

# Montessori Pathways' News

Montessori Pathways

The best way to discovery!



School

## November

### 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.

### Annual Community Harvest

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

~ Robert Louis Steven-

We concluded November with a **Giving with Gratitude Week**, when kids and their families were able to donate food and other items to the 32nd Annual Community Harvest, which will benefit clients of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry. Together we collected and donated **745 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.



**"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

### What kids are thankful for?

Our elementary students made the Thanksgiving Greeting Cards for their families. They wrote what they are thankful for there. It was so interesting to see the progression of their thoughts and feelings.

- \* 1-2 graders—thankful for mommy, daddy, food, water....
- \* 3-5 graders—thankful for friends, families, fishing, trees, traveling...
- \* 6 graders—thankful for nice people, technologies, hospitals, education, independence, democracy...

Way to go, friends! We are thankful for having all of you!!!



# Thank you from the heart



- ◆ Thank you, parents, for all of your help, support, and participation in the kids' learning process, 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, Chris Salcedo (Ava's dad), Danielle Tollaksen (Layla's mom), and Alina Zalipska (Evelina's mom) for helping us deliver all donated items for the Community Harvest to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.



## Parents' Corner



### ~ Process over Product in Montessori Classroom ~

It is not easy to be a Montessori Parent. Tolerating your child's shoes being on the wrong feet, sitting on your hands while they flip their coat thirty times before finally getting it on their body independently, and remaining unemotional but empathetic during meltdowns all come with the territory. Another aspect of Montessori that can be difficult to accept as a parent is the idea of valuing "process over product."

Most of the work a child does in their Primary class does not involve the creation of a physical product that the child can take home to show Mom and Dad, especially when they are on the younger end of the spectrum. Instead, the experience itself with the materials is what is important—not the completion of a worksheet, test, or other physical proof that a child has worked on a certain topic. That makes it tricky as a parent to know what your child is working on and how well they understand it. They are not bringing anything home for you to assess! And to make matters worse, when you ask your child what they did at school today, they answer, "Nothing."

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## COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS



in December



### Christmas Tree Lane in Downtown of Crystal Lake



Montessori Pathways School loves to support Crystal Lake Downtown by sponsoring their amazing events. This time we are happy to participate in Christmas Tree Lane Decoration. Go and find the Montessori Pathways' Christmas Tree in CL downtown.



◆ **December 1—18—Celebrating Winter: Winter Holidays Activity Month**

◆ **December 5—9 ( M—F ) —Spirit Week at Montessori Pathways**

Every day of this week will be special. Kids and teachers are welcome to dress up according to theme of the day.

- **Monday—Montessori Pathways Day** (wear schools blue t-shirts on top of long sleeve shirt)
- **Tuesday—Comfy Day** (wear your favorite pajamas or any other comfy clothes)
- **Wednesday—Go Team! Day** (wear your favorite sport teams' jersey, t-shirt, and /or cap)
- **Thursday—My Favorite Color Day** - (wear anything of your favorite color)
- **Wacky Friday** (wear mix and match socks, mismatched clothes, make a crazy hair)

◆ **December 14 (W) - Montessori Community Service—Elementary Class Trip to Crystal Pines Rehabilitation / Health Care Center.**

Our elementary students will participate in Craft Morning together with Crystal Pines' residents.

◆ **December 14 (W) at 5:30pm —Family Reading Under the Stars Night (Primary Classes)**



◆ **December 19 (M) - December 30 (F) - No school; Winter Break—Enjoy the Holiday Season!!!**

◆ **January 2 (M) - No school; New Year Day Observed**

◆ **January 3 (Tu) - School resumes**

## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



Ms. Bridget

As October changed to November, we added a new focus: Gratitude. Starting with our Giving with Gratitude week, we began talking and thinking about ways in which we are grateful. I then passed out sheets to the students so that they may record ways that they are thankful. Every day I pull out a slip to read a way in which someone in our class is grateful. This slip is then taped to our gratitude tree.



We also did a tour of the Crystal Lake Food Pantry to see the facility and see where our donated items are placed. The students had many great questions about the process of getting food and how the food is distributed.



Another opportunity to be grateful was our Thanksgiving Feast.

