

# Montessori Pathways' News



## January 2018

The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six.

~ Maria Montessori

### The Freedom of Choice in Montessori Environment

Maria Montessori said that everything the child does is creative. It is the creative mind that harnesses all of its power to solve problems. The creative powers of the children help them solve problems throughout their stay in the Montessori classroom. These problems can be social, emotional, intellectual or physical in nature. By allowing the children to grapple with these problems and ideas we help them enlist their own creativity.

When children are not permitted to deal with their own problems as they arise, but have adults solve them for them, they have difficulty experiencing their own creative solutions. In many ways the Socratic method of asking questions and allowing children to choose their answers is a way of allowing for creativity to arise. We all know there are many ways to get to a goal.

To teach children in only one way, and ask for only one answer, will prevent them from using their minds in an inventive way. Children need projects and tasks that they can tackle. They need to experience their own endless creativity. They must come to see that they can do this is to be allowed to solve appropriate problems and experience the benefit of their own innovative solutions. Some of these problems might be artistic, scientific, intellectual or social. Anytime a child sits down to accomplish something they are drawing on their own reservoir of creativity and inventiveness.



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### Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

Some of us might have experienced the fact that often schools will jump from one trend of teaching to another. As something new comes out, so a curriculum changes, moving onto the next big thing. Schools spend thousands of dollars on new programs and then 2 years later, there's something did not work or better out there.

The beauty of Montessori is that the principles of teaching, the philosophy and the tools have been around for centuries and haven't changed. There has got to be a good reason for that, as clearly it's working. The philosophy that Maria Montessori developed many years ago still greatly works for our kids today.

### ~10 Characteristics of Children in the Montessori Classroom ~

- ◆ Respectful
- ◆ Responsible
- ◆ Self-disciplined
- ◆ Independent
- ◆ Creative/Inventive
- ◆ Self-Motivated
- ◆ Organized
- ◆ Global Thinkers
- ◆ Collaborators
- ◆ Leaders

Learn more about it, [please click here.](#)



## Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished

Since it's time for parents to make a very important decision about the future of their children, one of the events we had this month was our parent evening "**Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished (Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary Year)**", where Ms. Karen and Ms. Amber demonstrated the spiral nature of Montessori education, whereby the skills learned in the early years of the Montessori Primary class are studied at a deeper level in the Kindergarten and Elementary years.

They also explained why the Montessori Kindergarten year is not the beginning of Elementary education, but rather the final and crucial year of the 3-year Primary Education cycle.

It is important to keep this in mind when deciding where to continue your child's education.



## Pizza / Bingo Night



While parents were discussing many interesting questions with Ms. Karen and Ms. Amber during the Parent Educational Evening in one classroom, the Pre-K and K kids were gathered together with Ms. Carole and Ms. Urana, enjoying an evening of bingo, stories, games, and a very yummy pizza in the other classroom.



## Thank you!

During Winter Break we made the renovations in our North Room using the money collected during our Mums Sale and Equal Exchange Fundraisers. The renovation cost about \$4,500.00, and the \$2,500.00 that we raised were of course of great help.

Thank you to all of you who participated in both fundraisers!

Thank you Meelis Saareoks, Emma's dad, for helping us with renovation!

We have changed the kitchen cabinets with counter and replaced the floor. Hopefully our kids enjoy their new floor and kitchen

BEFORE:



AFTER:





## COMING SCHOOL EVENTS

### Registration for the upcoming 2018-2019 School Year has begun!

It is that time of the year when we begin assembling the classes for the next year. We also begin to plan our staff and curriculum for the upcoming 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 School Year Re-Enrollment Fee (\$50; \$25 for the second child)*
- c. *Return the Re-Enrollment Form along with Re-Enrollment Fee to school **by March 1st**.*
- d. *Submit 10% of the annual tuition security deposit 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 15<sup>th</sup>** will be considered "newly enrolled" families, and will be subject to a new enrollment fee of \$100.00 for 2018-2019 School Year.

Spots 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.

