

Montessori Pathways' News



*When children come into contact with nature,
they reveal their strength*

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Exploring Nature

Notes from Ms. Alena

From the very beginning of life, it is vital to maintain the link between child and nature. To achieve this, we need to become aware of the importance of nature in our own lives, only then we will be able to share this wonderful world of miracles with our children.



Spending time in nature is a fully integrated sensory experience. Watching the sunlight bounce off of trees as they sway in the wind, smelling the plants and flowers around you, hearing the leaves crunch under your feet, feeling the cold dirt in your hands, and sometimes even tasting the fresh vegetables or herbs from a garden. Engaging with nature grounds us and reminds us of our connection to the environment. Nature provides a powerful tool for nurturing young minds.

The highlight of this month was the 4-day trip of our Elementary students to Nature's Classroom in Hartland, WI.



This national program of nature exploration brought to our students such a great experience of going in the path of rediscovery of nature, in the path of rediscovery of the world through their eyes, taking care of themselves and helping each other,



learning how to compromise living with roommates, and building a new friendship.

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 the other Montessori schools, and, the most important part of this trip, they spent most of each day in the forest and on the lake.



Thank you to all families who participated in our "Come and Work Together!" Family Night. It was so important for your children to feel that you are part of their learning journey.



Thank you, Parents!!!

“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



~ April was a fairly busy month for us. One of our very successful events was “Spruce it Up: Goodies with Grownups!” The kids were so excited to work together with their parents making our playground safe, nice, clean, and beautiful. ~



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

Thank you, Children!!!



Our planet is an amazing place! But it needs each one of us to play our part to keep it clean, healthy, and thriving. April 22nd is Earth Day!

As grownups, it's a great time to celebrate our Earth and set an example of environmental responsibility for our kids, so they are empowered to care for our environment.

At Montessori Pathways, we take our children on nature walks to show them the beauty of our planet; we use recycled materials in arts and crafts projects to reduce waste and pollution, we plant flowers to make our planet beautiful.



Our children are also eager to keep our planet clean and always are enthusiastic to go around the neighborhood and pick up all trash.



Thank you so much, Little Friends, for helping our planet being clean and healthy!



Way to go , Montessori Pathways students! You all are having such big hearts!

COMING SCHOOL EVENTS

in May

⇒ **May 5 – 9 (M—F) - National Teacher Appreciation Week**

"Dear Montessori Pathways Teachers,

Your dedication to your students' success is truly commendable. You go above and beyond to ensure they thrive both academically and personally. Your support and encouragement help students believe in themselves and their abilities. You instill confidence and a love for learning that will stay with them for years to come.

Your ability to inspire and challenge your students encourages them to strive for excellence. You help them see their potential and reach their dreams. Your dedication to building strong relationships with your students helps create a sense of community and belonging in your classroom.

Thank you for being such inspiring educators. You are the celebrants of today. Thank you for your selfless service from the bottom of my heart " ~ Ms. Alena Baradzina

THANK YOU
TEACHERS!

This week is a great chance for our families to pass your warm and kind words to your teachers!



⇒ **May 14, Wednesday (Rain Day—May 15, Thursday) - Planting Day / Pastries with Parents!**



Our students brought so much energy and effort helping their parents with spreading the mulch on our playground to make it nice and safe. Thank you, little friends!!!

Now it is time to add the finishing touches to our school's outdoor area and we invite parents to enjoy planting together.

It would be great if every child could bring one plant before Planting Day (on May 12 (M) or May 13 (Tu)) to have a chance to participate in the creation of the Pathways' Garden.

Any perennial, annual, or veggie plant would be very helpful and appreciated.

⇒ **May 22 (Th) at 2:00pm - Kindergarten Moving On Ceremony.** Kindergarten parents are welcome to attend.

⇒ **May 23 (F) at 11:00 am—School-wide Final Picnic at Montessori Pathways School.** Everyone is welcome.

