

# Montessori Pathways' News



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

I would like to start my note off with a huge thank to all of our teachers for the effort and energy that they bring to provide such a clean and safe environment that is full of exploration for our kids; a lot of appreciation to our families for their understanding, cooperation, and help in keeping our community healthy; and of course, a lot of respect to our little friends who accepted all of the new rules and are getting better and better at following them.

Unfortunately, it is a privilege now to have in-person learning possibility for our kids and we, at Montessori Pathways, are so happy and proud to have such wonderful teamwork! Way to go, Pathways Families!

However, the North Suburban Region 9, which includes Lake and McHenry Counties, is nearing thresholds set by the State of Illinois that could trigger new mitigation measures in the region. The Lake County Health Department and McHenry County Department of Health are urging the public to take action to slow the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

"After a period of relatively stable metrics, signs are now pointing to substantial community spread of COVID-19 in our region, and we are dangerously close to crossing the State's mitigation thresholds," said Mark Pfister, Executive Director of the Lake County Health Department. "For the sake of our vulnerable residents, for our schools and our businesses, we must double down, and all take personal responsibility to minimize the spread of this virus."

"We know that the everyday precautions of wearing masks, washing hands, and watching our distance help prevent this virus from spreading, and we have to remain vigilant," said Melissa Adamson, Public Health Administrator for the McHenry County Department of Health. **"Every interaction you have with people from other households carries risk. Carefully consider your plans for social gatherings, holiday get-togethers, and travel. Please do your part to protect yourself and others."**



## Family Reading Night

Helping your children to enjoy reading is one of the most important things you can do as a parent and well worth the investment of your time and energy.

Kids will learn reading skills in school, but often they come to associate reading with work, not pleasure. As a result, they lose their desire to read. And it is that desire – the curiosity and interest – that is the cornerstone to using reading and related skills successfully.

It is a common question for parents, "How to instill a love for books in children?". In our century of technology, we can find many great suggestions online. Check this article for some of them: ["Raise a Child Who Loves to Read"](#).

But please remember, nothing works better than your role modeling. Your child will love what you love, will do what you do, will avoid what you avoid.

**If you would like your child to read, the recipe is very simple - sit and read together.**



Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White encourages families to read together to celebrate Illinois' annual **Family Reading Night on Thursday, November 19.**

"This is a night when families are urged to turn off electronic devices and spend time reading together," White said. "Reading together creates a positive learning environment and helps children develop language skills, comprehension and a love for reading that can last a lifetime."

[Click here for the ideas: "The ABC's of Reading"](#)





## Parents' Corner



### Practical Life: The Soul of the Montessori Classroom

*"Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which is derived from a sense of independence."*

~ Maria Montessori, *The Child in*

Children are naturally curious and want to participate in the activities of daily life they see all around them. Maria Montessori developed the Practical Life exercises to give children the opportunity to practice those skills, gain independence, and become fully functional members of their community.

Some parents, new to Montessori, keep asking us why their kids are doing all of this sweeping, mopping, dusting, polishing, scrubbing, washing, cooking, etc. while parents are expecting their kids are working on math and language.

It's important to educate parents about the crucial role that Practical Life exercises play in their child's social, emotional, and academic development, providing a foundation for confidence and success.

These activities help children develop their motor skills, refining both large and small muscle coordination. A child may repeat a particular exercise over and over, perfecting her movements and developing concentration. Pediatric neuropsychologist Steven Hughes found that children's strongest link to their brains are their hands, noting that repeated motor movements develop the pathways in the brain that help children learn.

The child is learning to follow a complex motor sequence, independently, in order to fulfill his or her own desires and needs. These skills, when taught early in life, allow children to believe in themselves as well as develop the self-discipline needed for success throughout their lives.

Math, reading, and language all require one to have the ability to focus, to be able to follow logical and sequential steps, to make intelligent choices, to see a task through from start to finish, to persist when one makes a mistake, and to correct one's mistakes—and all of these are present in the process of learning and practicing the practical life activities.

