

MONTESSORI PATHWAYS' NEWS

The First Week of School (August 24— September 1, 2023)



Welcome to Montessori Pathways—
your child's home away from home!

Notes from Ms. Alena

(Head of School)

We would like to welcome back all of our returning children and families and extend a warm welcome to all of our new children and families. September is always a time of excitement, yet with that comes anxiety and nervousness for many children. We will do our best to ensure the transition is as seamless as possible and to ensure that each child feels loved, respected and safe. A Montessori learning environment is like no other ... our main objective at Montessori Pathways is to provide a carefully prepared, clean, safe, and stimulating environment which will help children to develop

within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills and ideas essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

Respect and courtesy in our Montessori school is the foundation for everything we do and each child will soon learn the following important skills:

- ◆ how to put their work away where they found it
- ◆ how to tidy up after themselves
- ◆ the importance of helping a friend in need
- ◆ the importance of respecting the materials, the teachers and each other
- ◆ how to tuck in their chair when they leave the table
- ◆ how to walk in the classroom
- ◆ how to be self directed and find their own 'work' and most importantly,
- ◆ how to be independent!



Each child will feel empowered at Montessori Pathways School and learn how great it feels to do things on their own! Each Montessori teacher is here to nurture, support and guide them each and every day and are committed to making your child's Montessori preschool, kindergarten, and elementary experience productive, stimulating and fun! We are honored that you have chosen our school and we are confident that this will be a wonderful year for everyone involved!

Montessori Pathways Team 2023-2024

Our experienced, enthusiastic, and outstanding teachers who will be helping your children become strong and independent learners, as well as responsible, kind, and helpful individuals:

- ◆ **Ms. Alena** – Director of Montessori Pathways School
- ◆ **Ms. Bridget**– Elementary I-II Teacher in the North Room.
- ◆ **Ms. Masha**– Primary Teacher in the East Room; Kindergarten and Pre-K Extended Day Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Carole** – Primary Teacher in the East Room
- ◆ **Ms. Kathy** – Primary Teacher in the South Room; Kindergarten and Pre-K Extended Day Teacher.
- ◆ **Ms. Urana**– Early Morning Arrival; Primary Teacher in the South Room; Preschool Extended Day Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Tina**—Late Afternoon Teacher / Substitute Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Noza**—Late Afternoon Assistant Teacher / Substitute Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Laxmi**—Substitute Teacher
- ◆ **Ms. Suzy**— Art teacher in Elementary Class



Each month, we will be sending out a newsletter to let you know about everything that has happened at school, as well as to announce upcoming school events. We understand the parents' interest and curiosity about their child(ren)'s first few days at school, so we have prepared a short newsletter for the first week.

For most of our students, the beginning of the new school year was smooth and organized. Some of the children are returning students and are a great help for their new friends. Some of our new students had also attended our summer camp, which helped them build a strong relationship with the school, as well as learn the rules and procedures of the classrooms.

Our newsletters will contain information from each individual classroom, but we suggest that you take the time to read all of it. Oftentimes the teachers include helpful information, interesting recipes, and other tips to be used at home, as well as a greater picture of what is happening around the school.

These newsletters also serve as a starting point for conversations about school with your child.

I would like to extend our appreciation to the teachers, who spent a lot of time, energy, and creativity in preparing such a wonderful and safe environment for our students.

Many thanks to all of our families who actively support our school and team and help us to provide a phenomenal learning environment and opportunity for our students. We, of course, would not be able to make it without your help and support!

We are looking forward to getting to know each child and working with each family to make this year an accomplish one! If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at **815-459-6727** or via email montpathways@hotmail.com so that we can discuss things in detail. Have a Happy and Safe Labor Day!

A Poem for Parents: "Nothing"

(Author Unknown)

When children come home at the end of the day,
The question they're asked as they scurry to play is,
"What did you do at school today?"



And the answer they give
Makes you sigh with dismay.



"Nothing, I did nothing today!"