⇒ **May 26 (M) - No School (Memorial Day)**



⇒ The Last Day of School is Wednesday, May 28th.

⇒ The school will be closed for Summer Camp preparation May 29—May 30.

⇒ The Summer Camp begins Monday, June 2nd.

⇒ **June 2 – August 15 – Summer Camp (11 weeks)**

⇒ **August 18 - 22 (M – F) - No Class (2025—2026 School Year Preparation; Parents/ Students Orientation Days)**

⇒ **August 25 (M) - The first day of 2025-2026 school year (full schedule)**

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget, Ms. Carole



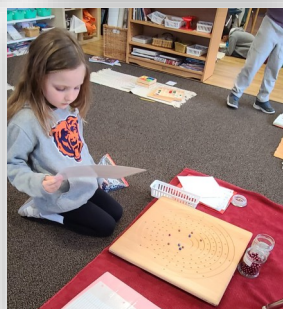
Nature's Classroom was a wonderful trip as well as an experience to learn new concepts and make new Montessori friends from the Montessori School of Chicago, Seton Montessori and Nature's Classroom Montessori School.



Ms Alena sent wonderful pictures to all the parents with a write-up about daily classes and activities. My favorite part of the trip is seeing how the first graders and first timers react to the freedom at NCI: freedom to choose classes, sleeping arrangements, when to shower, what to eat and how much, what to do in their free time and freedom to explore in a beautiful natural environment. It was an amazing trip.



Parent-Teacher Conferences were a good chance for us to touch base and plan for the next year. I enjoy this time to share some successes and areas of growth. Thank you to all parents who attended



We had our first full day Kindergarten visits this month.

Students got to work with their friends as well as show them Nature Class at Veteran Acres Park. They love to show the ropes and share their excitement of a place they love.



April is National Poetry Month.

During this month, I recited some of my favorite poems by my favorite poets each day and then on Wednesday writing day, they were able to try their hands at some poetry writing: acrostic and concrete and Haiku poems. I was so impressed with the original thought and composition.



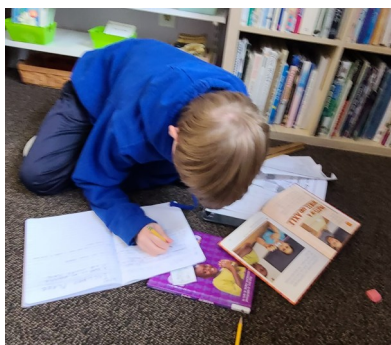
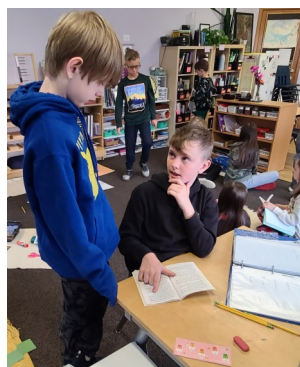
Collaborative work has taken over the class. Many choose to work with friends and are making better choices in work partners. More work is being accomplished, and better work is being finished.



This is my last newsletter for this school year. Feel free to contact me with any questions. I hope everyone has a wonderful summer. I am so thrilled to see most of you back next year and to welcome a good group of new friends to our Elementary Community!

APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP[

Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy



Our Pre-K and Kindergarten group has been incredibly busy this month! As more blooms awakened, we discussed the beautiful cherry blossom trees and where they begin to bloom. To make cherry blossom art, we explored mixed media with an unexpected ingredient – popcorn! When combined with pink paint, it made a very cute addition as blossoms for the cherry blossom tree. Later in the month as more spring flowers started to pop up and children began noticing tulips around them, we used oil pastels to mix some vibrant colors in making drawings of tulips. And while we present how to make the different shapes, mix the colors, and techniques that may be helpful, an important aspect of Montessori art is to leave it child directed, allowing them to fully explore their creativity and take on the process. No two projects end up being the same because there is no “correct” way to make art. We work to provide the children with inspiration and skills, leaving them the opportunity to be creative, proud, and confident in their creative choices.

