



Montessori Pathways'

News

September, 2013

“Only through freedom and environmental experience it is practically possible for human development to occur”.

Maria Montessori

Notes from Ms. Alena

The first month of the school year has come to an end and we've been able to enjoy some wonderful weather! Thanks to the weather, the children were able to spend quite a bit of time outside; the parents, kids and teachers had a chance to meet and spend a wonderful evening together during the **Ice Cream Social** event.

Thank you to *Mr. Vismay* (Ananya's dad) who helped serve ice cream for the kids and parents.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to our **Fall Mums Sale Fundraiser**. We were able to collect **\$304.50**, which will be used to purchase new puzzle maps for the classrooms' geography stands.



A special thank you to our Elementary students, who helped unload the mums from the truck! The kids were so excited, helpful, and fast, that the giant truck with 80 mums was unloaded in a mere 10 minutes!

The participation of all of the students in the event is very important. The children were really excited about choosing the color of their mums and taking them home. The kids are very eager to be a part of school events.

Continued on the next page

Therefore, we encourage participation in school events not so much for the event itself, but for the important feeling of community that they provide for the kids.

We really appreciate Mark and Selene's family's contribution to our school that allowed us to buy *the Word Study Complete Set* for the Elementary class, *the Continents Book Set*, and *the Four Seasons Book Set*. It is a great addition to our new materials that the kids are so excited to have in the classrooms and explore. When I came in to the elementary class one day, Mark was so proud to show me that he is reading a book that was a gift to the classroom from his mom and dad. *Thank you so much, Mr. Joe and Mrs. Dawn Martillaro!*

Coming School Events

On **Wednesday, October 23, at 6:30 p.m.**, we will be holding our first hands-on parent evening ***“Work Cycle for Parents.”*** We really hope to see you there!

We will be having ***Picture Day*** on **Thursday, October 24th**. Please dress your child(ren) appropriately.

On **November 8th**, we will have a very exciting field trip to see ***The Nutcracker play*** in the ***Marriott Theater in Lincolnshire***. As the theater's ticket deadline is October 14th and we have pre-ordered some tickets, please make sure that you *place your order by October 9th*.

Halloween celebration

We will be celebrating Halloween at school on **Thursday, October 31**. The children are invited to come to school dressed in a Halloween costume. Each morning classroom will have a simple celebration, which will allow time for each child to show his or her costume and tell a little bit about who or what the costume represents. Afterward, each class will “parade” into the other class and sing a special fall song for their friends and then return to their own classroom for a regular morning.

Our children need consistency and routine even more so on exciting celebration days, so we will strive to make it special while maintaining a level of regularity for the children.

The School Day and All Day children will be changing out of their costume prior to lunch, so **please send a comfortable change of clothing and a labeled bag to place your child's costume into.**

Children who leave at 11:45 will wear their costume home.

Costume Guidelines:

We highly encourage you to choose an age-appropriate costume with your child. As a Montessori school, we aim to operate within our philosophy of providing the children with real experiences that are beautiful and natural and encourage you to choose a costume that is based upon a person, thing or animal.

Some costume ideas include animals, community helpers, athletes and storybook characters. The most important feature of your child's costume should be comfort, please make sure they can still independently use the bathroom and can sit and move with ease.

Please note the following guidelines for costumes:

- No scary costumes
- No masks or headwear that covers the face
- No weapons or "fighting" props (swords, light sabers etc.)
- Please do not send any costume accessories that may be lost or damaged.

This year, we will be continuing the ***Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF*** tradition with the kindergarten and elementary class that successfully began three years ago. We will be explaining the importance of this fundraiser to the children in the classroom (how they can be helping kids across the world) and we ask that you give your children a chance to do so—our students absolutely loved knowing that they were helping out last year! We will be sending out more information regarding this wonderful opportunity shortly.

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

Working with Montessori Materials

Practical life in the Elementary Classroom.

Classroom care in the elementary classroom becomes the main focus of practical life education. The children receive more complicated tasks and also are working towards jobs that require maturity and accountability.

Our elementary students each receive a weekly job. These jobs include *sweeping, dusting, sharpening pencils, straightening shelves, rolling rugs, carpet sweeping, delivering laundry to the laundry room, folding laundry and putting away dishes.*

The second year students have earned the responsibility of holding two jobs.