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

- ⇒ **February 1 – New Families Enrollment begins**
- ⇒ **February 2 (F) – Vision / Hearing Screening for Preschool – Kindergarten Students**
- ⇒ **February 9 (F) - Elementary Class Trip to Crystal Lake Library**
- ⇒ **February 14 (W) – Valentine's Day at Montessori Pathways**
- ⇒ **February 19 (M) – No School (Presidents' Day)**
- ⇒ **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

## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS

Ms. Amber

*“The first essential for the child’s development is concentration. The child who concentrates is immensely happy.”*

~*Maria Montessori* ~

January conferences were successful, and the students chose excellent goals to challenge themselves for the rest of the year. Thank you for taking time to attend your student’s conference. It really means a lot to your child.

The half-way point of the school year is here. It is comparable to a corner, one we turn toward our destination. For students, that destination is the path toward mastering their environment and their lessons. Montessori’s quote on concentration is one key to that mastery. Concentration allows the child to completely focus on the task at hand, whether it is a math problem, building a sentence, creative thinking, or a chess game. In a day when so many children are exposed to “instant” responses from video games, computer programs, and other electronic devices, learning to be patient, thinking through a problem, and staying on task is far more difficult than in the past.

With so many distractions these days in our busy lives, it is important to teach children techniques to filter out the “noise” and ways to get themselves back on important tasks. Constant support from parents and teachers is necessary to encourage students to build their stamina for concentration, and their dedication to focus on schoolwork and learning. It requires **rigor**.



The Montessori work *Needs of People* identifies the fundamental needs of all human beings, both past and present: the material needs of clothing, shelter, nutrition, transportation, and defense; and the spiritual needs of communication, religion, and art/culture. It was fun discussing how we think early humans met their needs compared to how we meet our needs today. Plus, it was a great springboard for discussing our needs in the classroom, such as a respectful and peaceful

community, uninterrupted work time, no distractions from friends, etc. We will continue the *Needs of People* study in more detail as we learn about civilizations.



Botany and zoology studies have already begun, and our big study of Asia starts this month.

The birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an appropriate time to begin character education lessons. Students learned that character is the kind of person we are, what we offer others (such as kindness), and why others would want (or not want) to be our friend. The students learned about the famous peacekeeper and our focus, **The Content of My Character**, comes from one of the famous lines in King’s *I Have a Dream* speech:

*“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”*

~ *I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King, Jr; August 28, 1963 ~



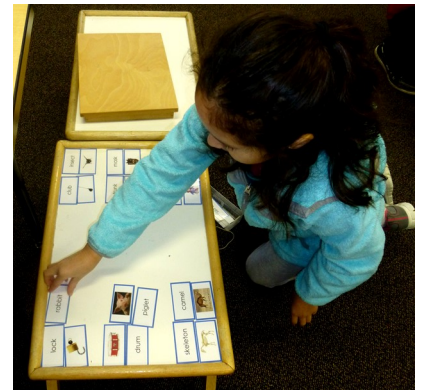
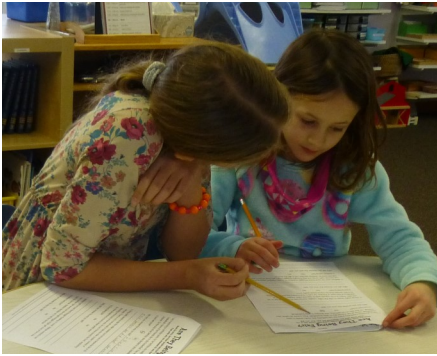
The first character trait examined was **fairness**. Each month we will introduce a new trait with discussion and role play.

*Happy Valentine’s Day!*



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class



## NEWS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY

### Ms. Karen

Welcome back. From where? Winter break. Doesn't that seem like a LONG time ago? At this moment, it has been only 3 weeks!

For sure, the *Step Afrika!* group at the Raue Center was a highlight. It was a show stopping combination of percussive rhythm (body parts only—clapping, stepping, stomping) in incredibly intricate patterns. The energy was palpable. It was pure enjoyment for the audience! It also included an emphasis on also on team performance. A lesson for the children: do you think they could all just start performing? No. What did it take? PRACTICE, persistence, stick-to-it-ness. Hence our proverb for the month: practice makes better! Accomplishment takes commitment, hard work, and time. But then we learn, we get better at what we practice.

Example: many children who could not do the tying frame or the lacing frame, or the 100 board, or the trinomial cube, etc. etc. are now proficient at it. **It takes practice! But practice pays off! The feeling of accomplishment, the "I can do it" feeling is it's own reward.**



For Martin Luther King Jr. day, we told his story, and thus a part of our United States history.