As more flowers have started to bloom, the children have been surprised to realize that we eat some flowers! So we decided to further explore edible parts of plants, making a “parts of the plant” salad. We used carrots and radishes for roots, celery for stems, baby spinach as leaves, tomatoes and cucumbers as the fruits, broccoli as the flower, and sugar snap peas as the seeds.



Children worked in groups to wash, peel, and cut the different components of our salad. One of the children also made the dressing for the salad, a mix of freshly squeezed lemon juice, oil, salt, a dash of paprika and black pepper, and a bit of sugar (though honey would be preferable if you're making at home). It was a huge effort to prepare the ingredients, clean their tools, working space, and dishes, and all that extra work ignited their appetite. We ended up with 2 huge salad bowls and guess what – our afternoon group completely finished both bowls! We had several children coming up for seconds and thirds and being incredibly excited to share the recipe with you at home.

As we noticed the continued interest in map making in the afternoons, we decided to make our April hiking trip a map making one. This led to a discussion of what maps are used for. Some can show us and tell us what a place looks like, such as the map of USA. But maps can also show us how to get from one location to another. Many children recognized this as the navigation their parents use when driving! We decided to work on making a map to a nearby and familiar location, making an East

Room and South Room map, to see if they will be similar, and use these maps to make our way back to school! We set out to the Crystal Lake Metra Train Station, a familiar path that most of our students have taken. We made note of the location of North, East, South, and West, and set our starting point on paper. Each time we turned, we stopped to note which direction we will be heading now, how long of a path we have walked, record it on the map and see if there is any notable landmark nearby to record. Another interesting conversation ensued – what exactly is a landmark? By the end of our walk, children became very aware of what landmarks are around them and added more and more to our maps! As we drew the landmarks, we had to analyze the shapes – the gazebo that is an octagon, the sign that is a curvilinear triangle, and even the train station which is a triangular prism. Waiting at our destination was the most exciting discovery – three trains passing by! Some children noted that their parents take the train to work, others pondered the shape of the train cars (cylinders or rectangular prisms?), and others still read the signs around them. The children worked together to check where we are each step of the way back on our maps. By the end, many children were keenly aware of their cardinal directions!

When Earth Day arrived, the older children worked to create a promise to the Earth with the moveable alphabet. Some really took these to heart and started helping others do the same. Other children realized they can make a difference on their upcoming holiday trips and clean the beach when they arrive. A few children remembered picking up garbage nearby the school last year and wanted to do the same this year. They had noticed a lot of the trash that piled up over the winter under the snow. So we donned some gloves, grabbed grocery bags and a few large garbage bags, discussed safely identifying what can be touched and headed out just near the school. This experience is always eye opening for the children. They also get pretty excited about some of the items we see! Notable finds this year included a comb, a hairbrush, a full towel, pizza box, a winter hat, three baseballs, and an old political campaign sign that had blown away. Children worked in pairs and filled their garbage bags to the brim, bringing the larger items to the teacher's large bags. In the end, we had 3 full large garbage bags and 12 full grocery bags filled with trash! The children were so proud to have left this space near our school better than we found it!

A similar theme was shared by Chad Powell, Audriana's dad, who came over to read a couple books to the afternoon group. One focused on going green, what that actually means, and how we can do that. There were a few fascinating new ideas for the children to explore, such as solar and wind energy, rain barrels, and working to make each space better than we found it. The second book discussed engineering and how buildings are similar in design to our bodies. The children were skeptical of this comparison at first, but agreed by the end. The rest of the afternoon many were mentioning that they were building something just like an engineer as they worked to use scrap papers for sustainable art. Thank you, Chad, for bringing this inspiration to the afternoon group!

APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Afternoon Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

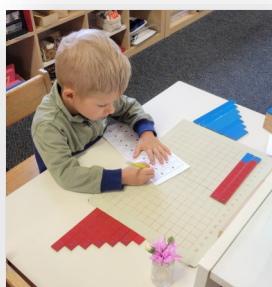
Ms. Kathy, Ms. Ellen



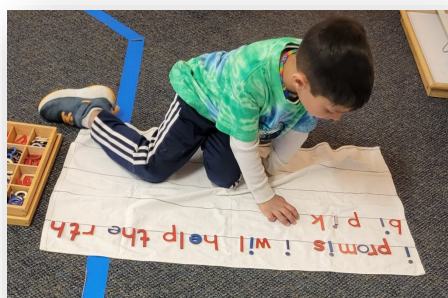
It is unbelievable to think that the school year is already coming to an end! During April, these last months of school, we begin to see changes in the work choices at every age level. The children begin to see themselves as capable learners. They have developed a deeper ability to concentrate, focus, organize and independently follow through and actually finish.



Many children were able to complete an activity they previously tried and tried again, but did not have the stamina to finish 6 months ago. "I did it!" was heard from quite a few this month. We are so proud and encouraged to see this type of growth happening in your children. These moments are exactly what we want to see. Everyone has come so far.



Our focus this month was on Earth. As we celebrated Earth week the children used the scrap bin to make tiny Earth models, while others wrote stories about how they pledge to care for the Earth by picking up trash and saving water, turning off lights and recycling. Even at this young age, the children know they can each do their individual part to help.



In the Practical Life area, the children had worked on sorting trash, into compost, recycling and trash, with model bins and picture cards (not actual trash). The afternoon Pre-K and Kindergarten students suited up with gloves and trash bags to clean the green space near the train parking lot. All these windy days gave them a lot to do! We returned with 3 full bags and a grocery bag for every 2 children.

Our study of Europe is in its second month. The children are working on so many aspects of this continent. The study of Europe includes plants, animals, landmarks, flags and beautiful places. It has been used nearly every day in one form or another.



Speaking of the Earth, a big thank you to all the parents and grandparents who came to clean and mulch our playground. This yearly event is a hit with all the children. Since this is the very last newsletter of the year, thank you to all who will also come to plant and weed in May.

Our Painted Lady caterpillars have arrived. We watched them eat and grow to 3 times their original size. They are currently in the chrysalis stage. What is happening there? We discussed metamorphosis as a physical change from one thing to another, like frogs exclaimed, one child. Yes, like frogs. The children have been working with parts of a caterpillar and May will bring us Butterflies! We also have a life cycle and parts of the ladybug which has been prompting interesting discussions.



Our "Come and Work with Me Night", was a great success. I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as the children enjoyed choosing the work they would like to show! It is always eye-opening and hopefully everyone learned a bit more about the Montessori classroom. It has been a pleasure to see how far your children have come and to watch them explore the wonders of the Montessori classroom. Until next year, enjoy your summer.



APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Laxmi



It's hard to believe it has only been a month since our last newsletter – so much has happened in the month of April! I think a few quotations from our East Room friends can help summarize:

- * *"This is the most fun morning!"* (regarding Spruce It Up Day),
- * *"I'm so good at sewing,"*
- * *"I'm going to stay near this friend while she bakes because I'm a good baker and I can help her if she needs help,"*
- * *"I know how to write book titles now so if anyone needs help, you can just come to me and I will show you,"*
- * *"Why fold the chain into squares? I can just count. This is the 6 chain, so I can just count by 6, because six 6s makes a square."*

It has been a month of growing confidence, skills, and many "aha!" moments for our students.

