

Montessori Pathways' News



April 2018

"There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community."

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

The highlight of this month was definitely the first 4-day trip of our Elementary students to Nature's Classroom in Lake Geneva, WI. For the first time, our students were away from their families for 4 days (3 nights) in a row.

What a great experience our friends had taking care of themselves and helping each other, learning how to compromise living with roommates, and how to be patient and respectful to the neighbors on the floor below.

During this trip, our students learned a lot of new facts, built many new skills, tried different new foods suggested by their friends, made a lot of new friends from two other Montessori schools, and, the most important part of this trip, they spent most of each day in the forest.

They were so busy. Their active day began at 7:45am with serving and having breakfast and ended at 8:30 pm with milk, cookies, and story reading. During the whole day, the kids were active outside taking classes of their choice and participating in field group or whole group (about 70 kids) activities.

The magic environment with quite sunny weather, a lot of fresh air, peaceful birds' songs, as well as fun, enthusiastic, and respectful staff, brought so much excitement and energy to our kids and to me personally.

On departure day one child asked me: "Can we stay one more day please?" "I would stay for a month" - said another child. "I would stay for 85 years here" - added our other friend.

There is a message from one of the students that I found in my room:



What more can I say?...





“Parents are the ultimate role models for children. Every word, movement and action has an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parent.”

~Bob Keeshan



Thank you, Dads!!!



April was a fairly busy month for us. One of our very successful events was “**Spruce it Up: Doughnuts with Dads!**” The weather finally cooperated and our students were eager to help with making our playground safe, nice, clean, and beautiful.



The kids were so excited to work together with their dads and so proud to have them at school! It took about an hour to get all the work done since we had a really great team.



~ The Montessori Pathways team and students would like to extend our appreciation to dads for their tremendous help during the “Spruce it Up: Doughnuts with Dads!” event. ~





“Come and Work Together!” Family Night



The following day our children from the Primary Classes welcomed the parents to their classrooms for the **Parent/Child Night “Come and Work Together!”** to show them their favorite works, which they are now able to do independently during the morning work cycle.



You could hear the kids’ directions to their parents: *“Follow me, please!”*, *“One piece at a time, please!”*, *“Hands are on your knees, please!”* *“It’s your turn now!”* .



~ Thank you, parents, for coming! Your participation in the kids’ school life is very important for them! ~



COMING SCHOOL EVENTS

Montessori Pathways

**** Registration for Summer Camp 2018 and the upcoming 2018-2019 School Year is wrapping up! ****

Thank you, parents, for returning all re-enrollment applications on time. It helps a lot to prepare our school for the Summer Camp and next school year.

We have just a few spots left in every level. Now these spots will be filled on a “first come, first served” basis. Therefore, if you or your friends are considering enrolling your / their child to Montessori Pathways, we suggest not waiting until the last minute.

- ⇒ **May 2 (W); Rain Day – May 4 (F) at 9:00am – Planting Day! Muffins with Mom!**
- ⇒ It would be great if every child could bring at least one plant on Monday, April 30 or Tuesday, May 1 to have a chance to participate in the creation of the Pathways' Garden.
- ⇒ **May 7 – May 11 – National Teacher Appreciation Week**
- ⇒ **May 11 (morning) - Elementary class Trip to Crystal Lake Library**
- ⇒ **May 18 – May 19 (F-S) – overnight – Sleepover at Montessori Pathways for Elementary Students.**
- ⇒ **May 24 (Th) at 5:00pm - “The End of the School Year” Celebration at The First Congregational Church in Crystal Lake.**
- ⇒ **May 28 (M) – No School - Memorial Day**
- ⇒ **The Last Day of School is Wednesday, May 30.**
- ⇒ **The school will be closed for Summer Camp preparation May 31—June 1.**
- ⇒ **The Summer Camp begins Monday, June 4.**
- ⇒ **June 4 – August 17 – Summer Camp (11 weeks)**
- ⇒ **August 20- 22 (M – W) - No Class (2018-2019 School Year Preparation / Orientation Days)**
- ⇒ **August 23 (Th) - 2018- 2019 School Year begins**



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber



"Everything you do for me, you take away from me."

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

It is only fitting that the subject of independence is addressed at this point in the school year. Establishing independence is a one marker of the elementary years that has its roots in the early childhood classroom. By the end of upper elementary, students have the encouragement, experience, and stamina to become independent, self-motivated students.

