Donna

Group Activities:

We learned that Christopher Columbus set sail with three ships, (the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria). He discovers America in 1492.

We have been watching our gray and black squirrels get ready for the long winter. It is fun to see them carrying large walnut seeds to their winter homes.

Games:

Hop Potato using a soft spider. When the music stopped the child with the spider moved out of our circle until there was only one child left holding the spider.

Ten Little Witches . We kept losing witches as we counted backwards from 10 to zero.

Five Black Bats. As we said the poem the bats would begin to disappear.

The Farmer in the Dell.

A Leaf Game Poem. The ending was the most fun where we would throw our leaves into the wind and watch them fall on the ground.

Halloween Bat Dice Drawing. The dice numbers let you draw the six parts of a bat. When you have rolled all six numbers you should have drawn a bat.

Songs:

*One Spider Went Out to Play.
Out on a spider's web one day.
He had such enormous fun.
He called for another spider to come.*

When all the spiders have joined the others, they sing the last verse of the song.

Last verse:



*All the spiders went out to play.
Out on a spider's web one day.
They had such enormous fun.
They didn't see the web break-- (clap hands)
And they all fell down!*

Science

"Fire a balloon rocket" - Take a 10 foot piece of string and attach one end to a chair with tape, put the string through a straw and tie the end of the string to another chair across from the first chair. Blow up a balloon and attach a paper clip to the end of the balloon, then tape the balloon to the straw and watch what happens. Try having two strings with

balloons and again watch what happens.

As the balloon deflates it pushes out the air inside the balloon. The air pushes the balloon away from the chair towards the other chair. Scientists describe this with a rule: every action has an equal and opposite reaction.



Try to find the correct ribbon that goes with the different size pumpkins. The children would put a ribbon by each pumpkin, then they would measure that ribbon around the middle of each pumpkin to see if they were correct. If any were not correct they would try to find the ribbon that went to that pumpkin.

Art: Crayon rubbings, painted pine cone pumpkins, using our hand we made one of Christopher Columbus's ships, we also made black cats using our hand for the cats body and then added a head, we did some fun sheets where we matched up pumpkins and finished the other half of a scarecrow.

Hand Puppets:

Using a black glove we were able to act out 5 Little Jack-O-Lanterns, 5 Little Pumpkins, 5 Pumpkins on Halloween Night and another poem call Halloween Night using a witch, ghost, skeleton, cat, bat and a pumpkin, and also Five Little Goblins.

Books/Stories:

Flannel board story about the Chocolate Chip Ghost, "Scarecrow's Hair" by Jill Egglet
"Trick or Treat Halloween" by Sharon Peters,
"Sixteen runaway pumpkins" by Dianne Ochiltree
"The Vanishing Pumpkin" by Tony Johnston

Outside:

What time is it Mr. Fox? When the fox would answer "lunch time" the children would run back to the line to be safe. If the fox caught a child they would be the new Mr. Fox.

OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

Halloween at Montessori Pathways



Thank you, dear parents, for bringing such amazing activities to our Halloween Party! You made the kids' day!!!

OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

More Wonderful Moments at Pathways

