

Montessori Pathways' News

JANUARY

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 © 2018 - Montessori Children's Center



Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

One day, my son, who graduated from 6 grades of Montessori Pathways last year and is a 7th grader of a traditional public school system now, shared the video "*I Just Sued the School System!*" with me that they were watching at school. He said: "Mom, you need to see it. You will love it because it is true."

Yes, it was interesting for me to see and I decided to share this video with you. [Click to view the video.](#)

All of those questions from the video have been bothering me for many years during my time teaching in the traditional education system. I always wished that something would be changed there.

And over the last several years some of us might have noticed the fact that schools will often jump from one trend of teaching to another. As soon as something new comes out, the curriculum changes, only to then move on to the next big thing when it changes again. Schools spend thousands of dollars on new programs and then 2 years later, something did not work or something better is out there again.

After my study of the Montessori approach and spending 10 years in this environment, another question came to my mind: Why do we try to reinvent the wheel if a great educational system already exists? The philosophy that Maria Montessori developed many years ago still works great for our kids today and gives amazing results in educating kids of absolutely different levels of development and ability to learn.

~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 Years)**", where Ms. Karen and Ms. Bridget 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. Bridget 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 renovated our East Room using the money collected during our Mums Sale and Equal Exchange Fundraisers. The renovation cost about \$3,000.00, and the \$2,821.00 that we raised were of course of great help.

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

Thank you Meelis Saareoks, our former parent, for helping us with the renovation!

We have replaced our old tile floors with waterproof planked flooring that looks nice and homey. The kids were really excited to see their updated classroom after returning from Winter Break.



Coming School Events



Montessori Pathways

Registration for the upcoming 2019-2020 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, once you have received the re-enrollment paperwork, please

- a. Complete the Re-Enrollment Form for the 2019- 2020 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, 2019.

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 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 School Year on time.

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- ⇒ **February 1 – New Families Enrollment begins**
 - ⇒ **February 1 (F) – Vision / Hearing Screening for Preschool – Kindergarten Students**
 - ⇒ **February 6 (Tu) at 1:00-2:00pm - “Nature in Winter” in-school workshop for Kindergarten and Elementary students**
 - ⇒ **February 7 (W) at 1:00-2:30pm - “Animals in Winter” - Field Trip to Prairieview Educational Center for Elementary, Kindergarten, and Extended Day Pre-K students.**
 - ⇒ **February 14 (Th) in the morning – Valentine’s Day at Montessori Pathways**
 - ⇒ **February 18 (M) – No School (Presidents’ Day)**
 - ⇒ **February 21 (Th) at 12:15-1:30pm - “Madeline and the Bad Hat” musical at Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake— field trip for Elementary, Kindergarten, and Extended Day Pre-K students.**
 - ⇒ **February 19 – March 5 – Moving-On Weeks:**
 - ◆ *Kindergarten Extended Day Class Visit Days for Pre-K Students*
 - ◆ *Elementary Class Visit Days for Kindergarten students*
 - ⇒ **February 25 – March 1 – Dr. Seuss Week**
 - ⇒ **February 26 (Tu) at 6:00-7:30pm - Kindergarten Demo Class**

During one hour, the Kindergarten students will demonstrate a short version of the Kindergarten Extended Day Class for Pre-K parents.
 - ⇒ **February 26 (Tu) at 6:00-7:30pm – 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.

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

“Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.”
~ Maria Montessori

Bienvenido!

Ancient Civilizations: The students have begun to do independent research on ancient cultures. We began by looking at early humans. What did they eat? How did they dress? What transportation did they use? How did they defend themselves? What type of shelter did they have? How did they fulfill their spiritual needs?

Since then, they have looked at Ancient Egyptians, Greeks and now Romans. How are these people alike? Where did they live in the world? What contributions did they have to the world? Slowly, kids are choosing to look deeper at them. Some skim through while others dive in and look at book after book. Our next group will be Ancient China.