This past month, nine of our students stretched their boundaries and exercised their life skills at Nature's Classroom. They participated, observed, practiced, bonded, and did many things independently. Was it scary at first? Sure, but they persevered by figuring it out on their own.



The other six students navigated the classroom environment with different teachers and worked on their own independence. Both groups of students had different experiences but added up these days equaled opportunities of learning and growth.



As we near the end of the school year, we should all be very proud observing the growth in independence in our elementary students. As parents and teachers, we can foster independence in our students by encouraging them and allowing them to experience new things, to try, to fail, to do it again, and to succeed on their own. We do not just "become independent" when we turn 18, we learn to become independent during the years that precede that age.



Spring is finally here, and students are anxious to be outside for longer periods of time. Sprucing up our playground and planting flowers are rewarding experiences for our children. Have your child do the same at home! Dig in the dirt, plant a garden, pull weeds, pick up branches, walk, ride bikes, play games, or just sit outside and take in all the sights, sounds, and smells.



Too many children today are "nature deprived" meaning they have little or no access to the natural world and spend too little time outdoors. Montessori is not the only educator

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

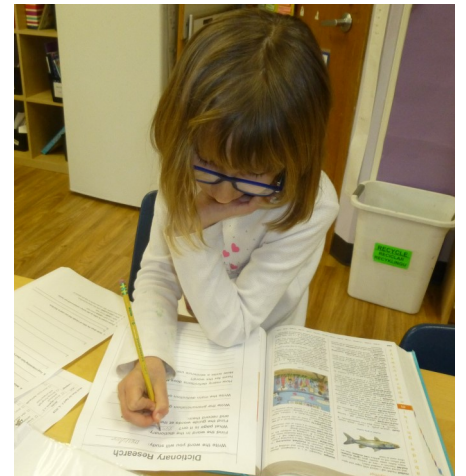
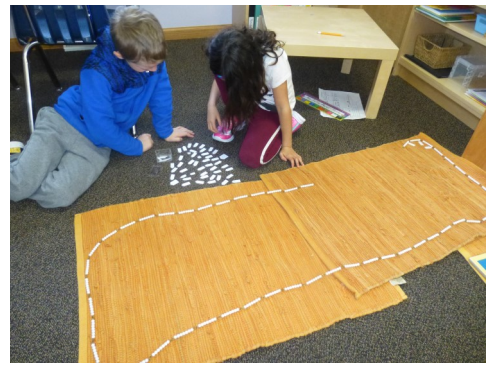
and scientist to recognize the tremendous value of the outdoor environment in a child's health and learning process.

In the classroom we are building a rainforest wall as students study the plants and animals of the Asian and Australian rainforests. Students will work in groups and independently on several creative projects until the end of the school year.

Through the end of the school year, students will continue math, language, and other culture studies, challenging themselves to complete more work each week and meet their goals. We are in the home stretch!

APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Karen

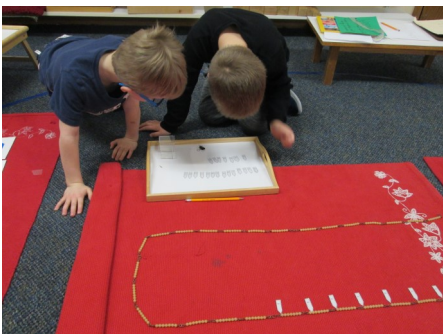
In the classroom, we are all awaiting the emergence of the Monarch butterflies. Caterpillars have arrived and much is happening, but, of course, it seems like little is happening. Patience is required. We do not control the time factor. The butterflies will emerge. If we are REALLY lucky, we will see the process as it happens. Now we are in the waiting period.

The plan, after they emerge, is to walk them down to the Nature Center a Veteran's acres. The Center has an indoor butterfly garden. This is our advice from them because, there will not be enough flowers out in nature to sustain the butterflies at the end of May. This way, the butterflies can be fed until they can live independently in the outdoors.

A science demonstration: water surface tension. We filled a glass with water (or thought we did). We then added more water, drop by drop. It seemed like we could go on adding drops forever, but of course there was a limit. We counted 118 drops. The surface of the water changed too and we could see it become a convex shape. (Part of the fun was lying on our stomach and watching the change take place "before our eyes").

