

## November/December 2009 Newsletter

### Class News:

#### Scribbles 'n Bits

We welcomed new friends to our Scribbles 'n Bits class during the last session. Most of us now gather for circle time and tap on our legs to "Here We Are Together." Homemade play dough, the riding yellow "truck" and stickers are some of our favorites! The adults get to mingle, network and share parenting ideas and concerns. The next session of Scribbles 'n Bits will be held in January 2010. Please see Mimi in the office if you would like to attend. As always, you can join at any time as long as you register in advance.

--Lauren Brickner-McDonald

#### Intro I:

In addition to focusing on a new color and shape each month, we are expanding and exploring learning center activities.

Our science table invites children to explore our natural surroundings. We



enjoyed touching different shaped gourds and lifting small, medium and large size pumpkins.

We were delighted as we magnified different shaped leaves.

Recently we added a variety of pine cones and evergreens to our collection. At circle time we passed around pine cones, noticing different sizes, shapes and textures. We also explored evergreen branches. We introduced the term "pine needle" as we touched the branch, learning to pass it to a friend.

At circle time, we are learning new songs. "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" is a new favorite along with "3 Little Monkeys." It is fun to sing as we identify parts of the body and learn to count. We are also playing jingle bells during the holiday season.

The children are beginning to interact with each other. Two friends worked together making a table top block structure. (We are so proud!) Three friends made food for a picnic in the house corner while another friend took the shopping cart with baby to the supermarket for extra supplies.

We love to peek at each other as we use magic markers or paint at the easel. It is fun to laugh and smile with a friend.

We are continuing to develop our self-help skills. We are learning to take off our hats, mittens, winter coats and boots. (Of course the teachers are there to help and encourage us.)

--Kathy Adams, Nancy Malchow & Linda Murphy

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

In November, our curriculum focuses on Thanksgiving. We read and talk about the many things we are thankful for – families, friends, pets, good food and the beauty of nature around us.

We enthusiastically prepared pumpkin bread using the skills of measuring, mixing and pouring. We also carefully cut our fruit for salad to share with our families at our Thanksgiving gathering.

Each season, we take a nature walk around the Community Church. We observed leaves as they changed color and swirled to the ground in the wind. We collected leaves of different shapes, sizes and colors for our science table and nature mural.

In December, we focused on evergreens. We looked at different varieties, feeling different size and color needles. Our classroom has again been transformed to reflect the bare trees and evergreens we see outdoors.

This month we are exploring the holiday traditions of Hanukkah and Christmas



through songs, stories, food and related activities.

In the spirit of giving, we are carefully and lovingly preparing special holiday surprises for our families. We wish everyone a joyful holiday season and look forward to a Happy New year.

--Kathy Adams, Carolyn Clark, Debbie Kasel, Denise Laden, Nancy Malchow & Linda Murphy

#### Thank You From the Threes' Teachers

A special thank you to Sam Wenger's mother, Molly, for purchasing three books from Usborne Books for the monkey room.

Thank you to our moms and dads that have read stories to us. You're the best!

A big thank you to Kayla Giordano's mom, Mary, for exploring recipes and preparing potato latkes for our Hanukkah celebration. They were delicious!

Many thanks to Sam Deutsch's mom, Jennifer, for preparing potato latkes and sending in all of the traditional celebratory items for our Hanukkah gathering.

Parent involvement in the classroom ALWAYS captures the interest of the children and is so very meaningful to all of us. Thank you for sharing your time, traditions and talent.

