

Montessori Pathways' News



February 2018

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

The Montessori classroom is a place where teamwork and respect are continually fostered. During this time of the year, we are fortunately observing more and more team work in all classrooms.



Many of the students understand that they have to be very helpful and respectful to their friends, able to listen and hear them, and be open to suggestions while working together as a team. They learned this through real life classroom experiences.



"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."

~ Henry Ford

The Leadership Opportunity in Montessori Environment

As the years go on, students become more confident in the classroom and with the materials. They are often entrusted to take on the responsibility of helping new friends in the classroom and even showing them how things in the classroom work.

Slowly they become a leader in the classroom modeling behaviors of what they want to see, and also helping their peers gain confidence in the classroom. The responsibility is not passed but earned and entrusted in the classroom. As the children grow, they are given opportunities to become classroom helpers, teaching them that work beyond for the good of self is a reward. When a new child begins in a room filled with leaders, they can easily integrate into the community, someone is always helping them along the way.

Leaders have the ability to teach and show anyone how to gain responsibility and respect in the classroom, helping make leaders of us all. © Baan Dek Montessori



Registration for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year has begun!

Thank you to all of the families who have returned the re-enrollment application for the next School Year.

If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please

A) Complete the Re-Enrollment Form for the 2018-2019 School Year

B) Attach the New School Year Re-Enrollment Fee:

- \$50 of Early Re-Enrollment Fee (before April 16) or
- \$100 of Late Re-Enrollment Fee (after April 15)

C) Include the 10% of annual tuition security deposit

D) Return the paperwork along with payment no later than April 15, 2018.

By submitting your 10% of the annual tuition deposit on time, you secure your child's spot at our school for the next school year, can lock in your child's current classroom, and any other special schedules and arrangements made with the school.

All families enrolling and submitting 10% of the tuition **after April 15th** will be considered "newly enrolled" families, and will be subject to a new enrollment fee of \$100.00 for 2018-2019 School Year.

Spots for all age groups, including Pre-K, K, and Elementary, are already limited and cannot be guaranteed - "newly enrolled" families will be enrolled on a first come, first serve basis.

Classroom and any other preferences will also be up to administrative discretion based on availability.

It is important that we know who is re-enrolled in the School Year as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate plans for hiring staff.

Students who are enrolled just prior to the start of School Year cannot be guaranteed a spot in the class.

Please do not wait until the last minute and help us and your family be successfully prepared for 2018-2019 School Year on time.

Click here to see:

[Montessori in Action](#)

[The Kindergarten Year – A Question for parents](#)

[Montessori : The Elementary Years](#)

Standardized education leads to a standardized generation.

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* Why aren't adults as creative as children?

For most, creativity has been buried by rules and regulations. Our educational system was designed during the Industrial Revolution over 200 years ago, to train us to be good workers and follow instructions.

* Can creativity be taught?

Yes, creativity skills can be learned. Not from sitting in a lecture, but by learning and applying creative thinking processes.

Creativity begins with a foundation of knowledge, learning a discipline, and mastering a way of thinking. We learn to be creative by experimenting, exploring, questioning assumptions, using imagination and synthesizing information.

* George Land's Creativity Test

In 1968, George Land conducted a research study to test the creativity of 1,600 children ranging in ages from three-to-five years old who were enrolled in a Head Start program. This was the same creativity test he devised for NASA to help select innovative engineers and scientists. The assessment worked so well he decided to try it on children. He re-tested the same children at 10 years of age, and again at 15 years of age. The results were astounding.

[To learn about the results and read more click here.](#)



COMING SCHOOL EVENTS

⇒ February 26 – March 7 – Moving-On Weeks:

- ◆ *Kindergarten Extended Day Class Visit Days for Pre-K Students*
- ◆ *Elementary Class Visit Days for Kindergarten students*

⇒ February 26 – March 2 – Dr. Seuss Week

⇒ March 1 – Summer Camp Enrollment Begins

⇒ March 1 (Th) at 6:00pm - Kindergarten Demo Class

During one hour, the Kindergarten students will demonstrate a short version of the Kindergarten Extended Day Class for Pre-K parents.

⇒ March 1 (Th) at 6:00pm – Elementary Demo Class

During one hour, the Elementary students will demonstrate a short version of the Daily Work Cycle for current Elementary and Kindergarten parents.

