

# MONTESSORI PATHWAYS' NEWS

September 2018



"It is not true that I invented what is called the Montessori Method... I have studied the child; I have taken what the child has given me and expressed it, and that is what is called the Montessori Method."

~ Maria Montessori

## Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

What a great beginning of the school year we have had! A lot of new friends joined us this year. Welcome to Montessori Pathways family, dear friends!!!

I would like to say thank you to all of our teachers who worked hard to organize and prepare a great and friendly environment for your kids to help them have a smooth and exciting beginning of the school year.



## Ice Cream Social



We, Montessori Pathways Team, really appreciate parents' help in being patient and giving us and your kids time for the beginning of school year transition and new students' adjustment.

*Everyone enjoyed meeting old and new friends and spending a wonderful time together on our school's playground during the Ice Cream Social.*



"One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child."

~ Maria Montessori

~ Check your emails for the link to the set of pictures of the daily students' activities in September. ~



# World Day of Peace!

On September 21<sup>st</sup> the children from Montessori Pathways School joined together to celebrate the *United Nation's Annual International Day of Peace*.



Beginning in New Zealand and finishing in the Hawaiian Islands, the song "Light a Candle for Peace" was sung continuously for 24 hours by Montessori school children around the world. Our school was excited about joining the many other Montessori schools to "Sing Peace around the World".

**"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."**

*~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*



**"Light a Candle for Peace" by MPS students.**



## ~Hardy Mums Sale Fundraiser~

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to our **Fall Mums Sale Fundraiser**. We were able to collect **\$1,269.89**, which will go toward East Room flooring.

The participation of all of the students in the event is very important. The children were really excited about choosing the mums' colors and taking them home. The kids are very eager to be a part of school events. Therefore, we encourage participation in school events not so much for the event itself, but for the important feeling of community that they bring to the kids.

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 truck with 145 mums was unloaded in a mere 15 minutes!





# Coming School Events



Montessori Pathways

- ◆ **October 4 (Th) at 1:00pm - Youth Traffic Safety Presentation For Kindergarten and Elementary Students**
- ◆ **October 8 (M) – No School (Columbus Day)**
- ◆ **October 11 (Th) at 6:00pm – Kindergarten Orientation Meeting** (for parents only)
- ◆ **October 11 (Th) at 6:00pm – Elementary Curriculum Night** (for parents only)
- ◆ **October 18 (Th) at 8:00am– 10:30am - Picture Day**

Please dress your child(ren) appropriately. If your child does not attend school that day, you can bring him/her between 9:00am -10:30am to take a picture. In this case your child will have a chance to be included in the class picture.

- ◆ **October 15 - 30 - EQUAL EXCHANGE ANNUAL SCHOOL FUNDRAISER**

The Mums Sale Fundraiser was a good start for raising a fund for our East Room Flooring Project.

In order to help us with our goal, we are partnering with [Equal Exchange](#) for a unique fundraiser, which not only supports our school's endeavors, but also small organic farmers and artisan communities around the globe.



- ◆ **October 26 (F) - School-Wide Field trip to “Junie B. Jones” musical by CYT at Cosman Cultural Center in Huntley.**
- ◆ **October 31 (Tu) - Morning - Halloween Costume Party**  
\*Parents are welcome to organize Halloween morning activities in the classroom
- ◆ **October 31 (Tu) - Afternoon - Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF – Kindergarten and Elementary students**

## Halloween Party Guidelines:

The children are invited to come to school dressed in a Halloween costume. Each classroom will have a simple celebration, which will allow time for each child to show off their costume and tell a little bit about who or what their costume represents. Afterward, each class will participate in special morning holiday activities.

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.

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

## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



### Ms. Bridget

September has been a month of firsts.

First, we received our farmer, Dana White, who we "adopted" through a program in Illinois called Adopt-A-Farmer. We receive e-mails from her, books, Ag Mag publications as well as cool farm related lesson plans. The first Ag Mag was focused on Pizza.