Math: The math bug has hit many kids in the class. Once kids get wind of others trying out new concepts or new materials, news spreads. No one needs to wait for anyone else. The beauty of the Montessori math materials will allow the child to see in different ways how to add, subtract, multiply and divide larger and larger numbers. Soon their facts will be easier to handle and their “ah ha” moments will happen on a more regular basis.

Indirect Instruction: All lessons in Montessori have direct lessons, which is the intended concept to learn, as well as the indirect lessons, the other concepts that are not directly taught.

An example of this is *test tube division*. Test tube division is a material to teach long division for numbers as big as a million divided by thousands. The direct lesson is dividing large numbers. However, what else is taught?



This material requires fine motor skills to manipulate the beads. It takes focus to remember the steps. It takes predicting to see

how many rows can be made with the amount of beads the child has. It requires stamina to complete the whole problem which takes many minutes. Finally, it takes patience to get this VERY large material out, use it and put it away.

If done with a partner, which is the desired method due the extensive work required, it also teaches team work, turn taking and planning.

The teacher teaches how to use the material and then sits back to observe what happens. She will step in when needed but will modify later lessons based on what is observed while the child is completing the work.

Snack: We are on the snack rotation-2nd round for kids. Thank you for your generosity in buying the items that your child has selected. It has been interesting to see the choices that each kid makes. There is a lot of steps involved in snack preparation.

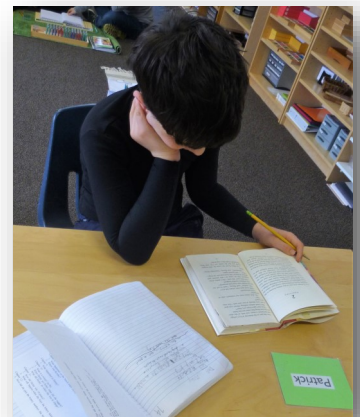
Kids enjoy the choosing of the menu. There is a suggestion list, but some decide to choose an item off the menu. They love that there is a built-in left-over day!

The preparation of the snack and choosing a buddy to help them prepare the snack is next. Each day, the host will set out the snack and choose how much snack a person should have. The host then gets out plates and/or utensils. Finally the host gets out the bin for dirty dishes. Snack is open and the first two students are invited.

When snack is over, the snack host and partner will clean up the snack area. They put away leftover snack and ready the dishes for the dishwasher. They wipe the counter and table.

Kids enjoying eating, socializing and preparing snack.

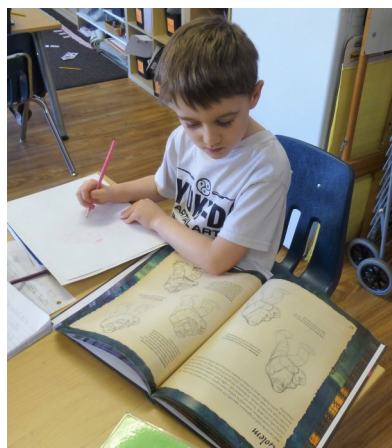
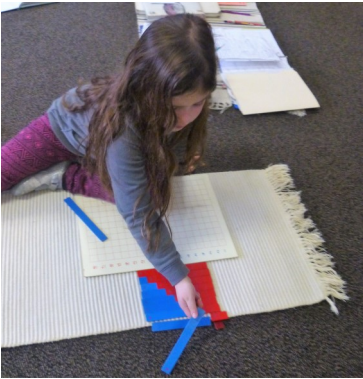
Reading: “Reading is an exercise in empathy; an exercise in walking in someone else’s shoes for a while”. -Malorie Blackman



Please continue to ensure that your child is reading at home. Trips to the library and book store are nice but borrowing books from the class can be a great way to read more. Having kids see you read also make the difference. Many libraries have winter reading programs where your kids (and YOU!) can get prizes for reading. Please keep the logs coming in. I will be checking this week for folders and will be checking logs/replacing lost or used up logs.

