

Montessori Pathways' News

November

Montessori Pathways

The best way to discovery!



School

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

I believe that November is a month that not only begins the holiday season, but also brings the spirit of giving and sharing. Following the Montessori approach, we at Montessori Pathways would like to teach our students the importance of sharing, giving, and helping, which will let them continue to be proud citizens of a country that is ready to help people around the world in any difficult situation.



"Children must grow not only in the body but in the spirit, and the mother longs to follow the mysterious spiritual journey of the beloved one who tomorrow will be the intelligent, divine creation, man."

~ Maria Montessori

Annual Community Harvest

"You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving."

~ Robert Louis Stevenson

We concluded November with a Giving with Gratitude Week, when kids and their families were able to donate food and other items to the 28th Annual Community Harvest, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Together we collected and donated **685 pounds** of food and other items.



It was a great chance to teach our students not only the importance of giving thanks for what they get, but also the importance of giving.



Kids are Helping Kids

Montessori Pathways' students began this season of giving with the **Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF** event. While collecting candy for themselves during Halloween night, many of our kindergarten and elementary students were also collecting money for UNICEF, the foundation that helps kids around the world.

You should have seen the kids' excitement when, after counting the money, they realized that together they raised **\$352.74**.

This amount can cover basic health needs of more than 40 children for three months, immunize 147 children against measles for life, vaccinate 465 children against polio for life, and provide 64 packets of high energy biscuits for malnourished children or can cover a pump to give an entire village clean water.



Thank you!

- ◆ Thank you, parents, for all your help and support and for giving your kids a chance to feel the Thanksgiving spirit!
- ◆ Thank you to our Elementary students for helping to load the donated items for the Crystal Lake Food Pantry!
- ◆ Thank you, Melissa Thomforde, Maddy's mom, and Eric Fistler, Samuel's dad, for helping us deliver all donated items for the Community Harvest to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.



PARENT CORNER

"Will My Child Be Ready for Public Kindergarten?"

While preparing for the Fall Parent/Teacher conferences, we came across this question multiple times in the parent/teacher questionnaires. I would like to touch on this subject.

The Montessori curriculum is focused on preparing students for the Montessori Kindergarten, so it is very important to understand the difference between Kindergarten in a traditional vs. a Montessori school.

In traditional education, kindergarten is the beginning of the elementary level, where children begin with the basics (sounds, numbers, colors, shapes, etc), since it is designed to accommodate those who have not attended preschool. These same concepts are covered at the beginning of the Montessori Early Childhood class (at 3-4 years of age).

The Montessori Kindergarten, however, is the final stage of the 3 year cycle of the Early Childhood Education.

Please remember that Montessori (Primary and Elementary) functions in 3-year cycles, the benefits and knowledge of which cannot be fully realized by removing the child mid-cycle.

The third year is crucial in culminating and solidifying the work of the previous years. If you've already allowed your children to enter the Montessori environment, give them the chance to complete the cycle of learning that they've begun.

The Montessori learning experience is cumulative: what a child learns in the kindergarten year builds on what was learned in previous Montessori years. The kindergarten year is the culmination of this learning when the child internalizes these early concrete experiences, building a strong educational foundation. The value of the first two years cannot be fully realized if the child does not continue working with the Montessori materials to complete the three-year cycle.

"Does Montessori Prepare Children for Traditional School?"

Click here to learn about it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gh11LXOgZF0&feature=youtu.be>

Coming School Events



Montessori Pathways



- ◆ **December 12 (W) at 10:00am— School-Wide Trip to “Shrek, The Musical” at Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire**
- ◆ **December 17 (M) at 1:00pm— Kindergarten and Elementary Students Trip to Fountain Retirement Community in Crystal Lake** for having a social time and singing Christmas Carols together.
- ◆ **December 19 (W) at 5:00pm— “The Nutcracker Suite” - Montessori Pathways’ Winter Performance at First Congregational Church in Crystal Lake**
 - ◇ *Please RSVP by December 7th.*
 - ◇ *If your child is an All Day student, please pick up your child from school no later than 4:30pm that day.*

◆ **December 24 – January 4 – Winter Break**

- ◆ Montessori Pathways offers **WINTER WONDER CAMP** for your children during winter break.