#### 4A and 4C

November and December are linked together with the word "thanksgiving". In November, we concentrated on what we are thankful for. At the top of our list is Nature. After experiencing one of our regular nature walks to notice the changes taking place, we turned our attention to the example set by the Native Americans. By exploring this group's use of, and respect for,

nature, we became more aware of our own use (and misuse) of nature. Throughout the year, the theme of diversity of peoples is woven in. We discovered through use of our Morris Museum loan exhibits, that even within the Native American community there is great diversity. We imitated through our art experiences just how they used nature for clothing, food, shelter and decoration. Eye-hand coordination was strengthened as

we did weaving, first with nature and then with art materials. Since this is harvest season, we combined the fruits, vegetables and grains being currently gathered to create our Thanksgiving feast. An activity that bridged November to December was the process of creating our own paint by pounding fruits, vegetables and evergreens with rocks into pieces of cloth. The cloth will now be enhanced to produce a truly beautiful gift since December is about giving. Even the youngest among us have a desire to be included in the custom of giving during the winter holidays. Another common theme for these various holidays is the creation of light and warmth in these darker days. To acknowledge this fact, we explore the use of candles with our candle science experiments and our creation of candle holiday cards.



Many thanks to Benjamin and Naomi Kleiner's mom, Lilia, for her wonderful presentation on Hanukkah in 4A. She showed us how to make a very creative (and delicious) menorah from edible ingredients (except for the candles!). This "recipe" will definitely be saved in our files and repeated.

It is time to celebrate with our families. Enjoy each other and see you next year!

--Arlene Aspell, Kathy DeMare, Ruth Trachtenberg

### **Creative Drama – Giraffe Room**

November and December are months of giving and thanksgiving. In keeping with these sentiments, we introduced

the classic folk tale The Elves and the Shoemaker.

With the help of our magnetic board, we develop our pre-reading skills by sequencing the story.

We set the stage as we match pairs of shoes and extend this interest to our table activity as we create our own "pairs" of shoes.

We enhance our emotional intelligence curriculum as we develop the characters in our tale and bring them to life. We recognize that the shoemaker, his wife and the elves are working together to help each other.

As we celebrate the holiday season, we will enjoy dramatizing The Wild Christmas Reindeer by Jan Brett.

--Kathy DeMare & Ruth Trachtenberg

### **4D**

Thank you, parents, for helping us to celebrate at our Halloween festivities. We began the month of November by learning about Election Day through a hands-on experience. Each child had the opportunity to vote for his or her favorite school snack, (pretzels, cinnamon graham crackers or Nilla wafers). After counting the votes, the final tally was 5 for pretzels, 6 for graham crackers and 5 for Nilla wafers. It was a close race!

In the month of November, our activities centered on the letters "N" and "T". We brought in "N" pictures which we glued on three giant N's, arranged the letters of our first name, and later in the month arranged the letters of our last name.

The curriculum theme throughout November was Native American culture. With the help of artifacts from the Morris Museum, we learned about the many different types of homes Native Americans lived in. After learning about the northwest coast Native Americans, we examined a model of their longhouse and the totem poles that told stories of their ancestors. Then we built our own totem poles with different wood

shapes. It also inspired us to make a classroom totem pole where each child worked on a paper plate animal face to add to the pole. We then decided to transform our "Hansel and Gretel" house into a Native American longhouse. We explored Native American pottery as well as weavings such as blankets on a loom and baskets. For our Thanksgiving feast, we made our own paper placemats by weaving strips of paper, reinforcing the concepts "under" and "over". Many of us also worked on the large circular loom we have in our classroom. The children made play dough "clay" and created their own Indian pottery. We also became quite good at reading Indian symbols in stories and using these symbols to decorate our classroom longhouse as well as writing a story on the headbands we made to wear to our feast.

We had a "show and tell" which focused on what/who the children are thankful for. Such wonderful pictures and items the children brought in! After cutting out turkey tail feathers, we recorded on the feathers what we are thankful for and placed this on our turkey mural.

Baking apple cranberry squares was our final activity before celebrating Thanksgiving at our 4D feast. The children wore their noodle necklaces and headbands, sang holiday songs and ate foods such as apple cranberry squares, stuffing and sweet potato pie that was shared amongst all the 4s classes.

As we began the month of December, we transformed our classroom's autumn mural by painting a beautiful night sky, decorating it with sparkling stars and then adding triangle trees for the letter "T".



December brings more holiday fun, and of course, the letter "D". We traced and cut out the letter "D" and glued dollars on it. We glued "D" pictures on a huge letter "D" and

played a dice game which was a fun way to reinforce our math skills.

