

Montessori Pathways' News

April 2016

"Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence".

-Maria Montessori



"Spring is here!"
(by Olivia S., using masking tape)

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

April was a fairly busy month for us. One of our very successful events was **"Spruce it Up: Doughnuts with Dads!"** The weather cooperated and our students were eager to help. They were so excited to work together with their dads and so proud to have them at school! It only took 1 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.



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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 independantly 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!"*. The hit of the evening was Line Time in both classrooms, which is impossible to describe or support with pictures. You should see it or, even better, participate.

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



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Coming School Events

**** Registration for Summer Camp and the upcoming 2016-2017 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.

Our Elementary Class is full and we have just a few spots left in every primary class. 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.

- **Wednesday, May 4 at 9:00am** - **"Planting Day: Muffins with Moms!"**
(The Rain Day – Friday, May 6)

It would be great if every child could bring at least one plant on Monday or Tuesday, May 2 or 3 to have a chance to participate in the creation of the Pathways' Garden.

- **May 2 - May 6 - Teacher Appreciation Week.**
- **Saturday, May 14 at 10am- 1:00 pm - Open House.**
- **Thursday, May 26th at 5:00pm** - **"The End of the Year" Celebration**



- The Last Day of School is Wednesday, June 1st.
- The school will be closed for Summer Camp preparation June 2-June 3.
- The Summer Camp begins Monday, June 6.

Best regards,
Ms. Alena

Notes from the Elementary Class (North room)

Ms. Amber

“Knowledge can be best given where there is eagerness to learn, so this is the period (ages 6-12 yr.) when the seed of everything can be sown, the child’s mind being like a fertile field, ready to receive what will germinate into culture... all items of culture are received enthusiastically, and later these seeds will expand and grow.”

Maria Montessori -- To Educate the Human Potential

Time is only one of the concepts students have been working on this year. Telling time is the easier part to master, but elapsed time and time remaining can be more difficult to grasp. The calendar tells us five weeks remain in this school year. Thirty-two weeks of learning and working together have elapsed, yet there is always more learning and working ahead. We started our year with culture: the theory of the Big Bang and the timeline of our universe.



Fast-forward to today, and culture studies continue as students learn about the United States and the short time that it has been a country. We had a visit from a baby pig, spread mulch with dads, and look forward to planting day with moms in May. Students were presented an overview of vertebrate animals and the basics of Botany.



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Culture work in a Montessori elementary classroom is big, time-consuming, a source of many learning opportunities, and most of all beautiful when the student takes the time necessary to do the work correctly and with care. Some students avoid culture work because it takes time, but the results are rewarding learning and creative experiences that sets the foundation for future learning. It is often difficult to convince some students to take that time to do the best and most beautiful work they can. Montessori learning is more than Math and Language. Culture work is the core from which all other subjects branch. Culture work offers beauty, opportunities to work with a partner, and insight to our world. It's more than about time!



Earth Day was a celebration of sorts for the elementary class. We worked with the lights off to save electricity, tried to conserve water while hand-washing, planted spider plants for home to clean the indoor air, and even watched Earth Day plays written by the students! Several students presented their goal work to the class. As we head into the final stretch students are hard at work completing their goals, asking for more presentations and working toward mastery of concepts learned. A packet went home for the draft writing titled "All about Me." It'll be exciting to see the final product.



Big thank you to Ashlyn's grandparents for presenting several very cool and exciting science experiments to the elementary students. It was a lot of explorations with fun!

Thank you again for your conference attendance! Your support of your child's learning is one key (a big key) to his/her success. As the time for summer break draws near, attentions tend to wander more than usual, so encourage your student to stay on task and to use his/her work time wisely. The school year is not over yet; students still have time to learn, to work, to firmly plant the seeds of knowledge and understanding into their fertile minds.



