

# Montessori Pathways' News



## December 2017

### Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

The three weeks of December truly kept our school busy. The kids spent time decorating their classrooms, preparing gifts for their families, and practicing songs and poems for the winter celebration.

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.

This month brought a lot of extremely cold days to us, but the kids still had a chance to spend some time 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!**



Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.

~ Maria Montessori

### Daily Activities Pictures

I hope that everyone enjoyed the set of your child's daily activities pictures. If you still did not see them, please check your emails for the set of pictures, discuss, and enjoy them together with your kids.



### After School Enrichment Program

We are glad to announce that the following classes will be offered as an After-School Program to our students during the second semester (January – May, 2018)

- ◆ Monday – 3:15 – 4:05pm – Taekwondo
- ◆ Tuesday – 3:15 – 3:55pm – Yoga;
- ◆ Wednesday – 3:15 – 4:15pm – Chess
- ◆ Thursday – 3:00 – 3:45pm – Dance
- ◆ Friday – 3:15 - 4:15pm – Sticky Fingers Cooking

These after school classes will start on the week of January 15<sup>th</sup>

This semester we offer 3 additional classes for **Kindergarten and Elementary** students only:

- ◆ Tuesday – 3:15 - 4:15pm – **Let's Build It Engineering!**
- ◆ Wednesday – 3:15 – 4:15pm – **Stage Stars**
- ◆ Thursday – 3:15 – 4:15pm – **Amigos Spanish Class**

These after school classes will start on the week of January 29<sup>th</sup>

If you would like your child to participate in some of these classes, **please register your child and pay for the session(s) no later than Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>.**





## “Flakes!”

Hopefully everyone enjoyed the “Flakes!” performance presented by the Montessori Pathways’ students as a great conclusion of the first school year semester.

While practicing songs and poems about Flakes and Snirt, our students learned how no two flakes are alike and we are all special in our own way.

Thank you for coming and sharing the holiday evening with us.



## Thank you!

- \* **Thank you, parents, for all your help and support in preparation of holiday snacks that concluded our Winter Celebration!**
- \* **Thank you, parents and kids, for your thoughtful Christmas gifts to our Montessori Pathways Team and for the many beautiful Christmas cards with a lot of wonderful wishes and very warm words!**





# Coming School Events

⇒ **January 8 (M) – School Resumes**

⇒ **January 11 (Th) – 6:00pm - Montessori Fun / Educational Night for Pre-K and K Students and Parents:**

- ◆ **“Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished – Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary Education” – Workshop for Pre-K and K Parents.**
- ◆ **Bingo / Pizza Night – for Pre-K and K Students.**

*In continuation of the parents’ education, we would like to invite the parents whose children will be going to Kindergarten or Elementary class for the next school year, to our annual parent workshop “Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished” that will be held by Ms. Karen and Ms. Amber on Thursday, January 11 at 6:00pm. Your kids are welcome to enjoy a Bingo/Pizza Night on the same evening.*

*The new year arrives with new problems and questions for us. In the beginning of every year, the parents of 5-6-year-old kids have to make a very important decision – what is the next step for my child? Where should he/she continue his/her education?*

*There are two common things we hear every year from the parents. The first one is a question “**Will my child be prepared for public kindergarten or elementary?**”*

*It is very important to understand that if we would prepare our students for traditional kindergarten, then we would not be Montessori, but the same conventional school where kids of the same age (but still developmentally very different) learn the same material at the same time based on the teacher’s plan.*

*Our school prepares our students not for public kindergarten or elementary level, but for real life, which more and more requires great thinking skills, independence, initiative, creativity, and so on. We provide a child centered, multiage environment, where kids are learning at their own pace through a hands-on experience, exploring, discovering, and making connections.*

***And the kindergarten year is the final and very crucial year in the primary 3-year cycle of the Montessori environment.***

