

Montessori Pathways'

News

December, 2013

“The child, in fact, once he feels sure of himself, will no longer seek the approval of authority after every step.”

Maria Montessori



Merry Christmas from East room!

Notes from Ms. Alena

The three weeks of December truly kept our school busy. The kids spent time decorating their classrooms, preparing gifts for their families, and learning songs for the winter celebration. It was so cool to hear Christmas carols around the school that kids were singing while doing their work or getting ready to go outside. Sometimes we saw different groups of elementary kids in the hallway practicing their poems or songs for the celebration or looking for and discussing the information for their research projects about winter holidays around the world.

Despite the anticipation of the holidays, kids continued to work hard. Quite often, many of the students come to share their work with me. You should see how proud they are during this moment and I am also so excited and proud of them. Our kindergarteners love to show and tell me about the work of their choice, which they usually do after their regular work is done. And you know what is very interesting and exciting for me? That the work of their choice is usually more challenging than their regular work.

This month brought a lot of extremely cold days to us, but the kids still had a chance to spend some times outside and enjoy the snow and sunny weather.

I hope that everybody had a wonderful time during this holiday season.

May everyone's New Year be filled with happiness, love, and prosperity!



*Best regards,
Ms. Alena*

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Happy New Year from South room!



Coming School Events

- We invite Montessori Pathways parents and friends to Parent Evening

“Thinking about the future”

(Montessori Kindergarten year and Elementary education)

on *Thursday, January 23rd 2014 at 6:30pm*

Please RSVP by *Monday, January 20th*.

- **Elementary Parent/Teacher conferences** will be **on January 29-30**
by appointments.

As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us via e-mail
montpathways@hotmail.com

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Notes from the Elementary Class (*North room*)

Ms. Katy



Happy New Year! December was a short and busy month at school. I would like to thank all the families for attending our Winter Celebration and contributing food and other artifacts the children requested for their research. It really was a student led project. I provided the initial research questions and celebrations and they provided the information and planning for what they needed to represent the holiday. The children also worked hard at reciting their poetry and performing Jingle Bells with instruments.

As a whole group this month we focused on the *Biomes of Australia*. The children learned about the different plants, animals and needs of people according to the biome we were looking at. Our next biome of study is Africa!

We continued our yearlong *study of weather* with a focus on language and art. The children each selected a different weather picture out of a book and duplicated it with water colors. They followed this up by writing a story to accompany their picture.

Last month the *first year students* received their first presentation on *Golden Bead Subtraction*. It is introduced with a story about Ms. Minuend who would like to give some of her golden beads away because she has just too many. From this story we focused on the idea that addition is putting it all together and subtraction is taking it away!



This month the children received the presentation on *how to borrow and exchange in subtraction*. Next month, the first years will move onto the Stamp Game for addition which is a more abstract way of completing problems. We will be moving away from actual quantity of numbers to the symbol of the numbers.

The second years have been moving solely towards *abstraction of dynamic addition and subtraction problems*.



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They now have a solid understanding of why we borrow and exchange in these two operations. They are also continuing to work on speed and accuracy in their addition facts. Once these are mastered, they will concentrate on speed and accuracy of subtraction facts.

In January we will begin work with multiplication with a focus on the concrete idea in order to really lay a good foundation for the concept of this mathematical operation.

I am looking forward to the New Year with the students. The second half of the school year is an exciting time as the routine, ground rules and expectations are generally understood at this point. We will begin our study of the Common Human Needs which will lead into some wonderful areas of research.

A small sample of lessons this month:

Group Lessons: Monthly Timelines, Personal Timelines, Biomes of Australia, Holiday Research, Weather Stories, Ornament Sewing, Poetry Writing



Math:

First Years: Number Line Addition, Addition Charts, Subtraction Strip Board, Dynamic Golden Bead Subtraction, Tessellations



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Second Years: Number Line Subtraction, Subtraction Charts, Missing Addends, Dot Game, Abstract Addition and Subtraction, Measuring Objects with Feet and Inches, Calculating Perimeter, Study of Geometric Solids



Language:

First Years: Blue Series Spelling Works, Common and Proper Noun Sorting, Capitalizing the Word I, Adjective Matching

Second Years: Contractions, Rhyming Words and Writing Couplets, Alphabetical Order Practice, Green Series Spelling Works, Commas in an Address, Commas in a Series of Nouns and Adjectives, Parts of a Letter



Zoology: Parts of a Fish, Parts of an Amphibian, Parts of a Reptile, Invertebrate Research

Geography and History: Geography Charts, Asia Map, North American Fish, Reptiles and Amphibians

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Art and Music: Ornament Sewing, Weather Painting with Water Colors, Using Instruments to Recognize Rhythm



Ms. Katy

Kindergarten Extended Day News

December was a short month packed with learning. The Kindergartners' continue to expand their work cycle in the classroom.

