

Montessori Pathways' News

March



These children have free choice all day long. Life is based on choice, so they learn to make their own decisions. They must decide and choose for themselves all the time... They cannot learn through obedience to the commands of another.

Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

Although many of our annual activities are cancelled this year due to the pandemic, every month was filled with a lot of new fun work, learning activities, and outdoor time.

We began this month with Dr. Seuss week. Each year, National Read Across America Day is celebrated on March 2nd, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. The annual event is part of Read Across America, an initiative on reading creative by the National Education Association. This event is designed to encourage reading in children and is fostered through the schools. This motivational and awareness day calls all children and youth in every community across the United States to celebrate reading. It encourages them to read wherever they are.



St. Patrick's Day was another great celebration for our kids. Most of the kids came to school dressed in green, and Ms. Bridget, our elementary teacher, held a very insightful presentation about Irish culture and traditions for her students and shared some interest-



ing facts with our Primary students. Everyone was so excited to get a gold coin that day. Many fun art projects were created by kids and displayed in their classrooms. Thank you, teachers, for making this day filled with fun for our kids.



Music and movement are a very big part of Montessori education. This month, we observed a lot of dances in the classrooms. Irish dance, dance with partner, and African dance, to name a few.



Getting more confidence by this time of the year, our kids are exploring many new things, doing more challenging work, and helping younger friends a lot. Many of them did a lot of map work as a part of cultural study, spent a lot of time reading books or journaling, are moving on to the next level of math discovery (building and working on 2, 3, 4-digit numbers; exploring all 4 math operations are the most favorite works for many of our Pre-K / K students).



This time of the year, we observe a lot of positive changes and satisfaction in our kids. Wat to go, our friends! Two more months of blooming!

Parents' Corner

Montessori and Freedom of Choice

One of the key features of Montessori homes and classrooms is that children have choices. Most of us try to structure choices into the lives of our children. Even toddlers can play with this toy or that toy. They can wear their green pants or their blue pants. They can eat an apple or an orange for snack. They can decide to sit on mama's lap or daddy's knee. Life is full of choices. Why is choice important in schooling?

Each one of us has our unique gifts and talents. One of us may be a fast reader, another a math whiz, yet another has a talent for all things mechanical. One may be a swift runner while another is a great cook. We are not all the same. Nor are all our children the same.

You can take ten children of exactly the same age. They may be different heights, different weights. Their skills and capabilities may be vastly different. Some are early bloomers, some are late bloomers. **Some learn through visual input through what they see, some learn best by listening with their ears and some need to touch to learn.** They all learn but they may have vastly different tastes in what interests them and when they are ready.

If these very different children go to the same traditional school and they have a teacher who lovingly offers them what the curriculum offers for that day, some are interested and ready for the new information and challenges, but some are not. The new tasks are just perfect for some, way too difficult for others and far too easy for others. It may be that some of the children are just smarter than others. But it may also mean that some are developmentally not quite ready for the tasks but in six months they would be perfect. Others would be a lot happier in the next grade up.

Maria Montessori understood all these learning differences and created an environment for children where they come in each day and choose what they want to work on. At the beginning of their first year in Montessori they might choose between doing a puzzle, stringing beads, or looking at a book. Each day the teacher shows them new lessons and soon they have a larger choice. Eventually the choices include writing and reading, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with concrete materials. It includes biology and geometry, art, and music.

The free will of each child is gradually being educated. Each choice they have is constructive, developmentally appropriate, and interesting. Montessori's biographer E.M. Standing suggests that **freedom to choose is not freedom to do anything you want, but freedom to do the right thing.** For a child the right thing is what he needs to fulfill the next step of his development at any given stage.

When a child chooses his work instead of doing what he is told to do, he often develops a more genuine interest and learns to follow the direction of what we call the "Inner Teacher." The child begins to value the inner satisfaction he gets from doing the work that corresponds to his inner developmental needs and he is calm and joyful in his learning.

Not every child chooses to do every lesson. But that is OK. Each child chooses what he needs. There are multiple ways to teach essential skills, so a child who does not want to do one lesson, may choose another that gets him to the same goal. But in Montessori, we realize that not every child reaches those goals in the same way or at the same time.

Montessori gave a series of lectures about freedom of choice. She makes a powerful argument that the roots of tyranny are in adults forcing children to obey their commands. When a child spends his entire day, year after year, following the instruction of adults and has no right to follow his own interests, he may come to believe that his own interests are unimportant. He may come to believe that his thoughts are not as important as the thoughts of the adults who are teaching him.