*The second thing that we hear every year from many parents is that “being in a Montessori environment during one or two years was enough for our child’s development. It is time for him/her to move to a public school like most of his/her friends. He / She will be fine there.”*

***There is no “enough” in education and no bounds in a child’s development. And being “just fine”- is this what we are looking for for our kids?***

*So, if you are still open to exploring all of the options and possibilities for your child’s education, you are more than welcome to attend the Parent Night on January 11.*

⇒ **January 12 (F) 9:00am— Elementary Students’ Trip to Crystal Lake Library**

⇒ **January 15 (M) - No School** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

⇒ **January 15 – 31 – Returning Families Preferred Re- Enrollment Period**

⇒ **January 17 (W) - 12:15pm—Kindergarten and Elementary Students Field Trip – “Step Africa!” Show**  
at Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake

⇒ **January 26 (F) – all day by appt.— Elementary Parent / Student / Teacher Conference Day**

- ◆ **No School** for School Day Elementary Students on Conference Day
- ◆ Child Care is provided for ESD (7:45am - 4:15pm) / All Day (6:45-am-6:00pm) Elementary students



## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber

“He does it with his hands, by experience, first in play and then through work. The hands are the instruments of man’s intelligence.”

~ Maria Montessori  
(The Absorbent Mind) ~

One of Montessori’s Great Lessons is the “Coming of Humans,” a story that nearly completes the history of life on our planet. Students also learned about human’s three gifts: a brain to think and reason, a heart with the capacity to love, and hands with opposable thumbs to use for writing or working. Each day these gifts are witnessed in action in our classroom. Sharing and caring for each other and the environment; thinking logically; and working and writing are happening at a wonderful pace. Students also heard several stories about the history of language, another Great Lesson. Next, we will study the needs of humans.



The calendar year was completed with a study of snowflakes, the winter solstice, and Arctic and Antarctica polar regions.

December’s library trip was a spectacular success: students knew what to do **on their own!** Two of the groups headed straight for the library’s computerized card catalog to look for books about the polar areas, while the other two groups asked the librarians for assistance. The librarians are now accustomed to our visits and even brought the students additional books. It was a great example of children learning by repeatedly doing. It’s hands-on learning in action!

We delved further into Zoology, Botany and biome studies, learning about Carolus Linnaeus, Swedish botanist and physician, who developed a system for classifying plants (and eventually animals) based on common characteristics. The concept of characteristics and adaptations was used in a

group project called *Wild Thing Adaptations*. Students first listened to the story “Where the Wild Things Are” by Maurice Sendak. Then they created an environment (biome) and their own wild things with adaptations that would allow that animal to survive in its environment. It was a thought-provoking and creative project that students thoroughly enjoyed.



We’re nearly half-way through the school year, so it is important to see accelerated progress taking place in the form of managing and completing more work each day. **It is possible to complete the work plan every week, and that should be the student’s goal.** Building internal motivation is a challenge, and parents can help with gentle encouragement. Say, “Work hard!” when you send your student off to school, instead of “Bye, have fun!” Believe me they are having fun, but they need to work harder at school work and at not interrupting others when they are working.

The week before winter break focused on required work to be completed during the morning’s **independent** work cycle: at least one Math and one Language assignment. Students saw they could accomplish more when they were directly challenged to do more. That drive of “I have to get my work done now” or “I need to stay on task and finish this work” must be internalized. Repeated practice takes a lot of time, and if time is wasted then mastery is difficult to achieve. In a Montessori classroom, learning is working, and working is learning. January is typically a vigorous work month, since the holidays are over, and students quickly settle back into the daily routine. The goal will be keeping up an accelerating pace. Students will also be setting their own goal(s) for the





## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS- CONTINUATION

Ms. Amber

**"If the idea of the universe be presented to the child in the right way, it will do more for him than just arouse his interest, for it will create in him admiration and wonder, a feeling loftier than any interest and more satisfying.**