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Kindergarten Extended Day News

Ms. Karen

It has been a busy month! We begin with a special “Thank you” to Erin’s (our elementary student) grandmother who sewed us some new napkins for our lunch. We can use additional napkins, so, if you have a sewing machine, **please help us** by simply hemming the edges of more napkins. That way we can have several sets which make one always available for the young children to wash and the older children to iron.

By the way, ironing of the napkins is a favorite activity with the kindergarten children. As always, in any activity, there are multiple skills involved in ironing. The children first sprinkle the napkins, then iron. Concepts: irons are hot! Heat will dry the fabric. The napkins are first folded in **half**, then in **fourths**. They fold **corner to corner**, and **edge to edge**. Folding and unfolding are the inverse operations that return the item to its original form. Think addition and subtraction = inverse operations. Multiplication and division are also inverse operations.



We discussed and illustrated the “rain cycle”. We began with water. We added heat which created steam (**evaporation**). We then added cold which created **condensation**. When enough droplets had formed, they began to fall (**precipitation**). An optional activity was to create a poster illustration this particular water cycle of nature. This vocabulary, with illustrated use, can become a part of the child’s understood vocabulary.



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With spring finally arriving, we are enjoying the outdoors. It has also been a time to bring in and share some of flowers that are blooming already this spring. So far: forsythia, hydrangea, daffodil, tulip (and dandelion). **If you would like to send a flower, or even a small bouquet, from your yard, we would really appreciate it.** It creates a lovely atmosphere in the classroom and there is a special beauty in being able to see one lovely flower close up in all its detail. It is the beginning of our appreciation of nature.



As a part of the Earth week celebration, we read *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss, a wonderful book that, through story, helps us to understand the finite resources and what happens when a resource (in this case, a special tree, the truffler tree, a tree upon which multiple groups of animals depend) is used up. The last tree is cut down. The effect has wide ranging consequences.

Remember a few weeks ago when the city came by to cut down the ash trees in front of the school? Well, they were back, this time grinding out the tree roots so we could plant a new tree. So we went outside to watch the process: grinding out the root with a large screw machine, raking and shoveling to restore the yard, and finally, using a ramp to load the little bulldozer back onto the bed of the truck. Partly I hope the children realize how many people in a community help and support each other.

We have scheduled a presentation with a friend of mine who raises and releases Monarch butterflies. She has actually been to their destination spot in Mexico to witness the remarkable gathering of the thousands (or more) butterflies where the cycle begins again. Sharon will join us for a presentation in May.



Author this month is Eric Carle. He is well known, of course, for his *Hungry Hungry Caterpillar* book. Also *The Tiny Seed* is relevant at this time of year. But, in addition to the story, his books are magnificently illustrated in the most unconventional ways.

Math: the most popular work now is division. Popular, I think, because the simplicity of the work directly illustrates the process of division and makes the ideas accessible and understandable to the children, including remainders. We have also done estimating. Today, we illustrated surface tension. The small glass was apparently “filled” with water, yet, drop by drop, we counted over 150 drops that could still be added before the surface tension broke and the water ran down the side of the glass. There really was suspense ---could we add yet another drop of water and another and another.



Finally, the kindergarten children have become so capable. They frequently help the younger children, they give lessons, they check the math work of others. It is one expression, one culmination of their school experience. They really are contributors to the community of the classroom. In helping others, they also help themselves.



Notes from the Art Class (Kindergarten and Elementary)

Ms. Linda

In art class this month both kindergarten and elementary began the month by finishing their non-representational art pieces. They took the painted and collaged pieces they began last month, cut them into smaller pieces, and rearranged them into an entirely new piece of art.



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Both classes began a study of Austrian artist and architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Both his buildings and paintings are very colorful, and fanciful. Students in both classes planned and drew "imaginary cities" and added color with colored pencil. The elementary class enjoyed this so much that they worked on it for two weeks!

We are furthering our study of Hundertwasser by creating a mixed media piece that is inspired by his painting "Blobs grow in beloved gardens". They began their piece by sponge painting a colorful background. We will then add the "blobs" by creating spirals filled with patterns. When it is finished it will resemble a fanciful forest.