It is always fun to learn about different customs and holidays. We look forward to a visit by Heather Weiner, Lindsey's mom. She will be talking to us about Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, and bringing in potato latkes for snack. Thank you Heather!



Kwanzaa, the African American holiday, will also be explored this month. We will learn that candles are an important part of many traditions as we look at the menorah, kinara and luminaries.

Our last letter for the month will be the letter "C". Show and Tell "C" pictures and candy canes will be just a few of the activities that will help reinforce the letter recognition.

Thank you to all the parents who brought in paper products for our feast, provided a letter snack or came to class to read or work with the children on a special project.

We hope you like the gifts the children lovingly made for you.

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

#### **Creative Drama – 4D**

In November, we dramatized the story of Owl Babies by acting out feelings of fearfulness and relief when our daddy came home. We made pine cone owls to hang on our tree in the classroom, and we loved being the baby owl who said "I want daddy!"

Before Thanksgiving, we followed the lead of the actors and prop designers in Thanksgiving Mice and told the story of how the Pilgrims came to America on the Mayflower and made friends with the Indians. We made our own Pilgrim hats for the show, as well as props such as Plymouth Rock and lighting.

We had a fun Creative Drama experience after reading the book The

Magic Dreidels by Eric Kimmel. Each child traced, cut out and water colored their own "magic dreidel." As an extended language experience, we asked each child to tell us what would "spin" out of his or her "magic" dreidel! As we acted out the story, we loved pretending to be Jacob, a member of his family, the goblin in the well, and Fruma Sarah.

We look forward to reading Gingerbread Friends by Jan Brett. Nicole Rafferty, Juliana and Samantha's mom, will be joining our class and providing us with gingerbread man shaped cookies for the children to decorate. Thank you Nicole! Also this month, we look forward to re-telling the story of The Elves and the Shoemaker. We will make shoes, reinforcing the concepts of pairs. The theme of the elves helping the Shoemaker and the Shoemaker and his wife giving back to the elves is perfect for the season of giving to others.

--Arlene Aspell, Joan Mallotides and Therese Jonsson

#### **Kids Club**

In November, we had a puppet party, giving voice and animation to many different kinds of puppets. We used finger puppets, hand puppets, stick puppets, sock puppets and marionettes on strings. We watched our teachers give a puppet show called "The Wee Vees" using our Irish hand puppets, courtesy of the Morris Museum. We made and used our own sock puppets and we also made sponge head stick puppets. Our puppet stage was always busy with creative story-telling.

In December we began our Wacky Woodworking unit. We learned that there are a great many objects made of wood. We made wood sculptures with a variety of 3 dimensional shapes. We are making catapults with hammer and nails, and we will practice using them with bean bags – lots of fun! We are learning that sandpaper is a rough texture used to make wood smooth. Our two



woodworking benches are available to make individual choice projects or just to hammer away and practice hitting the nail on the head! Woodworking is busy, noisy and imaginative fun! We want to thank Mr. Laden for getting us the lumber and cutting it to size in order for us to be able to make these fun projects.

--Arlene Aspell and Denise Laden

#### **Kindergarten Enrichment**

Our Thursday afternoon children continue to go "globe-trotting" to different places of interest around the world. Before Thanksgiving, we visited Plymouth, Massachusetts, to learn about the Pilgrims and their voyage to America. We looked at many pictures of the settlement and the way they dressed. Then we made pictures of a Pilgrim man and woman.

Next, we traveled a long way to Antarctica, asking; how do we get there?, what do we wear?, what do we eat? We looked at pictures of this vast ice habitat and noticed that people live in shacks on the ice. We made a tent and used flashlights because it is sometimes dark all the time. For our snack, we shaved ice and made snow cones with root beer syrup. What a yummy, icy treat!

Then we pretended to be in Washington D.C. with Ms. Aspell at the NAEYC convention. We looked at photos of famous buildings there. Then we experimented with science materials bought at the convention. We made various solutions, crystals and jelly marbles. We used colored fizzy tablets in water to create a tornado fountain.