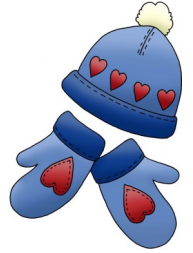
JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN CLASS

Ms. Karen



We are continuing to develop work in the geometry area. Montessori has set up a system of math that is based on the European model of math which includes geometry.

This area is a permanent part of the classroom with the materials available on the shelves. But this month, we have spent some time highlighting the area and working on demonstrating a more in-depth understanding

January work has included making 3-dimensional shapes. So far, we have done the tetrahedron (as triangular pyramid) and the cube as a group lesson. An advantage to the Montessori classroom is that our materials on the shelf include a set of 3-dimensional shapes. Using those materials is significantly different than trying to translate 2-dimensional pictures into 3-dimensional objects (which is the experience most of us had in school.). The children cannot get enough of this work. Every day sees some of the children excitedly working on these projects. They are fascinated by creating these 3-dimensional shapes from 2-dimensional (construction paper). The process is: we take one of the 3D shapes and trace around every side of it (requires rotation of the solid), then cut, fold, crease, and tape.



They are applying this skill set by additionally making, rectangular prisms, square based pyramids, etc. Implied in this activity is an analysis of the shape (ex. The cube is composed of 6 sides, each of which is a square.). This kind of implicit analysis leads to a more understandable experience with geometry.

We are also doing the vocabulary for the "parts of" lessons in geometry. In addition to the name of the shape (triangle), we learn the vocabulary for the parts of that shape. So far, we have labeled the angles and the sides of the triangle. This leads to the observation that all triangles have 3 sides and 3 angles. When children come home with new vocabulary, please be sure to review it with them.

An additional lesson in math included acting out the definition of zero: "Zero is an empty set. It receives nothing," The game is to ask, plead, beg the child to bring me "zero pencils" (or zero

any other item). They resist the pressure to bring something. In playing this game, we are reinforcing the definition. (Note: we do not say zero is nothing because it is a placeholder.) This activity was so much fun, and we were having such a good time that Miss Alena actually came into the room to find out what was happening!

Additionally, in math, we began lessons with the bead cabinet. This is a unique Montessori material which demonstrates the squaring and cubing of numbers 1 - 10. Really? Yes. More on that another time.

Yesterday we played a logical thinking game: what is in the mystery bag. The purpose was to help children "discover" an effective way to limit the possibilities of what is in the bag. When we began the guessing, the children would name some random objects, thus being correct or eliminating only one possibility. We talked about different way to approach the game. If one asked a more "general" or categorical question, one received a LOT more information. So, for example, if we asked a category question -----(Is it a fruit?), that eliminated A LOT of possibilities and lead to a more fruitful (pun intended) type of guessing. It is a way of asking about a set (fruit) and either eliminating a whole set or get an affirmative response and confine questions to items in the set. They immediately got the idea. It was a fruit, a fresh pineapple, which we then cut and ate --delicious!

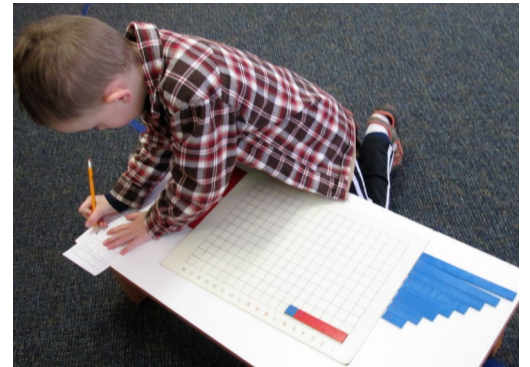
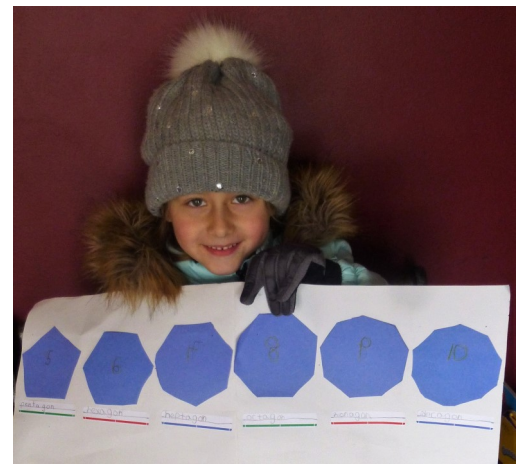
Our proverb of the month: "Many hands make light work". It expresses so well the end of the class period when we all pitch in to put activities away, straighten the shelves, return supplies to their proper place and generally, work together.