Another first was that students are completing their work plans. This shows organization skills, perseverance and focus. As we end this month, we have a few who are on their 3<sup>rd</sup> workplan.



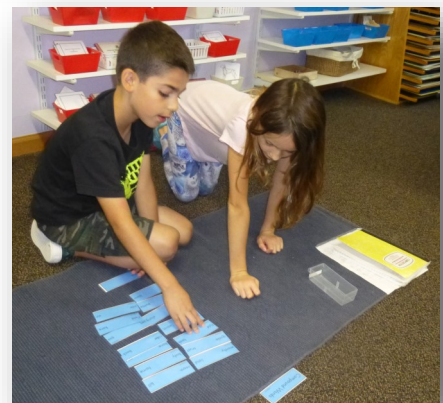
On the last day of school this month, students will fill out their first monthly evaluation. They will look back at the month and make plans for the next. It will be a time for reflection and planning.



Kids have exploded into writing. This month, we began by discussing what makes a story- setting, character and a plot. They did some acting, writing and sharing of group and individual writing. We are striving towards longer and more engaging stories.



Finally, many kids began their first "Reading Circle" book. Kids who are in this group will read a book together and discuss it with me. We are focusing on reading skills and developing good questioning/ answering skills. We will be continuing these throughout the year with multiple copy books that I have ordered through the library.





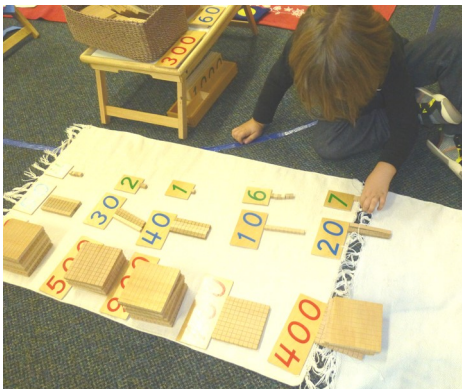
## NEWS FROM THE EXTENDED DAY KINDERGARTEN CLASS



### Ms. Karen

In the beginning of year, we place emphasis on building specific skills (cutting, gluing, etc.) These will be needed in creating more complex works. Through these lessons, children are also learning organization, precision, attention to detail, and independence. As their skills and precision develop, so does their absorption in the activity and the satisfaction they derive from their work.

Our primary curriculum is divided into subject areas. Each area has beginning lessons designed to introduce the "big", overarching idea/concept. This is in contrast to random facts unrelated to a big idea. This approach gives more meaning and grounding to the concepts that follow in each curriculum area. So, for example, we have introduced the category of *living/non-living*. This establishes a base for biology and botany. We then went on to look at the category of living and we subdivided it into *plants and animals*. We will go on to divide those topics into component parts. It is a Montessori way of organizing knowledge for the child. We begin with the big idea, and then subdivide that. Then subdivide again, etc. It is a child's way of outlining information, of connecting information. We work from the global to the specific.



We have begun to work with the decimal system which is the foundation of our mathematical curriculum. In math the decimal system is the foundation. The use of the Montessori concrete materials (one,

ten, hundred, thousand) provides a meaningful experience for further work in the math curriculum.

Geometry has begun with establishing the vocabulary for geometric solids. We will work with the actual 3-dimensional materials contrasted with simply pictures of geometric solids (pictures, by definition, reduce the 3 dimensional to 2 dimensional).

With many foundational lessons in place we will continue to "grow" each area through further detailed lessons. These foundational presentations are a base for further individual work by the child, so they have been presented to the class as a whole.

In addition to the group lessons, the children have been working individually. Sometimes I offer a specific lesson to meet that child's need or interest, sometimes the child asks

for lesson for a particular work. Frequently an individual lesson becomes a group lesson as children who are waiting for help or have a question will be invited to watch.



Of course, we are also developing a cooperative community in the classroom: sometimes children work together, sometimes one child helps another, sometimes we share our ideas in a group, sometimes the children come up with ideas to solve a situation.