In math, I brought in a quantity of beautiful stones in a glass container. The "game" was to guess (think estimate) how many stones were in the glass jar. We were relatively close when a small quantity was involved. But then, I added many more. We estimated. Then we had to count. A part of the lesson was alternative ways to count in order to get the total. But it was very tedious to count one by one. It also risked being inaccurate. We discovered "making sets" of 10. It was much faster, easier to count accurately, and fun to do. Then we could go back and simply count by 10s --- easy for most, also a review in skip counting by tens. Then someone suggested making sets of 2. That was a contrast. Back to a relatively tedious procedure. However, it was a review of counting by 2 and the children could experience the "shortcut" of counting by tens.

Also in math, the chains are currently a hit. Every day, one or more children get out the chains and count the sets within the chain.



For example, the short chain of 5 is composed of 5 bars of 5. It serves two, purposes. We can show that 5 fives make a square: hence demonstrate that the square of 5 is 25. The "long" chain of 5 has 25 sets of five beads. We can show that $5 \times 5 \times 5 = 5$ squares, equivalent to the cube of 5. Counting and tagging each section in any chain also reinforces the answers to multiplication facts. Sometimes the children recorded the numbers too.

We practiced playing rhythm sticks to note cards. Each card had a 4-beat pattern consisting of quarter notes and eighth notes. The children are so proud they can read these note patterns and play them independently on rhythm sticks. Then they wanted to play not just 2 measures, but 3. Then 4 measures. It requires precision and working together as a group. Today we began playing the noted patterns on drums (we have enough for each child to have one.) It was great fun ---- and includes both reading and math. Although it was our first time drumming, the group stayed together almost perfectly ---- that require full attention on the part of every child! We will continue to build our group music skills.

We began clock work this month beginning with the hour. Children are now noticing the classroom clock more and seeing what time we begin class (1:00 after outdoors) and see when it approaches the end of class (3:00). We will begin the half hour. They loved making their clocks. Some enjoyed making the hour clock book.

Finally, a note on worms: yes. We classified vertebrate and invertebrate. As an example of one (of so many invertebrates) I brought in night crawlers. Each child got their own worm to observe. Some had never seen one up close. Most had never held or touched one. After a short time, the children warmed up to them and were fascinated to see the many ways worms move.



They had "homework". Thank you to the many parents who helped their child do "research" and bring in at one interesting fact. Did you know that worms had 5 hearts (who would have thought)? Did you know that worms are blind? There can be 1 million worms in just 1 acre, etc. etc. Fun facts. We are so happy to have the warm weather! We waited long enough!

APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

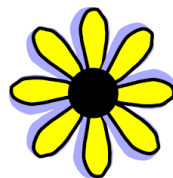
Ms. Linda



In March, the kindergarten students explore water color resist with crayon drawings. They created a cityscape and an outer space environment using crayon and then painted over them using water color.



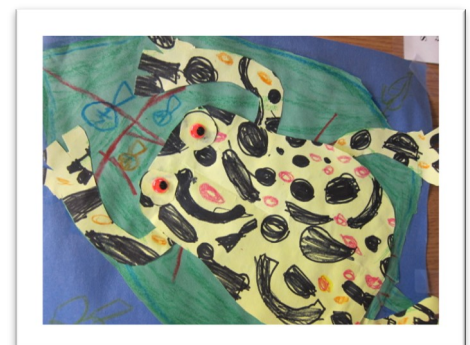
In the elementary class the students continued to work on and complete a piece inspired by Spanish artist Joan Miro. They created stamps on foam sheets and created prints with them. The prints were then cut out used to create a collage. Finally, the leftover paper was used to create colorful frames for the collages. These pieces turned out beautifully! On science day, the students learned how create their own piece of "scratch magic" using oil pastels.



This month in art it was all about animals!

In kindergarten, the students started the month by creating collage zebras. They drew their own zebras and tore pieces of paper to create the stripes.

The elementary class is studying the rainforest right now, so both classes worked on a mixed media poison dart frog. We learned about the concept of asymmetry. The spots on the poison dart frog create an asymmetrical pattern. The kindergarten students used black markers to create their spots and the elementary class used india ink to create theirs. To make the background for the frogs we discussed how to create texture by overlapping light and dark colors.



We will continue to add to our colorful rainforest as we move into May.



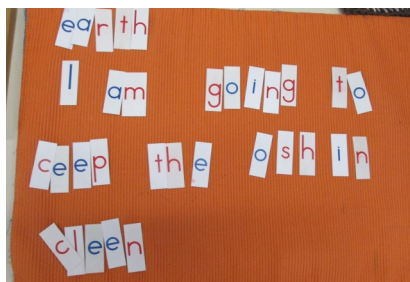
NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



This month was a very fun month in the South Room. We have been focusing on Earth Day as well as on the life cycle of the butterfly. For our celebration of Earth Week we began with a group discussion at line time about what it means to take care of the Earth, why it is important, and what we can do to help.