Perhaps nothing means

That I worked with *Pink Tower*, counted to ten,
Or studied about *The Parts of Flower*.

Maybe I painted or learned to tie my shoe;

Or discovered what happens when you mix red and blue.

Maybe I learned to tuck in my chair and put my work away,

Or maybe I learned to be kind to a friend while I was playing outside today,

Maybe my scissors followed a line and I mastered to write my name.

Maybe I learned some sounds or numbers or learned to play a new game,

Maybe I made a craft or sang a song from beginning to end,

Or maybe I learned to play with a special, brand new friend.

When you're in preschool

And your heart has wings,

"Nothing" can mean so many, many things.





COMING SCHOOL'S EVENTS



- ◆ **September 1 (F) - First Friday Nature Class at Veteran Acres Park in Crystal Lake for Elementary Students**
- ◆ **September 4 (M) - No School in observance of Labor Day.**
- ◆ **September 8 (F) - Back to School Picnic at Veteran Acres Park—5:30-6:30pm**
We welcome all of our families to meet each other as well as our wonderful team! Let's begin this school year together!
- ◆ **September 21 (Th) at 11 a.m.,** children from Pathways School will sing "*Light a Candle for Peace*" in celebration of 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" will be sung continuously for 24 hours by Montessori school children around the world.

Our school is excited about joining the many other Montessori schools to "Sing Peace around the World". It is a chance to connect our regular lessons of encouraging the children to treat each other with respect and dignity. To show compassion, patience, and kindness to others are values nurtured in the Montessori environment as the children work together each day for a peaceful classroom. In the words of Maria Montessori, "*The child is both the hope and promise for mankind.*"



INTERNATIONAL
PEACE DAY

- ◆ **September 22 (F) - Elementary Parent / Teacher Conference Day (North Room)**
 - * No School for all Elementary students
 - * During Elementary Orientation Meeting, most parents voted for virtual P/T Conferences for elementary class.
 - * The link to schedule your virtual conference will be sent to you on Monday, September 11th.
 - * The link for Zoom P/T meeting will be sent on Monday, September 18th.

- ◆ **September 26 (Tu) - Mums Sale School Fundraiser.**

Thanks to many of our families during previous years' fundraisers, we were able to replace some furniture, change the carpet around the school, update the floor, kitchen counters and cabinets in all rooms, and renovate our playground. This year, proceeds will go to replace old and add new Montessori materials to our classrooms. If you would like to participate, **please return your order forms with payments no later than September 8th.**



"The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child's own natural desire to learn."

MARIA MONTESSORI



NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS (NORTH ROOM)



Ms. Alena, Ms. Maryam, Ms. Bridget

"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

—Maria Montessori, "To Educate the Human Potential"

In our Montessori elementary classroom, we spend the first week of school building on the foundations that we set on the first day — further establishing rules and routines, empowering the students, developing relationships, and presenting inspiring work.

We begin talking with the students about classroom routines and expectations on the very first day of school. Throughout the week, we build on these discussions, usually during community meetings. Like all Montessori teachers, we have high expectations of courtesy, respect, and order. Taking time during the first week to fully establish these expectations helps the students understand what is required of them and of others in the classroom. It serves us all well for the remainder of the year.



A great interactive strategy for discussing expectations is to invite the students to role-play different scenarios. For example, we may invite a returning student to role-play three situations and encourage the other students to determine which is the most courteous:

1 *Walking by someone, bumping into them accidentally, and carrying on.*

2 *Walking by someone, bumping into them accidentally, saying "Excuse me," and then carrying on.*

3 *Walking by someone, bumping into them accidentally, and saying, "Excuse me. Sorry. Are you all right?"*

Throughout the first week, we also reinforce the idea that the classroom is the students' space. We encourage them to feel a sense of pride and ownership in their environment, and we empower them to take responsibility for the classroom. When we see things that need attention, we ask the students what they can do to help.