*If you would like to sign up your child(ren) for **Winter Camp**, please return the registration forms, along with the payment, no later than **Friday, December 7th***

Note: The camp will operate if there are no less than 7 students daily. Otherwise, camp will be cancelled. The decision will be made by December 7th based on the number of applications.

If you are planning to enroll your child in Winter Camp, please return this form with payment on time.

◆ **January 7 (M) – School Resumes**

- ◆ **January 15 (Tu) – 6:00pm - Montessori Fun / Educational Night for Pre-K and K Students and Parents:**

◇ **“Good Enough VS Becoming Accomplished – Montessori Kindergarten and Elementary Education” – Workshop for Pre-K and K Parents.**

◇ **Bingo / Pizza Night** – for Pre-K and K Students.

- ◆ **January 21 (M) - No School** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

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

- ◆ **January (TBA) - 1:00pm— Sledding at Veteran Acres Park – Kindergarten and Elementary students**

- ◆ **January 25 (F) – all day by appt.— Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day**

- ◆ **No School** for School Day Elementary Students on Conference Day

- ◆ Child Care is provided for ESD (7:45am - 4:15pm) / All Day (6:45-am-6:00pm) Elementary students



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

“The child has a different relation to his environment from ours... the child absorbs it. The things he sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul.

He incarnates in himself all in the world about him that his eyes see and his ears hear.”

~ Maria Montessori, “The Absorbent Mind”

The class continues to hum with new learning. Routines are established, and many are able to help and can find materials that are needed.



Academically, we are enjoying learning together and I have seen more pairs working together. This is a huge part of the Montessori elementary class- collaborative work. Not only are they able to learn from each other academically but socially. Working in teams is a huge part of adult work.

Math is becoming our focus. Kids are choosing the work more as they see the different materials being used by their friends. They also like to move ahead once they have shown success with a concept. Many are working independently on a concept and then will help others work who are learning the concept to work on the skill.

In Botany, students learn the various parts of the plant, the purpose of that part, aspects of the part and the naming of the basic parts of the plant. We have done this with the leaf and the seed so far. The kids enjoyed learning how seeds are dispersed and dissecting a bean seed which is a *dictyoleron*.



In Zoology, we have examined many simple invertebrates: porifera, cnidaria, the 3 worms (platyhelminth, nematode and annelid) and are now investigating the mollusk. This is our largest group so far and will spend some time learning the various parts and animals in this group.



In Geography, we have finished the space outside of our Earth and are now exploring our Earth. I presented the basic land and water forms on our Earth and then we will look at many more that make up our Earth.

In History, we finished time and are now looking at time though the history of humans. We looked at the Basic Fundamental Needs of all humans and will then explore some of the great civilizations to determine how they met these needs.

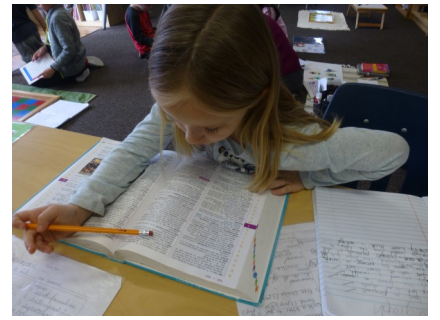


Our chemistry study is completed so now we delve into Physics. I taught the students mass and weight and we will continue this study for the rest of the year.

Language Arts still is at the forefront of our learning. We read, write and study words daily. Every day is fun and full of adventure.

NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Elementary Class



NEWS FROM THE EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN CLASS



Ms. Karen

The Gift of Giving Continues:

We talked about the experience of giving through UNICEF in the last newsletter. But just a little follow up anecdote: one of the children asked if they could put some of their candy in the UNICEF box when they brought it back because otherwise the children would have to use all the money to buy food and would not get to have any candy! Several said they would do it again next Halloween for the "Children of the World who do not have enough to eat". Such generosity of heart!. Maria Montessori recognized that children grow in their empathy and desire to help.

It has been a time of giving. The trip to the Food Pantry was so informative. The children were very attentive. It was a good experience for all. People working at the Food Pantry were impressed by the attention and behavior of our students.