#### The Exercises

In the preliminary exercises, children learn basic life skills such as pouring, cutting, folding, and spooning. In the applied exercises, children learn how to care for themselves (hand washing, dressing and undressing, etc.), as well as the environment (polishing furniture and washing their own snack/lunch dishes, for example).

The other two areas of the Practical Life curriculum are Grace and Courtesy, (which include asking for or offering help, letting someone pass, covering a sneeze or yawn; using "Thank you", "Please", "Excuse me", etc.), and Control of Movement, (carrying scissors, walking around a rug, the Silence Game, etc.).

#### Spontaneous Contributions

At first the child acts solely for himself, washing a table for the sake of doing the activity. Later he will wash a table because it is dirty. Eventually, what were once exercises become spontaneous and natural expressions of community life. Unprompted, children will often help each other mop up a spill or sweep the dirt from an overturned potted plant.

As his world expands, each child comes to realize that he is an important part of the community, someone with something to give. Children feel trusted and respected when adults provide them with the opportunity to take part in the real work of their family and school. Perhaps this is one reason why Margot Waltuch, who trained with Maria Montessori, said that "Practical Life is the soul of the Montessori classroom."

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guidepostmontessori.com

[Click here to learn more: "How Cleaning and Sweeping Prepare Children for Academic Success"](#)

[Click here to see our kids' Practical Life activities](#)





## COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS

### In November



◆ **November 3 (Tuesday) - By appt. - US General Election Day**

Please exercise your right to vote

Every

VOTE

Matters

◆ **November 9 - November 13 – Giving with Gratitude Week** (Crystal Lake Community Harvest Food Drive)

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 select with their parents and purchase 5-10 items to bring as a donation to school any day from Monday, November 9 through Thursday, November 12.

**The donated items will be delivered to Crystal Lake Food Pantry** (42 East St, Crystal Lake, IL 60014) **on Friday November 13 at 10:00am.**

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



◆ **November 1—20 – Turkey Disguise Family Project**

Since we are not able gathering together this year and having many fun activities that we previously did, we decided to offer you a family project this year that will give you a chance to enjoy your family time while working on Turkey Disguise Family Project together.

We need your help and creativity! Help this turkey make it safely past Thanksgiving this year by disguising him as a part of your family.

Turkeys that have made it through past years have been dressed like ballerinas, mermaids, football players, Elvis, astronaut, Santa, race car driver, and many other family resemblances. Think of something that is unique to your family (hobbies, jobs, sports, events, etc.) and dress your turkey.



You may view examples of disguised turkeys at the following website:

<https://findingmandee.com/2018/11/08/best-turkey-disguise/>

**Return your disguised turkey to school AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!**

We would like to display the disguised turkeys in the hallway by Friday, November 20 and make a photo album to share with you!

◆ **November 19 (Th) - Family Reading Night**

◆ **November 26- 27 (Th- F) – No School (Thanksgiving break)**





## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget



October has arrived and students are buckling down to more intensive work. We have begun goal setting and most students hit their goals on a daily basis. We explore reasons for not hitting the goal (getting more engrossed in a work, not predicting timings correctly for works and chatting too much are some of the most frequent reasons of not reaching the goal).

Math groups have been collaborating and working on concepts weekly. All are improving their facts and looking at math in different ways. For 11 students, we have 4 math groups! It is rewarding for me to see them get excited for new lessons once the group masters their concepts.

Our reading discussion groups have begun. We received our first multiple copy books from the library. One group is reading a fantasy, ghost story called "Time For Andrew", one group is reading a fantasy book about a kid who is learning that too much chocolate can be NOT a good thing, one group is exploring the literature of Tomis De Paola and one group is reading great picture books with me. We discuss and read each week. The kids enjoy the discussions best.