In the language area, they have been practicing their reading skills. Several children have become familiar with blends (*ch, sh, th*) and with phonograms (*oo, er, ar, ee*). Not only have they been reading these words, but they are also using them to word build (spelling) and in their writings. It is exciting to see their language skills improving every day!

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Word study is an important part of the Montessori language curriculum. This month we learned about *adjectives* in a fun way by using gingerbread cookies!

Each child was given a gingerbread cookie. They used all their sense of touch, feel, smell, sight, and taste to describe their cookie. Hard, bumpy, tasty, brown, and sweet, are just a few of the adjectives that the children used to describe their cookie. Afterwards, each child decorated their own version of a gingerbread man/woman!



In our cultural area, the children have been learning about *animals in winter*. Do they migrate, hibernate, or adapt? Will their fur change colors with the winter season? What does their animal home look like? At recess, we have been investigating the animal tracks that we find in the snow. Was the track made by a rabbit or squirrel?

We discussed the changing seasons and read a book about the Winter Solstice. We learned many facts about the Winter Solstice, including that it is the shortest day of

the year! We wrote about these facts in our journals!

In the math area, we have had presentations on *place value* (ones, tens, hundreds, thousands). This will lead to more advanced works with the decimal system in the coming months.

In January, we will be traveling to the Prairie view Educational Center for their “Animals in winter” program! We will continue our study of winter animals by incorporating science, art, and literature! We will also learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. and other peacemakers of the world.



Have a Happy New Year!



Sincerely,
Ms. Patty

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Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Patty, Ms. Ambreen



Thank you to everyone that attended our Winter Celebration- “Holidays around the World”. The children enjoyed performing the songs and dances that they learned about Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. They especially enjoyed singing about “Roo-Roo the Red-Nosed Kangaroo that lives in Australia! Learning about the holidays of different cultures embraces Montessori principals of inclusion and peace. Students understand that celebrations have had a great significance to people throughout the world!

With the changing of the seasons, we added new materials to the shelves.

In the practical life area, the children have been working with *the string along lacing kit*. The child uses a lacing pen to punch a design into a board. The child can make an original design or follow a pattern card. This material develops hand-eye coordination and helps the child practice counting and patterning.



Arts and crafts are important to the 3-6 age group, creating things to take home and learning to express ourselves artistically gives the children a confidence in their abilities. The skills involved in cutting, gluing, painting, and coloring all develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. This month, the children have completed many crafts including *flying reindeers with many different colored noses, glittering Christmas trees, and button stars!*

In the language area, the children are working with our new *sequencing work* based on the book, “Froggy Gets Dressed” by Jonathon London. This is a funny book about a frog that learns how much work it is to get ready to go out to play in the snow. Each time he gets “ready” he forgets to put on a piece of clothing and has to start over again. The children use felt pieces and a felt board to sequence the story.

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Understanding sequence, the order in which items or events occur, is an important ability in reading.

Many of the older children have been working with *compound words and phonograms* (a letter or combination of letters that represent a sound).



The children were so excited to see peppermint candy canes in our *estimation jar!* Although no one estimated the correct number of candy canes (27)...many of the children had reasonable estimates. Of course, *in mathematics* we encourage children to calculate the correct answer, but being able to estimate is a valuable skill. First, because it shows that you have a good sense of numbers and how big they are. Secondly, children who have that number sense will be able to use that skill to determine whether their answers to math questions are reasonable.

In the cultural area, the children have been learning about *animals in winter, animal homes, animal tracks, and parts of a reindeer!* Winter is cold. There is snow on the ground. People live in warm houses, but where do the animals go? We have been reading books about animals that hibernate, migrate, and adapt. In the coming month, we will be making pine cone bird feeders. We will observe and record the winter birds (and other animals) that come to eat the bird seed!



Our Chicken Soup poem for the month of December:

In December I will be

a baubled banged Christmas tree

With soup bowls draped all over me.

Merry Once, merry twice

Merry chicken soup with rice!

The children are looking forward to next month when we will make our Chicken Soup with Rice! Our vegetarian friends will enjoy “Vegetable Soup with Rice”!

During this month, we celebrated Sophie, Jake and Joe’s birthdays!

We wish your family a very Happy New Year!

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Ms. Patty and Ms. Ambreen

Notes from the East classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all of our families; we hope you are enjoying a warm and relaxing break with your family! Thank you so very much for making our classroom such a Bright and Merry environment for our kids; everything you help with and contribute to truly makes a difference in our class community!

The short weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas are always busy, and honestly, just flew by! We started December with practicing some favorite *Christmas carols* to sing along with our families at our celebration on the 13th. Our class put together a *"hand made" Christmas tree* by tracing all of the children's hands and forming a beautiful, shiny Christmas tree, which is in the front hallway.



Many additional *Art* options were available and popular choices, and we hope you were able to view them as well as enjoy them when we sent them home over the break.