December 13<sup>th</sup> is St. Lucia Day in Sweden, so Ms. Jonsson "took" us to her home country to learn how they celebrate this special day. We saw beautiful pictures of the Swedish countryside, reindeer and the amazing Ice hotel which is made completely of ice, even the beds! It has to be rebuilt each year because it melts in the summer. The children dress up in white gowns with red

sashes. The boys wear cone-like hats with stars on them and the girls wear wreaths with seven candles on them. So we made headpieces just like the Swedish children wear. St. Lucia is known for giving food to the poor and the candles on her head light the way.

--Arlene Aspell and Therese Jonnson

### **Notes From "Nurse Nancy"**

With winter weather upon us, we are glad that you are properly dressing your children for outdoor play, which is a critical part of our curriculum. When properly dressed, they love the gross motor activities, snow and fresh air. Per our "winter weather alert," make sure your children have properly fitting warm mittens and footwear, and a waterproof layer if there is snow (wet clothes are cold!). We encourage "kid-friendly" clothes, so the children can dress and undress themselves (with some assistance if needed). For safety reasons, children are not to have any clothes with cords attached (e.g. on mittens) or long scarves, as these are serious choking hazards. When properly dressed, it is quite healthy to play outdoors, when recovered from colds and illnesses, unless the doctor says otherwise.

Please notify Scribbles if your child will be missing school due to a contagious illness.

With all of the different thermometers available on the market, I thought I'd review the current options. The "best" thermometer depends on the child's age and the particular situation. Mercury thermometers, of course, are no longer to be used (or sold in the US) due to the toxicity of the mercury inside of them. This leaves two other choices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics: a digital thermometer, used for rectal, axillary (arm pit) and oral temperatures, and the tympanic (ear) thermometer. When reporting temperatures to doctors, be sure to

indicate which type was used and on which body part.

A "normal" temperature can range anywhere from 97 degrees F – 100.4 degrees F, depending on the individual, but a "true" fever according to the AAP and doctors is 100.5 degrees F and higher. This is why it is important to "track" a temperature and provide this information for the doctor.

Accurate temperature readings require a few precautions. First, be aware that any thermometer requiring batteries can give an incorrect reading if the batteries are running low! An oral temperature requires the patient to have had nothing to eat, drink or chew for 15 minutes prior to taking the temperature. An axillary thermometer requires skin contact, and should not be touching any clothes while computing. A tympanic reading can be inaccurate when there is wax build up in the ear (check both ears). The most important advice is: if the measured number doesn't seem right, recheck it!

Wishing you a happy, healthy, holiday time!

-- Nancy Malchow, R.N.

### **Miscellaneous News**

#### **College of Saint Elizabeth**

The past two months have provided us with several opportunities to assist graduate education students in the Early Childhood Accelerated Certification Teaching Program. These teachers observed in our classrooms and were able to review our curriculum information and other material pertinent to their courses: Gena Gallanthen, Sara Lamendola, Megan McCarthy, Brielle Laughran and Linda Rutz. Other teachers will be observing throughout the year.

#### **In Service Training**

On Thursday, November 5, Mimi Lyons attended a child care management conference sponsored by The Appelbaum Training Institute.

Doug Medford was the program trainer and addressed issues such as child care money management, curriculum enrichment, conflict resolution, staff development, etc.

Teacher Denise Laden and Director Mimi Lyons attended the "Seasonal H1N1 Influenza Update for Daycare Professionals" workshop at Morristown Memorial Hospital on Tuesday evening, November 17<sup>th</sup>. Karen Williams, Manager of Infection Control at the hospital, led the training session.

Teachers Arlene Aspell and Nancy Malchow had the most intensive, informative training at the NAEYC Annual Conference November 18-21 in Washington D.C. They each participated in many engaging and motivating sessions on a wide range of issues and networked with colleagues from around the world. The highlight of what they learned was shared at the December staff meeting and will continue at the January staff meeting. Attendance at the annual conference is recognized as an excellent way to strengthen knowledge of the best and latest approaches to high quality early childhood education.

Nancy and Arlene also checked out the latest resources for educators in the Exhibit hall (with over 1,000+ books!). We thank our families for their fundraising involvement which enables us to send staff each year to the conference.

