

# Montessori

## Pathways'

### News

#### October 2014



#### Notes from Ms. Alena

We began October with a **field trip to Goebbert's Farm** with the Kindergarten and Elementary students. The kids had a chance to learn more about how farm harvest is grown and observe various animals from around the world. We would like to thank Kelly (Zoey's mom), Marion (Emily's grandma), Natalia (Daria's mom), and Nate (Ashlyn's dad) for coming along with us.



The next big hit of the month was our **Math Parent Evening** with Mr. Matt and Ms. Karen.

It's no big secret that success in math in middle and high school is based on memorization (facts, formulas, theorems, etc). However, it is also no secret that simple rote memorization that is not supported with an understanding of the concept, does not last longer than the test itself.

During this meeting, Ms. Karen and Mr. Matt showed how our Montessori materials help students understand and practice the concept in depth and detail prior to moving on to its memorization. They also showed us the transition from the more concrete math materials in Early Childhood to the more abstract ones in Elementary. Some of the parents had a chance to work with the materials and see how meaningful and exciting they really are.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to join us. Of course we only touched the tip of the iceberg during this meeting. Several parents expressed interest in having a second meeting to cover some of the more advanced materials. If you would be interested in attending, please let us know and we will set one up.



## ***"Will my child be ready for public Kindergarten?"***

We came across this question multiple times in the parent/teacher questionnaires. I would like to touch on this subject. Our 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 public Kindergarten, 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 our Early Childhood class (at 3-4 years of age). The Montessori Kindergarten, however, is the final stage of the 3 year Early Childhood cycle.

***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.***

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.

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I would like to extend a big thank you to Mr. Matt and the Elementary students for leading the Science Experiment Day at school. Our young friends were very excited to see the scientific tricks that our older students prepared and explained. You can find more details about it in Mr. Matt's news.

Also a big thank you to Ms. Karen and the Kindergarteners for preparing a scrumptious apple sauce for the whole school. Please ask you Kindergarteners about the process!



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We wrapped up the month with an exciting Halloween celebration. Thank you to all of the parents who celebrated with us.



### Coming School Events

- The deadline for our **Equal Exchange fundraiser** is quickly coming to a close. We hope you've had a chance to look through the catalog and pick something for yourself! If not, please remember that you are always welcome to donate directly to the school.

Though we have received some support, our playground project and the opening of the Upper Elementary needs as much support as we can get.

*Private schools thrive from the support and donations of our families, as the tuition is only enough to cover the daily operations of the school. We depend on the support of our entire community to sustain our unique and progressive educational program. Every penny counts!*

We would like to thank everyone who has already submitted their orders. Please note that the deadline is **Tuesday, November 4th.**

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- On **November 7<sup>th</sup>**, we will have a very exciting field trip to see **The Wizard of OZ** play in the **Marriott Theater in Lincolnshire**.
  - *Please remember that all children taking the bus should be at school no later than **8:30 a.m.***
  - *The bus will leave the school promptly at **8:45am.***
  - *If you are driving to the play, please expect to arrive by **9:40 a.m.***
  - *Please remember to wear the blue school shirts!*
- We would like to invite you to our **Thanksgiving Celebration** on **Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>** at **10:00am.**

As always, if you have any comments, questions, or concerns, feel free to contact us via e-mail [montpathways@hotmail.com](mailto:montpathways@hotmail.com)

Warmly,  
Ms. Alena

## Notes from the Elementary Class (North room)

*Mr. Matt*

Wow! October went by fast in the elementary classroom. We covered a lot of material and were very busy.

We finished up our study on *the biomes and countries of Africa* and moved on to *Australasia*. Australasia consists of the different territories of Australia, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.

*The field trip to Goebbert's Farm* was a great addition to our studies of continents since the kids were able to observe animals from different continents there.



In addition to learning about the political geography of any continent we study the children also learn about *the biomes* of these places. Biomes are regions that have similar climatic conditions and that dictate the ways of life in that area. The biomes we focus on in the 6-9 classroom are: deserts, grasslands, temperate forests, tropical forests, mountain regions, polar regions, and wetlands. The biome materials give the children a glimpse of how people and animals living in a particular biome adapt for life there.

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We continued with our study *of the plant and focused on the leaves*. We learned about the parts of a leaf and learned about the different shapes of leaves and the types of leaf venation.



In language we continued our study of the parts of speech. We learned about *verbs and prepositions* and continued to work on our *adjectives, nouns and articles*.