Empowering the students to be responsible for their space means that they are also involved in keeping the classroom tidy. During the first week, we introduce the students to our classroom chore log. Each student receives a task listed on the log that he/she is responsible for during that week. The following week, we change the log and the students are given new tasks. For example, one student may be responsible for sweeping the floors, while another may be in charge of straightening the books in our classroom library. The students carry out their tasks in the middle or at the end of each day, taking ten minutes or so to make sure their classroom is clean and tidy. Returning students carefully model how the tasks are done for the new students. Throughout the year, we observe how the chores are being carried out and when necessary, we review the steps involved in careful cleaning.



Another important focus of the first week is helping students make connections with their teachers and peers. We make a point of having a meaningful conversation with each of the students within the first days of school. This helps us set the foundation for a trusting and caring relationship. We also look for opportunities for the students to build and strengthen their friendships. For instance, we may ask an outgoing returning student to show a new student how to complete a classroom task, or we may encourage a new student to ask a returning student to help him if he is looking for something in the class.

Overall, the first week is an enjoyable time of establishing relationships as well as creating a positive and trusting atmosphere with expectations of courtesy and care. It truly sets the tone and builds the foundation for the year.

Unfortunately, this year our elementary students were not able to begin with Ms. Bridget. However, we would like to say a huge thank you to Ms. Maryam for helping our students with a smooth and organized back-to-school transition. We know that as soon as Ms. Bridget will be back soon, the students will continue a very exciting learning journey with her.



NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Urana



The first week of school was very busy and exciting. We began our days outside, socializing and enjoying the expansive outdoors at Pathways. Some children engaged in group games while others chose to run and explore the beautiful new playground equipment. The returning students learned to introduce themselves and ask what is your name? We did a few group games which allow new children to meet others and feel welcome. It is very important for each child to feel safe and welcome in our community. A sense of security is essential to success outside of the home. A few children were unsure however, as the week progressed all engaged in some sort of activity outside. We only had a few hand holders and minimal tears! The least tears in my 30 plus years!



Our very first lesson was on how to divide by classrooms. All the pre-primary children are outside at once. When recess is over the children find their water bottles and then their teachers. The South Room uses the gazebo area while the East room uses the benches on the green carpeted area. Most siblings separated by classrooms. We did have a few tears, but not very many. Each room made it fun by chanting: *"We are the South room! The mighty, mighty South Room."* The East room did so as well, and we continued to try and outdo each other on the volume of our chants.

At the beginning of the school year there is both an early morning and post-work cycle line time. The morning line time is very informative and full of basic presentations. Freedom within limits requires a whole lot of guidelines. Our formal lessons began with carrying a rug, unrolling, and rolling a rug, as well as how to walk around a rug and within the classroom.



The rug or table is an essential boundary for the children and defines another child's workspace. A few of the younger returning students could not understand why someone would touch their work and responded with loud crying! Another lesson evolved. How to ask someone not to touch your work? We learned to use our words, "Please choose your own work

from a shelf". The only place we choose a work is from the shelf. This is difficult for many of the new children. Everything looks so cool and inviting and each child wants to do what they see out on rugs and tables.! We use walking feet, inside voices and gentle hands.

Lessons on Grace and Courtesy are also given. We did quite a bit of role-playing as the older returning children modeled how to ask for help, how to wait, and how to watch another child. The returning students gave lessons for our new friends. Everyone enjoyed having at least one turn to model different lessons. Self-confidence was evident by the smiles seen after utilizing their new roles.

Presentations were given for basic Practical Life and Sensorial activities each morning. Work time began and everyone was excited to choose work. During the work cycle individual children are given more specific lessons catered to the child's age group. These early morning lessons will continue and build upon one another, other laying the foundations of each child's classroom experience.



As the weeks progress the children become more confident each day, learning new activities through both group and individual presentations given. Repetition is key to each child's individual success. Taking the time to master each activity may last from a few days to a few months and is dependent on each individual child. Each interaction with a material brings new aspects, defines the content, and refines the child's experience within the Montessori classroom.