⇒ March 2 (F) at 12:15pm – Elementary Class Field Trip—“Freedom Riders” Show at Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake

⇒ March 8 (Th) - 11:15am—3:15pm—Kindergarten and Elementary Class Field Trip to Discovery Center in Rockford for “Discover the Night Sky” Planetarium Show and “Color and Lights” Workshop.

⇒ March 9 (F) - Science Day in Elementary Class:

- ◆ Morning – Presentation for Primary Students
- ◆ 2:00-3:00pm – Presentation for Parents

⇒ March 14 (Wednesday), 9:00am – 11:00am – Picture Day

Please dress your child(ren) appropriately. If your child does not attend school that day, you can bring him/her between 9:00am -10:30am to take a picture. In this case your child will have a chance to be included in the class picture.

⇒ The **Parent / Teacher Conferences** for Primary Classes will be held by appointments on

- ◆ **March 15 (Th) – for South Room Kindergarten parents**
- ◆ **March 16 (F) – for South Room Preschool and Pre-K parents**
No school for Morning and School Day South Room students
- ◆ **March 19 (M) – for East Room Preschool and Pre-K parents**
No school for Morning and School Day East Room students
- ◆ **March 20 (Tu) – for East Room Kindergarten parents**

⇒ March 26 – March 30 - Spring Break

The school will be operating for All Day (6:45am—6:00pm) students during Spring Break.



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber

This month students will focus on the next character trait, **caring**, which is a perfect trait to study following Valentine's Day. It is truly satisfying to watch the students in action, especially in their interactions with each other. There are daily occurrences of students helping peers by answering questions or helping with a work activity; students pitching in to help clean up or volunteering to do someone else's job (often because they want to get out to recess quicker); students helping students in other classrooms; or students getting fellow students unstuck from winter coats or snow pants. Elementary students will welcome and mentor our kindergarten students into our classroom as each of them gets to "Level Up" and experience an elementary day.

In the work they do, elementary students find satisfaction, whether it is using a favorite teal pencil for a geometry work; feeling a sense of accomplishment for completing stamp game subtraction (and expressing the desire to do it all day!); learning new facts about Abraham Lincoln and Chinese New Year; being successful with all the words in a Bob book; earning the red bead for knowing all the addition math facts; or finishing a map study before the deadline. These are all "I did it myself!" moments. That is learning in action.

One change recently implemented in the elementary classroom was instituting a brief break every hour, a practice in many European schools. Students have a scheduled time twice each morning and once in the afternoon for purposeful movement or stretching away from the work spot, a morning snack, reading a few pages, or a quick chat with friends. Several positive results have been noticed: less general fatigue, fewer hunger complaints, quieter voices during work time, and the increased ability to go right back to work once the break ends! Time management skills can be started with elementary students, along with understanding choices and consequences. For example, some students choose to forego the break because they are in the middle of a work or close to finishing it. However, choosing to take a social break during worktime may mean having to work during a scheduled break later. It is the student's choice and understanding that is a forward stride in thinking and acceptance of responsibility. As adults, we know the value of hard work and the value of taking a short break now and then from work!

What is a scientist? We give the name scientist to the type of man who has felt experiment to be a means guiding him to search out the deep truth of life, to lift a veil from its fascinating secrets, and who, in this pursuit, has felt arising within him a love for the mysteries of nature, so passionate as to annihilate the thought of himself.

~ Maria Montessori

Calling all junior scientists! Science activities are taking place on our learning stage. Students will be learning about science safety and conducting basic experiments with plants, apples, pH, magnets, etc. We will visit the Discovery Center in Rockford on March 8th. Our first *Science Day* will take place on Friday, March 9th, and even art class will have a science focus! We would like to challenge the students to do a simple science project at home and bring it to school (as they did with their UN projects.)

Demo Class on March 1st is a great opportunity to come into the classroom and observe students working. At this point in the year, elementary students should be accelerating their work effort to be working to the best of their abilities. The classroom routine is normalized, the environment is beautifully and carefully prepared, weekly presentations (lessons) are scheduled to be delivered, and expectations are clearly and routinely announced.