We read a book called *"10 Things I Can Do to Help My World"* by Melanie Walsh, which talked about conservation and simple things everyone can do to help. Each day we also read aloud books on recycling, gardening, composting, and of course on the emphasis of "reduce, reuse, recycle."



For an Earth-related craft, we created individual Earths using paper plates and painting with shaving cream and green and blue paints. When they dried, the effect was similar to water colors, but it was a fun and different way for the children to paint. There was also a recyclables sorting activity in which the children could sort the recyclables into four categories: glass, plastic, paper, and metal. We also learned to sing some popular children's songs that were adapted to include Earth Day ideas.



Our painted lady caterpillars have arrived, and the children have been watching them eat, grow, crawl around the cup, and spin silk.

Two are currently in their chrysalis state and the other four should be following soon. The children are invited to observe them, and they can also sketch what they see and include their scientific drawing with a daily journal entry. This activity prompted an interesting conversation on how to observe something that is a part of nature and how to make a scientific sketch: "draw exactly what you see."

For instance, if there are six total caterpillars and they have black bodies, when you sketch them there should not be three caterpillars with rainbow colors and smiley faces.



Their sketches are incredible and it's so cool to see their abilities when participating in this activity. We were also very curious as to how the caterpillars transform into their chrysalis state and so we watched a time lapse video that show how the caterpillars push their skin up and off of their new chrysalis form. It has been so exciting, and we look forward to watching them emerge as butterflies.



We had a new friend join our class this month, and she was a great reminder of just how incredibly capable, independent, mature, self-reliant, and compassionate our students are. So many of the children offered their help in showing our new friend around the classroom. One of our kindergarteners met the new friend and immediately asked if he could show her one of his favorite sensorial works. It was so sweet to watch him teach his new friend: from how to walk slowly in the classroom, where to get a work rug and how to carry and unroll it, to how to remove the work from the shelf and carry it to the rug. It was a perfect illustration of the importance of the 3-year cycle in the Montessori classroom and how the kindergarten year is truly the culmination of the time spent in this environment. I was so very proud of this child and how he embraced his role as a leader in the classroom as well as how he expressed his kindness and compassion towards someone new. It was a wonderful thing to observe.



APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

South Room

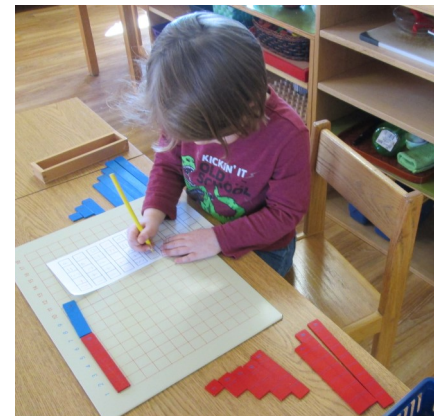
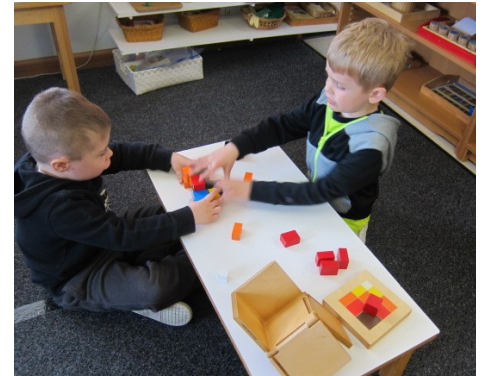


APRIL NEWS AND PHOTO GALLERY FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY



Ms. Andrea

Our pre-k group continues to show their increasing abilities in the afternoon class. Some of them will be kindergarteners soon and we are always encouraging them and guiding them into more challenging works in the afternoon. It helps that the kindergarteners are in the same classroom, and that when we come in the kindergarten students are deep in concentration in their very challenging kindergarten work; this is an excellent opportunity for the pre-k students to see what they might want to explore as well as what they can look forward to when they are kindergarteners.



