

# Montessori Pathways' News



## ~Learning to be Change Makers~

*“For parents who invest in a Montessori education beyond the earliest years, you are gifted with a child who goes into the world able to reach their highest potential—not only academically and eventually in their careers, but as human beings who are going to give back and make it a better world.” — Michelle Morrison, Head of School, Princeton Montessori School*

If children near the end of their kindergarten year in Montessori, many parents struggle with the question whether or not to keep their children in Montessori for Elementary Program.

On the one hand the typical Montessori five-year-old's self-confidence and love of learning lead many families to ask: *Why tamper with something that is clearly working?*

Other parents feel that, since their kindergarten graduate will be moving on to another class one way or another, next year might be the logical time to make the transition from Montessori.

If you are facing this choice, we encourage you to take a good look at your school's elementary program. Although, you will, of course, want to gain an impression of the teacher, focus your attention on the students themselves. Elementary students are often the best spokespeople for the value of a Montessori education.

**What makes Montessori special is its ability to nurture talent without needless competition and stress. In a nutshell, Montessori children never lose the joy of learning.**

### Why Continue in Montessori Elementary?

[\(click here to read an expert's opinion\)](#)



## Notes from Ms. Alena (Head of School)

### \*The Magic of Montessori Materials\* Family Night

*“What the hand does,  
the mind remembers”.*

*~Maria Montessori*

Thank you so much to all who came out to our “Montessori Materials” family night. It was a great turnout and the parents who attended were amazed by the progression of the curriculum from Primary through Upper Elementary, the materials and the way in which it is presented to the children, and how the children learn to internalize mathematical, language and other concepts.



The objective of Montessori is to develop the concept first. By using concrete materials during the early, sensitive years, the Montessori child can learn the basic concepts of mathematics and language. Montessori students use concrete hands-on learning materials that make abstract concepts more clear. Lessons and activities are introduced simply and concretely in the early years and are reintroduced several times during the following years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity.

All of the materials in the Montessori classroom have been specifically designed to attract the interest of the student, while at the same time teaching an important concept. The purpose of each material is to isolate a certain concept the child is bound to discover. Montessori believed that “what the hand does, the mind remembers”. Concrete materials make concepts real, and therefore easily internalized. The student works abstractly (paper and pencil) when he or she has internalized the pattern and no longer needs the Montessori material.

The hands-on materials in the Montessori classroom not only provide self-confidence and independence, but helps with concentration and memory which leads to more abstract learning in math, reading, and all other academic areas.



## Parents' Corner



### Multi-Age Grouping: Observation + Imitation = Learning

Inside the Montessori community and beyond, multi-age classrooms are a hot topic for parents, teachers, and school administrators.

Angeline Stoll Lillard, in her authoritative research review "Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius", describes the Montessori multi-age setting this way: *"Montessori encourages learning from peers in part by using three-year age groupings. This ensures that as children move through the classroom they will be exposed to older and younger peers, facilitating both imitative learning and peer tutoring... Dr. Montessori was quite clear about the need for this mix of ages."*

#### How & why multi-age grouping benefits younger learners?

Simply put, children learn readily from other children. Not only are they eager to play "teacher," they are astonishingly attentive "pretend" students. What young child has not played "school" with a friend or sibling? Multi-age Montessori schools take advantage of this natural tendency toward spontaneous learning by letting them "play school" with structured classroom activities.

Along with direct lessons given by classmates, younger students in a multi-age setting also learn by observing the activities of older peers and even by "eavesdropping" on advanced lessons given by the teacher to another child. Montessori teachers are careful to present lessons to older children in a manner that allows interested younger children to watch, listen, and learn.



#### The benefits of multi-age grouping to older learners.

It's easy to see how access to advanced activities and lessons benefits younger children academically. What about older children? Any adult who has tried to teach something the least bit

complicated to someone else has enjoyed a taste of the older child's Montessori learning experience! There is no better way to reinforce one's own knowledge than by teaching someone else.

Teaching a real lesson, as children do in Montessori classrooms, helps older children identify gaps in their own knowledge and often inspires them to achieve even greater mastery.



Leadership opportunities are extremely rare for children in a single-grade classroom; such roles are often assigned by the teacher. A Montessori multi-age classroom affords children daily opportunities to teach a skill or share information with others. Further, because every child is particularly good at something, this opportunity exists for every child, every day. This difference in how leadership roles develop in the classroom is a typical illustration of the difference between single-grade, teacher-centered, traditional schools and Montessori multi-age, child-centered classrooms.