The challenge for the student is to rise to the expectations! This can be a challenge when the interest is on socializing or being distracted by the business of someone else. As a team, parents and teacher, we want the best for your student. Since a weekly work plan is used to outline the plan of action for each student in response to concepts presented, **the expectation is the work plan is completed by the end of every week.** Much time and effort has been spent in carefully outlining a realistic and feasible work plan for every student, but it is the student's responsibility to complete the work plan by neatly doing the work and turning in the work to be checked. If a student is not keeping up with assignments, she/he is not moving forward toward mastery and not ready for the next presentations. When the green folder comes home, please review your child's work and work plan. Discuss the effort it took to complete the work and the reasons why work was not completed. Encourage your student to be responsible and use work time wisely, not make excuses. Every elementary student can finish their work plan every week. It's time to put that plan into action!



Elementary students will be busy, but we close out the month with Spring Break, a well-deserved rest. Spring is just around the corner. Enjoy these days with lengthening daylight hours!

FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Karen

Saturday I attended the AIMS (Association of Illinois Montessori Schools) held in Lisle Illinois.

The conference began with a keynote speaker, Tammy Pawlowski. Her experience is a study of the importance of environment, particularly in the early years of the child's life. Although she specializes on the population of children who live in poverty or are born with diagnosis of special needs, every person in the audience was taken with her research results as they apply to ALL children, NOT just to children born into poverty or just to "special needs" children. So what were the key points of her presentation: **Resources change the brain!** So.....

- ◆ Read, read, read to your child
- ◆ Talk, talk, talk to your child.
- ◆ Appropriately high expectations for all
- ◆ Eye contact
- ◆ Smiles
- ◆ Physical contact
- ◆ Playful dialogue
- ◆ Emotional comfort



All children need to read music and play an instrument. A child's neural network is being built during the early years. As they get older, they need experiences such as going to camp which she describes as a 24/7 rewiring of the brain. The impact of the environment will have a lasting effect in a child's development. And we are keys in that process.

Valentine's Day: An opportunity for giving. The children created Valentines for their parents (or entire family) with joy, with care, with love. They were engrossed, some for the entire afternoon, with precision, attention to detail, and love. They so enjoy doing something for someone else. They are often on the receiving end, so they love an opportunity to create something to give to another!



Highlight: We have been working more in the geometry area. Some of the art activities included geometry: gluing quadrilaterals to a background. Cutting and folding to create spirals, repeated folding to create a zig-zag pattern. This are related to turning 2 dimensional into 3 dimensional. The favorite: construction of a cube (and other shapes they decided upon) using gumdrops ----no they did not eat them ----and toothpicks. In doing these kinds of activities, the children can actually see/experience the change in dimensionality from 2 to 3. One of the aims is to have the child develop and understand the vocabulary. (Includes "common" but mathematical terms like top, bottom, side, corners, angle, edge, overlap, diagonal).



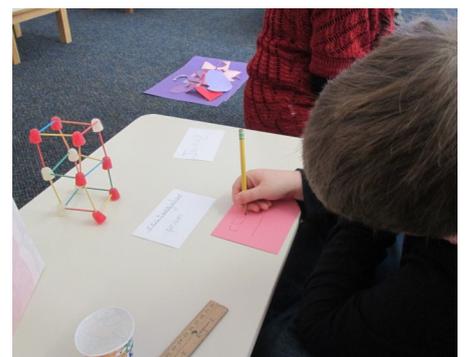
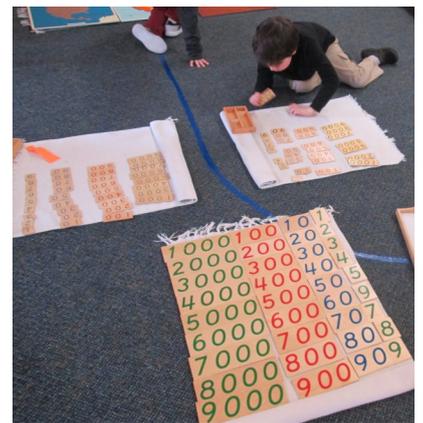
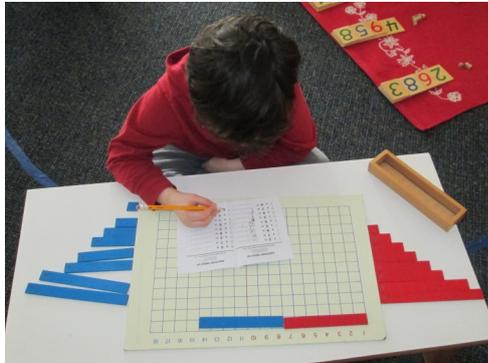
Skill: as they do more complex work, they need the skill of precision to be successful. So working carefully and taking one's time are points of emphasis.