April also brought us Earth Day. We read [Ocean! Waves For All](#) by Stacy McAnulty, which highlights the beauty and importance of the ocean while starkly contrasting it with the dim and ugly state much of the ocean has become with our increasing pollution. Many of the kids remembered that we must be mindful of our paper use to protect the trees that gives us oxygen, but all were surprised to hear that our actions also affect the ocean. We decided to use the scraps of leftover paper we collect to express ourselves during Earth Week in a more sustainable way—some children made small Earths, others made a heart card or book about Earth, and others still figured out how to make maracas with the supplies we had! A meaningful experience that they continued to talk about as the days went on.

Spruce It Up was a great addition to the conversation of caring for our outdoor space, and we soon were able to enjoy it with another special event!

Carmela Riley, Bria and Myla's mom, came to lead an outdoor workout class for the East Room! What an exciting way to get our outdoor classroom opened for the season. The kids had a blast getting outside to move their bodies in a new way and challenge themselves. Thank you, Carmela, for such a memorable experience!

We also had a few new members join our classroom this month – caterpillars! Every morning the children have been excitedly coming in to observe what the caterpillars are up to.



There is a beautiful mix of excitement and gentleness in our caterpillar observation area as the children are so eager to see the butterflies emerge but know they must remain gentle and calm nearby to protect this important process. This observation has sparked an interest in learning more about the different types of insects, as well as the parts and lifecycles of ladybugs, caterpillars, and butterflies.

On the botany front, some children continued to dive deeper into the various types of leaves, flowers, edible flowers, and classification of deciduous and coniferous trees. Once we noticed the trees around us start to bloom, we moved to the classification of blooming trees and shrubs, helping us identify the different blooms emerging around us. The children have become more comfortable and creative with their works by this time of the year, looking for new ways to challenge themselves. This time, many chose to paint the types of flowers or trees rather than color with pencil, which added a layer of challenge as they worked to mix the colors they needed.

Children who are making maps (yes, the map craze is still going strong!), are also often choosing to paint them. But before we get to painting and labeling, we must understand what maps actually are – a representation of a real place. We have been inviting children to map their favorite place in the room with modeling clay, making a 3D representation on paper first is a much smaller jump to representation. Then we trace their shapes, noting that each pencil mark represents the shelf, tray, table or chair that they made. And the puzzle piece they are tracing as they make a map of the USA or Asia represents a real, much larger, place.

In the art area, a color mixing activity has allowed children to further explore how to get the colors they need for their painting works. Children first mix primary colors as liquid watercolor with pipettes, and then mix the primary colors in model magic to make secondary colors. Many have chosen to use the new model magic to them practice making geometric solids and take them home!

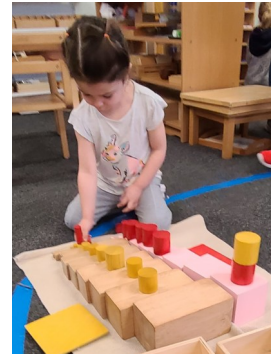
As spring started to awaken our senses, we introduced matching smelling jars and scent identifying smelling jars, so the children can work on finding scents that smell the same in one activity, and matching a scent to its name and picture in another. The smell of cloves has elicited some strong responses from the children! We also invited Beyond Green, our catering company, to share a presentation on the different tastes our body can recognize, along with a tasting activity at the end. And to change up the taste of snack, we worked together to make a simple guacamole by mashing avocados and squeezing some fresh lemon juice, allowing the kids to have avocado toast for snack.

We head into May with excitement for the upcoming school events, warmer weather, and the chance to use our outdoor classroom to the fullest. While this is the last newsletter of the school year, please look forward to the pictures that will be coming to see the fun!

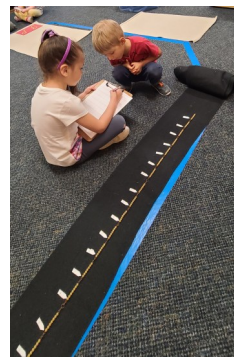


APRIL PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



*"... the child always chooses something hard to do. This is something we would never have thought of."
~Maria Montessori*

