

# Montessori Pathways' News



## Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

*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*

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 cold days to us, but no luck for the kids in getting snow. However, they still had a chance to spend some time outside and enjoy the cold, but 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!**



## Thank you!

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!

It was so nice to notice that many of the gifts not only brought us enjoyment and showed the warmth of your hearts, but also supported our local businesses, small farms around the world, our nature, and kids in need.

Isn't it a wonderful Christmas Spirit?



## 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, 2020)

- ◆ Monday – **Taekwondo** —3:00 – 4:00pm
- ◆ Wednesday – **SNAPology**—3:00 – 4:00pm
- ◆ Thursday – **Dance**— 3:00—4:00pm

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 Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>.**

All detailed information was sent to you by email and as the hard copies earlier.

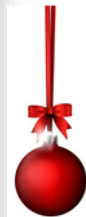


# December Nights, December Lights,



Hopefully everyone enjoyed the “December Nights, December Lights” performance presented by the Montessori Pathways’ students as a great conclusion of the first school year semester.

While practicing songs and poems about different winter holidays, our students learned that it doesn’t matter what you celebrate – Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa. All of these holidays bring the spirit of love, peace, sharing, joy, and happiness of spending time together!







## COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS




### in January

- ◆ **January 6 (M) – School Resumes**
- ◆ **January 16 (Th) at 12:30pm - Kindergarten and Elementary Students Trip to Legoland for the “Pulleys” workshop**
- ◆ **January 20 (M) - No School (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)**
- ◆ **January 22 (W) – 6:00pm - Montessori Fun / Educational Night for Pre-K and K Students and Parents:**
  - \* **“Thinking about the Future. The benefits of Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary education” – workshop for Pre-K and K parents**
  - \* **Games / 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. Bridget and Ms. Kathy on Wednesday, January 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 and organization skills, independence, initiative, creativity, ability to work as a team, 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, making connections, and developing all necessary life skills .*

*Therefore, 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 few 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 22.*

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





## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Bridget



*"December nights, December lights.  
Celebrations all across the land.  
December nights, December lights.  
Celebrate with others hand in hand.  
Learn the customs of your fellow man,  
Understanding what they do,  
Celebrating all the differences,  
Bring us closer, me and you."* ----from the finale song of the celebration



These lyrics could have been written by Maria Montessori when she contemplated her vision of education for all children. She believed in world citizenship. Caring for all living things. This is what we teachers try to instill in our students every day. The world is a big place where they can make a difference. Thanks to Ms. Cynara for finding a musical with so many of the values of being a good world citizen.

December was more peaceful than expected. Students were focused and readily chose work. We saw growth in reading, writing and self-discipline. All students became more aware of their role in the class as stewards of our environment and care givers to each other.

We also had many visitors. Diego and Ernesto Ramirez taught us about Mexico. Mrs. Seidel demonstrated how to weave small pots for our final craft for North America. Mrs. Low wowed us with film of various machines she uses in her job- Xray, CAT scan and MRIs. Maria Martin, Patrick's sister, shared her learning at UIC as she is studying to be a nurse. She even taught them some names of bones in their body. We really appreciate the time and effort of all of our guests!



Our celebration for the holiday this year was one that will become a part of our yearly tradition. The kids enjoyed it as did I. I knew it was a hit when one child asked, "Why didn't we do

this last year?" and another said, "Are we doing this next year too?" Here is what we did:

**Food.** The kids were divided into groups: sweet, savory, veggie foods to bring. They had to choose what item they would bring to share with their friends at the party. I always enjoy listening to the discussions that occur during the time together- compromise, reasoning and kindness. For the first time in over 20 years of teaching, it was decided that sardines would be a part of the menu. Excellent!



**Secret Santa.** Students wrote their names on a piece of paper and then put them folded up in a basket. Each child then drew a name and showed it to me so I could record it. The students were then tasked with buying a gift (under 15 dollars) to give to their "Secret Santa". They were overjoyed by this challenge. We discussed the art of gift giving and receiving with strategies. I was very impressed with the gratitude kids showed to each other upon opening gifts. I loved the expressions and excitement of the students regardless of how was opening the gifts.