And, of course, the snow is a big hit!! It is a treat! They roll in it, shovel it, build with it and even taste it. They build snow forts and never get tired And pull each other on sleds, slide down the incline on the playground and are always ready for more the next day!

JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



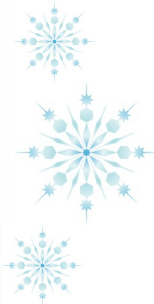
NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



Happy new year to all our families! We hope you had a fun but also restful winter break. We know the children were ready to get back into the swing of things.

As we begin this new year, we can slightly shift our focus with the older children of the class. In knowing that the end of this school year will be here before we know it, we really want to guide those soon to be kindergarteners and 1st graders into the appropriate work that will best prepare them for the next "grade." Therefore, during the morning work cycle, kindergarteners are being asked to complete a language work (consisting of both reading and writing skills) before they move on to another work in one of the other areas.



Since we have such a long morning work time, they can use their first 30 minutes or hour (depending on which work they are doing) to really strengthen their reading and writing skills. We also have little flip books with *Sight Words*. Sight words are words that appear frequently in most of the text people read, but can't easily be sounded out (*the, you, what, is, of*). Learning them helps children become more confident readers. This list of kindergarten sight words includes the 220 most commonly used words every kid should know, also called *high frequency words*. Each kindergarten student has their own book of sight words and every morning, after they are done transitioning into the classroom, they bring their book to either teacher and we quickly flip through the words as they read them to us. Once they have mastered/remembered most of their words, we add more, until they have the entire list in their books and eventually know them all.



With the younger children, the sensorial materials have been very popular this month. Because these materials are comprised mostly of wooden cubes and cylinders, at first glance one might think they are simply building blocks like Lincoln logs. However, Montessori designed these materials to be in very specific ways, to help a child develop and refine his or her five senses. Use of these materials constitutes the next level of difficulty after those of the practical life area of the classroom and offer a bridge to the more academic areas of the classroom. Like many other materials in the Montessori classroom, sensorial materials have what is called a *control of error* built into each work. So, the child can work with the material independently and has a way to check their work themselves and easily find any error, rather than seeking out the teacher if they have a question on whether they did it right. This is done to help promote independence and problem solving on the part of the child. The sensorial materials also allow for a variety of extensions and variations so that even the oldest child in the classroom can use these materials in challenging ways that are meaningful to their skill and ability level.



Regarding birthdays, if you would like your child to celebrate their birthday within the classroom you are more than welcome to do so. We will send home a "Celebration of Life" form that you can fill out. It gives a timeline of some of their life events and you can send that form back to school along with a photo for each year of their life. Then at line time we will have a celebration in which your child shares their photos and we read from their form. Parents are always welcome to join, and you are welcome to bring a treat for the children (25 children total, nut free, preferably on the healthier side, fresh fruits are always popular). Please just let us know ahead of time so we can plan the morning. **We prefer birthday celebrations from 9:30-10:00.** If you cannot make it, but would like to send the celebration form, photos, and treats with your child, this can also be arranged. If you have any questions regarding birthday celebrations, please email the school.

We are looking forward to February!

JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



PRE-K EXTENDED DAY NEWS

Ms. Andrea



As we begin this new year, the extended afternoon work cycle has become a great time to focus on more challenging work for this group of children who will soon become kindergarteners. The Pre-K have been doing a lot of math and language work and seem to really enjoy being able to do some of the works that they have watched their older kindergarten friends do. They are very excited each afternoon to either continue work on something they started previously or try something new. Either way, they are really embracing their afternoon time as one of the "big kids."