We are also exploring what readers do to assist our writing. Great readers read a text and then pause to think about the text. They ask questions as they read, make predictions and use background knowledge to relate to the text. This will help our writing process to think as we write.



For nature class, we have been looking at animal clues. What clues have they left to let us know that they have been near or that they are preparing for the changing season. We will finish the month looking at animal tracks. A special thanks to the Low family for donating their wagon with all terrain wheels. This will make our trips to the

park a TON easier!

At the park, we worked on leaves as well. We learned the parts of a leaf, jobs of a leaf, shapes of the leaves as well as what leaves tell us about transpiration, root growth and why leaves will move to face the sun.



We have begun work on simple invertebrates. We began with protozoa, then porifera and now we are working on cnidaria. Students learn the parts of each group and what the functions of these parts are. Next they will do research on a particular one from the group.

In American History, we have researched a few Native American tribes and learned their needs- clothing, shelter, food, where their tribe lived and how they traveled and protected themselves. Their group project is to create their own tribe and come up with their own fundamental needs that their tribe has. They will do the work and then create a tribal land for their group. After, they will present their work to the other tribe.

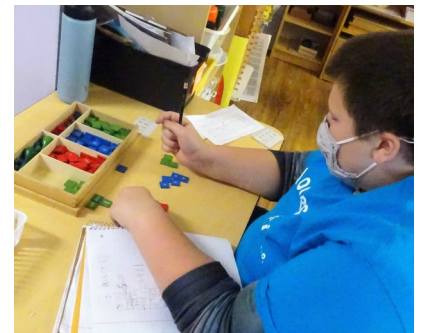
Halloween has been on their minds, of course. They are really looking forward to helping the primary kids make it to the Candy Tree. They brainstormed some tasks that the kids will have to accomplish in order to make it there. Then they will be at the stations and will guide the kids to finishing the task. They too will receive candy from the Candy Tree for their hard work! It has been a month of growth and learning.





# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class





## FRIDAY ELEMENTARY NATURE CLASS

Ms. Bridget



### Student Led Discoveries

Every Friday, the elementary class heads to Veteran's Acres. The trip is an opportunity for the students to eat outside, play with each other and have a nature class.



In the past few weeks, not only have we explored nature and used our observations skills to find leaf shapes, animal evidence of Fall, fungi, algae and unique growth in the woods, but have experienced a bit of what outdoor time can be like without adult intervention.

In Montessori, we follow the child. We watch and observe and then make changes to the environment if needed. Montessori children learn so much about their world and themselves when they can do it by themselves becoming independent thinkers. As a teacher, I have had the special opportunity to observe kids at play. Here is what I have observed during their free, uninterrupted play time after lunch and before our nature lesson:



**Curiosity:** what can you see with binoculars, magnifying glass, what are different types of rocks, how far you can throw and kick



**Ingenuity:** what to do if you do not have the right equipment or the correct number of players to play a game, what to do if you do not want to do what others are doing

These lessons will improve their character and create citizens of the world.



**Autonomy:** They choose what to play, who to play with or to be alone.

**Diplomacy:** How to teach a game, take turns, learn and teach the rules, abide by rules, learn consequences, how to win and to lose

**Justice:** How to stand up for yourself, use good words,

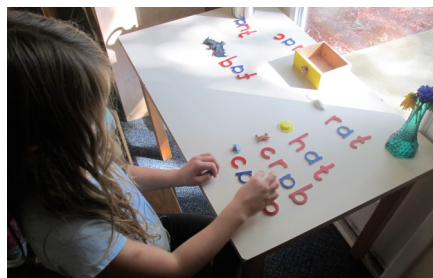
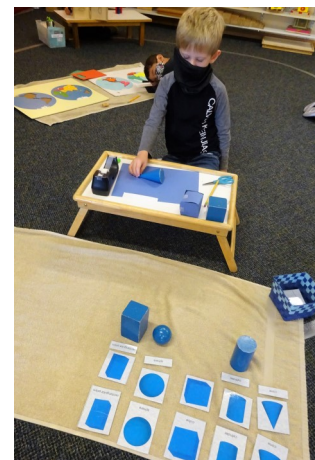
find out what happens if you hit, how to stand up for others, how to make sure everyone gets a fair opportunity and to play fair in games





# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group





## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



Another month has come and gone. October brought us fall colors, apples, and pumpkins not to mention everyone's favorite, Halloween. The children have enjoyed these themes in most areas of the classroom.