**Our Christmas tree.** Thanks to Ms. Alena for deciding that our room should have a Christmas tree. The kids assembled it, put the lights on it and decorated it all by themselves with only a little direction from me. It took several tries to get the branches right and the lights strung correctly but it was all their work. Finally, a tradition we will keep is the sharing of a favorite ornament. Each student was able to bring in their favorite ornament to put on the tree. (Even Ms Alena participated!!) The ornaments will come back home after break when we take down and box up our tree. Thanks Kelsey, for our amazing star on the top!!

**Coupons.** Each child received a gift from me. It is a coupon book. For all of the first level parents, this is a coupon book that students can use throughout the last half of the school year. They may redeem them at any time. Some of the coupons are: no homework week, vacation from job or free donut on Friday. This, too, is a highly anticipated gift that the kids enjoy.

So, as we head into the new year, and decade, my hope is that the spirit of love and understanding for all that I have seen often on the classroom will carry over from 2019 into 2020. Best wishes for an exciting and fun-filled year of growth and learning.



# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class





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



Ms. Jennifer

We've been quite busy in November and December. I introduced your kids to jelly press printing, which is a process of applying paint to a rubbery, jello-like printing plate, then using stencils or stamps to create shapes, and finally lifting a print. We focused on a leaf motif for Fall, and we used our prints to create a Mixed-media card for Thanksgiving. The students loved the process of pulling prints almost as much as they loved squishing the jelly plate between their fingers. It was a very FUN & tactile experience...one that we will have to revisit in the future!



The Kindergarten students loved creating Close-Up Monster Paintings...and, especially enjoyed adding tons of teeth to their toothy grins! These came out SO cute!



Next, I introduced the kids to Dot-Painting on a wooden ornament...another activity that they want to revisit! They were very mindful of the detailed work & step-by-step process that was required to achieve the desired result. And, I think they enjoyed painting with the wrong end of the paintbrush for a change...LOL. They did a great job with these! I know they'll be proud to hang them on your tree this Holiday.



teaching future classes of young artists! Thank you!

Mom that I drew a dragon!" ...and, "I'm going to be drawing dragons all week long!" I am so grateful for Abby to have the opportunity to teach your children, whose kindness & appreciation will, no doubt, boost her confidence for

In December, students made Thumbprint Christmas Lights. We used tempera paint & a silver Sharpie marker on black construction paper to create a colorful string of lights. Then we added colored chalk applied with a Q-tip to give them that "glow!" Students finished off their festive, holiday artwork by signing their names next to the year 2019, adhered in multi-colored number die-cuts. Everyone was so happy with the way they turned out!



May their artwork bring cheer to your home this holiday & the coming new year! Abby & I will see all of our artistic friends again in 2020!





## NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN AND PRE-K EXTENDED DAY



**Ms. Kathy, Ms. OnDreia**

This past 3 weeks have flown by, while getting ready for our Holiday Season. The children have been practicing the songs of various cultures for the holiday presentation. To further the children understanding of different traditions we explored the cultures more in depth. We began with Kwanzaa, then Hanukah and Los Posadas.

For Hanukah, we read "Hanukah Hop" by Erica Silverman and discussed how it's different from the Christmas traditions. We talked about and lit a menorah discussing the miracle of the eight night. The children shredded potatoes and enjoyed scrumptious and crunchy latkes together.



A lot of fun was had learning and playing the dreidel game. Ask them about this game and see if they remember what each symbol on the dreidel means.

For our Christmas Celebration, the elementary children came in and read Christmas stories, and a few pre-k and kindergarten students read as well.



We decorated our Christmas Tree and the children strung popcorn as garland adding handmade ornaments for it. We have all had a fun and exciting month of celebration. Have a Healthy and Safe Holiday season!



For Kwanzaa, we read the book "Seven Spools of Thread" by Angela Shelf Medearis, and shared a snack of sweet cinnamon oranges, which is a Kwanzaa treat.