Additionally, the kindergarten class practiced folding paper by creating origami animals which included an origami aquarium. They also designed their own beetles. We looked at many different kinds of beetles and the variety of colors and patterns they come in.

Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Eva

Spring is officially here and in the South Room we have a lot going on. We received our *Painted Lady* caterpillars a few weeks ago and have been talking a lot about the life cycle of the butterfly. We learned that the caterpillars grow ten times their original size; and to show this to the class we had ten children at a time lie down head to toe across the classroom floor.

We learned that caterpillars: have 12 eyes (6 on each side of their head), have different types of legs, true legs that have hard joints, and prolegs which are fleshy, breathe through spiracles that are basically several holes on both sides of their body connecting a straw-like breathing tube, caterpillars spin silk, and they have an exoskeleton that they shed seven times before going into the chrysalis state. The life cycle consists of: 1) egg 2) larva or caterpillar 3) chrysalis or pupa 4) emerging adult butterfly.



Currently our five *Painted Ladies* are in the chrysalis state and the children are anxiously awaiting the emerging butterflies. We have set up an observation table with a magnifying lens, ruler, and paper so the children can sketch what they see.

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It has been very interesting to see what their sketches look like: can they make a scientific observation and draw exactly what they see? Or are they more artistic with their sketch, drawing smiley faces and using colors that are not present on the caterpillars and chrysalis. This week we will be reading Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and painting with inflated balloons to create our own caterpillars, as well as pretending to be an emerging caterpillar using a bed sheet. We have also added several new activities to our biology shelves including: a puzzle of the life cycle of the butterfly, a puzzle with parts of the butterfly, and three part cards for the caterpillar and the butterfly.



We have also been celebrating Earth Day and having a lot of discussion at line time about ways that we can help take care of our planet. The children had many great ideas including: not leaving the water running, turning off lights when they leave a room, planting gardens, picking up garbage, not littering, reusing paper, recycling, not wasting food, etc. We have been making bird feeders with cheerios and pipe cleaners. We also made an art project with their hands surrounding the earth and had them make a promise of how they would help the earth.



One child promised to “not pick flowers so they could grow giant” and then after I wrote his promise and read it back to him he began to quietly cry. I asked him what was wrong and he said “I know I promised not to pick flowers but it makes me sad because I really like picking flowers.” It was such a sweet heartfelt moment; he really wanted to make a promise to the earth but was torn because he enjoys flowers so much. I assured him that it was ok that he still picks flowers as long as he helps take care of them while they were growing. It was a reminder of how very special this age is for children and how they have so much that they are experiencing very deeply.

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Our physical science shelf has been quite popular. The children are really enjoying experimenting with *sink and float* as well as *magnetic and nonmagnetic*. This week we will be adding *translucent and opaque* as well as *heavy and light*. Before the experiments, the children have an opportunity to make a scientific prediction on what objects will sink or float, etc. and then through the activity, determine if they were correct in their predictions.



We are also adding some different items to the art easel to change the painting experience. Last week we added a fork so they could make flowers. This week will be the inflated balloons. In the coming weeks we will try objects found in nature (sticks, branches with needles, etc.).



Our sewing area will also be changing a bit, adding burlap and a sewing ring, as well as a more free form sewing through a paper roll, and a yarn wrapping project.

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Our kindergarteners have also begun to lead more group activities. This has been very exciting to hear their ideas and then watch them, very successfully, plan out their lesson, gather their materials and then teach and guide a group through the activity. There will be more of that to come in the following weeks.

We are all very excited for the last month of the school year before summer camp. We have a lot of activities planned and look forward to what May will bring to the South Room.