Montessori believed in discipline. But she realized that the way to reach it was by creating environments where children found engaging materials to use. When they are fully engaged in the work that appeals to them at their particular level of development, they become self-disciplined. You see in Montessori classrooms a group of three-, four- and five-year-olds hard at work. No teacher could command such discipline, yet the children freely give it to their own self-chosen work.

Freedom of choice becomes a habit of mind. Freedom to explore your own thoughts and interests can open the floodgates to creativity, as it has with such Montessori alumni as the co-founders of Google, Wikipedia and Amazon.com – all Montessori graduates.

<https://ageofmontessori.org/montessori-and-freedom-of-choice/>





REGISTRATION FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN!



As you know, Montessori Pathways School has been serving the community for over twenty years, building a better future for our children and our world—one child at a time. Innovative Montessori education is our trademark. Our unique Montessori Pathways Team are delighted that your child and your family have been a part of this vision.

The Montessori approach to child development and education encompasses a wide range of experiences. Montessori works best when the child has maximum attendance and stays with us for the entirety of the developmental stage, which includes the Kindergarten Year in Primary class and Elementary education.

The completion of the 3-year cycle in every stage is the key of Montessori Education.

We look forward to having you and your child(ren) continue with us in the coming 2021-2022 school year!

We do not know yet what the next school year will look like, but as soon as things will get better and Illinois will move to Phase 5 of Reopening, we will slowly begin returning to our regular activities, rules, and procedures. We will be notifying you about every single coming change.

We all know that due to Covid-19 a lot of great private schools and childcare facilities were closed while the number of students in every classroom is very limited. Because of this, the demand of enrolling children in the program is rapidly growing. Therefore, we would like to make sure that we accommodate our current families before opening registration to new families and are beginning enrollment for our current families for the 2021-2022 school year.

The Tuition Schedule 2021-2022, Re-Enrollment Application Form for the 2021-2022 school year and Registration Form for Summer Camp 2021 were emailed to all families. Please let us know if you have missed it.

⇒ If you have decided to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please complete the **Re-Enrollment Form for the 2021-2022 school year** electronically and email it back to us along with the **\$50.00 re-enrolment fee (\$25.00 for the second child)** no later than **April 15th, 2021**.

Check or QuickPay via Zelle are acceptable.

⇒ **The 10% annual tuition security deposit is due April 15th.** *This will ensure a place for your child at our school and allow your child to continue in the same class with the same teachers.*

⇒ The tuition contract will reflect a 10% discount for the second child's tuition and 20% for the third one's.

⇒ **The Summer Camp registration has begun. The application and \$30.00 early registration fee are due April 15th.**

Please note: If the registration forms will be returned after April 15, your child will be considered as a new student with a \$100.00 registration fee for the next School Year and \$50.00 registration fee for Summer Camp requirement.

~ It is important that we know who is enrolled in Summer Camp and 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 Summer Camp or School Year cannot be guaranteed a spot in the same class or at school at all. ~ We look forward to another great year with your family!

IN APRIL:

- ◆ **March 29 (M)—April 2 (F) – Spring Break**
- ◆ **April 5 (M) - School Resumes**
- ◆ **April 5 - 8 (M-Th) - Elementary Class 4-day Trip to Nature's Classroom—CANCELLED due to Covid**
- ◆ **April 9 (F) - Virtual Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day (North Rooms)**
 - * **No School** for all Elementary students **on Conference Day, April 9.**
 - * The Zoom link for your virtual conference will be sent to you on Monday, April 5th.
- ◆ **April 19—23 – Earth Week**
- ◆ **April 21– 23 (W- F) - Spruce It Up! Mulching Days.**

NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

This month was very different than a year ago. As I wrote last year, we were preparing to go virtual for a few weeks. Little did we know how long or when the quarantine would be over. Now a year later, we are in-person and having great new adventures in masks of many fun themes. Thanks for keeping us all safe so that we could be in person all year!

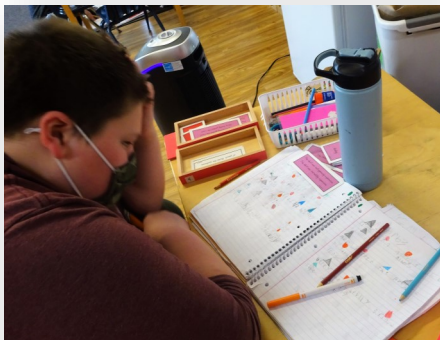
Ireland is on our minds as we celebrated St Patrick's Day with a little history, geography, storytelling, and culture. Kids enjoyed a gold coin, Irish Soda bread and some Irish music and dancing. I entertained them with Limericks and we did Irish blessings before lunch...thanks Mrs. Martin! It is always a pleasure to share my love of Ireland with the kids each year.