Continued on the next page

These jobs are rotated on a monthly basis and include *taking care of the classroom bird, monitoring that chairs are pushed in, acting as a substitute to cover jobs of absent students, supply monitor and date recorder.*

As the year progresses, more jobs will be added. The children also have the opportunity to think up new jobs as they become needed throughout the year. It is the responsibility of the children to complete their job in the proper way. The children are reminded that the classroom belongs to them and it is up to the class to keep it clean and beautiful. This provides a sense of pride and this responsibility also builds confidence.

Overall, the Montessori classroom serves as a safe place for children to gain their independence through challenging, meaningful work. Care of the classroom is a wonderful way to provide this opportunity to children of any age and any level.

Ms. Katy

Washing or Scrubbing the Table

Seriously, what's the big deal with washing a table? Why do Montessori folks get so excited about it? You just spray on some cleaner and wipe it off, right? Why go through all those ridiculous, laborious steps just to get a table clean? It wasn't even that dirty in the first place!



Washing a table is one of those quintessential Montessori activities that one can talk about for hours. It beautifully epitomizes the work of the Practical Life area: *fine and gross motor control, lots of order, use of the will, concentration, repetition, indirect preparation for work in other areas, following a logical sequence... you name it, and table washing does it.* This is why it is sometimes referred to as ‘The Queen of the Practical Life Activities.’

Table Washing comes early in the Montessori Primary curriculum, with the child around 3.5 years of age (or possibly even younger if she attended a Montessori toddler community). However, it's not one of the very first activities a child would encounter in Practical Life, and there are some good reasons why not. We need to get lots of important preliminary activities in place first. Preliminary activities are component skills that a child will combine to do a more complicated activity later, such as reserving a table, walking through the classroom, carrying a pitcher of water, fetching water, pouring water, folding, carrying a bucket, and pouring water out of a bucket. By the time the child learns how to wash a table these skills are already in place, demonstrated by the teacher in charming small-group presentations and practiced by the child until she's confident.

Continued on the next page

The building of skills in this way is critical to the success of the presentation. Washing a table takes quite a long time, and there are many steps. Imagine that in addition to trying to remember all those steps, the child also had to carry water for the first time, or pour water for the first time, or fold a cloth for the first time. How much more difficult and intimidating table washing would be if all those little tasks were also completely new! Instead, by allowing the child to accumulate these various skills, we make her confident and sure of herself so that she need only focus upon what is unfamiliar.



Washing a table is one of the wonderful Practical Life activities that allow children to build physical and mental skills, to feel good about themselves, and to have a sense of pride in their environment. Like so many Montessori materials, its humble appearance belies the multitude of benefits it offers.

<http://www.montessori-nw.org/blog/entry/material-spotlight-washing-a-table/>

If you would like to learn more about how washing the table activity can develop logical sequencing, concentration, self-worth and responsibility, could be indirect preparation for reading and writing, take a look at the article that we will send you soon (You will find it in your child's blue bag).

Baking activity.



One of the most visually attractive, inviting, and hands on areas of the Montessori classroom is Practical Life. This section of our classroom offers your child a real life experience in helping our class community, logical thinking and problem solving (lots of water activities!). By far, one of the most popular choices is the Baking activity. This is a food preparation choice in addition to apple slicing and carrot cutting that is available every day to your child.

In the beginning of the year, an older student will measure and mix *Bisquick* and milk to the ideal consistency. This means that if the dough is too sticky, we need to add more baking mix, and if it is too dry - more milk. It is a sometimes tedious and very messy job, but the children love to experiment with the balance of ingredients. As the year progresses, all "bakers" will measure their own ingredients so that they will possess hands on measuring and success / retries of their own dough consistency.



Continued on the next page



This is a great activity for fine motor hand development - rolling the dough with a rolling pin and pushing the cookie cutters fully through the dough to create the shape, carefully transferring the cookie shape onto the cookie sheet and then enhancing it with decorations. By the way.....sometimes the decorations (mini-choco. chips/sprinkles) don't actually make it onto the cookies! But sharing the bounty with friends is priceless :}

Baking and food preparation activities are not just merely about the final product, but the process of completing the many tasks to make it a success.