We learned about *rhyming words* and what rhyming is, focusing on the sounds the words make not necessarily their spelling. We also started working on *antonyms and synonyms*. We moved to antonyms and synonyms earlier than I had planned because the children spent a couple days talking about opposites at lunch. For instance one child asked another "What's the opposite of rainbow?" The other child said, "I don't know, what?" To which she responded, "I don't know either that's why I was asking?" The children, on their own, taught each other about antonyms and found that some words do not have opposites.



In math, the first graders moved on from *static addition* (which doesn't require exchanging – changing ten 10s into one 100, etc.). They began doing *dynamic addition* (addition with exchanging). Dynamic addition is done with the same materials (Golden Beads, Stamp Game and Small Bead Frame) as static addition but it requires the extra step of exchanging whenever one place value's sum is ten or greater.

The second grade reviewed *dynamic subtraction* and continued to learn *multiplication*. In addition to continued use of the Multiplication Bead Board and the Multiplication Finger Charts, the second grader worked with bead bars to do multiplication as repeated addition.

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The third graders continued to do *long multiplication* with the Checkerboard, solving equations with 2 and 3 digit multipliers. They also worked with the Racks and Tubes material, often called Test Tube Division, to work on *long division*.



As a class we also worked on skip counting, which helps prepare the first graders for multiplication and helps the second and third graders refine their multiplication skills.

In geometry we learned about *two more quadrilaterals the deltoid and chevron*. Those each have 2 pairs of adjacent equal-length sides, but the chevron is the first concave shape that we have learned about.

The children watched some science demonstrations, and had the chance to perform some of these demonstrations themselves. They actually presented to the younger children in the building as pairs on our *Science Experiment Day*.



Each pair of elementary students was set up at a table in our room and the younger children rotated from table to table to see the demonstration and learn a little of how each one worked.





Thank you for coming to Parent-Teacher conferences, it was nice to talk with each of you about your child.

*Best regards,  
Mr. Matt*

### **Notes from the Art Class (*Kindergarten and Elementary*)**

In October, we created dolphin colored pencil drawings, lizard watercolor paintings, and autumn tree watercolor paintings. Students practiced shading, learned how to draw animals, learned how to use watercolors, and practiced composition. They also researched different types of fishes and underwater animals to add to their underwater scenes.



*Sincerely,  
Ms. Susan*

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## Kindergarten Extended Day News

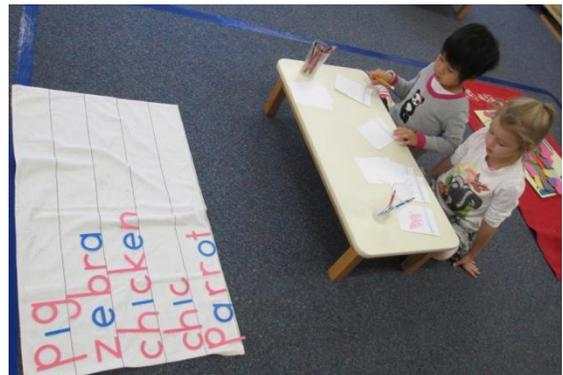
*Ms. Karen, Ms. Christine*

Again another month passing so quickly! Our focus this month has been follow-up activities relating to the trip to the pumpkin farm and the beginning of the geography curriculum.

The trip to Goebert's Pumpkin Farm was so much fun! It actually seemed like a cross between a farm and a "petting zoo". What a good time we had ---feeding alpacas, birds, pot belly pigs, etc. But the highlight had to be feeding the giraffes from a platform that put us at eye level. And the giraffe tongues!!!!!!



We followed up the field trip by discussion, making a collective list of animals we observed and making the book or poster showing the development of the pumpkin from seed to harvest.



We have begun the geography curriculum with our overview: land / air /water. The elements upon which we depend. Several of the kindergartners have chosen to make posters illustrating the concept.

In math, we have been emphasizing the construction of 4 place value numbers using the concrete materials. Additionally, there is a flurry of activity around the memorization of facts.



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As always, we base the work on concrete materials so that the students, with practice in a variety of ways, gain an understanding of how the "system works". This week, for example, in working with addition, one of the children "knew" that  $2 + 7$  and  $7 + 2$  will result in the same answer.

*Student: "It doesn't make any difference. They're the same."*

*Adult: "They are not the same. See. One is  $2 + 7$  and the other is  $7 + 2$ ."*

*Student: "But it doesn't make any difference. Not a bit. The answer will be the same."*

What is gratifying is that the student is so sure of himself and can hold his position and justify it. And demonstrate his point using the materials. This is the beginning of seeing the interconnection within the math system rather than a lot of discrete, memorized facts. And for further reinforcement, we try several pairs of equations to be sure that it works every time, that one set is not an exception, of fluke.