Here were the steps:



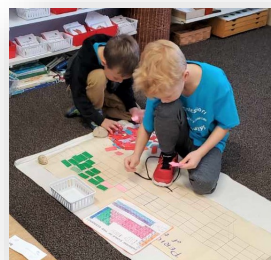
1. During the first few weeks of November, I brought in cook book that students could browse. Once a student selected a dish, and I made sure it was able to be made in our class, it went before the class to vote. This year, we had ham/pineapple/cherry skewers, macaroni and cheese, green salad, stuffed strawberries and brownies in a mug. Fruit punch was our drink.
2. I made a list of all the ingredients and my sixth graders did the math to make sure we asked for enough ingredients. Then students picked what they would like to bring in for the meal.
3. On the day of the feast, the students were put into teams to prepare each dish with my supervision.
4. Finally, we ate and appreciated our great meal. Even my pickiest eaters tried everything and enjoyed it.



Everyday, Ms Alena and I take pictures of your children at work or play. It is enjoyable to us to be able to catch these cool moments to share with you. This is a good opportunity for you to look at the pictures and ask your child questions. "What are you doing in this picture?" "How do you do this work?" "Who else does this work?" It will give you a fuller picture as to what we experience here every day.



Since many kids are at different levels, this is an opportunity to also look at other students to see what they are accomplishing. You can ask your child questions of these pictures as well. "What is this student working on?" "How old is this student?" "Have you done this work too?" Lots of great dialogue can come from these pictures.



Finally, we are changing some of our specials. For the first three months we have been doing kickball in PE and Spanish class on Tuesday. For the next three months, we will be doing yoga and Music class, focusing on playing recorder.



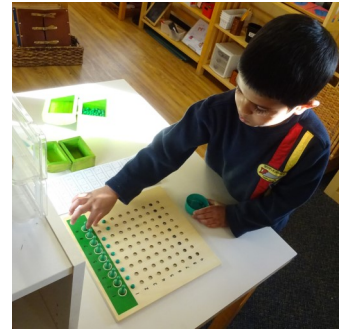
# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class



# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten Extended Day Group



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



What crazy weather we have had this month! Our first 9 days were like summer and then boom! November 10th was 78 degrees and the next day, November 11 we got an arctic blast! Nine more days of freezing temps! Brrr, thanks for sending appropriate clothing for the cold snap. As the snow continued during the week of the 14th the children ran to the windows and sat watching it fall in anticipation of playing in the snow. The inevitable cry of "Oh look, its Christmas!", prompted a discussion of the seasons again. It can snow in fall, winter, and spring. We skipped the fact that it did snow in the summer of 1816, which is fascinating! "The year without summer"!

Daylight savings time posed more conversation, why can't we go out in the afternoons? Unfortunately, mittens are wet and snowpants are soaked, but several children noticed it was much darker than previous days. It was a great way to re-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.

The children revisited our seasons work, what changes do we see, smell and experience? As our classroom discussion centered around Thanksgiving and giving with Gratitude. The South and East room kindergarten children went to Crystal Lake food pantry to help donate the food we as a community donated. It was a fascinating and interesting trip for all. The group was astounded by a question posed to them at the pantry. "What do you do if you are hungry?" "We eat!", was the reply. "What if you have no food?" The faces of the kindergarten children were priceless, it had never occurred to them some families have little food. The experience was a great lesson for all.



In the classroom the children are becoming more harmonious and delight in the chance to be a leader and help others. It is a uniquely Montessori experience to guide and teach younger children within the room. The older more experienced child gains self-confidence through the experience and masters the material. The younger child gains a mentor or resource within the room. Many younger children only seek the adult as a resource for help, they overlook the other "teachers" the experienced 4-, 5- and 6-year-olds. When we suggest asking a friend, expressions are blank. As the children learn peers are a source of amazing help they begin to seek each other and look forward to also being a helper. A very important aspect of the Montessori classroom is the multiage mix, for many reasons.

**[Check out this video resource for more understanding of the kindergarten experience in a Montessori classroom.](#)**

In the same manner, the social network of the class is enhanced by the entire group. When mistakes happen, the children, who are always astutely observant gather, offer suggestions and resolutions. A sweet tale this month, was of one child who hurt another. This led a nearby kindergarten child to lead a conversation of what our hands are for. "Hands are for helping", said one, "hands are for hugging", and then almost the entire group was drawn to give hugs to everyone. What a beautiful moment.