**The child's mind will then no longer wander, but becomes fixed and can work. The knowledge he acquires is organized and systematic; his intelligence becomes whole and complete because of the vision of the whole that has been presented to him, and his interest spreads to all, for all are linked and have their place in the universe on which his mind is centred."**

**-M. Montessori, "To Educate the Human**

### Synopsis of work activities:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> grade:

- Addition and subtraction operations using several kinds of materials. Next, multiplication. Telling time to the hour and half-hour. Fraction names. Some students have made progress memorizing addition facts.
- Continued practice with proper letter and number formation. Several students started cursive which demands proper letter formation.
- Word building using Moveable Alphabet with Pink (short vowel sounds) or Blue (blending sounds) Series materials.
- Spelling routine (learn new words, practice, take a test). Please practice words with your student at home.
- Writing or copying sentences (needs to be a daily practice.) Most students started study of Nouns.
- Emerging readers getting closer to becoming novice readers! Please continue daily reading at home.
- Organization techniques (managing work spot, binder, cubby, work, classroom materials, etc.)



#### 2nd grade:

- All four math operations with materials. Working on memorization, specifically addition and subtraction. Fractions. Telling time to half-hour, quarter hour.
- Continued cursive practice and strive toward daily cursive use in work.
- Building strong sentences using articles, adjectives and nouns. Verb study next.
- More word study work.

#### 3rd grade:

- All four math operations with materials. Working on memorization of addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts. Fractions equivalence. Telling time to quarter hour and minute.
- Continued cursive practice and strive toward daily cursive use in work.
- Building strong sentences (then paragraphs) using verbs. Completing grammar study next.
- Continued word study work.
- More independent research.

#### 4th grade:

- Multiples, factors, basic algebra, long division and abstract operations
- Trait-based writing skills, figurative language, completed intense study of nouns. Next, adjectives.
- Study of the atom
- Independent research and upper elementary group work
- Typing skills

#### 6th grade:

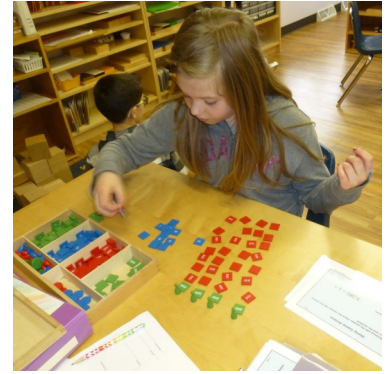
- Abstract operations and basic algebra
- Figurative language, verb tenses or advanced verb study, more practice on writing using trait-based writing skills.
- Study of elements
- Independent research and upper elementary group work
- Typing skills

A brief word about clothing: Every day remember to send your student with winter coat, winter boots, snow pants, hat, and mittens. Snow pants are difficult to put on and wear over a dress. Your child may need to wear warmer clothing as well. T-shirts and leggings (or thin pants) are not adequate. It really is about warmth and comfort, not fashion. Children work on the floor and they are growing. Make sure the bottoms cover the bottom, and the tops cover the top. Keep the jewelry and distracting accessories at home.



# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class





## NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Karen

Where to begin?

Let's start with the holiday. Tradition is such an important part of family. It creates memories, closeness, and belongingness. Traditions give us something to look forward to. We, all of us, have memories that we cherish. With the fast pace of our life, we need to simply stop and look for big (perhaps) and small ways to create those memories --- those family ties. We all have these memories from our childhood. Let's remember to create them for our children too.

### Giving:

Children love to give. But how often do they have an opportunity to give of themselves --- not just giving something that another person has purchased. How can we cultivate opportunities for this giving from the heart? They can sing their Christmas song for the family. Perhaps they want to give a few coins from their bank to the Salvation Army kettle a chance to help another person in need. Perhaps making a card for the neighbor. Since this holiday is about giving, how can we include our children? How can they experience the "joy of giving"?