We start first with hand washing, organization of materials needed to complete, staying on task, washing and drying the items used, labeling their bags to bring home their final product. Sometimes, just waiting for the opportunity when someone else is immersed in the activity is a challenge itself!

We can't wait to give our parents a hands on demonstration of this process during our "Progressive, Hand's On Journey" parent night on Tuesday 10/23!

Ms. Christine

Notes from the Elementary Class (*North room*)

Ms. Katy



Happy Fall! We have completed the first month of school and the elementary class is off to a wonderful start. This month I have observed a group of highly motivated learners. The children are interested in trying new works and learning new material. The class is willing to solve both academic problems as well as social problems. We are moving right along through our curriculum and continue to emphasize grace and courtesy in the classroom so we all have a comfortable, caring environment to discover and learn.

We took our *first field trip* of the year to the **Chicago Botanic Gardens** to reinforce and expand on what we have been studying about plants in the classroom. I would like to thank Sally Junaid (Shawn's mom), Kate Bulgakov (Tim's mom), and Ms. Alena (Alex's mom) for driving on this trip. We were able to participate in many hands on activities to learn more about the parts of plants we can eat. Perhaps we will head out that way in the springtime to see more of the garden during the beginning of the growing season!

Continued on the next page



In the upcoming month, our classroom goals include the continued practice of using kind words to solve problems and continued progress in our math, language and organizational skills.

We will also continue practicing our group listening and speaking skills. One way we are working on this goal is taking turns answering a “Question of the Day.” Examples of the question of the day include: *What is one thing you learned today? What was the hardest thing you had to do today? Did you do something kind for someone today?* The children stand to answer the question of the day using a complete sentence. The listeners are expected to give their full attention. It is a wonderful activity for speaking, listening and reflective thought.



I am looking forward to the month of October. The Great Lessons (a main part of the Montessori Elementary Curriculum) will begin this month. It will be a month filled with stories, experiments and discovery! I hope everyone has a wonderful month!

A small sample of lessons this month:

Math: Stamp Game Addition, 100 Board Activities, Golden Bead Addition, Preparation for Multiplication, Math Minute Fact Practice, Money Work



Continued on the next page

Language: Spelling with short vowels and long vowel sounds, Thank You Letters to the Fire Department, Alphabetizing, Noun Work, Sentence Editing, Reading Comprehension



Botany: Outdoor Plant Observations, Parts of a Plant, Nitrogen Cycle, Conifers and Broad Leafed Plants



Geography and History: Parts of Month, Directions, Land and Water Forms, Types of Maps, Continents and Oceans, Ocean Research, Introduction to Biomes, Weather



Continued on the next page

Spanish: Months, Days, Seasons

A Typical Day's Schedule in the Elementary Classroom

- Morning Meeting
- Group Lesson
- First Year Presentation
- Second Year Presentation
- Work Time (individual presentations and review)
- Lunch
- Recess
- Reading Groups and Silent Sustained Reading
- Group Lesson/Work Time
- Classroom Jobs
- Gym
- Question of the Day
- Dismissal



Ms. Katy

Notes from the South Classroom

Ms. Patty, Ms. Ambreen

It has been a busy and exciting start to the year. The children have been settling into the routine and have been enjoying getting to know new friends and spending time with old friends as well. We have been establishing our ground rules in the classroom; primarily that we help everyone and hurt nothing. We have also had *many grace and courtesy lessons* such as sneezing and coughing into our elbow, placing a hand on a shoulder to interrupt, observing a lesson or someone working without interrupting, knocking on the bathroom door and saying excuse me when trying to get past someone in our way.



We have been *learning about trees* and will continue in October with more study of leaves and apples. During our line time, kids have been *learning and singing about Johnny Applesseed*.

Continued on the next page



We celebrated **Johnny Appleseed Day** with a *special presentation on apples and taste, testing 3 different varieties*. We sliced the apple to find its “star”, count the seeds, and then we tasted each variety. We then graphed our results to determine which apple was the favorite!

We have also been talking about *the seasons and the months of the year*.

The children have especially enjoyed *learning our poem* for the month of September. Each child is given the opportunity to stand before the class and recite the poem! Each month we will learn a different poem from the book “**Chicken Soup with Rice: A Book of Months**” by **Maurice Sendak**.