At the end of the class time, one child rings the bell and makes the announcement: it is time to put your work away, do your job and then meet at Miss Karen's table. It sounds like a "small" thing, but that is often the very first question of the day: "Who is going to ring the bell?" The children are delighted to make the "public" announcement, the first time with hesitation perhaps, but then with confidence! We have a chart so there is an order. It naturally creates situations to solve: it is \_\_\_\_\_ person's turn to ring the bell and make the announcement, but they are absent. So how can we solve the problem. And several suggestions were given by the children.

There is getting to be that "settled" feeling in the classroom. It has been a pleasure working with and sharing the company of the young people in this group: they are interested, cooperative, becoming more patient, AND we have fun doing it.

Be sure to come to our Kindergarten Orientation Parent Meeting. Looking forward to seeing you there.



## NEWS FROM THE ART CLASS (KINDERGARTEN AND ELEMENTARY)

**Ms. Jennifer**



Hello. I'm Jennifer Lilliebridge, And I'm so happy to be introducing myself to you as the new art teacher at Montessori Pathways. Your children and I have been getting to know each other through art over the last month. I hope to introduce your children to many different art techniques and mediums as I meet with them every Friday. I have to say, I am so impressed with their talents, manners, and cooperation! So far, we've worked on several projects, as follows:

**First Initial Banners:** Our introductory project included techniques combining watercolors with a patterned wax resist design lifted from embossing templates, on individual pendants featuring the students' names and first initial.

**Mixed-media Collage:** Using masking tape to create a random pattern of diagonal lines across the piece, students painted selected areas with tempera paint and then applied, (liberally and with enthusiasm), patterned washi tape, after peeling away the mask.



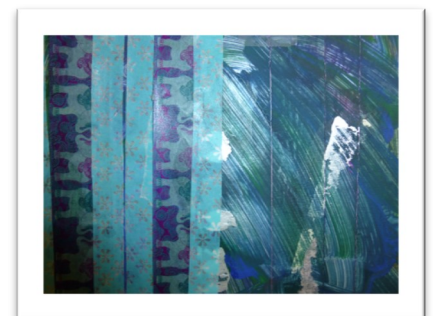
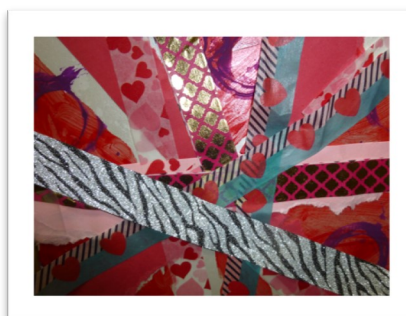
**Color Wheel Mini-Book:** Students filled in divided sections of three-color wheels featuring primary, secondary, and tertiary colors using colored pencils.

**Piet Mondrian:** Inspired by the cubist works of Piet Mondrian, students applied oil pastels in primary colors to pre-printed graphs, and then adhered black strips of paper to the piece, creating their own Mini-Mondrian Masterpiece.

**International Peace Day:** Projects included the tracing & cutting out of the students' hands on ethnic-colored paper which were gathered and assembled to create a beautiful fall wreath that is on display in the front hall. Please stop in and see it. Also, students traced patterns, cut out, and assembled charming paper-plate doves in celebration of World Peace and were sent home with themed coloring pages.



I've been posting the students' artwork on my Instagram page @Jennifer Lilliebridge along with my gallery of Mixed-media pieces, if you are interested in seeing the class's work as a whole.





## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana



It seems like the school year just started and yet here we are at the end of September already. This year we have several returning children as well as a whole new batch of bright-eyed new/young children. It's been great getting to know everyone!

At this point, the children seem to have internalized their new schedules and are able to follow the daily routine quite well. It helps that almost every school day is an identical schedule so that the children are able to fully grasp the flow of the day and what to expect after each transition. Every morning we welcome happy and confident young people into the classroom, ready to begin a new day of exploration and learning.