What did it feel like to be excluded: your best friend, a neighbor, has a bus pick him up for school. You have to walk. Your friend can go in the front door of the movies. You go in the back door. Your friend can have a soda at the counter, You cannot sit down. And so on. Actions affect people. They have consequences. King's dream was that we work together, play together, respect each other, have equal opportunities regardless of our surface differences.

The snow has been a treat! The children roll in it, shovel it, build with it and taste it. They are frolicking in the snow, pulling each other on sleds, building "forts", shoveling a path around the playground, chopping out and moving great chunks of ice (they are heavy!). It seems like there is not a care in the world. But problems arise. So we practice solving problems on the playground. Let's talk and come to a solution for the problem. The adult can facilitate possible options that the children may not think of. There almost always is a solution if we talk about the problem.

A popular classroom work at the moment is Word Building

which leads to reading and to spelling. Children have little interesting objects or pictures. They have a box of separate alphabet letters so they can choose one letter at a time to spell a word. Is the word always spelled correctly? No, they will get better (if we spoke/wrote Spanish --- perfectly phonetic, the task would be so much easier). You can help by having children read any work they bring home. But why not have a little game at home that reinforces their reading work. They love it when we write a "message". Children read it and find what you wrote: ex. Get a pen. Bring me a slipper. etc. etc. Learning to read and write is a process that takes time and practice! Another game: label things in the environment. Simply write the word: help your child sound it out and the child then tapes it to the object. They have such delight in being able to read.



In math, a work that is so popular now and fascinates them is the "Chain" work. The chains can be used at many levels. A bit of a description: all numbers from 1 - 10 are represented by chains composed of individual beads. Each number is represented by a "short chain" which represents the square of the number and another "long chain" representing the cube of the number. (really!) The children are learning to skip count (4,8,12,16 = the short chain of 4 and also represents the square of 4). The chain is constructed so it can be folded back and forth to make a square.

The long chain of 4 = 4, 8,12,16, 20,24,28, .....60, 64. This chain can be folded back and forth to create 4 squares of 4 which, when stacked up, makes a cube! How cool is that! For all of us that did not really "get squaring and cubing of numbers", this material is absolutely awe-inspiring!

Squaring and cubing numbers is connecting the children to the geometry of math.

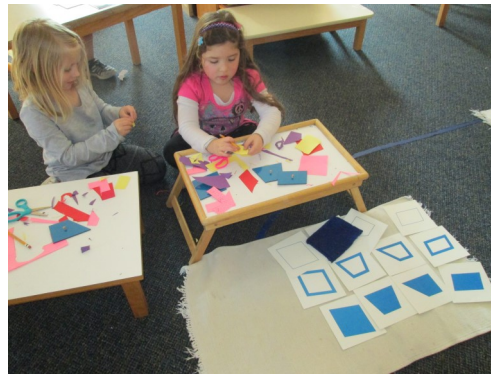
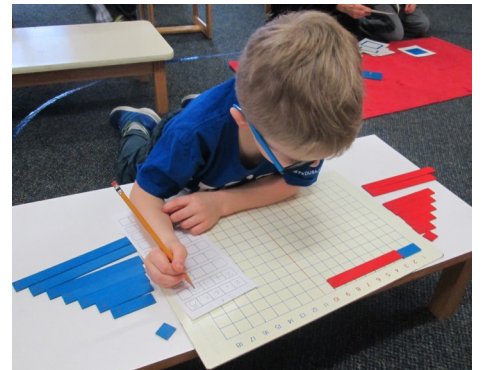
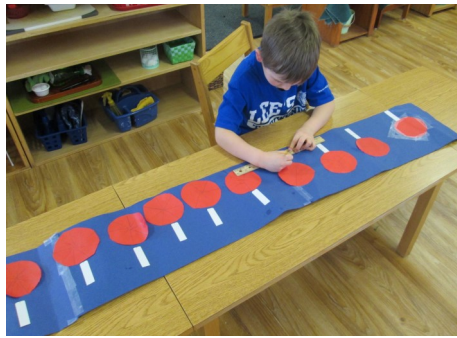
In counting the chain, the child is skip counting. Skip counting numbers are the answers for multiplication of that number. (1x, 2x, 3x, 4x the number. Etc.) The Montessori materials are unique in their richness.