In September, for awhile

I will ride a crocodile

Down the chicken soup-y Nile

Paddle Once, Paddle Twice

Paddle Chicken Soup with Rice.

All of the children have been exploring the many materials of the classroom practicing skills in practical life, sensorial, math and language.

In the practical life area, many children have been busy with *baking, chopping carrots, flower arranging, table scrubbing, and painting beautiful pictures*.



In Sensorial kids are learning many new skills with *the red rods, pink tower, and brown stairs*. The older children are building upon their skills with extensions to these activities.

Continued on the next page

The Math area has been quite busy with the younger children using *the sandpaper numbers and red/blue rods to the older children practicing their adding and subtracting skills and place value of numbers.*



Language continues to be a favorite area for all the children. It is so exciting to see them using this area on a daily basis. The younger children are using *the sequencing activities and learning sounds.* Meanwhile, the older children are working on *reading comprehension skills and sentence writing.*



On September 19, we celebrated the **Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival** with our friend Sophie!

The festival is an important holiday to the Chinese people. Every year, when the festival comes, families get together to admire the moon, and eat moon cakes. The Chinese people believe that a full moon is a symbol of peace, prosperity, and family reunion. On Mid-Autumn Festival night the moon is supposed to be the brightest and fullest, which is why the festival is also known as the **“Day of Reunion”** and the **“Moon Festival”**. Thank you Sophie and her family for the delicious Moon cakes!



We discussed the **International Day of Peace** (September 21) with the children and explained that the day is for celebrating peace all around the world. We are continually encouraging the children to explore peacefulness within themselves, compassion for others and understanding of the differences and similarities amongst people from all cultures.

Continued on the next page

We made a *collaborative art project of a dove*, the symbol of peace, to hang in our classroom to remind us about being good friends and peacemakers. The children enjoyed the simple celebration of Peace Day. What is important is to plant the seeds of peace within, so peace is not just for a day, but for a life time!

Peace be with you.....

Miss Patty and Miss Ambreen

Kindergarten Extended Day News

The kindergarten children have been working diligently from their work plans. They are doing such a great job of learning to work together as a group. They are rising to the challenge of being the leaders in the classroom and are eager to help the younger children. The kindergarteners have received many group lessons.

In the **Cultural area**, they have received presentations on *land, air, water, and night/day*. These lessons are the foundation to learning about geography and history. A few of the children have completed *Continent and North America maps*.



In **science**, we have studied *the effects of the importance of hand washing* by using a cut piece of apple. We found that the piece of apple that we touched *before* washing our hands deteriorated faster than the apple that was touched *after* we washed our hands. We then illustrated and wrote about the results in our journals.

In the **math area**, the children have been working with *addition, subtraction, ten board, and the one hundred board*.



Continued on the next page

In language, each child has been working at their own pace learning *sounds*, *reading comprehension*, and *writing skills*.



Our *first field trip* was to **All Seasons Apple Orchard!** We had such a great experience and enjoyed learning all about apple farming! Afterwards, we again used our journal to write about our experience at the apple orchard. It was interesting to see what each child was able to recall from their trip to the orchard. The children received such nice compliments on their grace and courtesy skills from the All Seasons staff! Thank you to all the parents (Ms. Jamie, Addison's mom; Ms. Jackie, Christopher's mom; Mr. Andrew, Aidan's dad; and Mr. Kurt, Kyra's dad) that chaperoned our trip!



We are looking forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Ms. Patty

Continued on the next page

Notes from the East classroom:

Ms. Christine, Ms. Laxmi

We have enjoyed getting to know our classroom friends, routines, likes and preferences and of course all of our families! It is amazing that we have been together for only one month of school - our class feels very comfortable and confident in the daily routine of things. Children are offering help to new students with zippers and hangers for fall coats and new friendships are blossoming daily.



This has been a busy month in which we celebrated our first birthday - *Kyra's 5th!* She is a kindergartener and great help to whomever needs it. She brought home grown apples from her yard which we enjoyed in a recipe for Apple Crisp and devoured on the line as a group snack. Thank you!