When peer-to-peer learning is self-directed, when it happens because children are ready, willing, and able to participate, it bolsters the older child's self-confidence, opens doors for younger children, and sharpens the academic skills of both.

Maria Montessori observed that children are eager to learn, and she identified self-directed, observational learning as a central theme of childhood. Describing the phenomenon of observational learning in a multi-age group, Montessori wrote that the child *"...suddenly becomes aware of his companions, and is almost as deeply interested as we are in the progress of their work."*

[www.montessoriservices.com](http://www.montessoriservices.com)





## School Events in February

### REGISTRATION FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN!

For the past several years, it has become harder and harder to find a great place that would be the right fit for a child's development, education, and daily care. Many good private schools and childcare facilities were permanently closed after the pandemic and those that survived, have long waitlists. Because of this, and with an increased interest in Montessori Education, the demand of enrolling children in our program is rapidly growing.

**The spots are filling up very quickly now. 87% of available spots for the next school year have been already taken by our families during the Preferred Re-enrollment Period. We tour new families almost every day now and they are waiting for new families enrollment to begin to enroll their child.**

**We have 2 spots left in Elementary class and a few ones in Primary classes. Beginning February 3rd, the rest of the spots will be open for the new families and enrollment will be going on the first come, first served basis now.**

If you still would like to continue your child's education at Montessori Pathways, please:

**1. Complete the Re-Enrollment Form for the 2025-2026 school year and return it back to us along with the \$50.00 re-enrollment fee at your earliest convenience,**

Check to Montessori Pathways or QuickPay to montpathways@hotmail.com via Zelle are acceptable.

**2. The 10% annual tuition security deposit is due no later than April 15th. This will ensure a place for your child at our school and allow your child to continue in the same class with the same teachers.**

Contact Ms. Alena if you need a payment plan for deposit. The tuition contract will reflect a 10% discount for the second child's tuition and 15% for the third one's.

**3. The Summer Camp registration begins March 1st.** The application and \$30.00 early registration fee are due no later than April 15th. The spots for Summer Camp are also limited since it is time when our teachers need to take some time off. So, do not wait too long with your decision and registration.

Please note:

- a) Some par-time spots are already taken and if you consider a part-time schedule for your child, please **check with Ms. Alena what days of the week are available for part-time attendance** before filling up your application.
- b) If the registration forms will be returned after April 15, a spot at our school and camp cannot be guaranteed and your child will be considered as a new student with a required \$100.00 registration fee for the next School Year and \$50.00 registration fee for Summer Camp if the spots are available.

~ It is important that we know who is enrolled in Summer Camp and the School Year as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate plans for hiring staff. Students who are enrolled just prior to the start of Summer Camp or School Year cannot be guaranteed a spot in the same class or at school and Summer Camp at all. ~

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ms. Alena. It is time to make your decision. Time flies and it can be too late. Do not miss your opportunity to provide an amazing education for your child(ren)!

We look forward to another great year with your family!

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### IN FEBRUARY:

- ◆ **February 3 (M) – New Families Enrollment begins**
- ◆ **February 13 (Th) – Love and Friendship Celebration (Valentine's Day at Montessori Pathways)**
- ◆ **February 14 (F) – NO SCHOOL (Teachers' Institute Day)**
- ◆ **February 17 (M) – NO SCHOOL (Presidents' Day)**
- ◆ **February 19—March 6 – Moving On Weeks: Elementary Class Visit Days for Kindergarten Students by appt**



## NEWS FROM THE ELEMENTARY CLASS



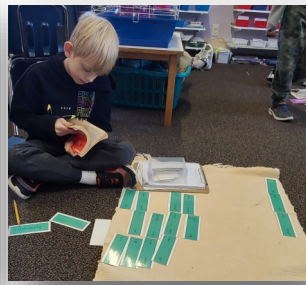
### Ms. Bridget, Ms. Carole

What a chilling beginning of 2025! The students returned with great stamina and curiosity.



Thankfully the kids have been able to explore outside in the snow when we briefly had it. We continue to work on social exchanges and compassion.

**Word Games:** To make transitions a bit more interesting, we have begun playing word games. *How do you spell \_\_\_\_?* *What begins with the blend \_\_\_\_?* *What rhymes with \_\_\_\_?* Kids enjoy these and you can include them in your travels to and from school.