During the past two weeks or so, there has been a discernible shift away from relying solely on the teachers for help and guidance, and instead the children are now comfortable enough in their school environment to attempt to solve problems or to get their needs met either by themselves or with the help of a friend. It's amazing to see this confidence and independence so early in the school year and it's the reason we begin each school year with a heavy emphasis on community building.

Every school year always begins with a focus on community building and an emphasis on grace and courtesy. Although the academics of the classroom are of course important, the purpose behind the multi-age 3-6 classroom is to create and foster a classroom community that is built on the kindness and natural inclination that these young children have to take care of one another through helping, teaching, befriending, etc. Throughout each day we are nurturing both the growing independence of the very young children as well as encouraging the leadership and increasing abilities of the older children.



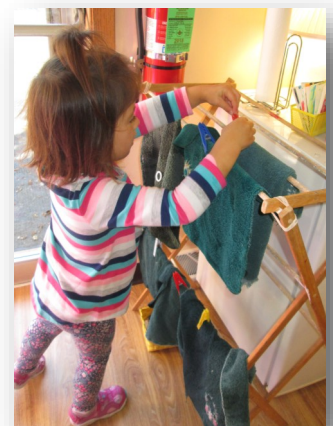
The first few weeks we review often the general classroom/ school/ playground rules to help insure that everyone is safe and happy at school and is able to learn their best throughout the day. We are continuously stressing grace & courtesy and helping the children navigate social interactions with each other as well as with the teachers. We work on learning each other's names through several line time songs and games such as: "Ickle me, tickle me, bumble bee. Will you say your name for me?" and "Where is Timmy? Where is Timmy?" (to the tune of *Where is Thumbkin*), and games like "Who's missing?" in which all the children close their eyes and I choose one of them to tip toe away from the group and hide out of sight, and then the group has to figure out who is missing from the line.

When the children arrive in the morning I greet them at the classroom door and after they put on their inside shoes and hang up their jackets, they are ready to start the work cycle. The younger children and the children who are new to Montessori, are often encouraged to begin their day in the *Practical Life* area of the classroom. This is the area where they are learning the skills necessary to be more self-reliant and increase their self-confidence. The activities in this area are designed to strengthen each child's sense of *Independence, Order, Concentration, and Coordination*; four important elements that will serve them well in all the areas of the classroom.



The work they do in the *Practical Life* area emphasizes (1) care of the self (handwashing, food preparation, learning to use various utensils: spooning, tonging, tweezing, cutting) (2) care of the classroom (polishing, table scrubbing, etc.) (3) care of the world (plant care, gardening, weeding, etc.).

The older children use the *Practical Life* area in a different way; they do handwashing not for the activity itself, but so they can prepare snack for the whole classroom, they choose table scrubbing when they have gotten pencil or glue on a table and are preparing it for the next person to use, and sometimes they choose a *Practical Life* activity as a break and reset from the more academic work they are involved in. The older and/or returning children will often jump right into a work they have done before or continue work on an activity they began the day before, they may also be ready for a challenge and will then ask for a presentation on something new.



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM (CONTINUATION)



**Ms. Andrea, Ms. Urana**

If your child has not brought their *sound book* home yet, please look for it in their blue schoolbags this week. The idea is for them to learn their sounds at school and practice them at home with you. This is a great way for them to share what sounds they have mastered as well as have another chance to practice the ones they are currently working on. When working on their sound books at home, please first ask them: "what sound does this letter make?" so they have an opportunity to recall if they can. If they are unable to recall the sound, then say: this letter (m) makes the sound mmmmmm.

You can then trace the letter with your index and middle finger, always starting at the top of the letter, and repeat the sound it makes. Then have them trace and make the sound at least 2 times. Once you have practiced with your child, please send the sound book back to school in their blue school bag so that we can add more sounds at school. If at all



possible, please do not say the name of the letter: it often confuses the child because most of the names of the letters do not match the sound the letter makes (saying the name of the letter w, duh-duh-double-u...is not the same as making the sound wwwwww).