We will have one more opportunity to give this year. On Monday, December 17th, we will be going to the Fountains, a residential senior residence in Crystal Lake. Preparations are already beginning. We are planning a concert for the residents. The Kindergartners and Elementary will share "the stage". This has always been a very special and memorable experience.

Thanksgiving Song:

We practiced the song a bit every day. Most of the children became quite comfortable. They were excited that they could get their song out on Thanksgiving Day (not before) to sing for the family. Most planned to hide their song under the bed! ("My mom won't look there!") An enjoyable time was had by all as they framed their song as a gift. They had to punch the holes for sewing, then "laced" around the edge with yarn, and prepared their envelope in which to bring their special gift home.

Mathematical Thinking:

We have introduced and practiced "exchanging", an activity using concrete materials work out the process of what we called "borrowing" and "carrying" when we learned it in school.

We begin with demonstrating exactly how 10 ones equals 1 ten, and how 10 tens equals 100. Because of the precision of the math materials, we can actually do it!. This lead to some children adding 4 place value numbers accurately and with visual help from the precise materials.. Public school teachers consistently report that place value is one of the least understood math concepts. Children show difficulty in understanding and precisely carrying out mathematical functions when it involves exchanging. So, wonderful that the materials give an opportunity for UNDERSTANDING the process. Knowing how the process works also opens up other options. Recently some of the children have begun to do 4 place value addition, beginning with no exchanging, but then moving comfortably into exchanging in one or more places.

There has also been a lot of interest in the process of both multiplication and division. More on that next time.

Reading/Writing:

As the children have become more proficient in being able to associate a particular letter with a particular sound, both reading and writing have taken on new meaning and interest for the children. We have increased the number and kinds of activities that require some work with reading by sounding out letters and blending those sounds. Also writing their own phonetically spelled words.

Work with geometric metal insets is also popular. The child makes the outline with chosen shape, then fills in the outline with colored pencils of their own choosing. Eventually the designs become more intricate. He does this by superimposing multiple shapes. In addition to creative design, the use of insets helps the child to develop and refine their pencil control.

The Curriculum:

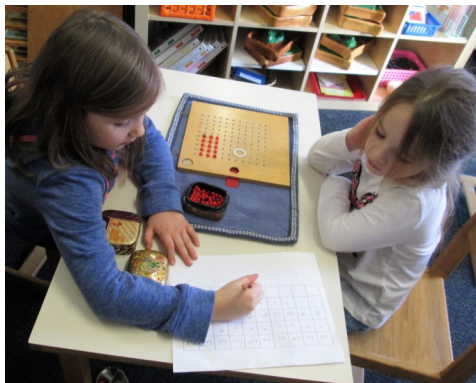
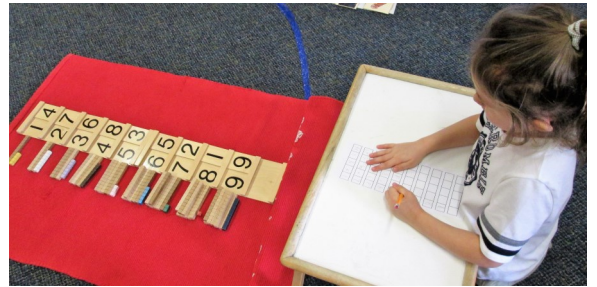
From the above examples, you can see that although your child is in the same environment daily, the environment "changes for him as he/she is given new lessons to increase their repertoire or to increase the challenge of the materials already presented by adding a new component. The environments "grows" with the child. And as they grow, they take delight in their new skills and joy in helping others. "I can do that all by myself" is heard more frequently.

They are so independent in multi-step activities: baking, art easel, bank game, the decanomial, finding points of interest in the classroom. "I can do it myself" is heard often!



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

Kindergarten Extended Day Class



NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)



Ms. Jennifer

For Art Class in November we worked on a Fall Mixed-media collage featuring an acorn with Zentangle line drawing. Didn't these turn out great? We painted paper leaves with watercolors & then splattered them with black tempera paint. The children really enjoyed painting the leaves & they produced the most beautiful collection of fall foliage I've ever seen!