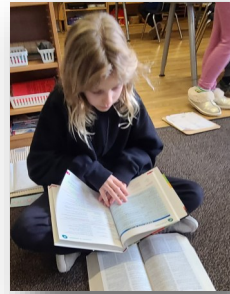


**Spelling:** All students have spelling lists. Spelling words are taken from their writing. Each student has his/her list to practice during the week. We worked on writing better and longer sentences using our spelling words. Students then quiz each other. This will bring attention to the words without the pressure of a spelling quiz. It will hopefully transfer to the new writing habits of each child.



**Reading:** *"Reading is an exercise in empathy; an exercise in walking in someone else's shoes for a while."* -Malorie Blackman

Please continue to ensure that your child is reading at home. Trips to the library and bookstore are nice. Borrowing books from the class can be a great way to read more. Having kids see you read also make the difference. I will be checking this week for logs/replacing lost or used up logs.

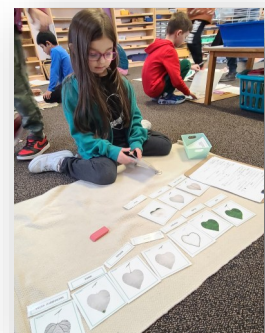


**Math:** More students are choosing math and are moving from materials to abstract. I love that when I am teaching a new concept, I am often teaching to a lot of eyes. This is the beauty of a multi-age classroom - where there are people doing your math, where some are doing math in where one has been and where one is heading.



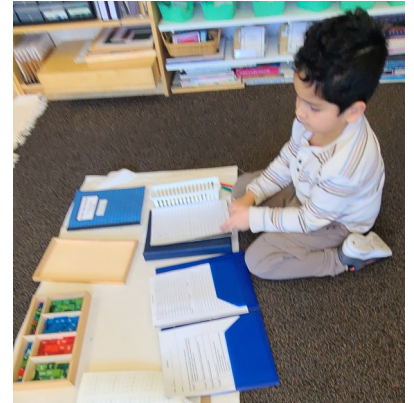
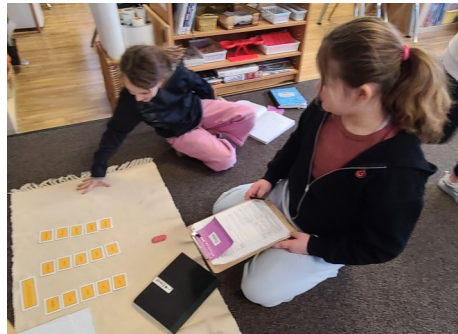
There is always reinforcement of concepts. Playing mental math games at home can be fun. Money, time, how much left, how many more? It is exciting when you include your child in real life math.

Earth, Ancient Civilizations, vertebrates, plant parts, forces and simple machines are all concepts to further explore in this next half of the year.



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## Elementary Class



## NEWS FROM THE PRE-K AND KINDERGARTEN AFTERNOON GROUP

Ms. Masha, Ms. Kathy



Our Pre-K and Kindergarten friends have entered a season of collaboration. Perhaps it is the (infrequent) snowfall leading to group work of pulling sleds and building forts, or perhaps it is the addition of new members graduating from the nap room, but there is a definite buzz for collaboration in the afternoons this month!

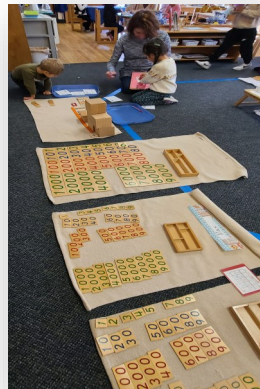


Not only is this a phenomenal opportunity to continue practicing fine motor skills, concentration, and organization (try keeping track of over 30 poked out European countries without being organized!), but it is also an effective way to truly understand, feel, and remember Geography.



Dr. Montessori observed that children crave more social interaction and collaboration as they get closer to Elementary age, which the materials reflect. The Banker's Game, for example, needs at least two people, but can have as many as 4 or more working together to collect 4-digit numbers with golden beads, label them with numerals, and head to the "bank" to exchange 17, for example, for one 10 and 7 units as they add, multiply, divide, or subtract!

After days or even weeks of working with a map, tracing each piece, painting or poking it, locating it on the control chart, labeling it (and in some cases, continuing the exploration with flags, animals, landmarks, and more), the children absorb the location and names of these places! Meaningful, hands-on repetition leads to deeper understanding and memory!