Of course we have continued enjoy the outdoors especially with the snow, It is wonderful to watch the children cooperate together to build ramps, snowmen, trails, and more.

FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana

February is almost over and I feel like a broken record saying it again, but wow has the month just flown by. When I reflect on how fast the month has gone, it makes me slow down and cherish every minute that I get to spend with your children. We have had a great February and the children are constantly doing amazing activities.

I would like to thank all of our parents who were able to donate their time, energy, and money to make our Valentine's Day so special. We had some great activities and the party went very smoothly. We couldn't have done it without all your help so thank you very much!



Our crafty Ms. Urana put together some very interesting Valentine's themed art activities: painting a heart using pompoms, tracing a heart on black paper and using chalk and q-tips to smudge the chalk line, and cutting on folded paper to create a heart.

It's always interesting to observe the trends in the classroom; how certain works that have seemed almost avoided last month are somehow super popular this month. This is the case with our maps. Suddenly, a third of the class is working on maps and can't seem to get enough of them. We always begin the map series with the land and water globe, then move onto the continents globe. The continents on the second globe are the same colors as the continents on the world map. We talk about what a globe is (a model of our planet Earth) and then what a map is (a flat representation of our planet Earth). Then after a child has completed the world map, they move on to the map of North America and then continue through the continents, learning how each continent is divided into countries. Finally, they are able to complete a United States map, which as you can imagine, takes quite a long time. The maps consist of wooden puzzle pieces that the children trace on matching

construction paper and then either poke out or cut out and then eventually recreate the map by gluing the countries together. Finally, if they are able, the children will write the labels for all of the countries.



We also introduced a new way to interact with non-fiction books: research. One of the kindergarteners was very interested in ancient Egypt and the pyramids so we borrowed a nicely illustrated book from the elementary room about this topic. This inspired two other children to research about the solar system and Vikings. The children choose a page that they find interesting, I read the page to them, and they dictate back what they remember from what I read. I write their dictation and then they copy it on lined handwriting paper and draw an illustration to go with their text. This is a great way for them to get basic facts on a topic. They are able to hear the information read to them and then respond back with their own words and illustrations, thus internalizing and retaining the information in a more meaningful way.

The Montessori bead chains have also been a very popular activity this month. At its simplest, this activity is good for practicing the order of the numbers. That after 29 comes 30, and after 39 comes 40, etc. On the next level, it illustrates skip counting; counting by twos or threes or fives. On another level, an older child will see the multiplication tables. And finally, this material illustrates the squares and cubes of these numbers and their relationships with each other. This is a beautiful work and it's



wonderful when the children are at that point in which they truly ready to use it for the mathematical purpose it is intended for.

We are looking forward to warmer weather and all the fun things that March will bring.

FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

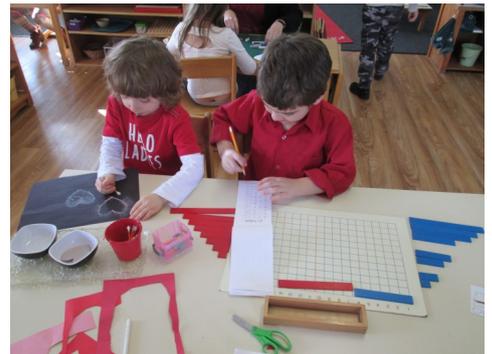
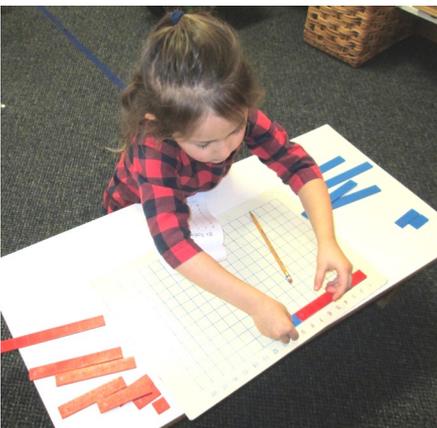
South Room



PHOTO GALLERY FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Andrea

The pre-k children continue to push themselves in the afternoon. Because they are able to observe the work that the kindergarteners are doing, they see new possibilities of work they can do or extensions that they did not know they could try. Recently there has been a new interest in addition, and at least half of the pre-k are working on addition on any given afternoon.





NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

February is always a fun month in the classroom because nearly every week has a special day to celebrate. We began with Groundhog's Day on the 2nd and learned about hibernation, migration and acclimation of various animals in winter. We also introduced a new work which shows different animals footprints to track in the snow over winter - one snowy morning, we observed a rabbits tracks right outside our classroom door!

The everyday energy of our classroom brought both meaningful and challenging work. Our older students are feeling confident and comfortable with our routine and open to helping/teaching our younger students to navigate, as well. One of the most beautiful features of the multi-age classroom is that every child, no matter where they are developmentally will explore work that is right for their skill set. Once they master that work, they then become a "teacher" to another friend who would like to try it, too.



Next up was our Valentine's Day celebration. It was an exciting and busy morning; thanks to our parent volunteers- to Kai's mom Mary for the healthy and delicious apple snacks that the children prepared and ate. Also to Jack's dad Tony for playing the guitar for some very fun and amusing games of Musical Chairs. In addition, beautiful Valentine's bags were created and decorated with the help of Lexi's mom, Melody who also supplied all the wonderful stickers. Also a huge thanks to Tommy's mom, Cori, who brought us a sweet tissue heart craft that the children designed themselves and took home later that day! It is so wonderful to have so many involved and interested parents as part of our Montessori community - thanks to you all.

We are looking forward to the arrival of Spring and meeting with you all during conferences on March 19th. Thank you for supporting our class with Sharing Basket items that we use daily - the children are so proud on their contributions.



FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS

Ms. Donna

On Feb.2, otherwise known as Ground Hog's Day, the groundhog did see his shadow. As the saying goes if he sees his shadow we will have six more weeks of winter. The groundhog has several different names. They are ground hog, woodchuck, and whistle pig. When in danger they whistle very loud. They are also related to squirrels and rodents called marmots. They can climb trees and they can swim but not very well. They eat grass, dandelions, grains, clover, bark, insects, fruits and veggies. Their teeth keep growing so they need to chew lots of things. Before they hibernate, they eat a lot of food. While they are sleeping they barely breathe (once every 6 minutes), their heart beats (once every 4 or 5 minutes) and their teeth stop growing

On Feb.14 we show others that we care about them with Valentine cards for friends.

We talked about Presidents' Day. We remember President Washington (1st President) and President Lincoln (16th President) on this day. We looked at money that had their pictures. President Washington is on our nickle and one-dollar bill. President Lincoln is on our penny and five-dollar bill.



We talked about the Olympic Games. The Olympic flag has 5 rings (blue, black, red on top with yellow and green on the bottom) all on a white background. We talked about winter sports.

GAMES:

- *Mr. postman, do you have a letter?* Children are in a circle while another student walks around and drops a letter behind someone. The letter is then picked up by that child and they then walk around the circle as we sing "Valentine, Valentine, do you have a letter. I can

hardly wait to see what is in the mail for me"

- Musical chairs
- Dance Party
- Going on a Bear Hunt



ART:

- Groundhogs who popped out of the green grass.
- Groundhogs that saw their shadow
- Felt heart that could be traced and then colored or even make a crayon rubbing of the heart.
- Six hearts each colored with three different colors and given the same background and then glued on black paper.
- A large paper mouse made by using different sizes of hearts.
- Made different sizes of mice using paper hearts
- A silhouette of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln on a red, white and blue background.
- Using the colors of the Olympic flag and paper tubes as our brushes we painted a picture
- Made red lanterns for Chinese New Year.



SCIENCE:

- Take a glass jar with a lid, add 1 cup of salt and a fourth cup of popcorn kernels. Put the lid on the jar then roll the jar on a flat surface so the salt and popcorn can mix together, turn the jar upright and gently tap it on a flat surface. Watch what happens to the popcorn.
- Take two rocks one small and the other a little larger. Hold with fingers which are pointing towards the ground then let go of both items. What happened? Now try using the small rock and a crumpled up piece of paper. What happens this time?

BOOKS:

- "The Biggest Valentine Ever" by Steven Kroll This book gave us the idea of making our large mouse
- "Ground Hog Gets A Say" by Pamela Curtis Swallow

FEBRUARY PHOTO GALLERY

More Wonderful Moments at Pathways