In the last days of November, we really had some fun creating our own hand-painted papers with gift cards! I surprised the students by pushing all the tables & chairs out of the way--we weren't going to be needing them for this project--they were so excited & curious about what they'd be doing!



Next, we crumpled up some brown craft paper for the nut of the acorn & applied both metallic-paint & ink to it creating an amazing pattern, texture, & sheen to the piece. Didn't these turn out great? You should have seen their faces when I instructed them to crumple up the brown paper acorn that they just finished tracing & cutting out! They were like..."you want us to WHAT???" They really liked that part! Then, I taught them, through demonstration on an easel, several *zentangle* patterns to illustrate the cap portion of the acorn. The children loved incorporating several different mediums into a simple collage that would still generate a high-impact response. And, I loved challenging my students to be brave, push the envelope, & tackle a seemingly intimidating project step-by-step, so they can get that "wow" response for themselves from their work! They continually impress me with their talents!



I laid down a huge plastic tarp, spread out big pieces of paper in two rows with an aisle down the middle, where I walked, dripping globs of paint as the children ooh-ed & aaah-ed, their gift cards in hand, so eager to get at that paint! At one point, as I'm walking, a paint bottle in each hand, dispensing paint from the heavens onto these eager artists' canvases, myself so giddy with excitement over the idea of breaking all the conventional norms, I turned to the classroom teacher and, with a huge smile on my face, I said, "Can you believe they pay me to have this much fun?!" Everyone enjoyed this one! There's more happening with these hand-painted masterpieces...stay tuned for the results in the December newsletter!



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



It is November and the South Room continues to operate like a well-oiled machine: new children arrive and the classroom community grows and welcomes the new children with friendship and kindness. Whenever a new child enrolls in our school, they provide a great opportunity to review the classroom rules and to revisit grace and courtesy, specifically how to be kind and patient when helping the new children acclimate to the classroom.

We have been continuing our emphasis on the changes in nature and the seasons and holidays. The first day that it snowed, two children were so excited to announce that it was "Christmastime," so this turned into a great conversation about the seasons and weather, and that it can snow in autumn and how certain weather does not necessarily mean that a particular holiday is soon. It was a great way to introduce seasons and months of the year; another example of "following the child" and embracing those opportunities to explore new concepts that are coming from the child's own interests and questions.

Ms. Urana is a very creative and crafty teacher and she has been adding some wonderful new activities to the classroom. Recently she has added several new works including: parts of the scarecrow, a coin identification work (quarters, nickels, dimes, and pennies), a snowflake counting work, and the most popular – a mini volcano that actually erupts! She has also been very busy in the art area, adding several seasonal craft projects: dot painting with q-tips to create Indian corn, fingerprint stamping to make adorable little turkeys, as well as fall/Thanksgiving themed poking and cutting works. She is such an incredible contribution to our classroom and the children love her seasonal activities so much.



We also introduced personal journals to the children this month, and they have been quite an exciting activity. Of course, most children this age love to free draw and most would sit and do just that all day long. However, we obviously want them to experience all areas of the classroom. The journals are a great way to allow them time to draw, but with an added expectation that they also attempt (at their own level) to write.

Depending on the age and ability of each child, the journal is a way to encourage several writing skills ranging from: learning to hold a pencil with a solid/correct grip, learning prewriting skills such as drawing straight and curved lines (that will eventually help them write letters and numbers), practice writing

their letters and numbers, learning to write their own names and the names of the friends and teachers, sounding out single words to label their drawings, sounding out many words to tell a story, and so on and so forth.



Truly the opportunities seem endless and it has been a great way for the children to try to sound out words independently, since this journal is just for them and that means there is no "right or wrong" in their journals just "doing their best." We weren't sure exactly how the journals would work, but it has become a great way to encourage more free-writing as well as a fun and creative way for the children to use their reading/writing skills at their own level and in a low/no-pressure way.

Thank you all for attending your parent/teacher conferences! It's always nice to sit down with you and be able to tell you about all the wonderful things your children are doing.

Since the holiday season is upon us, and as a way to connect home and school at this special time of year, we would like to invite South Room Families to share a family tradition, holiday-related or not, with the class.