### Skills:

Again, we have brought back the lacing (around the Christmas song) and weaving of placemats. During the time that children are doing these multistep activities of weaving and sewing, there is such an air of absorption and contentment. Perhaps we do not think of these activities as "skill building" or we think they are easy to develop. However, we have all experienced learning a particular skill and realizing that it takes practice, repetition, concentration to master that skill. So, with weaving: looks easy. But there are patterns to follow in the over/under motion. There is vocabulary: "pattern, alternating, over, under, edge, first, last, etc. We also work for precision. Some children chose to create a pattern with the colored strips. All skill development takes practice. Gaining skills in one area creates a foundation for skill development in other areas. Mastery of a skill creates confidence.



### Highlight a work:

Of course, multiple activities are going on daily in the classroom. However, we can choose to highlight a particular activity. This month, it was building multiple place value numbers with the concrete materials. The decimal materials are meant to give the child **an experience of place value**. The material consists of ones, tens, hundreds, thousands. We realize that our decimal system is a repeating pattern: point, line, square. It repeats every three place values i.e.. the new point is the thousand cube, the a line of thousand cubes (the ten thousands), then a square of thousand cubes (the hundred thousands). This **pattern** continues as we advance up the hierarchy of the decimal system. Learning and understanding how this pattern works requires a meaningful experience.

But where do we begin? We begin with the construction of numbers (ex. 483) using the materials. So, the children can actually construct the number. They can also **feel** the geometry of the system as they handle the materials.



When ready, we begin to add these 4 place value numbers, actually doing the action of combining (addition, multiplication) and separation (division, subtraction). Very soon with these functions, the children will have to learn the exchange process --- ex. 10 ones make 1 ten. We knew this process as "borrowing" and "carrying", but in the Montessori classroom, the children actually do the exchanging. We look forward to this work progressing through the coming months.

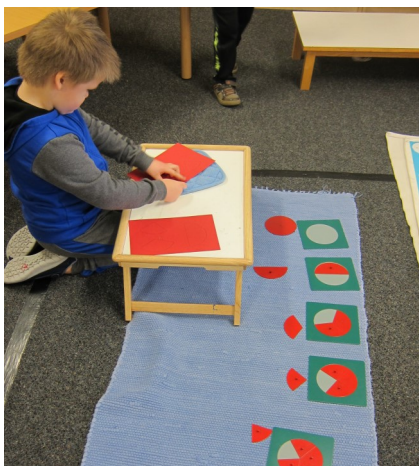
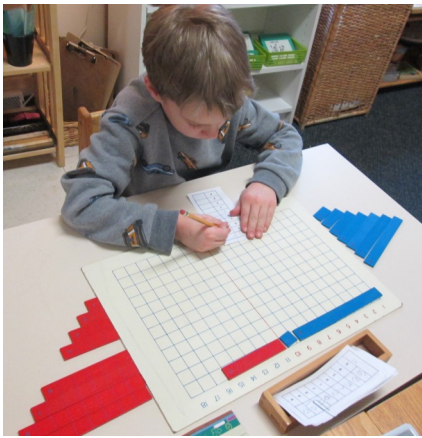
### Geometry:

We are working on vocabulary for the geometric solids. In the coming semester, we want to actually construct some of the geometric solids. An advantage of the Montessori classroom is that we have the actual shapes (not a 2D photo of a 3D object) that the children can handle and feel. All vocabulary that comes home needs "reinforcement" and practice to learn.



# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Kindergarten Extended Day Class





## NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

Ms. Linda

This month in art it was all about the snow!

The kindergarten students painted a watercolor background and then "built" a snowman and its accessories from construction paper.



They drew their own snowballs, hats, and scarves and glued them to the background. They finished the scene by making it snow using the end of a paintbrush dipped in white paint.