Nature class has been all about Spring. We have been observing new changes in the park and on our walk: airs of ducks, new green growth, buds on trees. Patrick, a Boy Scout, even demonstrated how a magnifying glass can make a bit of fire on a leaf!



Everyone is more motivated by our new goal sheets. If a student finishes their goals by Friday, then the student may have free choice after snack. Most of the students have been able to plan and to make wise choices. Some have my guidance to help them. It has definitely motivated students to accomplish more work at a time in the year when the kids begin to grow a little sluggish.



We have begun vertebrate animals, which all of the kids love. We completed our last rock type and are working on the rock cycle.

In US History, I gave a lesson on the Depression, Women Voting and some of the amendments to the constitution at the beginning of the 20th century.

In Physical Science, we are learning about simple machines. We watched a video on levers and they made a lever to demonstrate. We also drew the 3 different types of levers.

In reading, we continue to work in our book club groups. All are working on different parts of speech or word study development: synonyms and antonyms. We continue to hone our writing skills by learning what makes a good story, looking at different types of characters and settings as well as different genres.



In math, some are working on addition fact learning, some division, some lowest common multiples and greatest common factors and others are rounding decimals. In geometry, some are working on quadrilaterals- naming and finding perimeter while others are working on triangles- parts of, different types and bisecting angles.

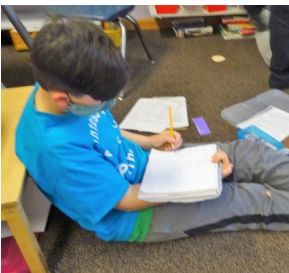
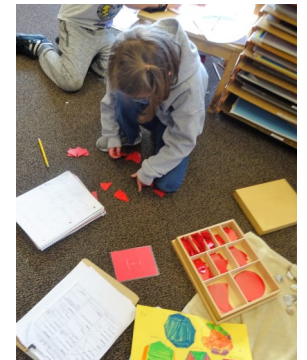
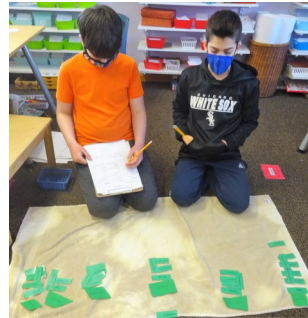
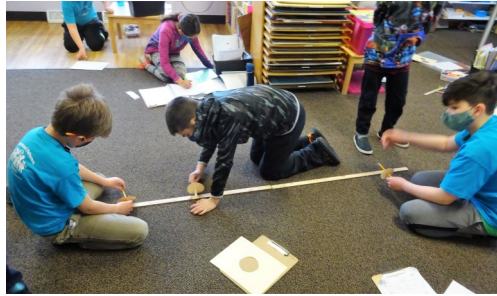


In specials, we have been looking at ways to do cardio in a fun way-through dance. And yes, I taught them the Chicken Dance, the Electric Slide and the Cha - Cha Slide. We listened to jazz, especially Louis Armstrong and did portraits in art.

Finally, we had a virtual tour of a farm from IL Agriculture in the Classroom. They received bookmarks, pencils and soy-based crayons. We learned about horses, cattle, chickens and pigs. Did you know that the wattle and comb on a chicken keeps them cool? Or that Holstein cows are the dairy cows? Or that the pumpkin capital of the world is Morton, IL? It was a great lesson for us all.

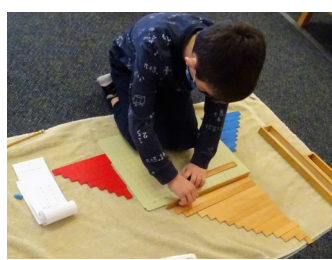
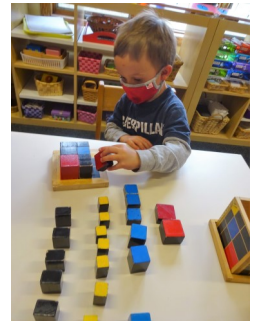
MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



The last few months have passed with incredible speed! The children continue to expand their work cycles and push themselves in all areas. The desire for more challenging work is becoming evident now. They have evolved into a harmonious group, displaying the academic and social skills of a "normalized" Montessori classroom. "The children are now working as if I did not exist."- Maria Montessori. Well almost!



During the month of March we had many celebrations. Beginning with Pulaski Day, we discussed what a calvary is and how he is credited as being the father of the American Cavalry. We discussed Presidents Day and the two United States presidents we celebrate on this day. We found them on our coins.