The Sensorial area of the classroom has also been a very popular spot for many of the children. I have seen many interesting patterns being constructed with the brown stairs and pink cubes. This area also lends itself to small group lessons. I have invited several groups of 3-8 children for lessons on various sensorial and geometry materials including: sound cylinders, color tablets, geometric solids, pink cubes and brown stairs, knobbed and knob-less cylinders, etc. This is a great way to engage several children at one time and also a great lesson on taking turns. Small groups are helpful for the teachers and the children, because when I observe several children who are not engaged in



an activity, I can entice them to work in my small group. This is a way for them to socialize with other children in addition to learning a new work that they can then add to their repertoire of teacher-presented works and return to at another time, independent of the teacher.



One game in particular, what I call *The Color Game*, the children have really enjoyed and you can easily do at home. All you need to do is use something that has several colors, a box of crayons for example, and then choose 8 or more (depending on your child's interest) and have them choose one color at a time and go on a color hunt around the house, choosing items of the same color and bringing them back to where you started, then moving on to the next color. This is a great game for movement, memory, and color recognition and it is a way to help the new children navigate their classroom and to learn where things are.

Thank you Amanda, Trenton's mom, for bringing the butterflies to our school and sharing your experience of taking care of them. It was an amazing opportunity for Trenton to share and for our kids to learn.



Overall, we have had an incredible first month of school and your children have already shown so much growth in such a short time. We look forward to what the next month of school will bring to the South room.



# NEWS FROM THE PRE-K EXTENDED DAY



Ms. Andrea

After the pre-k children have finished their outdoor playground time, we move back inside for an extra hour of Montessori work. Because this is a smaller group of older children, this is a great opportunity for group presentations as well as a perfect time to introduce very challenging and in-depth works on a more individual basis.



During this time both pre-k and kindergarteners are in the same classroom allowing an opportunity for the older children from both 3-6 classrooms to work together.

During this time, the children also prepare the afternoon snack, set the tables, and serve snack for those children that stay a bit later. It's a very nice way to end each school day.



It gives the pre-k a chance to observe the more advanced activities that the kindergarteners are currently working on and it seems to help inspire their own ideas as well as strengthen their maturity and self-confidence as learners.





## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine



Warm greetings from the East Room!

Just as the month of September has quickly flown by children have quickly made new friends, discovered new works and embraced new experiences. During this past month we began to instill a sense of personal responsibility in our classroom environment,

both individually and communally. We spent quite a bit of time introducing these ideas through Grace and Courtesy Lessons.

### Each child is learning how to:

1. Exchange shoes and hang up their coat, with the assistance of an older child if needed
2. Preparing individual snack - which includes setting their own table, washing their hands and cleaning up after finishing their snack.
3. Asking for assistance - We have talked about and practiced asking for help (other than yelling across the room)
4. How to carry sharp objects like a scissor, poker or pencil
5. Walking around the work rugs (rather than walking over them)
6. Forming and walking in a line with others
7. Taking turns and coming to a presentation

These tasks may seem like a lot but the children are so capable and have become very successful with gentle reminders. We will continue to introduce new lessons that will help us grow together as a caring community of friends.



Children are also discovering how to care for their classroom with Practical Life materials. These works include: Table and Chair Scrubbing, Plant Care, Snack Preparation for the class, Shelf Cleaning, Window Washing, Sweeping, Flower Arranging and Polishing (naming just a few). Indirectly, these materials help develop coordination, concentration, independence and a sense of order. Not to mention the lovely smell of the soap and the many bubbles while scrubbing, the amount of dust that is found on the cloth while cleaning the shelf, the tiniest speck of dirt found on the window or finding the "baby"

leaf on a plant while caring for it. We have observed a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction while working on their chosen material.

Every child has a *sound book* and we have begun sending them home in their blue bags. The children are very excited to bring them home and



"read" it with you. We focus on the sound of the letters not the names. If a child already knows the name we acknowledge it and add that A says 'a', for example. The spiral notebook helps us track their progress in mastering their sounds along with new sounds being introduced.