Many students have become proficient with the 100 board. We are just beginning fractions with some of the students, multiplication and division with others. A pleasure to see such progress.



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## Kindergarten Extended Day Class



# NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

Ms. Linda

We are off to a great start for 2018! The kindergarten students created some beautiful snowy owls using tempera paint. Their drawing skills continue to improve each week.



The elementary students looked at photos of Chinese vases and then painted their own paper vases using blue paint and thin brushes to imitate the intricate designs and patterns.



Using directed line drawing instruction, the students drew a pirate ship and then used their imaginations to add details.





## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

### Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



Happy New Year to all our families! The children returned to the South room with great energy and enthusiasm and have been so busy.

In our science area we have been adding new mini experiments to our physical science shelves. We have added: *sink and float, magnetic and nonmagnetic, rough and smooth, and translucent opaque*. For each activity the children need to work through the material and investigate the particular properties of each object in order to sort them into the correct classification. Before they test each object, they have an opportunity to make a guess as to what it might be and then try the experiment and see if the guess was right or wrong. For example, for sink and float, before the child tries each object in the bowl of water, they can examine the object and try to determine if they think it will sink or float and then actually find out. For the older children we can add an additional component, which would be to create a chart and list or draw their conclusions.



We have also been introducing a lot of new Spanish vocabulary, both through materials during the work cycle as well as songs at line time. Some of the Spanish materials we have include colors, fruits, and vegetables. We are always working to add more each month. At line time, we have been working on some new songs in Spanish. We have been working on this song to the tune of *London Bridge is Falling Down*:

*Hola means hello, hello, hello  
Hola means hello,  
Hola Amigos!*

*Adios mean goodbye, goodbye, goodbye  
Adios means goodbye,  
Adios amigos!*

Another song we are working on is a Family Song to the tune of *Are You Sleeping*:

<i>Padre – father</i>	<i>Madre – mother</i>
<i>Chico – boy</i>	<i>Chica – girl</i>
<i>Abuelo is grandpa</i>	<i>Abuela is grandma</i>
<i>Nuestra familia, our family</i>	<i>Hermano – brother</i>
<i>Hermana- sister</i>	<i>Chico –boy</i>

*Chica- girl  
Abuelo y abuela*

*Padre y madre  
Nuestra familia, our family.*

Daily we are reviewing the Spanish vocabulary words: *hola, adios, amigos, padre, madre, chico, chica, abuelo, abuela, hermano, hermana, y, nuestra, familia.*

For our kindergarteners, we have added something new since we have returned from winter break: work plans. Basically, each kindergartener has a folder and a work plan that includes a chart with each area of the classroom: *math, language, sensorial/geometry, practical life, science (botany, zoology), cultural (geography, history)*. Under each area there is room for three choices, two that I make, and one of their choice.



The work plans span about two weeks to complete all the works selected. Each time a kindergartener finishes a “challenging work” from their work plan, we check it off and at that time they are able to “take a break” which can include a fun practical life work, food preparation activity, snack, reading a book, completing an art project, basically anything that is not on their list of “challenging works.” So far, they have been a great tool to keep the kindergarteners on task and give them a place to go when they are not sure what to do. Also, they seem to like knowing that they can still do the fun and less-challenging activities once they complete a work plan choice. This is great practice with time management as well as preparation for the challenges of first grade, which is not that far away.

Overall, the children are moving right along, continuing to progress in all areas of the classroom. Socially, we have a lovely classroom community where people are kind and courteous to one another and respectful of each other’s learning space. We have seen so many examples of leadership as the older children offer their assistance to the younger ones. It is a great time of the year when things in the classroom begin to normalize and the teachers are able to take a step back and watch how the children grow.



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room



PHOTO GALLERY FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY

Ms. Andrea



## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

Where has the month of January gone!! The bright smiling faces of your children, returning from our holiday break, are still so vivid in my mind. It was such a happy reunion of friends. Their eagerness to share stores of their time off from school and reconnect with their friends was priceless. Also, I'm happy to add that they didn't waste any time getting right to work either. Sound books were reviewed; maps we continued, addition facts, word building and of course baking were center stage.