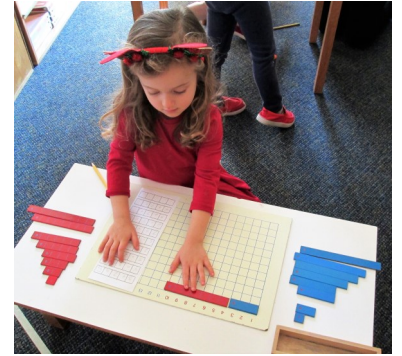
For Las Posada, we discussed the custom of going from house to house in search of lodging. House after house shelter is denied until they are finally welcome with food and refreshments. Searching for lodging where shelter is denied until they were welcomed. We also made fresh Guacamole and Salsa and lit a luminary.





# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group





## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



Happy Holidays to all of the South Room Families.

December was a short and very busy month. The Art area got the most traffic. It is here the children integrated both Art and Practical life. The salt dough was measured, mixed, kneaded and rolled out by the children to create the salt ornaments. They also, cut out, baked, painted and wrapped each little gift by hand. Some even made wrapping paper by hand stamping and coloring the wrap. I hope you enjoyed your gifts.



from the activity.

Other holiday related activities were set out in Practical Life, matching ornaments to the outline, spooning holiday gems, tweezing and stamping.

Math held more of the same snowflake counting and number writing.

Baking was introduced to Practical Life this month. Baking is a multi-step, lengthy, activity. Baking is a real, not make believe. It satisfies all domains of developmental needs, cognitive, social, emotional and physical. The purpose of baking encourages natural development through purposeful motives of activity. Developing concentration, fine and gross motor control and fosters independence within the child. This very important activity provides the child the opportunity to fulfill the need for movement and independence, engaging mind and body, strengthening natural physiological development for mind and body integration.



The entire activity takes nearly an hour to complete. The child begins by washing hands at the hand washing stand, cleans that and sets out to knead, roll out the dough, transfer it to the tray, decorate it and bake it. The dough is then baked and clean up begins, washing, drying and returning all parts to the shelf. The label for the bag is made and the cooled dough is transferred to the bag to be sent home. Our baking mix is Bisquick and water. When you see these "cookies" come home, be proud of how much growth your child has gained

Language and Science held parts of the reindeer and gingerbread man. We read the story of the "Baby Gingerbread man" by Jan Brett and some children made their own books to go along.

Unfortunately, in Geography we discovered we cannot make a proper scale model of the Solar System as the Sun and Jupiter are too large to scale the smaller planets to. We will figure something out if the interest is still there after our winter break.

The children worked hard learning the songs and movements for the Holiday Show. I hope you continue to enjoy them throughout the season. It was a lot of hard work and they did well onstage. It was very exciting to learn about other holiday traditions and celebrations. Thank You to Ms. Cynara for all of her hard work.

Happy Birthday to Grayson who turned 3, Charlie L. who turned 4 and Angie who turned 5. A Huge thank you to the Bastian family for the much-needed gift of towels for our art area. Thank you to the Heatwole family for the book donations and Thank you to the Zhang family for the lovely birthday snacks. All were greatly appreciated and helped shape our festive month.





# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. OnDreia, Ms. Carole



December was a wonderful month. Our children loved learning about holidays around the world. Please spend some time with your child and talk with them about some of your own family's holiday traditions. Each week we spent time learning how other cultures celebrate the holidays. We learned about Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Los Posada, to go along with our Holiday Celebration.

For Hanukkah we read "Hanukkah Hop" by Erica Silverman and discussed a few Yiddish terms and meaning. Such as dreidel, which is a spinning top used in a Hanukkah game. Each side is engraved with a Hebrew letter, *Nun, Gimel, Hei and Shin*. The children loved this game a caught on very quickly. Here are the Yiddish words for the game, see how many they remember, *Nun* stands for nothing, *Hei* stands for half, *Gimel* stands for all and *Shin* means you have to put in. Each child was given a piece of chocolate gelt at the end of the day.

We lit and talked about the Menorah and discussed the miracle of the little bit of oil that kept burning for eight nights. The children really loved seeing the Menorah all lit up. They had a chance to make a Jews flag.



We also discussed Las Posada, how people have been celebrating Las Posadas since it was introduced to Mexico in 1587 and how friends and family gather to recreate the journey in search for lodging and at first was refused and then were welcomed.



We made fresh Guacamole, salsa and chips, they made the Mexican Flag and a poinsettia art project to celebrate Las Posada with the children.