The Kindergarten and Pre-K group has been reading about the voyage of the Mayflower. The children learned what a pilgrim is, that they suffered a long and hard journey. When they arrived, there were no houses or stores. They had already run out of a lot of food onboard. The children then prepared a Thanksgiving snack mix to represent the hardships the pilgrims faced during the first year in America. Please see the attached definitions of each of the item's significance within the mix.



This group also began having a "Reading Buddy" every Tuesday at 2:30, the Elementary student's pair with pre-k and kindergarten to be read to and to read back to as ability allows. The children will have the same buddy or mentor for the rest of the year. It is a great motivator and community building activity.



December 14 is "Reading under the Stars night". Come and enjoy a family and group reading time on December 14th at 5:30 – 6:30 and enjoy some milk and cookies together. Watch for the email invitation, to follow.

Other community family opportunities are available every month! I encourage you to take advantage of these and email community events you happen upon throughout the year. Of note, currently is Home Depots has a train ornament making class. These are free and available once a month on the Home Depot website. Sign up and create family memories and keepsakes for a lifetime.

# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Joey, Ms. Carole



November has brought colder temperatures, falling leaves and excitement, like running to the window type of excitement to see snowflakes floating down from above! Not to mention the holiday season quickly approaching. This is also a wonderful time of year to show gratitude for all that we have. We would like to begin by thanking all our families for donating to the Crystal Lake Food Pantry.

Giving with Gratitude week has given us all the opportunity to stop and think during this busy time about others in need of food and shelter in our communities. The children were very excited to participate which led to discussions on how we could help. They then realized that we need food and other things every day, so we should donate all the time, every month! What a great way to stay involved in our communities while continuing to instill empathy and compassion for others.

The children have adjusted well to inside arrival, giving us an extra hour of work time. Because of the longer work time some of the children might experience false fatigue. False fatigue refers to a loss of focus. About one hour into the work cycle children can become restless, distracted, noisy and appear to lose interest. Montessori discovered that a brief disconnect happens at a predictable period during the work cycle. If left alone the child is given the opportunity to choose their next activity, redirect their own learning. They can discover the work that is exactly perfect for them at that time.



When allowed to move through restlessness, and distraction, without a quick fix, they learn to develop self-control. They then can focus longer and harder than before, suddenly there is a hum in the classroom and a feeling of calm. Letting children work through false fatigue encourages, independence, love of learning and confidence.



After much anticipation and asking... yes, baking is now available in the classroom! Baking is a multistep activity. It builds fine motor control, concentration and patience.

We begin with the dough already made in proportioned balls. The children must wash hands, gather the baking supplies, roll out the dough, cut the cookies, decorate them, place them on the baking tray, wash, dry, and put away their work. Then write name on a label, affix to bag, place cookies in the bag and done! Later on in the school year, we will have the children measure their own ingredients for dough. We encourage you to cook and bake with your children, it always leads to wonderful conversations and great memories.



In the afternoon program our elementary friends are now going to joined us for Reading Buddies. Everyone will have a partner or more, and will have the opportunity to read too, or listen to a book that they would like to share. Helping to develop language and listening skills, comprehension and confidence. We are all very excited to have our older friends spend time with us, learning together and growing relationships.



During community time this month we played games, read stories and had discussions about our country's beginnings and what it means to be thankful. In the science area parts of the turkey was introduced, we also discovered that the turkey is only native to North America. In the art area the children created their own turkeys and cornucopias. Our last day at school each child had fun preparing a special snack, using a waffle cone, grapes, apples and orange slices making a delicious horn of plenty! We also hope you enjoyed your very and carefully, prepared chocolate pretzels with sprinkles, the children really enjoyed making them for their families!

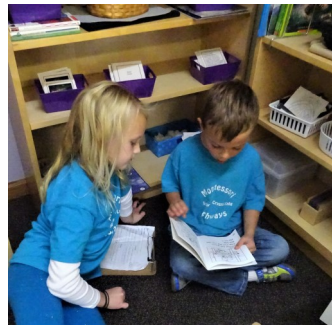
It has been a very busy and fulfilling month, what a joy and pleasure it is to work with your children. Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving

# NOVEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room



# MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



*"Preventing conflicts is the work of politics; establishing peace is the work of education."  
~ M. Montessori*