The elementary students created a lovely winter night scene. They worked with the concepts of tints and silhouettes. They used white paint to which they slowly added blue to create the effect of a moonlit sky. On top of their moonlit background, they used black paint to create silhouettes of trees.



For their final project of 2017, they painted a snowman and his bird friend using acrylic paints.

They also created beautiful snowflakes by tracing snowflake shapes on black paper with gold and silver markers and adding patterns to the snowflakes. They loved the gold and silver markers!



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

Amazingly it is already the end of December and I'm not quite sure how that happened. We continue to watch your children do incredible things in the South room. This month has been busy with a lot of holiday and winter themed activities, especially in the practical life and art areas of the classroom. Thanks to Ms. Urana's crafty side, we



have lots of options: Holiday card-making, holiday poking and cutting of gingerbread, stockings, Christmas trees, making a snowman scene with their fingerprints and an ink pad, making a candy cane with red and white beads, etc. We hope you enjoy the elf ornaments that the children made and hang them somewhere fun in your homes.

We also were fortunate enough to have Sam Fistler's family visit and teach us about their Swedish holiday traditions that they celebrate. They baked and shared *lussekatter* (a saffron sweet bun with raisins) which Sam often bakes with his grandma or *mormor*. They also shared a special mulled spice juice drink called *glogg* that the children loved. We also learned other Swedish vocabulary words such as *tack* (thank you), *tack sa mycket* (thank you very much), *varsagod* (you're welcome), and *good Jul* (Merry Christmas). The children were shown Sweden on the globe and were given some information on the location of Sweden on the Earth. They were also taught about the longer days of sunlight and darkness because of Sweden's location within the Arctic Circle.



The children were very interested in learning the new words, and really enjoyed the sweet treats and drink. Thank you so much to Sam and his family for sharing their family holiday traditions with us.

Please remember that we love having family members visit our classroom. If there is ever something special that you would like to come in and share with the children, we welcome your visits. Just let us know and we will schedule

you in!

We ask that if your children are not going to be attending school over the winter break that you try to keep them on a similar schedule, as far as sleeping and eating. It helps them so much when it is time to return to school after the two week break. Also, we will be sending their sound books home and would love for you to work on their sounds over the two weeks. Thank you in advance!

The children continue to grow in their independence, concentration, and overall abilities within the classroom, both socially and academically. They are moving through the materials and continuing to gain understanding and mastery in all the areas of the classroom. Word-building and phrase building have been very popular, and we are always encouraging the children to write and sound things out.



Thank you all for attending the Winter Celebration. The children worked very hard practicing the songs and movements daily, for over a month, and were so excited to perform for their families. They all did such a wonderful job!

We wish you and your families a wonderful holiday and look forward to seeing you next year!





# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room

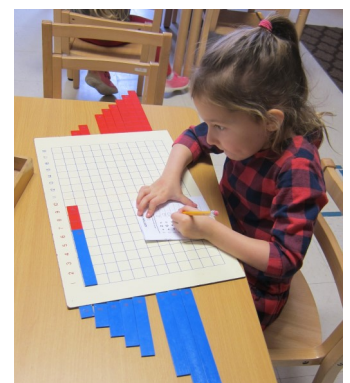
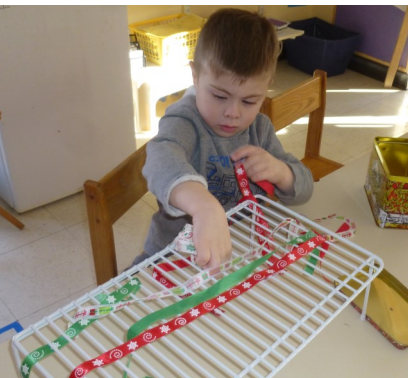






# PHOTO GALLERY FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Andrea







# NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

## Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all of our East room families! We hope you are enjoying a warm and relaxing winter break with your family. We would like to share a very heartfelt thank you for all of your support and kind contributions that help us sustain a positive and friendly environment for our children.

