

## January/February 2010 Newsletter

### Class News:

#### Scribbles 'n Bits

Our group, both the children and adults, has been enjoying the opportunity to connect with each other and share time together. We have been exploring manipulative toys, train sets, animals from the jungle, songs and, of course, we end each session with play dough.

If you are interested in joining Scribble n' Bits, please contact Mimi in the office. This session will continue until the end of March. A reminder that we are flexible regarding registration. You pay only for the days you can attend, as long as you tell us in advance.

--Lauren Brickner-McDonald

#### Intro I

Each day as we sing our "Hello Song" we now notice if friends are not in school. We also include a weather report. Our winter weather vocabulary has expanded – chilly, icy, snowy, windy or just plain "COLD!"

Since we have more indoor time on particularly cold mornings, we have enjoyed rereading a number of favorite stories in small groups. We love the Eric Carle book, From Head To Toe and another current favorite, Freight Train which provides an enthusiastic format for color review.

Blocks are exciting. Dressed in hard hats, we work together building bridges with the large blocks. We then take turns balancing carefully across to the other side.

Mozart is our background music toward the end of our class day. Some of us stop and totally focus on the music and others spontaneously dance.

Thank you for all of your support. Our young ones are growing in so many ways – longer attention spans, verbal skills and interactive play!

--Kathy Adams & Nancy Malchow

#### 3A, 3BI, 3BII, & 3C

Winter and the cold weather that it brings have been the focus of our curriculum during the months of January and February. Our songs, finger plays and books have been about chilly weather and snow. We have pretended to be snowflakes twirling around and snowmen melting to the ground. A favorite story was The Mitten. It was especially fun acting out the story, taking turns crawling into a giant mitten.



The winter theme has continued with our exploration of various art mediums. We have painted with snow and have created snowy day pictures, printing and painting with strings. Snow people of all sizes have been "built" with shapes, collage materials and special dough that we made ourselves. During the process of exploring and creating art, your children are constantly learning and developing fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination skills. These skills are pre-requisites for writing and reading.

February has provided us with the opportunity to celebrate two holidays, the Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day. Did you receive our special valentines in the mail? We were very excited when mailman Mike came to our classrooms to pick up our valentine mail. We hope that you enjoyed your valentines as much as we enjoyed making them.

The children in 3A celebrated "Australia Day." A special thank you to Nikita and Trinity's mom, Corina Paul, for talking to us about Australia and making "fairy" bread with us.

Thank you to everyone who donated items for 3BI's pancake day and Valentine's parties.

Your children are wonderful and so are you. We appreciate your ongoing support.

--Kathy Adams, Carolyn Clark, Debbie Kasel, Denise Laden and Louise Marsh

#### 4A and 4C

January is a time to pause, evaluate how far we have come and re-establish goals. With input from parent/teacher conferences we can now proceed with the second half of our year.

This is a great time of year for our budding scientists. We continue our year long study of the concepts of "Habitat" by exploring the hibernating bears in their caves. The weather was quite appropriate for our examination of the freeze and melt cycle. We discovered how the simmering combination of our favorite raw vegetables evolved into a delicious new taste and texture in soup. Likewise, our self portraits clarified how the combination of our many differences made for a new mixture which is our class.

February began with a day devoted to shadow science to acknowledge the groundhog's day of weather prediction. We then returned to our ongoing examination of our community helpers by



focusing on the postal workers. Our classroom post office afforded the opportunity to practice many pre-reading and pre-writing skills.

Thank you to Jenny Chen, Michael's Mom (4C) and Lisa Albregts, Mae's mom (4A) for helping us to

appreciate a different cultural celebration, Chinese New Year.

Thank you to Christine Ferri, Eric's mom, for sharing a favorite family story book.

--Arlene Aspell, Kathy DeMare, Ruth Trachtenberg

#### **Creative Drama – 4A and 4C**

As we observe the world around us, we notice that the winter season has arrived. In adjusting to the colder weather, we engage in discussions of hibernation, as we realize animals are settling down for their winter naps.

We're Going On A Bear Hunt is a book that encourages us to dramatize action and practice choral speaking skills.