March 2nd also brought us Dr Seuss's birthday. We celebrated the whole week reading stories such as "The Lorax", "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish", "Horton Hears a Who", and of course "The Cat in the Hat". The older children made word family of "hat", a Lorax craft and cat whisker masks. What an interesting year to celebrate Seuss! A week or two later one of the children exclaimed "I am the Lorax, I speak for the trees."



The children all enjoyed St. Patrick's Day. We had crafts with rainbows, shamrocks, and pots of gold. Ms. Bridget dropped in dressed in green and gave all of the children gold coins and a little background on St Patrick's Day. A few of the children set out to create leprechaun traps. We had no luck! There were gold coins to count, shamrocks to match to our numerals. Four Leaf clovers set in resin to look at, and 4 leaf clover searches as well as many other fun crafts and coloring pages and St

Patty's books to explore.

It was a pleasure to speak with all of you at conferences. Thank you for participating. We loved seeing your smiling faces! It is a pleasure to work with such a wonderful group of children. Kudos to all of you.

March also brought us the first day of spring and we began preparing for our Easter celebrations. We changed our classroom colors from green to pink and blue. Eggs and bunnies arrived as well. We discussed the signs of Spring and each child shared the signs they have seen outside buds, flowers and sprouts. All of the signs of new growth and renewal. What a wonderful time to review all of the Seasons and months of the year.



In math the division, multiplication, addition and subtraction boards have been very popular. The children are repeating these activities and working towards mastery of the facts. A few fun and popular variations are using dominos, cards and dice for addition too. Also, the 45 Layout (Place Value math work) has been constructed almost every day this month. Word building to create stories and roll a story are also very popular. You can find printable roll a story online. They are a very fun language extension.

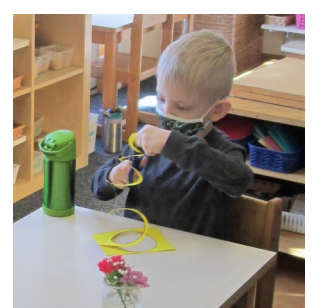
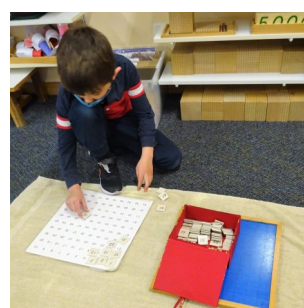
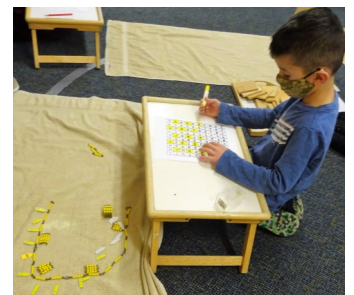
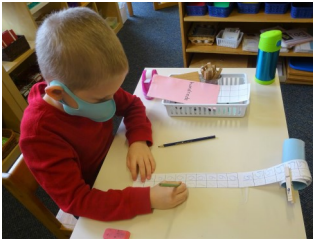


Happy 6th Birthday to Madison and Kayleigh Skocz! We enjoyed celebrating with you. Thank you for the cheese and crackers. The children loved playing the "Guess Who" game with the twins' baby pictures, thank you for including it. It was a wonderful birthday for all.

March came in like a lion and as of this now, did actually go out like a lamb! The children have been enjoying the mild weather.

MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM



Ms. Joey, Ms. Carole

The warmer temperatures and sunshine have been a welcome change, Happy Spring! We began March with a week filled with fun activities and stories to commemorate the life of Dr. Seuss. Some of the children created their own artwork with Truffula Trees and the Lorax while others made Cat in The Hat whiskers.



One of the many stories read was "Wacky Wednesday", when the children arrived at school, they discovered some things in the classroom where not quite right. The clock was upside down, there was a can of soup where a work should be, a shoe was hanging from the curtain rod, a lamp wearing a cowboy hat? They all had a great time counting how many wacky things they could find in the classroom.



We visited the country of Ireland this past month to learn about the origins of Saint Patrick's Day. The children listened to traditional Irish music, looked at books, made shamrock crowns, and enjoyed a visit from Mrs. Bridget, who looked a lot like a leprechaun! She shared gold coins with all the children.



The children love to discover things for themselves, and learn best when engaged in self-chosen activities. We know each child has different abilities and interests learning at their own rate, and through repetition the children are allowed to work on something until they have mastered it.



One of the foundation skills for learning is focus and concentration, a day is never interrupted by having to move on to the next lesson before finishing the current one. It is amazing to watch the children learn to think for themselves as they grow in confidence and experience.



This month we celebrated Odin's 5th Birthday, Happy Birthday Odin! Thank you for sharing your story.



It was wonderful to see all our families for conferences, it is such a privilege and a joy working with your children.

MARCH PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



*"The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence."
~ Maria Montessori*