#### **Parent Fundraising**

The note cards and notepads designed by your children will be brought to your home before the holidays, thanks to Alessandra Giansanti Zorlas, the parent coordinator. We raised approximately \$325 on this KidsArt, Inc. fundraiser. The Scribbles Yearbook pre-order sales are going well and should generate a profit of about \$500. Thank you to Liana Bassin for coordinating this. Arttra Creations Peppermint Bark orders are still being delivered, because Louise Marsh was nice enough to

extend the deadline, allowing us to order "last minute." So far, we have raised approximately \$60. Extra order forms are in the office. The Raffetto Past Sale is still planned for the spring. You will receive details as the time approaches. Once each fundraiser is completed, you will also get an updated accounting of how well we fared. We are so grateful for all your involvement in our fundraising efforts. You are really making a difference.

### **Holiday Gift Giving 2009**

This year the Diaper Bank, sponsored by Child and Family Resources, will be the recipient of the many diapers and wipes you've donated. Our crates set up in the hallway are already overflowing with these much needed items. Many thanks are in order for your being so responsive to all our requests. (Be sure to check out the article posted in the hall about the "Bear Hugs for the Holidays" program that was the charity we selected in 2007.) The Diaper Bank donations will be collected and delivered by Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Kids' Dance Caravan Recital**

This year's first dance recital is scheduled for Friday evening, December 18, 2009 at 6PM. Don't miss the fabulous dance routines and costumes. The recital is a treat for all. We hope you plan to attend even if your child is not performing.

### **Registration for 2010-2011**

Registration materials for the 2010-2011 school year will be distributed via cubbies in early January, before parent/teacher conferences are held. Priority is given to current and former families before registration is processed for new families. Details to follow.

### **Delayed Opening/School Closings**

We recently circulated a notice about delays and closings and the various ways you can find out the information. If you didn't receive this in your child's cubby, please stop by the office. We're glad we distributed this before our first delayed opening on Wednesday, December 9! Let's hope for a mild winter.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

As per our school calendar, our parent/teacher conferences are held on days when classes are not in session. These conferences are held at school. You'll be able to select a time slot from various options. Notices regarding conferences will be in your child's cubby in early January.

### **Thank You...**

To Agnes Raffetto (of Raffetto's Fresh Pasta fame) who donated boxes of educational supplies to Scribbles on December 9<sup>th</sup>. These consisted of puppets, craft supplies, dress-ups, dinosaur construction kits, fabric, etc. What a wonderful, practical, welcome surprise! Thanks so much Agnes!

To Bookkeeper / Administrative Assistant Karen Calabrese for the donation of an inflatable "ice castle." This is perfect for the winter session. We plan on using it outdoors starting next month.

### **Enrollment Update**

As of now, our Kids Club (KC) program on Friday afternoons has no openings, but Kindergarten Enrichment (KE) on Thursday afternoons and Creative Drama (CD) on Friday mornings have a few. If interested in going on a wait list for KC or registering for KE or CD, please stop by the office. Tuition is always prorated, based on your child's start date.

The entire Scribbles staff wishes you a holiday season filled with joy, good health and much happiness. We will see you next year, when classes resume, on Monday, January 4, 2010.

## **REGISTRATION**

for the

2010-2011 school year:

**Current & former families:**

**Tues., Jan. 26, 2010**

**(snow date: Wed. 1/27/10)**

**New families:**

**Thurs., Jan. 28, 2010**

**(snow date: Fri. 1/29/10)**

### **Gift Giving Update**

**WOW!**

**We just received a check for \$595 made out to Child and Family Resources to be used for their Diaper Bank! This is in addition to the 1115 diapers you supplied. 4D Room Mommy Heather Probst coordinated this phenomenal donation from 4D families, in honor of the 4D staff. Our entire staff is touched by your compassion and generosity. What a wonderful gift!**

*We end this second newsletter of the year with a **second***

*THANK YOU*

*to Debby Fazendeiro, for yet another outstanding job of word processing!*