Our *Practical Life* area was merry with green, red and gold items and liquids for the children to practice their fine motor skills; we strung a *popcorn garland* for our classroom tree which we will then put outside after break for our squirrel and bird friends to enjoy (hopefully, not the black and white cat, or raccoon that occasionally visits outside.....).

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Many of your children love making "Parts of the....." books, in which we added *the Reindeer*, or Caribou to, in *Science*. We learned about their color markings, habits and habitats by coordinating a lesson with *Geography* too.



We have classmates who have newly mastered *The 100 Board*; one mom told us that this was the #1 item on her child's Christmas list this year!! We have moved some friends into more challenging *addition equations and subtraction* (they call it "take away") where appropriate.



We are continuing our daily work with *individual letter (phonetic) sounds* and working on *blending them together* for pre-reading readiness, as well. There are a lot of new Language materials that are in preparation for the second half of the school year. Our goal is to keep each child motivated, interested and challenged at their appropriate levels.

We celebrated Nate M.'s fifth birthday and Noah's fourth this month. Thank you for sending in adorable pictures and delicious treats to help make their Birthdays special and a nice experience to share with their friends!

Also, we had a surprise visit from Ms. Eva who worked during Summer Camp with me; she is a junior majoring in education at ISU and many of the children who attended during the summer were excited to see her - she was also so happy to see them, too!

Thank you so much, families, for all of your contributions to the Sharing Basket - we enjoyed *food preparation activities* on days when it was too cold to go outside; we baked muffins, made fruit kebabs with strawberries and grapes, enjoyed mini-pizzas and warm bagels with cream cheese.



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This is such a great way for your child to experience teamwork and bond with their classmates - also, our tables looked so bright and colorful with amazing *flower arrangements* made by the class!

Next, we just really want to thank all of our parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and especially our class for super attending our Celebration on the 13th! Our classroom was so full of families and friends and our tree looked so beautiful because of all your craftiness in making some very original ornament.:) We very much enjoyed your company and look forward to more opportunities in our future. (BTW....we are celebrating a Frosty the Snowman Day in January - I'll check our signup list but if you would like to help in some way....COME ON!)

Additionally, a ***huge Thank You to our parents for the gifts for our classroom*** (and to Jennifer Dearlove who coordinated the effort!). During line time on our last day of school before the break, we were all so excited to unwrap the presents that came for "Our Class"! The children (and their teachers!) were thrilled to open a new Arithmetic Cube for our Math/Sensorial shelf, beautiful, wooden numerals to enhance our math equation works, and a very cool volcano which opens to show the inside layers of volcanic rock and lava (yes!!!!!! We won't have to make one every year :)! They will all be appreciated and enjoyed by our class this year as well as future children, as well. Seriously, this was a wonderful way to give to our school and it is truly cherished!

Enjoy your time with your families and we are looking forward to sharing a wonderful 2014 together! Happy New Year!



Sincerely,

Ms. Christine & Ms. Laxmi

Notes from the Pre-K Extended class:

Ms. Ambreen

We entered into the month of December filled with holiday spirit.

In language, our vowel of the month was ' e ', so we worked on word families using this vowel sound.

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In Science, we studied about parts of the tree, as well as reindeer and Christmas tree.

In Geography, we learned about the Holidays celebrated around the World. We learned about Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, the African-American holiday, which inspired us to study about Africa,

the second largest continent of the world, and home of the longest river Nile and the ancient Pyramids. The pre-k kids worked very hard to create beautiful books and posters on Holidays around the World.



In Math, we learned how to count by 4s, different kinds of triangles and continued working on addition facts.



In Art, we created beautiful Poinsettia Flowers and water color paintings.

The Recipe of the month to share with families is 'Ginger Bread Cookies'.

Please review the December folders with your kids and Happy Holidays to all of you.

*Sincerely,
Ms. Ambreen*

Notes from the afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna

The first week of December we took advantage of being able to go outside and play in the snow. It is great to see the older children pulling the younger ones on our sleds.

The second week I was in warm Costa Rica and Ms. Christine had to stay inside due to the cold.

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Her shaving cream and glue project with beads was a wonderful sight to see hanging on one of the hallway walls.



The third week we were able to go out for the first couple of days and then the cold temperatures forced us to stay inside. We did a magic picture, where we drew a picture with a white crayon and then applied a blue wash over the paper. The picture was hard to see but when the blue wash was applied it truly was magic.

We brought out the *color cube game* and rolled it and then when it stopped the person who rolled had to find or name something that was that color.

We ended with a game called *Guess what is in the Box?* We passed the gift box around and everyone had a chance to shake it, feel it, and smell it. Then kids said what they thought it was. No one had the correct answer. Clue number 1 was given (you could eat it) - again no correct guess. Clue # 2 (Candy), the last person to guess was Cate and she guessed candy canes. This was the correct answer. The candy canes were divided up for everyone to take home.

*Best regards,
Ms. Donna*