If interested, you are invited to visit our classroom from 11:00-11:20 and share something special about your family with the children.

Some examples from previous years: *Christmas tree ornament collection, favorite book, gingerbread houses, Hanukkah latkes, Diwali- Festival of Lights, etc.* If you are interested in participating, please email the school with a few dates that might work for you (December 3rd – December 21st) and a brief explanation of what you will be sharing. Also, if you have any questions or need further clarification please email the school or call.



We are looking forward to December!

NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

South Room



PRE-K EXTENDED DAY PHOTO GALLERY



Ms. Andrea



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM



Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

Brrrr.... This past month's temperatures were certainly colder than expected but, much to the joy of the children, brought us our first snowfall. It only took one child's keen observation, "It's snowing outside!!" Children quickly headed to any and all windows to watch the snow blanket our playground. Excitement bubbled up with the anticipation of playing in the snow after lunch....snow angels, snowman, sledding and shoveling; So much fun! Thank you for providing all the necessary snow gear for your child to enjoy these experiences.

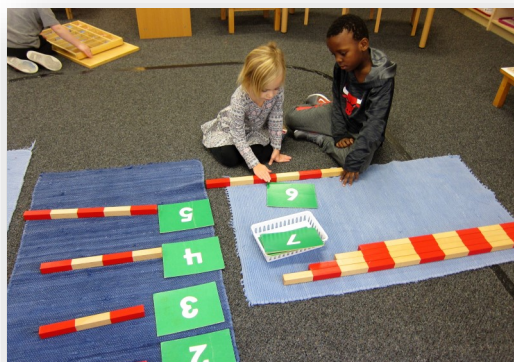


The children have become more independent and confident in making their own work choices than earlier in the year. We are so encouraged to see the children greet their friends with hellos and smiles as they arrive. Some of our children are coming into the room with an idea while others enjoy time with a friend before they choose their own individual works. We've observed friendly conversation while drawing a picture, cutting apples or carrots.



In the math area, associating quantities with numerals is quite popular this month. We have been going on "number hunts" and playing The Memory Game. Either game can be done individually or with a friend. When playing the memory game numbers 1 – 10 are written on small slips of paper and a box of counters are placed a distance away from their work space. A child randomly selects a number, counts and brings the appropriate quantity back to the work area. These 2 activities are fun little games to help master their understanding of one-to-one correspondence and numeral recognition.

Some of the older children are working with the decimal system, doing simple addition using the strip board and red/blue table rods. Presentations using the Division and Multiplication material have also been given.



We continue to work on sounds and have begun introducing beginning sound material when appropriate. We are matching objects and/or pictures to letter sounds, or matching rhyming word groups. Some of our beginning readers are so excited to bring their book home and read with you.



A fun language game presented this month was the I-Spy Game. At this time, it's a teacher directed activity but an older child could lead this as well. Objects from around the room are selected and placed in basket (pitcher, fork, spoon, napkin, apple, etc). Once each object is identified the game begins, "I spy something that begins with the 'a' sound". If a child selects the incorrect object another clue is given (ex. I'm thinking of something that starts with 'a' and it's red). As the game continues there's usually a few more children squeezing around the rug wanting to play too. As children become familiar and can easily identify beginning sounds we then focus on ending and middle sounds. Your child will take this skill of phonemic awareness along with letter/sound recognition and become a successful reader.

Earlier this month we talked about how nature is changing and preparing for the winter months ahead. Leaves changing color, colder temperatures, shorter days and different ways animals adapt were discussed and read about. "Trees in the Fall" and "Let's Look at Fall" were the books we enjoyed reading together.



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM (CONTINUATION)



Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine

.One of the songs we sang and acted out was "Little Squirrel Went Scampering". The children loved taking turns pretending to be a squirrel and acting out the movements while the rest of us sang along.

Little squirrel went scampering on a sunny day

Little squirrel went scampering, how he loved to play

He shook his tail, he dug for nuts and he ate some too

Until he heard this quiet sound (ruff, ruff, ruff)

Little squirrel went scampering right back to his house



We also spent some time exploring the idea of *being thankful* (something that we love and feel is important in our lives). We also talked about how the celebration of thanksgiving brings families and friends together; which is what we did as a class. To help with our mini feast some children prepared grapes, arranged pumpkin muffins on a platter or cut cheese. Others passed out napkins and served the food. As we ate together we expressed what we are thankful for: Moms and Dads, families, pets and animals, shoes, homes and sharing food with others were things they mentioned.