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine



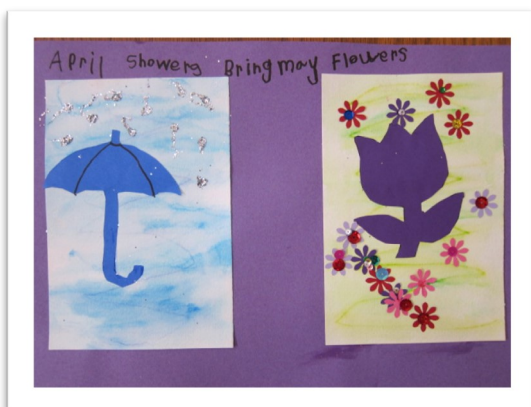
Can you believe that we are entering our last month of the school year already? This year has gone by so fast!! Can you also believe that warmer temperatures are finally arriving? Hopefully here to stay and not just a "tease" of spring like weather.

Much to the thrill of the children, the warmer morning temperatures allowed us to enjoy some outside time before our morning work cycle began inside. As we observed the children happily running around it brought to mind the simple joys of childhood; reminiscent of lambs or puppies frolicking in a spring meadow. Their joyful and lighthearted play was endearing to watch.



April Showers Bring May Flowers:

I'm sure you remember that short little poem, perhaps reciting it many times as a child. In April, as a class we talked about the changes in nature that occur as the season of spring arrives. We talked about migrating birds returning (Robins and Red Winged Blackbirds), animals waking up from their long winter sleep (chipmunks and possums) and spring flowers blooming (daffodils and tulips). We encouraged the children to watch for these signs of spring here at school and also in their neighborhoods. Children enjoyed making their own spring "April Showers Bring May Flowers" art picture. Their beautiful artwork has brightened our classroom all month.



Earth Day:

Earth Day was celebrated during this month too. We took several days to discuss ways we can, even as small children, help our planet. We ended the week with mulching our playground. Through books and songs we learned the 3 R's: Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce. Together we:

- ◆ separated various items into categories: bottles, paper, boxes and plastic
- ◆ talked about using less paper; recycling the paper we do use to save more of our tree. Reusing sponges and cloths to wipe up spills rather than paper towels and turning off the faucet when we are finished our washing our hands or lunch plates
- ◆ cared for living things in our own neighborhoods by making cheerio bird hangers and suet cups to feed our birds and other small animals around our homes

Also, during Earth Day week Mr. Carey, Miles' Dad, visited our classroom to share his love for nature. We listened very attentively and tried to name various sounds of nature we heard, we were introduced to the importance of composting and planted flower seeds. After a quick presentation we each had a turn planting and watering the seeds. We had such a great time! Thank you, Mr. Carey, for your time and effort!



Just this week the children discovered that the seeds have now sprouted and we wait for the day they can be moved outdoors.



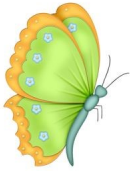
NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM (CONTINUATION)

Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine



Caterpillars and butterflies:

By now you have heard that our caterpillars have arrived and the children's excitement is building!! We have watched them eat and grow, crawl around plus spin silk. Our older children have shared some interesting fun facts about caterpillars such as: the number of hearts they have, why they shed their skin and how they breathe. We have also introduced the stages of the butterfly: egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis) and butterfly.



There are several works on our science shelf to reinforce what has been presented. Some of the children have written and illustrated the different stages they have observed, made word lists with illustrations; some have traced and painted a butterfly, completed the "Butterfly Life Cycle" timeline and/or made a Life Cycle of the Butterfly book.



We were so happy to discover that each caterpillar has climbed to the top of the cup, attached itself by a strand of silk and has made the fascinating change into a chrysalis. We wait, with much anticipation, hoping to witness the birth of the butterflies very soon.

Montessori clock:

This clock work has become a very popular this past month. The Montessori clock is a hands-on activity that first requires the child to order the number tiles and then position them correctly on the face of the clock. The vocabulary is given naming the minute and hour hand. At first the o'clock numbers are only given and practiced. As the child progresses half-hour, quarter hour and 5 minute intervals are presented. Younger children are more focused on just working with the materials while other children are writing the numbers and drawing the appropriate arrows on clock paper. Some children are working on a clock booklet "A Day in My Life" where they describe in a few words what they do at a particular time of day.



Sensorial Material:

Building intricate designs with our sensorial material has also emerged this month. Children usually begin with combining both pink tower and brown stairs but quickly add other material from the sensorial area. With thoughtful planning and engineering a very impressive structure is created. As an older child came by to admire their work he suggested drawing what they built. Before I knew it the boys gathered everything they needed; floor tables, paper and pencil and began drawing their creation. Simply incredible!!