Pre-K Extended Day Class (Photo Gallery)

Ms. Andrea



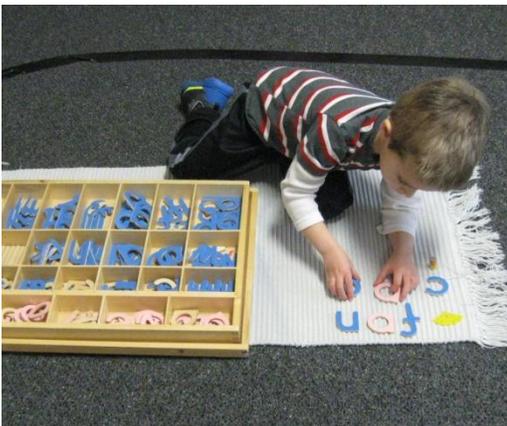
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Notes from the East Classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Carole

It sure is hard to believe that our year is coming into its final weeks! We have seen such tremendous growth, compassion and responsibility within our class this year. Your children have demonstrated abilities not only in academic achievements, but social and emotional maturity and awareness as well.



Attention to details of classroom protocol (inside voice, body awareness) time on task (staying focused), ordering of work on a rug or table are in evidence everyday - and still, of course, a work in process!



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It was a very eye opening experience for the parents who attended our "Come and Work Together!" night to see how much progress, pride and organization goes into their daily routines - thank you for coming - what a great and rewarding turnout!



We received our little, tiny caterpillars a couple of weeks ago and watched as they ate and ate and ate.....and thankfully, all 5 spun their chrysalis'- and we're waiting. In the meantime, many students have compared our habitat with the Elementary and South Room's butterfly environments/watching for similarities and differences. They have been introduced to the *Life Cycle of a Butterfly* and *Parts of a Butterfly* work. Keep your fingers crossed for a warm, spring day to release our Painted Lady Butterflies.



Our missed friend, Thomas, came to visit the school with his grandpa, Daniel. They happened to bring a very adorable and young 8 month old piglet that elicited much excitement and curiosity from all of the classrooms. The children had the opportunity to observe, hold and ask questions about life on a farm and the care of "Swine". This little piggy will get to be about 300 lbs!



The class celebrated Earth Day with the arrival of Dads who helped beautify our outdoors with mulch and the help of our classmates. We then, enjoyed doughnuts and it was a very special and fun day. Thank you again, families!



Our friends from Elementary class created and presented an *Earth Day* performance for our kids. That was cool!!! Thank you, friends!!!

Looking forward to planting with Moms next week! Thank you for your continued interest and involvement with your child's education!!



Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

April teased us with our Illinois weather. We had some nice warm sunny days as well as windy and cold days. It reminded us about dressing in layers.

In celebration of Earth Day and every day consider what your family can do to incorporate outdoor and eco-friendly activities into your own routine. Grab sidewalk chalk and color on the driveway. Turn off the TV and head outside with a ball or jump rope. It's easy and fun to green your routine. Find a nature trail near you and go on a woodsy adventure. Take more hikes (weekly or monthly) throughout the year. Remember the three R's -- Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Make every day Earth Day.



How long does it take for garbage to break down?

- *Plastics - 500 years*
- *Aluminum cans- 500 years*
- *Cotton - 6 months*
- *Organic materials - 6 months*
- *Paper - 6 months*

ART:

Rainbows from paper plates, tissue paper, yarn, cotton balls and glue
Painting a picture with a brush on a piece of construction paper

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ACTIVITIES:

Flannel board story about a farm with a barn and different colored chicks

Dancing to music, waking with bean bags on different body parts
A big book story called "I'm a Seed" by Jean Marzollo

OUTSIDE: Scoops (throwing and catching a ball using a scoop)

SCIENCE:

Dancing Raisins - Put some raisins in a mason jar and add some club soda. Then watch what happens.

Put an egg into a mason jar. Fill the jar with vinegar and watch what happens for about a week. Look at it every day. On the 7th or 8th day pour the egg into a rubber container and feel the egg.



*We wish everyone to enjoy the spring weather
and spend more time outside together!!!*