We will be heading into an expansion of our biology, moving from plant/animal. We focused on plants and their parts. We will be moving into the animal world: vertebrates/ invertebrates and then various categories within each classification.



Warmly,  
Ms. Karen, Ms. Christine

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## Notes from the East Classroom:

*Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi*

October has been a busy and fun filled month! We have enjoyed Fall and Halloween crafts as well as a delicious pear tasting activity; the Anjou pears were the class favorite, and thank you to our families who helped make this project possible.



Apple, pumpkin and leaf activities are the current manipulative in Practical Life and Art areas of the classroom. Poking jack-o-lanterns, ghosts, bats and witches hats are also very popular right now. Glow in the dark paint is always a favorite, too.

In Botany, the Life Cycle of a Pumpkin, Parts of a Leaf/Tree have been introduced. Parts of a Skeleton, Bat and Spider are works in process as well.



We continue challenging students in Language and Math with a variety of new materials. As teachers, the protocol is to know when a child is ready for a presentation of new material based on their current level of experience and knowledge, then present (demonstrate) how the material is to be utilized, next, have the child show they have understanding, then step back and observe that the child can successfully replicate it's use properly. This happens daily, on many, individual levels in all areas of the classroom. We are very pleased that our children are so eager and willing to take on new learning opportunities every day!

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Currently, we seem to have a large number of students interested in the Geography area; maps of the World/Continents, Africa, North America and Australia are all over our working space - awesome!



We have enjoyed making special snacks this month thanks to our families who send Sharing Basket items; the children really enjoy creating a variety of healthy foods to share with the class.

This month, we celebrated the birthdays of Cate, Chloe, Cara and Molly - it has been such a wonderful experience to watch your children meet their 5 year milestones! :)

We really and sincerely enjoyed meeting with you during conferences. Your children are our children and thank you so much for letting us be a part of their early education. Always feel free to keep us up to date with any information or concerns you may have.



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Warmly,  
Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

## Notes from the South Classroom

*Ms. Ambreen*

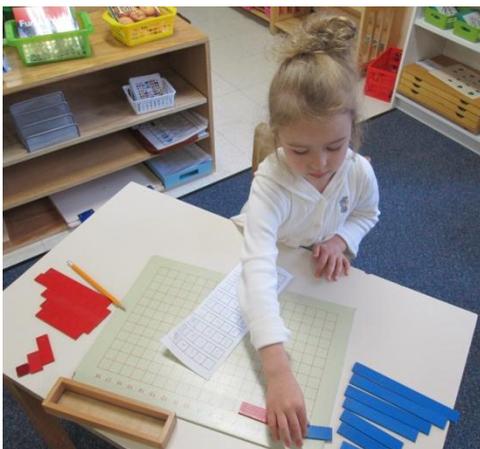


The onset of the month of October witnessed the official start of the fall season. Fall, also called autumn, is the season of transition when leaves change colors and fall. Animals prepare for hibernation as cold winter is about to follow, birds prepare to fly south for warmer climate, sweet delicious apples and big orange pumpkins ripen, ready to be picked and each passing day kicks up the excitement of Halloween.

October had been a very exciting and busy month full of fall activities and learning.

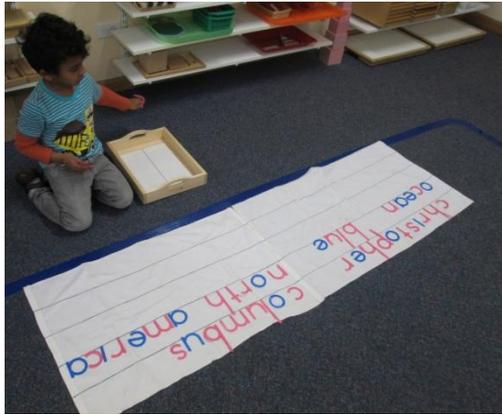
The kindergarteners went on a field trip to the pumpkin patch and shared their fun experience with the preschoolers. They brought a pumpkin, a gourd and an Indian corn as a gift for our classroom, which inspired a lot of kids to do word building and study about the life cycle of a pumpkin.

The kindergarteners also continued practicing their multiplication facts, addition and division. The falling leaves motivated them to study all about trees and leaves - the parts, types, shapes, and names.



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The observance of Christopher Columbus day inspired them to do research on this famous person: who he was, when he lived, and what did he do. This research led them to read about Columbus, explore the map of Europe, and do a story project.



In honor of Christopher Columbus, who sailed the ocean blue in 1492, we baked and enjoyed blueberry muffins for snack.