The class read "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn. A wonderful story about a young raccoon, Chester who was scared to go to school. His mother told him she had an old family secret to share with him from her mother and her grandmother before her. The mother raccoon kissed Chester's hand on his palm and told him he would always feel her love if he held his hand to his heart. The story ends with Chester doing the same for his mother, in case she misses him as well! Several children came in with hearts and drawings from home. So cute.

As our first week wraps up, we would like to stress how happy we are to have a wonderful group of friends who are beginning to form friendships, cooperate and help each other learn. It will be a wonderful year! We have no doubts about it!



NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Carole



Welcome or welcome back, East Room Families! It's hard to believe it's only been one week of the new school year with how much learning and progress our students are already making. Our returning students have hopped straight back into their routine, many picking up where we left off during summer camp. This is incredibly helpful for our newer students who not only see exactly how the class works right in front of them, but also have many friends at the ready and eager to help.



Perhaps it is exactly these helping hands from fellow classmates that have allowed our new friends to focus more on their transition and enjoying themselves rather than missing home! We are even seeing some of our new friends who feel comfortable with the routine take on leadership to help fellow new students get into the groove – a lot of love and respect for each other in our class.



To help our friends with the transition back to school, we have been reading some heart warming books like "A Kissing Hand for Chester Raccoon," singing old and new favorite songs, and giving as many various presentations as possible so our students can see what piques their interest in different areas throughout the classroom.



In true Montessori fashion, we have already seen many of our younger friends become inspired by their older friends, whether it's pulling up a floor table to join in making their own "Parts of ..." books or setting a goal to get to the Hundred

Board. For our older students, this serves as a great motivator to keep selecting complex works and is a wonderful way to reach mastery of materials they've previously worked on.



One of the best ways to ensure a child has truly learned something is for them to try teaching it to a classmate. As you start to see works coming home in your child's blue bag, you may notice that they're repeating some activities, and that is great! Repetition is how our children become more comfortable with an activity and work to solidify their understanding of a concept. It is also part of the learning process! What starts out as a "Numbers 1 to 5 Book" that was created during a one on one presentation with a teacher will become a book created with only a bit of help from a friend or teacher and will eventually become a book made from start to finish by the child all by themselves.



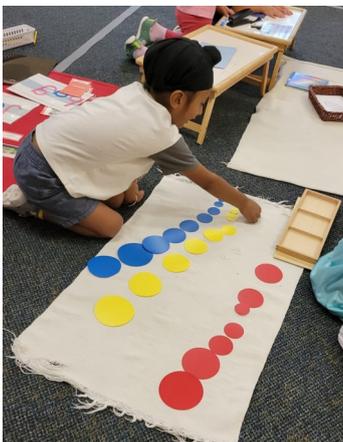
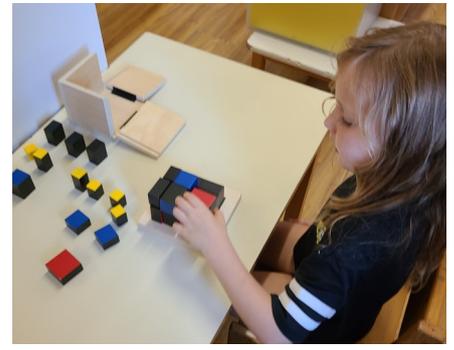
Our students have been hard at work familiarizing themselves with their class, the school, and each other. And within only one short week, they have done a phenomenal job of getting themselves, and each other, used to the school. We have many exciting fall themed activities planned for our students as we head into September, so be sure to keep an eye out for them in the next Newsletter!



PHOTO GALLERY FROM THE KINDERGARTEN AND PRE-K EXTENDED DAY



Ms. Kathy, Ms. Masha





MORE WONDERFUL MOMENTS AT MONTESSORI PATHWAYS



In August



Our care of the children should be governed not by the desire to 'make them learn things', but by the endeavor always to keep burning within them the light which is called intelligence.

- Maria Montessori