Some of the children are beginning to write their own words and stories. As they are becoming individual writers we are presenting proper use of upper and lower-case letters, the placement of letters on a line and also spacing of words in a sentence. At this stage of development, we aren't concerned so much about correct spelling. For example, as children phonetically sound out the word "was" it may look like "wuz" or "buddies" look like "budez". They are so excited to share their stories with us and bring them home to you; "mom will be so proud of me!!"



This past month we introduced winter-themed activities in both art and science, also added a few new materials in our practical life area. Two winter songs we learned were, "Once There Was a Snowman" and "Find A Little Snowman". In art the children cut or poked out snowman shapes and

then added the details. Some added a hat and buttons while others added a scarf and of course the carrot nose. We painted winter trees and made a beaded snowflake hanger. They turned out so adorable.

In the practical life area we added both mirror polish and orange juice squeezing. Squeezing while turning the orange to release the juice, following and cutting on a curved line to create their snowman and using a soft touch when applying the polish to the mirror, all helps to further define their eye hand coordination and fine motor movement.



Speaking of oranges, we had a citrus tasting this past week. Much like our apple tasting we did in the fall, we chose dif-

ferent types of oranges (Navel, Tangerine and Mineola) plus a red grapefruit to try. Not only did we taste the different fruit, but we also learned the names and parts of an orange as well. *Zest, rind, segments, wall, juice sacks, pulp, pith and pips* are the new vocabulary words we learned.... honestly we *all* learned during this activity. I bet you can imagine which word brought the most giggles.

I love it when Mother Nature cooperates and provides exactly what we need to introduce a subject into the classroom. The day following a fresh fluffy snowfall we found animal tracks right outside our door. In groups of 4 we went over and tried to determine what animals made them. It was quite fun and imaginative. We used this experience to present animal track rubbing, which led to ask this question, "what do animals do in the winter and where do some of them go?" Through a series of books, role playing and object/picture classification we learned about migration, hibernation and adaptation.



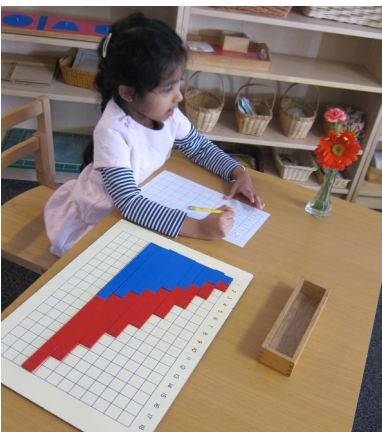
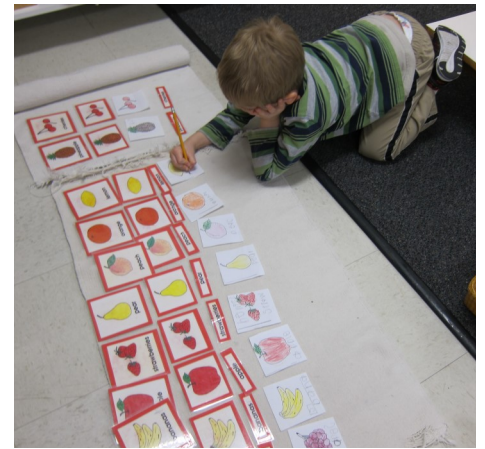
As we learned, food is scarce for our animal friends this time of year. Providing extra food for them is always a great thing to do. Children were invited to string cranberries, bring them home and hang them in their yard.

January has been an exciting month of learning, growing and experiencing fun activities.



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room



## NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS

Ms. Donna



We learned how animals get ready for winter: some grow long thick fur, some gather food, bears eat lots of food in the fall, (they need lots of body fat for energy as they rest over the winter), some migrate to warmer places, lots of birds gather together before they leave (flocks), fish swim to warmer water if they can, while others, go near the bottom of lakes and ponds, some change their fur coloring to white to blend in with the snow.

We learned that Martin Luther King Jr. believed all people should be treated the same.

### LANGUAGE

Winter Vocabulary: *snowflake, mittens/gloves, snow, snowman, sled, scarf, hat, sweater, ski, cold, jacket/coat, ice skates, snow pants, and boots.*

'Five Little Snowmen Fat' finger play



### GAMES:

- ◆ Using a die, you color the dice on the paper that matches what you roll on the die.
- ◆ Match the snowflakes
- ◆ "Candy Jars" board game



### BOOKS:

- ◆ "Snow Is Falling" by Franklyn M. Branley
- ◆ "Snowmen at Night" by Caralyn Buehner

We made a poster of what you would do if you were a snowman playing at night (slide down the street, fall down in the snow, sip cold cocoa, play baseball, have snowman races, have a snowball fight, go ice skating, go sledding, or go home).