The most popular activities among the preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners during this month were learning numbers through number rods, practicing sounds with sand paper letters, basic addition with spindle box, pink tower, brown stairs, peeling and chopping of carrots, baking cookies, painting on easel and various polishing activities.



In Spanish we learned to count from 1- 10 and names of different fruits. We also continued with our weekly yoga, dance, and music lessons at line time. The most interesting group discussion we shared at line time was about why the leaves change colors in autumn season and the process of Photosynthesis.

During October we encouraged our kindergarten students to read books and participate in story time to help inspire other kids to read. The books read and shared were 'Hedgie Loves to Read', 'The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog', 'Little Rabbit's Loose Tooth', 'Ollie the Owl' and Aesop's Fables.



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We welcome our new friend Ellie to our classroom.

I extend my heartiest thanks to all parents and friends who participated in sharing basket activity. Your cooperation is deeply appreciated as it brings a lot of joy and brightness to our class.

The last week of October was dedicated to Halloween. The kids had a lot of fun scrubbing and washing the pumpkin in practical life and enjoyed pin poking shapes to carve an exclusive South room Jack-o-lantern. The creative paper craft spiders and bats motivated them to study interesting facts about these creatures. We finally concluded the week with an exciting and fun filled Halloween celebration.

Wishing all of you a very safe and happy Halloween!



Sincerely,  
Ms. Ambreen

## Notes from Pre-K Extended Day Class

*Ms. Ambreen*

The month of October started with the onset of the autumn season. The season of beautiful trees with their leaves changing colors and falling down, the fragrance of cinnamon and apple cider, pumpkins harvesting and the excitement of Halloween. All of this motivated us towards a fun filled learning experience.

In Math, we learned about Polygons, their shapes and names. Counting leaves outdoors inspired us to learn to count by three's. We also learned fractions through a real cheese pizza and then enjoyed having it as an afternoon snack. Through our Tens-board we learned how to make numbers beyond teen numbers.

In Language, our vowel of the month was 'O', so we worked on making word families using that vowel.



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In science, our focus was on autumn, which motivated us to study about the parts of a tree, parts of a leaf, kinds and different shapes of leaves and, of course, the life cycle of a pumpkin.

In Geography, the observance of Christopher Columbus Day inspired us to study the map of the world and the sea route from Europe to North America.

In art, each of the Pre-K kids created an amazing painting of an autumn tree, a fall leaf, a pumpkin picture through spoon painting and a paper craft

spider for Halloween.

The recipe of the month to share with everyone is for Blueberry Muffins that we baked and enjoyed for afternoon snack in honor of Christopher Columbus who sailed the ocean blue in 1492.

Parents please review the October folder sent home with your child.

I would like to end with our Poem of the Month:

*In October I'll be host,  
To witches goblins and the ghosts,  
I'll serve them chicken soup on toast,  
Whoopy once, whoopy twice,  
Whoopy chicken soup with rice.*

I wish you all a very happy and safe Halloween.

*Sincerely,  
Ms. Ambreen*

### **Notes from the Late Afternoon classroom:**

*Ms. Donna*

*Games played this month:*

"The Witch needs a seat". (The witch is standing in the middle of the circle, she becomes tired and wants to sit down, so she calls out the names of two people who are to exchange places, if she gets a chair before one of the children get to the chair that child becomes the witch.) A great time was had by all.

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"The Witch is in the Dell", Tune of the Farmer in the Dell (Each child said what they wanted to be for Halloween).

"Hide the Pumpkin" (A small pumpkin was hidden in the room while a child was behind a rug in order not to see where the pumpkin was being hidden. The children could only use these words to guide the child close to the where the pumpkin was hiding (cold, hot, warm, boiling). When found, another child was chosen to go behind the rug and the child, who had found the pumpkin, would hide it

for the next child to find.)

"Scarecrow, scarecrow turn around" (Children did the actions to the Poem)

*Science Experiment:* Which container holds the most water? The children picked the container that they thought would hold the most. We used a tall cup, pie pan, bowl and a plastic container. The pie pan held the most.

*Math Experiment:* Which string would measure the closest to the circumference of our very own home grown pumpkin? Six different lengths were available. We had three children who chose the closest string.

*Art:* Spider Web marble paint, 5 Pumpkins sitting on the fence, Witches Hat, The Little Orange House (we used white paper to practice on)- the children thought they would make good masks. Later we made The Little Orange House out of orange paper and it turned out to be a pumpkin and a haunted house.



*Story:* The Five Little Pumpkins Sitting on the fence using a black glove.

*Outside:* Favorite things to do ride the stick horses, look for bugs, and ride in the wagon.

Best regards,  
Ms. Donna