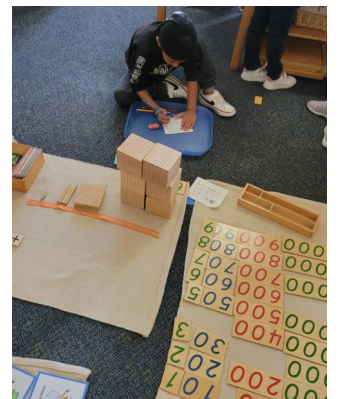
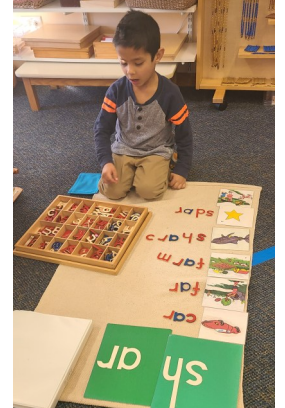
We have also seen more children jump into map making in the afternoon, whether they are poking out a map of Europe or painting the map of North America and Canada.

We rounded out the month of chilly weather by working together to create a hearty vegetable soup. Children worked as a team at their own stations, peeling and chopping the vegetables of their choice to add to the soup. We patiently waited for it to cook the next day during the work cycle and enjoyed a warm bowl for snack together with Elementary friends!



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## Pre-K and Kindergarten—Afternoon Work Cycle



## NEWS FROM THE SOUTH ROOM

Ms. Kathy, Ms. Ellen



We began our new year with a flurry of activity. The children came in and got back to work as if they had just a weekend off rather than a whole 2 weeks off. Many remembered they had unfinished work from before the break and set out to finish it.



We also explored the arctic areas with a study of Polar Region by exploring the animals, plants, landscapes and Inuit people. One child remarked "They all look so cold"! This also included a hugely popular study of penguins from parts of a penguin, types of penguins and the life cycle of a penguin as well. There are so many penguins and some significantly funny looking varieties.



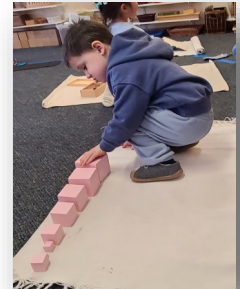
January brought us a study of different citrus fruits and the parts of the orange. These are introduced in the familiar style with the 3-part cards. One set of cards with a picture and label, one set of cards with just a picture and no label and the last only a label. The cards are used in many areas of the room and although the subject matter changes to oranges or penguins the familiarity of the material makes it user friendly. The vocabulary changes for each specific lesson. For example, the parts of an orange isolates the parts in both picture form and the label. First a picture of a whole orange, then only the juice sacs are colored for identification of the specific part. We all enjoyed identifying and naming the parts, juice sacs, pith, pips wall, zest. Many children made books for each.



The children observed the different fruits similarities and differences, and we had a tasting as well. We have quite a few sour pusses in our room it was surprising to see how many children enjoyed the lemons and limes as well as the grapefruit.



The children have been preparing for Montessori Family night. Each has chosen a lesson to "present" to our community in both language and math. The youngest can present lessons on the Pink Tower as it is both a lesson in Sensorial area and a preparation for the math area. It is made of 10 cubes from 1 cm cubed to 10 cm cubed. It is also the same as our bead cubes for the long chains of cubed numbers. The Pink Tower is a necessary lesson before any other math can begin. This is the beauty and natural flow of a Montessori classroom.



Each material teaches lessons that build upon one another to prepare the child for more advanced activities. This is true for every area of the classroom. Language begins with simple classification, matching object to object or pictures to pictures to refine the eye and prepare for identifying individual letters.

All the areas of the classroom are filled with snow themed activities from making a snowy owl fork painting, penguin poking, q tip snowflakes, decorating a winter hat, parts of a snowman, penguin or citrus, sewing snowmen and arctic explorations.

A huge hit in the Sensorial area is the new smelling jars. It is used to match different scents. The children match the scents of dill, ginger, rosemary, garlic, cinnamon and nutmeg in a white capped jar to its match in a black capped jar using only their noses! Refining their olfactory sense. Which led to a discovery by one child that "We are using our 5 senses and that is why it is called Sensorial area!" she exclaimed. Everyone at the lesson was amazed!



# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## South Room



## NEWS FROM THE EAST ROOM

Ms. Masha, Ms. Laxmi



Happy New Year and welcome back, East Room! January is one of our favorite times to observe the students. They come back rested and excited to dive back into their work with new zeal. Their enthusiasm serves as an annual reminder about the importance of taking time off to be with family and relax! Adding to the excitement was the arrival of a new student to the East Room community. In true Montessori fashion, our returning students have stepped up as experts, guiding her through every aspect of the day, from getting a snack to the complexity of post-lunch cleanup and recess prep! Even the youngest students have found the courage and confidence in their own skills to step in and help, fueling the confidence in their own work as well.



Academically, we are seeing many new concepts click for students. Some children are remembering their first sounds, and getting the hang of sorting words by beginning sound. Others are finally mastering identifying number 1-10 and almost instantaneously rolling seamlessly into the concepts of odd and even, tens, and teens! Others still have been working on building their first words, working with word families, blending them together and reading their first words—we have so many passionate readers in the room now! And others still are moving from a very concrete division of golden beads between people to the more abstract division board and grasping the concept of remainder. There is a wave of excitement in the room as the pieces gathered in the months prior start to come together and the patterns of language, math, and geometry emerge!



The children are especially excited to be able to share these discoveries with the parents during the “Magic of Montessori Materials” night. There is no way to properly capture the pure eagerness and anticipation in our students’ eyes when we let them know you are coming to see their work – they so look forward to sharing their world and being the experts in the room! Thank you to everyone who took the time to come sup-

port the students and learn more about the Montessori curriculum. We hope you left as inspired as we are daily!

You may have heard about the citrus tasting week from your child as well. This year we had the opportunity to try out 8 different citrus fruits! Thank you to the Evans family for tracking down and bringing all of them in! We had a chance to taste lemon, lime, grapefruit, pomelo, tangelo, mandarin, orange, and the beloved kumquat. We tasted two fruits each day, pairing a sourer variety with a sweeter one, allowing the children to feel the different areas on their tongue that taste sour or sweet. We were surprised to see more and more children reacting positively to the sourest fruits, even asking for seconds! In addition to taste, we saw the different ways parts of a citrus presents itself in the different varieties – a grapefruit has very large and plump juice sacs, whereas a kumquat is mostly walls, pip, and rind, and the pith on a pomelo is thicker than on a tangelo! We also noticed even our most reserved eaters taking a chance this year to at least nibble on the fruit in the midst of the excitement with their friends, and surprise themselves by liking some! The older children also took this chance to practice graphing, helping to count and record the number of children who enjoyed each variety. The tangelo was the crowd favorite this year!

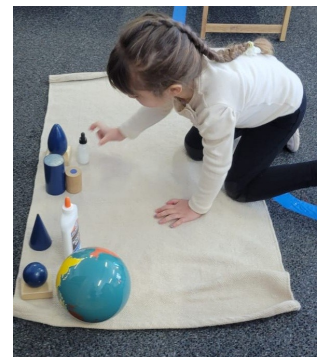


Our sewing shelf continues to expand and gather a lot of attention. Sewing is not only a practical skill, it helps the child practice immense self-control, emotional regulation, focus, concentration without distraction, and incredible fine motor development. It is always fascinating to see that the children who need refinement in these areas always find their way to sewing, as it is such a rewarding way to practice these skills! This month we added a more open-ended snowman sewing activity, allowing children to pull together available pieces and thread options to decorate their snowman as they see fit.

We also popped some popcorn and, paired with fresh cranberries, have been ever so gently stringing them together with needle and thread to make garland feeders for the birds! Have you ever tried to sew through a popcorn piece? It takes quite the concentration and refined motor skill to do so continuously for a prolonged time, and our children are doing it so beautifully! This work is out and being used at all times throughout the day as the kids are quite concerned with the birds having enough food available during this freezing weather. We sure are hoping for some warmth and finally some snow in the next month!

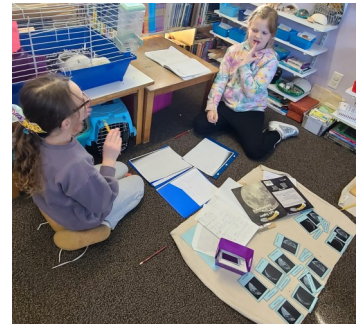
# JANUARY PHOTO GALLERY

## East Room





# WE LOVE SUCH MOMENTS!!!



*“Children acquire knowledge through experience in the environment.”*  
~M. Montessori