Leaves of various shapes, sizes and colors were brought in and identified. Oak, Maple, Red Bud, Bradford Pear and Sycamore were some of the types of leaves brought in. We talked about the different parts of a leaf taking special notice of their margins. In the art area leaf painting was available. Individual discovery of blending 2 primary colors into vibrant oranges and purples was very exciting for the children. "I see orange in my leaf now!"

It was a very sweet time.

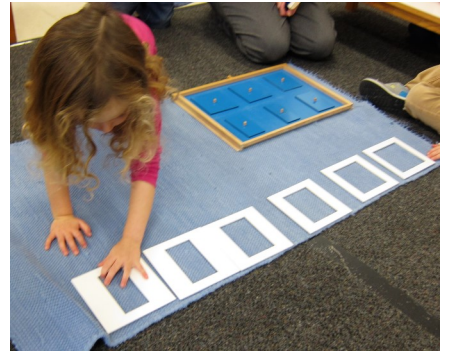


During the last couple weeks of November, we began reading Thanksgiving books together. We introduced the Pilgrim's journey on the Mayflower and their first Thanksgiving. Bringing out the globe, we talked about where the Pilgrims began their journey and where it ended. We now understand a ship, not an airplane or spaceship brought them to America. Also, how the Native American Indians helped the Pilgrims when they arrived. We have an activity on the shelf where the children can retell the story with a friend if they choose.



NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

East Room



NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS



Ms. Donna

Thanksgiving Fun Facts: The First Thanksgiving dinner was in 1621 with the English settlers (Pilgrims) and the Wampanoag Indians. They celebrated a successful harvest season. It lasted for three days. Besides eating they played games and had shooting contests. In 1863 President Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday to be held on the last Thursday every November. In 1941 Congress changed it to the fourth Thursday of November. A Cornucopia is a big basket shaped like a goat's horn. Inside are fruits, vegetables, and other good food. It is a part of Thanksgiving when we are thankful for all the good food we get to eat.

Poems: The Turkey by Toni a Gaffe

*The turkey is a funny bird.
His head goes wobble, wobble.
He only knows a single word:
Gobble, gobble, gobble.*



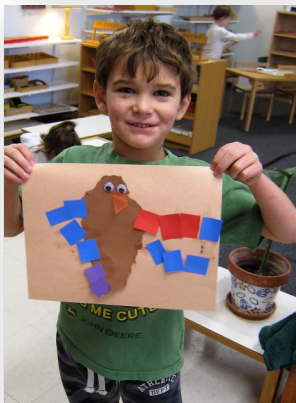
Songs:

*Gobble, gobble says the turkey,
Soon will be Thanksgiving Day.
Will you eat me? How you treat me,
I'll quickly run away.*



Art:

- Marble painting turkeys
- Hand print turkeys saying what we are thankful for
- Overlapping turkeys decorated differently
- Owls made of paper
- Tracing owls, leaves, and an acorn



Owl facts: An owl is a type of bird. Many owls eat small animals such as mice and rats. They have sharp claws called talons. An owl's call sounds like "whooh,whooh,whooh!"

Science: Learning about our five senses (hear, see, smell, feel and taste). We matched up pictures to go with these sentences:

- I can taste the
- I can hear the
- I can see the
- I can touch the
- I can smell the



Games:

- The Farmer in the Dell
- London Bridge is Falling Down
- Twister version using the color you had chosen to be able to move forward. If the spinner landed on your color, you were able to move to the next circle.
- Exchange game (two names would be called and those two had to change places)
- Do what the picture card showed (sit, stand, etc.)
- Thanksgiving Bingo



Animals:

Giraffe facts: They are the tallest land animals. A giraffe's legs are taller than most grown-up people. Its long neck makes it even taller. They eat leaves and use their long tongues to grab food. Giraffes live in groups called herds.

KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Trips to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry and Bank



More Wonderful Moments at Pathways in November