We set the stage as we create the scenery for our dramatization. Swishy swashy grass grows out of green crepe paper streamers hanging over a rope line. Our river emerges as shades of blue tissue paper are attached to mural paper with liquid starch. Of course, the bear cave is a big cardboard box covered with cozy fake fur.

As we practice hibernating in our bear cave, we retell our bear tale and begin to comprehend concepts, to develop expressive vocabulary and begin to improve our sequencing skills.

We notice our story has a beginning, a middle and The End.

--Kathy DeMare & Ruth Trachtenberg

#### **4D**

Our Happy New Year began with emphasis on the letter "H." We built houses with shapes and learned the addresses of our homes. "H" also stands for the habitat of animals and the hibernation of many animals in winter.

Listening for the letter "B," we designed two different habitats for bears, one for the polar bears, and another for the black and brown bears. Only when the children provided all the necessary parts of the environment did the bears come and

live in a comfortable environmental habitat.

We traveled north to Alaska, to the land of the Eskimos, to explore their cold weather environment and way of life. We explored Inuit artifacts from the Morris Museum and engaged in related craft activities.

We also went south to the continent of Antarctica to study the penguins and the fragile nature of the South Pole environment.

In February, Groundhog Day gives us the chance to have fun with fact, fiction and shadow play. The science is, what is happening with the weather? The fiction is, will we really have six more weeks of winter? (It seems so, so far!) The fun is, we crawled through tunnels and made awesome shadows.

Our February vacation, beginning with President's Day, is the starting point for introducing our 5 year olds (ready to learn) to George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We relate this to history, math and MONEY; look at presidents' images on coins and currency.

Valentine's Day inspires us to initiate discussions of kindness and thinking about and doing things for others. Look at our displays, both in the hall and in the classroom. We're all



learning empathy and kindness, how to love and be loved. We're happy you received the "V" valentines we made for you, even though we didn't get to go to the post office to mail them because of the snow. Thank you for coming to our Valentine's Day party! We love you!

The Tiger Room children are especially excited to celebrate the Chinese New Year (February 14-28) and the Year of the Tiger! Thank you to Marie Conlin, Grace's mom, and Liana Bassin, Jackson's mom, for

coming in and sharing their children's tradition with us. Gung Hay Fat Choy!

--Arlene Aspell, Joan Mallotides, Carolyn Clark and Therese Jonsson

#### **Creative Drama – 4D**

We began our new 2010 year by acting out some of our favorite winter stories which illustrate the themes of being yourself, even if it's different from others, even if you make a mistake. In The Hat, Hedgie shows us we can be who we want to be. The Mitten shows us there is always room for one more. Tacky the Penguin tells us it is okay to be different and that we all win in the end. Caps for Sale is just plain mimicking fun.

Believe it or not, we have passed the mid-point of our school year, and we all are 5 years old. Our Fridays will now emphasize the Five Senses. We began with the sense of hearing as we made fancy shakers and had a parade to the playground. Soon, we will study vibrations and make rubber band guitars. Then we will communicate with one another with our homemade tin can telephones. They really work!

--Arlene Aspell, Joan Mallotides and Therese Jonsson

#### **Kidsclub**

Our Friday afternoon children began the New Year with a "Blast Off" into outer space. We built small rockets and flying saucers individually to use for imaginative play. We talked about the Apollo mission and landing on the moon. We used our Morris Museum box to examine a model of the Lunar Module (LEM) and a globe of the moon. We also learned the planets in our Solar System with the use of a museum model. We looked at pictures of the planets and discovered amazing facts about each of them. Then we designed our own Solar System pictures, complete with asteroid dust.

Our next stop was the stars. We learned to recognize the Big and Little

Dippers and saw pictures of other constellations before creating our own. Space travel is fun!

In February, "Squish and Squash" was a very hands in and hands on sensory experience with different mixtures. We made Goop, also known as Oobleck, with cornstarch and water. It was very smooth to the touch, and it was hard to tell if it was wet or dry! Combining glue and liquid starch, we made Glarch, a blubber-like substance that really stretches and even bounces. We also played with clean mud, but it didn't get us dirty because it is made with soap shavings! All SENSE-sational recipes will be coming home in our monthly booklet entitled "Squish and Squash."