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Lorrie, Ms. Carole



Welcome Back:

Excitement filled our room as the children returned from our long, restful holiday break. They were eager to see one another; greeting each other with smiles, giggles, and laughter. Their joyfulness warmed our hearts. It is one of the perks of teaching young children.

This past month has been a time of introducing Ms. Lorrie to all the grace and courtesy lessons that assist us in becoming a group of "good, solid citizens." From remembering to respect our friends' work by walking around their rugs, to the complicated routines of getting ready for lunch and going outside, we have worked together to create a strong community for the new year. When people hear "Montessori" they sometimes think, "That's the method of education where children can do whatever they want." But nothing could be further from the truth. It takes self-control to become a cohesive class. The ongoing grace and courtesy lessons are vital to the smooth functioning of our group. It has been wonderful to see how kind and willingly the children are to cooperate with each other and the teachers through these little role plays.



Author of the Month

We would like to introduce one of our new ideas for the new year. We are choosing to focus on a different author each month. Author/illustrator *Jan Brett* was our pick for January. She wrote and illustrated the Ukrainian folktale, *The Mitten*. The interesting thing we learned about Ms. Brett is that, although she lives in the United States, she loves to travel to different parts of the world to study their cultures. Her stories are often the retelling of their folktales, and her illustrations are replete with the national costumes and cultural items she finds.

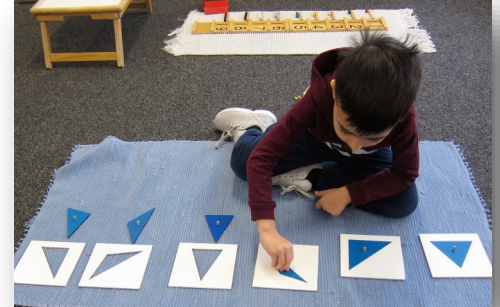
First, we read her story. Then, we listed the characters and acted out the story. And finally, we have a smaller version of the book with a basket of characters from the story which children can choose to retell the story to themselves or with a friend. We have included a mitten making activity in the art area and we use her stories in language activities with the older children. Other Jan Brett books we have read are, *The Gingerbread baby*, *The Three Snow Bears*, and *The City Mouse and the Country Mouse*. Your child may enjoy a visit to the library to find more Jan Brett stories, or you might visit her website at <http://www.janbrett.com/index.html> for follow up activities.

Geometry for the three-year-old

Montessori's sensorial materials are designed to give the children keys in the exploration of their world. These materials assist them to become more aware of their world. We are surrounded by geometry in nature, in our class, in our homes. Shapes are everywhere. The geometric cabinet has six drawers full of shapes, from the simple circle, triangle, square to the more complicated quatrefoil, curvilinear triangle, and octagon. The young child enjoys tracing and matching the insets to their corresponding frames, much like an early puzzle. Neurological-

ly, they are building a stereognostic sense of shape in their brains.

Next, we introduce the names for the various shapes such as oval, trapezoid, or pentagon. Montessori found that young children are in a stage of language acquisition and they love to learn new BIG words. The four-year-old works on a bit more abstract level through matching the 3-dimensional inset to a 2-dimensional picture of the shapes' outlines. This enhances the child's visual acuity that can also be applied to recognizing letters and numbers.



One day a child makes the connection between the geometric shapes in the cabinet and the metal insets, which he traces to practice his handwriting. Montessori is an integrated curriculum with many discoveries embedded in the materials. By the time the child is a kindergartener, he possesses a wealth of information about shape and geometry. He is ready to make his own geometric poster by tracing, cutting, gluing, and labeling the shapes within a chosen drawer. We know the child has reached a point of arrival when he brings us the container for the multiplication beads, saying, "Look, I found a pentagon in our classroom!"

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Bundle Up



Brr! It's cold outside!! The new blanket of snow and colder temperatures help bring up the question, where do the animals go in the winter? We will be researching the how animals survive the cold through migration, hibernation, and adaptation. We look forward to sharing what we have learned through our stories, role plays, and activities in February.