We also practiced our first fire drill on the 6th, which we previously discussed how the children would just leave their "work" and line up by our back door. It was emphasized it was a practice and that we would walk outdoors to our safe area and take attendance. Funny thing- while one child was baking the day before the drill, the baking timer went off and a little girl quickly lined up at the back door to head out - let this be a lesson in preparation and readiness!:)

Thanks so much for your contributions to the Sharing Basket.....because of this, we were able to enjoy *apple tasting a variety of apples, stamping apple prints and dissecting an apple to match with "Parts of an Apple" work for an actual hands on replication.* The children loved the apple work and we are looking forward to pumpkins and leaves in October.



Continued on the next page

It was so nice to see so many families together for our first Annual Ice Cream Social - the children were excited to eat and "wear" their treats; it was a beautiful and fun evening to share with our school family.

This week, we have **celebrated the arrival of official fall**, made tissue paper apples and continue to challenge and motivate our students to do their best and make appropriate choices in their schoolwork. This is an ongoing process, and the beauty of the Montessori philosophy is that it connects with them on their own, personal level!



Just a quick head's up for October.....We have a "Hands on" Parent Meeting on Wed. Oct. 23rd - don't want to miss it! We will also be looking for crafty parents for Fall/Halloween projects. These will probably be two separate events: 1 day for crafts/ 1 day for Halloween help (costumes, etc.) Thinking craft day will be Friday, 10/25 and of course, Halloween is on Thurs. 10/31. We'll let you know more details but if you know you're available, let us know.....p.s. your great craft and snack ideas are always appreciated and welcome!



We close this month with the celebration of *Nora's 4th birthday* on Wednesday, and a *celebration of Johnny Appleseed with the South classroom* on Thursday. What a beautiful month and we are looking forward to an exceptional year ahead.

Sincerely,

Ms. Christine & Ms. Laxmi

Continued on the next page

Notes from the Pre-K extended class:

Ms. Ambreen



After the long Labor Day weekend, we stepped into the first week of September with great energy and big smiles. In the first week, our focus was on the "**about me unit,**" in which we practiced *reading and writing first names, last names, addresses, and phone numbers.*

Our second week focused on **Math.** During this week, we learned *counting 1-10 using our bead pyramid, formation of teen numbers using our teen-boards, fractions of a cookie and fruits.* We also focused on *basic addition using our spindle*

boxes.

We celebrated the end of this week by *making chocolate chip cookies* as a treat, which again involved a lot of order, measuring, pouring, spooning, mixing, counting and, finally, tasting.

In the third **Language** week, we *reviewed the sounds* of some familiar letters and worked on *making phonetic words.*



We did **outdoor exploration** using our magnifying glasses. All the kids had great fun exploring the outdoor environment. To celebrate the great outdoor week we *ainted our beautiful sunflowers* and enjoyed *making dirt cup treats* for everyone.

The kids enjoyed getting the seeds off from a big sunflower head while we talked about how the sunflower grows.



Continued on the next page

We also all participated in creating a *Diamante poem on a Sunflower*. Inspired by the newly arrived mums we *created our amazing mum painting* not with a paint brush but by using the Okra vegetable. We used a half of a cut Okra slice to stamp flowers.

The last week of September was the **Birthday of Johnny Appleseed**, so our focus was on apples.

We did *the parts of the apple, apple printing, apple tasting, counting and fractions of apple*. We also did *planting of apple seeds* in honor of Jonathan Chapman. Together, we enjoyed learning with fun in the month of September and we all look forward to entering into October with the same energy and big smiles.



Sincerely,

Ms. Ambreen

Notes from the afternoon classroom:

Ms. Donna



We have been working with different art materials (painting with brushes and different weeds, using our hands to make lizards, tearing paper to make red apples or some chose to make granny smith apples, making prints from our painted fish and adding worms and seaweed to our pictures).

We are almost finished with our class quilt.

Children were asked to draw with fabric crayons something that they liked on a blank square then we tied them all together.



Continued on the next page

We are now working on our Rainbow Pie. We have two of our eight slices finished. (Red and yellow)



After snack we have group or line time. We have just started telling a story and then acting it out. Our first story was "The Three Little Pigs".

Some of our favorite works after snack and project time are: Marbles, Rail road building, Castle building, Reading, Free drawing, Wedges and Sewing cards.

Outside we have been working on our Tee Ball skills and doing a lot of climbing on the climbers.

Best regards,

Ms. Donna