### ART:

- ◆ Painted a picture on foil then put a white piece of paper over painting, rubbed and made a mono print and added a frame.
- ◆ A chain of snowmen



### SCIENCE:

Climbing ink. Using paper towel strips a different color from markers was put on each strip, the strips were attached to yarn by a paperclip and hung over a deep container, water was added to the container so that it touched each one. The strip will start to soak up water. What has happened to the dots? The ink in most felt-tip pens contains mixtures of different colors. some colors dissolve more easily in water than others because of the chemicals they contain. These colors spread quickly up the paper. Other colors contain chemicals that don't like water. these colors stick to the paper to avoid the water. So they don't move up the paper as the water spreads



### MUSIC:

- ◆ "I'm a Little Teapot" song
- ◆ "I'm a Little Snowman" song
- ◆ "The Mulberry Bush" song
- ◆ Musical Instruments
- ◆ Dancing



# NEWS FROM THE WINTER CAMP

Ms. Donna



This year we had 8 days of winter camp. We had enough snow to make it a great time. However, the temperature was never warm enough for us to go out to play. Since we could not do much about the weather we used the basement to have great snowball fights. We used rolled up socks for our snowballs. We were able to walk like animals by using some rubber animal feet that we put over our shoes and tried to walk around. Plastic cups, were recycled into objects that we could throw beanbags and balls at to knock down. We got to be pretty good at knocking down lots of the cups.



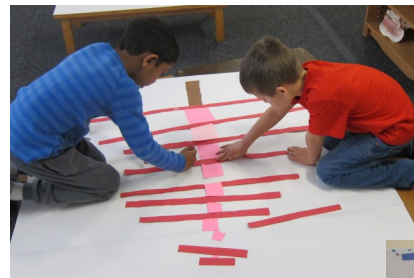
We observed tracks in the snow when we looked out the window. Our rabbits and squirrels were very busy looking for food all over the playground. We also were able to see mice and a few bird tracks.

We made our own hot chocolate and banana bread, and cookies. Yum, Yum. Our lunch was served family style. We learned how to pass things around the table. The campers helped with preparing our lunch. We had servers who served us our milk and water. Clean up was done by all because we able to use holiday plates, cups, and napkins.



An Arctic mural was made by the campers after we learned which animals might be seen in the Arctic, (narwhal whale, Arctic fox, Arctic wolf, snowy owl, puffin, beluga whale, caribou, orca whale, musk oxen, Arctic hare, seal, walrus, and polar bear). Our other mural was a winter wonderland with snow, trees, and lots of snowmen.

From the book "K is for Kwanza" by Juwanda G Ford we learned that it is a holiday that honors African-American people and their heritage. It lasts for seven days and begins on December 26th. It began in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, an African-American teacher. He wanted to help African Americans learn about their African history, culture, and customs.



Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili word "Kwanza" with an extra a at the end to make it seven letters long. There are seven

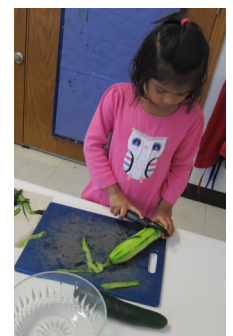
Kwanzaa Principles one for each day of Kwanzaa.

We did a sink and float activity with real pine cones, acorns, wood chips, pine branches. One of our acorns had a crack in its top. Can you guess what did not float?

Using string attached to a candy cane, (our hook) we tried to catch other candy canes out of a cup. (fishing)

Using a dreidel, we played the dreidel game. We used noodles for our gilt (money). All ended up with gold coins that contained chocolate.

Shaving cream pictures, painted ice cubes with food coloring, marble painted snowmen, reindeer dice game, dance, obstacle course in the basement, board games, holiday books – all of these and other activities brought a lot of fun and excitement to our Winter Camp.



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## More Wonderful Moments at Pathways





# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## More Wonderful Moments at Pathways