We began the month talking about parts of the apple and the life cycle of an apple. The children enjoyed making their own parts of an apple booklets as well as the life cycle wheel.



In the math area the children counted apples and stamped to make apple counting booklets from 1- 5 or 1-10. The children tasted different varieties of apples and older children wrote about and recorded their favorite apple. The change in the weather brought talk of the seasons and what the four seasons are. We have been singing songs (outside) about autumn leaves, squirrels, and nuts. Adding our Halloween favorites for extra fun.

Fall is a great time to explore sensorially. The Sensorial area of the classroom offers exploration of the senses, sight, touch, taste, smell, and auditory senses. Sensorial is learning through discrimination of the senses. Maria Montessori designed the materials to help children classify, clarify, and understand the world around them. She observed that from birth children learn through their senses touching and manipulating the world around them. This area of the classroom sets the foundation for learning in the other areas. These explorations develop nerve connections stimulating the senses and heighten memory. Various quality of each material is isolated, from the Pink Tower is big to small, the Brown Stair is thick to thin, the Red Rods are short to long etc. In each of the subcategories in the Sensorial area, the materials prepare the child for Math, Language, Geometry and writing as well.



To an adult the Pink Tower looks simple. To the younger children it is complex and many of the middle qualities of size are not easily discriminated. The youngest children often build an uneven tower with smaller cubes placed in the middle. The tower topples and the child tries again, or an older child will help to build it. The child repeats the activity and repeats it until finally they master it.



A few of our Kindergarten children recently discovered the Pink Tower resembles the cubes of numbers 1-10. This simplistic material is built with ten cubes of  $1\text{ cm}^3 - 10\text{ cm}^3$ . It is the same as the cubes for the numerals 1- 10 which the Kindergarten children were exploring. It sets the foundation for more advanced math work. In addition, the children classify sound by matching pitches and grading from loudest to softest, matching colors and the textures of touch tablets, various weights of wood using the baric tablets.

A current favorite is matching a scent, vanilla, coffee, rosemary to the matching picture card. Sensorial is an exciting and developmentally necessary part of the Montessori classroom. There is so much to explore in the Sensorial area of the classroom.



Research it and you will be amazed!

Happy Birthday to Catherine and Nora S! Thank you for sharing the story of YOU with us. We celebrate you.

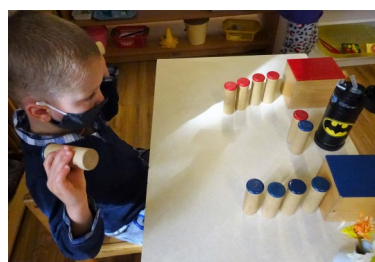
We will continue to explore the Season with Halloween words, booklets, and crafts. Watch for the parts of the Pumpkin books, pumpkin counting, and Life cycle of the Pumpkin activities to come home.

Please, continue Grace and Courtesy lessons at home. Your child should be waiting for you to finish speaking before talking. A gentle reminder, such as what do we do when someone is talking or how do we wait would be beneficial to all of us. We are getting so much better but need a little more practice.



# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Joey, Ms. Carole



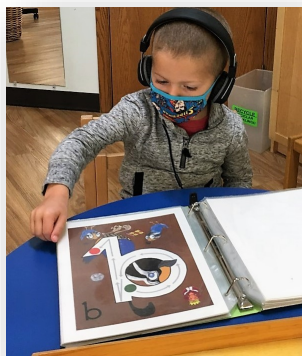
Autumn is a wonderful time of the year and provides children with countless opportunities for natural learning. We see the leaves changing colors and are discovering why and how nature is preparing for the cooler months ahead.

As the month changes so do the works in our classroom, we go from life cycle of the apple, to life cycle of the pumpkin...parts of the honeybee to parts of the spider and bat.

The children have also enjoyed learning parts of the skeleton, knowing that many children during the month of October see this image quite often.. it's the perfect opportunity to discuss vertebrates and invertebrates.



As one child was working with parts of the skeleton, another child said, "Skeletons were scary". The child working said, "Skeletons are not so scary, we have a skeleton that looks just like that inside of us." The other child's response was "...wow that's inside of me!"



The children have been having fun working with their letter sounds and recognition of letters and numbers also practicing handwriting and very excited about beginning Bob books.

Many of our younger children have been drawn to the practical life area. As parents we know that the younger child wants to be with adults to take part in activities of daily adult life. The

Montessori practical life materials allow them to do just that and provides the link between home and school.

In Practical life the children are able to perform the same activities they see adults do: polishing, scrubbing, pouring and sweeping. The pace is unhurried, and we are always nearby to help if needed but not to interfere.

A three-year-old is of course more interested in the scrubbing motion of washing a table than he is getting the table clean. The motions help them gain gross motor control and hand-eye coordination.

In the Montessori classroom, there are four distinct groups of practical life exercises:

- ◆ Care of Person (buttoning zipping, tying etc);
- ◆ Care of Environment (cleaning sweeping gardening etc);

◆ Development of Social Relationships (greeting, serving accepting, apologizing ,thanking, etc: the "grace and courtesy")

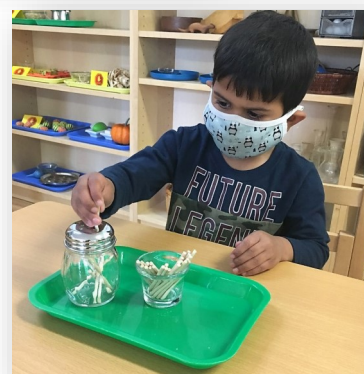
◆ Movement (balancing, "walking on the line", playing the silence game, yoga, etc).

The children have such a sense of accomplishment and pride when mastering practical life skills. To the adult, care of one's self and home are necessary chores. The younger child is attracted to these activities for very different reasons.



They are meaningful, creative movements and achievements that hold the child's attention; they lead to greater physical skill, perfection of movement and concentration.

After learning how to button a coat, or tie their own shoes, they will repeat these activities to master them, allowing them to function independently.



For our younger children it is important when having your child dress, that they can successfully put on their clothes, socks and shoes at home. If they are wearing shoes that are too big or too tight; if they have coats that have zippers that are always getting stuck. It can prove to be a frustrating challenge.

We can also help our younger children practice putting on their masks. Invite your child to stand in front of a mirror so they can see how to loop the string behind their ears. This too they will master. "I can do it myself " is the motto of the young child and we all want to encourage and foster this independence.

We all enjoyed celebrating Miles's sixth birthday this month, Happy Birthday!



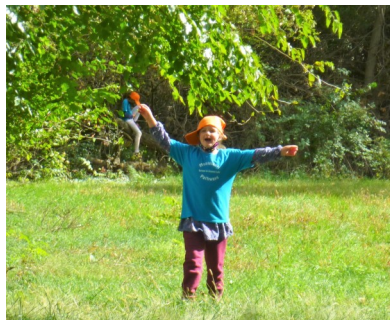
# OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room





## MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



"Childhood is not a race to see how quickly a child can read, write and count. It is a small window of time to learn and develop at the pace that is right for each individual child. Earlier is not better."

-Magda Gerber