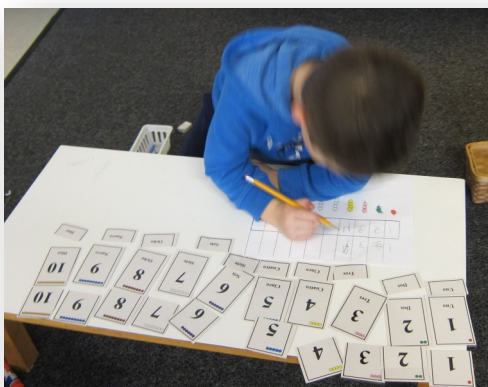


Our class very much enjoyed practicing our Holiday songs to share with you at the Winter Celebration - thank you so much for making such a big turnout in support of their efforts!

Wish you and your family the best this holiday season and in 2018. Happy New Year!

It's hard to believe that the school year is nearly half over! December is always a month that just flies by. Your children are busy working indoors and having lots of fun outdoors. While their indoor work is important, the Practical Life skills associated with getting ready to play outdoors are equally important as well. Their time and concentration in organizing, prioritizing and getting themselves ready to go outside is immense. Please continue to encourage and support their independence at home.

To balance the natural excitement of the holidays all around us, we try to maintain a predictable routine and calmness to our days inside the classroom; but of course, we are always adding new and fun activities to our morning worktime!



We continue our daily "work" with individual letter sound acquisition (thank you Ms. Jackie for your time and commitment to making this a wonderful priority for our students!)

Many children are working with language materials designed to blend sounds together for pre-reading readiness. Our goal is to keep each child motivated and interested at their own, successful and appropriate level.





# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room





## NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS

### Ms. Donna

December seems to have been very busy for all of us. The days seemed to have flown by so quickly. The days became darker so much earlier. On December 21st Winter arrived. The Winter Solstice as it is known has the shortest day and the longest night. The children were always talking about how dark it looked outside.

We learned that Hanukkah began on December 12th this year and lasts for 8 days.

#### ART:

- ◆ Holiday wreath made by tearing paper and adding a bow.
- ◆ Dot pictures using bingo dot markers.
- ◆ Gingerbread men (cut, hole punch, yarn, and stuff with cotton balls)
- ◆ Three triangles made into a holiday tree ( large, medium and small) added a tree trunk and decorations.
- ◆ Painted candy canes.
- ◆ Yarn Tree (wrap yarn around a large triangle after making slits on the outside of the triangle adding a tree trunk)
- ◆ Reindeer heads and some with bodies using our hands as antlers.
- ◆ Large tree and snowflake (trace, color, and cut).
- ◆ Santa head by tracing our hand and putting it upside down. The thumb became part of Santa's hat, the palm his face and the fingers his beard.



#### GAMES:

- ◆ Musical chairs
- ◆ Dreidel game using noodles for money
- ◆ A card game called "I have..." (they would answer I have the ? and then they would say "Who has the?")
- ◆ Musical Package: A box was wrapped with many layers of tissue paper in different colors. When the music stopped the person holding the box got to unwrap one layer of paper, then the musical would start, and the box would continue to be passed and the music would stop. This would continue until all the paper was off and the last child would get to open the box and pass out what was inside.

#### SCIENCE:

- ◆ Dancing Corn and Dancing Raisins - clear container, fill it half way with water and a couple tablespoons of baking soda, stir. Then fill with vinegar to the top. Add the raisins and popcorn Kernels and see what happens.
- ◆ Using straws, we tried to move cotton balls and pompoms to another container. We had to use a lot of air to keep the cotton balls and pompoms on our straw. We were happy to not have to breathe in when we released them.



#### STORIES:

"The Gingerbread Man" retold by Jim Aylesworth. We took different parts from the story and acted out the story.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you.





# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## More Wonderful Moments at Pathways