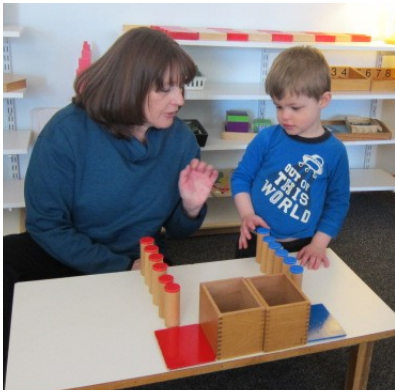
During these last months of school we begin to see changes in the work choices in every age level. They begin to see themselves as capable learners. Children develop a deeper ability to concentrate, focus, organize and independently follow through and finish. We are so proud and encouraged to see this type of growth happening in your children.

Enjoy the warmth and beauty of spring! :)



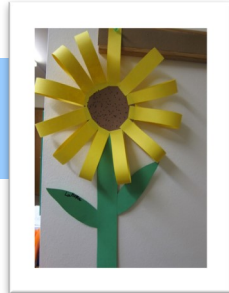
APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON

Ms. Donna



We learned that April Showers bring May Flowers as the saying goes. Snow came and cover our flowers and the flowers pushed right up through the snow. They seemed to know it was their time to grow and the snow was not going to stop them from doing what they do every spring. They look pretty in the front and on the side of our school.

Earth Day made us think more about the planet we live on. We all need to remember the three R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. We need to pick up litter instead of adding to it. Do not waste water. The children like to make things out of scrapes of paper that they find in our scrape paper recycle bin. We had fun singing songs about recycling.

Get to Know the Earth. Try to get outside regularly. If you have a backyard, find a special place where you can sit and listen to the wind and the birds. Dig in the dirt. Turn over rocks and look for cool creatures. If we spend time in nature we will know and understand it better. The natural world will matter to us, and we will be more likely to try to protect it.

about how we could help the earth.

We used coffee filters and marked it all over with lines of blue and green, then we used a squirt bottle filled with water and sprayed our filter. When it was dry we wrote SAVE OUR EARTH on the filter and glued it to a black piece of paper.

We created 3-D Butterfly, 3-D Flowers, caterpillars, made large boxes into rockets and took them outside.



GROUP ACTIVITIES:

Geometry Shapes Game Cards were passed out to the class. They would look at their cards. The first person would say "I have the PENTAGON. Who has the ELLIPSE?" The person with the ellipse would then say I have the ELLIPSE, who has the SQUARE?

Color Game Cards were played the same way. "I have red who has yellow". "I have yellow who has..." etc.

Look 'N Do is a card game about following directions. Example: Jump forward then all would jump forward etc.

ART:

Using newspaper, we cut out a large circle and make lines showing land forms. We painted the land forms green and the rest of our circle blue with a large red heart in the middle. We then added a paper



OUTSIDE TIME:

We were so excited to be able to get outside when the days got longer and warmer.

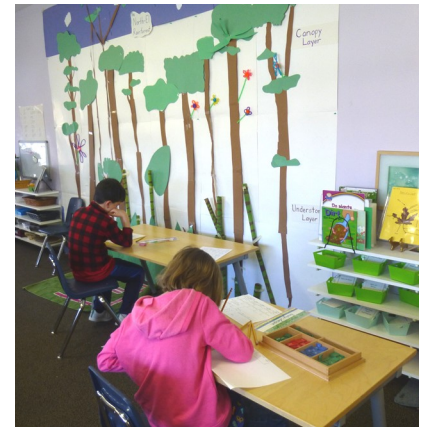
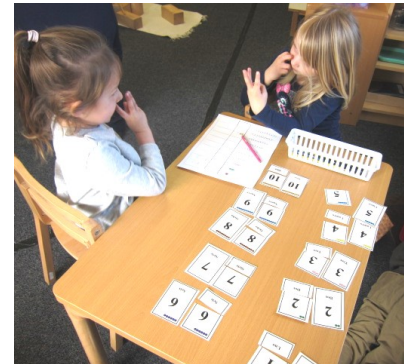
T-Ball has been lots of fun. Bubbles - Who doesn't like bubbles?

Boxes were so much fun (from rocket ships to drive in restaurants) What kid doesn't like boxes!



APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

More Wonderful Moments at Pathways



NATURE'S CLASSROOM PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class Trip