Have fun and feel free to play sound games with your child. Find things in your house that begin with the sounds that are in their books or think of words that begin with the sounds they are working on. In the classroom we have several language works that reinforce the sound he/she is working on.

Once several sounds have been learned we can introduce the moveable alphabet and begin word building with your child.





# NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM (CONTINUATION)



Ms. Carole, Ms. Christine



Children have been very interested in the math materials too. Materials have been presented according to each child's ability. Younger children are working with the 0-9 material including the sandpaper numbers and counting quantities with the spindle boxes and the red and blue rods. The older children are working with teen/ten boards, addition equations and the 100 board.



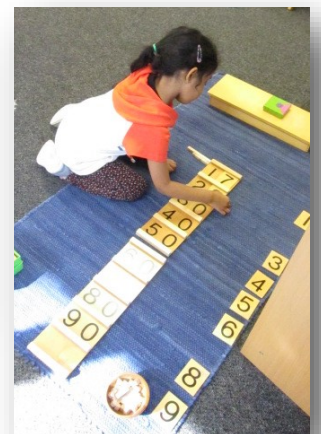
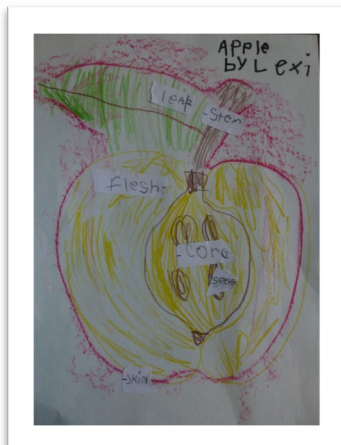
During the last week of September we had our ever popular apple tasting activity. The children have enjoyed tasting a variety of apples. This year we chose Golden Delicious, Fuji, Macintosh, Honey Crisp and Granny Smith. We used our senses to describe the color, size and shape of each apple. We also talked about their similarities and differences. Was it sweet or sour, crunchy or soft, which apple was the juiciest etc.



Finally, we want to say "thank you" for your contribution to our first sharing basket of the year. It's just another small way of building community – we couldn't do it without your help. If you come upon an interesting vegetable or fruit while grocery shopping together feel free to send it in – we'd love to try them. Also, we'd like to say thank you to Miles and his Mom, Amy, for baking a squash pie and sharing it with his friends. It was delicious!!



As we "dissected" an apple we learned the names of each part. The children were invited to make a booklet or an apple rubbing and label the different parts of the apple. Throughout the week we read books, learned apple themed songs and talked a little about Johnny Appleseed.



September brought smiles, hugs and excitement into our classroom; we are so thankful for each and every family.



# NEWS FROM THE LATE AFTERNOON CLASS



**Ms. Donna**

September had us doing noodle art pictures made out of different types of noodles that had been colored with food coloring. Their designs were glued on to foam plates.



Birds gather together to fly to warmer places. Animals are really working hard to store food for winter. Some animals grow more hair to keep warm. We have seen our squirrels picking tomatoes and running to their homes with them. Some of the children think that the squirrels will eat their tomatoes now rather than saving them for a snack when they wake up in the winter.

We made three different types of apple trees and glued them on paper (red, green and yellow). Fall trees were made using small twigs and adding different tissue paper leaves.



We talked about different changes that might happen in the fall and wrote it on chart paper. Now we are looking for what we think happens in the fall. It begins to get darker outside in the late afternoon and early morning.

We learned a new game called "Doggie, doggie where's your bone." It is hard for some of us not to tell the dog who has the bone. We also have enjoyed playing our other group games. (Little bug, Little mouse hiding under the little house, and what's missing). We also looked at some large cards and did what the children were doing on the cards. (Jump, sit, stand on one foot, etc.) The exchange game is moving faster now that everyone knows everybody. Two names are called, and those people must quickly exchange places on our line.





# SEPTEMBER PHOTO GALLERY