Build a Little Snowman

As we finish up the month of January, we wanted to include a couple of songs your children have enjoyed singing this month.

Build a Little Snowman

*Build a little snowman round and fat
Find a carrot nose and an old straw hat
Now my little snowman won't you stay?*

Out comes the sun and you melt away

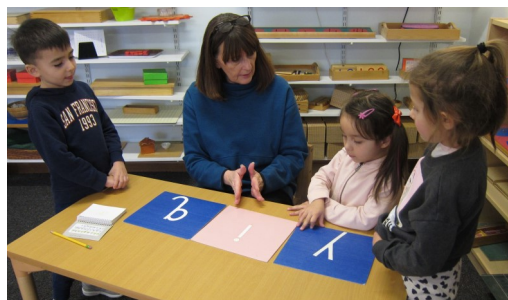
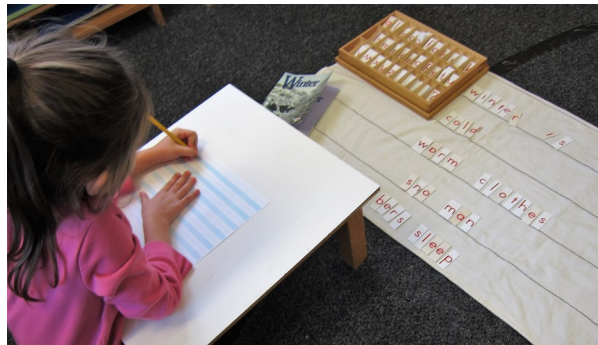
Chubby Little Snowman

*A Chubby little snowman; had a carrot nose
Along came a bunny
And what do you suppose?
The hungry little bunny, looking for his lunch
Ate the Snowman's carrot,
Nibble, nibble, Crunch!!*



JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS



Ms. Donna

We learned that a man named Martin Luther King Jr. believed that all people should be treated the same. He gave a speech called "I Have a Dream" that became very famous. On the third Monday in January we do not have school. People celebrate the Life of Martin Luther King Jr. on this day. Several quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. "the time is always right to do the right thing" and "We are all more alike than we are different".

- Painting on foil using white, blue, and purple paint.
- Newspaper dresses
- Poster of our hands showing we are the same but different
- Snowflakes out of white coffee filters

Books: "Snowman at Night" by Caralyn Buehner. The children then said what they would do if they were a snowman in the story. Dalila drink cold cocoa, Aleta go ice skating, Charlie and Maddy have a snowball fight, Jacob go sledding, Angie go home, Cole play Baseball, Mirela fall in the snow and Cooper play in the park.



We wrote a book called "How Many Mittens Tall Are YOU"? The book is written by the students in the late afternoon and early morning class.

Songs:

- " It's Snowing, It's Snowing"
- " I Built Myself a Little Snowman"
- "10 Little Snowflakes " : 1 little, 2 little, 3 little snowflakes, 4 little, 5 little, 6 little snowflakes, 7 little, 8 little, 9 little snowflakes, 10 little snowflakes, floating in the wind.



- "This is the Way (Winter)":

This is the way we put on our mittens, put on our mittens, put on our mittens. This is the way we put on our mittens all winter long.



(shake a snow globe, throw snowballs, build a snowman, sled down a hill, go ice skating, drink hot cocoa, go snowboarding, make snow angels, go ice fishing, shovel the snow and warm by the fire.)

Art :



- A snowman made of snowballs with a snowball for each letter of their name.



Games:

" I Have, Who Has" Several cards are passed out to the students with two pictures on them. The top card part of the card says "I have" and the bottom of the card says "Who has". One students says I have _____ and then says who has _____? The person who has the picture of what was said answers I have the _____, who has the _____? etc.



More Wonderful Moments at Pathways in January



Kindergarten and Pre-K Extended Day—Quick Peek ([click here](#))