--Arlene Aspell and Denise Laden

### **Kindergarten Enrichment**

Our Thursday afternoon children continue their travels around the world as they extend their 4D experiences to a deeper level. We explored Alaska and examined Morris Museum artifacts. We built igloos and played in a GIANT blow-up snow castle.

We went south of the border, down Mexico way, and looked at Mexican weaving, baskets and other artifacts. We tried on a sombrero, a shawl and tried out instruments. We recognized the piñata custom and how colorful everything is. Then we made our own individual yarn pictorial designs.

After Groundhog Day, we learned more about the history of Groundhog Day which began in Punxsatawney, Pennsylvania in 1887. While we all agree this story is a legend, it gives preschool children a great opportunity to learn about hibernation, groundhogs and the science of weather prediction as winter turns to spring. It's fun! Let's test the groundhog's prediction for six more weeks of winter...

Next, we will travel to China and learn more about the Chinese New Year. In the Tiger Room, we are very excited because 2010 is the Year of the Tiger!

Since the Winter Olympics only come every 4 years, we can't resist visiting Vancouver in Canada, learning about winter sports and creating our own mini Scribbles Olympics. We anticipate many gold medals!

--Arlene Aspell and Therese Jonsson

### **Miscellaneous News**

#### **Teacher Training**

The entire staff received training on February 4, 2010 from Certified

Parent Coach

Peggy

Fitzpatrick.



Peggy introduced us to an exciting new parenting program called "Scream Free Parenting." We saw a DVD and discussed key elements of this new approach developed by Hal Runkel, LMFT. Areas emphasized were how even preschool teachers can incorporate this approach in their classes, as well as how effective this is even in dealing with much older children. We are excited to let you know that Peggy will be introducing Scribbles Families to this new parenting program on our upcoming parent education day in March. The workshops that Peggy facilitates through her Parent Resources company are always informative, interactive and well received. Stay tuned for details.

Upcoming March training includes a workshop for staff in music given by Munchkin Music founder/director Claudia Lemming. Teacher Kathy DeMare plans to attend the Storytelling and Music Festival at CCM. Thank you to Gabe Dokkus' mom, Lynee Richel, for informing us about this upcoming event. (Lynee is a CCM professor.)

#### **Registration for 2010**

Registration started officially this past January and is now ongoing. As always, some classes filled at registration and other classes have openings. A reminder that to go on a waiting list, no tuition deposit is required. If you've already registered, please note that as stated on the cover

page of our registration packet, we do not want medical forms or photos now. You may submit them no earlier than June, as we need them to be more current.

If you have a particular request for a class option that doesn't appear, please don't be shy! Just let us know in writing so that we can work on ways to meet your needs. Remember also about the Lil Ashton Scholarship Fund. This enables children to attend by providing financial assistance. Especially in this economy, we're pleased to be able to offer this service. Everything is kept confidential, of course.

#### **Scholastic Book Club**

Although we haven't been able to submit your orders online, we appreciate your participation. Hopefully Scholastic will soon work out the kinks with their online ordering. The good news is that we continue to receive free educational items no matter how you order.

#### **Community Blood Drive**

The Student Government Association of Mountain Lakes High School requested that we publicize their annual Community Blood Drive on Tuesday March 16 from 2:30 pm to 7:30 pm in the Mountain Lakes High School Cafeteria.

#### **NAEYC Convention Fundraisers**

The last remaining fundraisers, our Scribbles yearbook and Raffetto's Pasta Sale will be here before you know it. If you haven't ordered a yearbook yet, you can still do so by picking up an order form from the office. The 30 page yearbooks will be distributed in June and cost \$20 each. The Pasta Sale will take place in early spring. An itemized accounting of what we've raised and what our NAEYC convention expenses were will be circulated after the Pasta sale. Our volunteer fundraisers have done a fabulous job!

*Thank you to Debby Fazendeiro for doing a wonderful job on the newsletter YET AGAIN!*