Another activity this month was putting up a Christmas Tree and decorating it.



We also had parts of tree, made with felt. The children could build a tree piece by piece. First the roots, then the tree trunk and then the branches and the leaves. We also had Parts of a Christmas Tree book that they could make. It started with the trunk, then branches, needles, lights, ornaments, and garland. They also made a Christmas Tree by rolling a car in paint and then rolling it on the tree to look like garland. Another Tree activity was building a tree from trunk up and then adding beautiful sequence to it, this was a big hit.



Parts of a Reindeer and Parts of a Gingerbread Man were also added to our shelves this month. We hope you have enjoyed seeing some of these projects coming home.



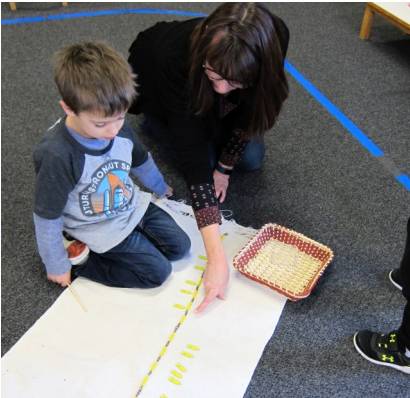
In our language area we had Christmas objects were younger children worked on beginning sounds and the older children built the words out. We had a Stereognostic bag filled with holiday object where the children have the ability to perceive and recognize the form of an object in the absence of visual and auditory information, by using tactile information to provide cues from texture, size, spatial properties, and temperature, etc. naming holiday objects.

Ms. Carol and I both wish all of you a healthy and safe Holiday!



# DECEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room





## NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON



**Ms. Donna**

### ART:

- \* Santa Puzzle --- color, cut apart and glue the four pieces in the correct position on another piece of paper.
- \* Paper plate wreath --- paint plate green, when dry add green tissue paper, punch out red berries using a paper punch and add them to the wreath, trace hand on a folded piece of paper to cut out two hands at once to make the bow for the wreath, punch a hole in the top of the plate and add a string to hang.
- \* Dancing reindeer--- color, cut out pieces and put together with brads.
- \* Santa face using a paper plate.
- \* Reindeer head--- used a ruler to trace a triangle on a brown rectangle shaped paper, cut out the triangle, folded two corners over to make ears, traced hand on a folded piece of paper to make antlers, added a red pompom for the nose and two wiggly eyes.



- \* Candy Cane---- glued red tissue paper on each side of a paper cut out of a candy cane.
- \* Colored and cut out holiday paper shapes, then glued them into a tree shape on another paper and added a star and a trunk to the tree.
- \* Painted our gingerbread cut outs and added a string so they could hang on a tree.
- \* Advent calendar --made by using a tree and paper chains. We would take off a chain off each day as we got closer to Christmas.
- \* Painted a picture using a holiday bow.
- \* Mitten picture frame--- punch out pieces and put together.

POEMS: "Ten Little Presents", "Five Little Gingerbread"

BOOKS: " The Gingerbread Man", " Rudolph The Red-nosed Reindeer" by Barbara Shook Hazen



### SCIENCE:

#1 We covered the bottom of a bowl with baking soda, then added real candy canes on top of the baking soda. We mixed different food colors into four different cups of vinegar. The next step was taking a teaspoon to the colored vinegar and dripping it slowly on the candy canes. The baking soda and vinegar bubbled when the vinegar landed on the baking soda. We then poured all of the leftover vinegar on top of the candy canes. When we looked at our experiment the next day, we were surprised that all the candy canes had dissolved



#2 After talking about the story "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" by Dr. Seuss, we drew a heart on a balloon, put some baking soda into the balloon, added vinegar to an empty water bottle and then put the open balloon end over the bottle and let the baking soda spill into the vinegar which made lots of bubbles that began to make the balloon fill up showing how the Grinch's heart began to fill up with joy..

GAMES: "Hide the Santa". One student would hide the Santa object. Then the person who hid Santa would give clues to the one looking for it by saying warm, cold, warmer, colder, freezing to get them to know if they were near Santa. Like the old game of Hot and Cold.

Enjoy winter break.

Happy Holidays to all.





# MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT PATHWAYS IN DECEMBER

