

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

October



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What's Been Happening

October is such an exciting month, with at least two holidays to celebrate with and have fun: Diwali and Halloween.

Feelings are high these days, so it is only fitting to learn more about what those feelings are, and what they are called. It is usual to hear the children classifying their feelings as happy, sad or angry. Day after day, this month, the children learned to distinguish the feelings of love, jealousy, embarrassment, generosity, guilt, shame, being sorry, shyness, eagerness, bravery, boldness and, of course, excitement. By reading parts of the book *Feelings* by Aiki and having group discussions, the children are now identifying and addressing theirs' and others' feelings.

Ms. Kristin, a former Seed kindergarten teacher, returned from Australia and gave the children a presentation about that interesting country.

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Language Arts

What a busy, busy month we have had in language arts! Halfway through the month we started reading not one, but two books each week, so our book total has jumped from four to six: *In the Mirror*, *Hands, Feet, Legs*, *The Ghost*, and *The Haunted House*. We also read two poems: "I Have," and "Hooray for Hands!"

We focused on several more letters and letter sounds during the readings of books and poems: J, L, N, V, Z, F, M, W, X, Y, and Q. We learned that letter Q is always followed by letter U in words, such as quail, queen, and quilt. To supplement their learning of letter sounds, we practiced sounds using the *Zoo-phonics* program, sang a *Zoo-phonics* song called "Quality Friends" (about letters Q and U), created lists of words beginning with these focus letters, played Mystery Box, played Beginning Sounds Bingo, completed ABC word match puzzles, colored worksheets/traced letters, played Around the World, and completed beginning sounds worksheets.

On top of completing our knowledge of consonant letter sounds, we have also started paying more attention to identifying sight words. This month's words are **in**, **see**, **my**, **say**, **by**, **can**, **run**, **all**, and **at**. Besides locating sight words in text, we have played Sight Words Relay (matching sight words written on cards while performing a physical action, such as skipping), and played Around the World: Sight Words.

We have also started to sound out words by producing the letter sounds contained in words before putting them all together to read a word in its entirety. We will be continuing to practice this skill so the children can learn to rely on their reading skills, rather than solely the pictures, to help them begin reading independently.

We have also started learning about rhymes. We began the process by learning about common word endings, such as -at, -am, -ad, -it, and -ot. We created lists of words containing these endings to help us hear the rhymes, read *Come Rhyme With Me* (the children get to fill in the blanks to test their rhyming skills), matched up rhymes found on word cards, played with Rhyme puzzle cards and a rhyming sounds game, and also played our first round of Word Family Ladder Bingo, using the -at word family. It is played similarly to Bingo, except each game board is a ladder containing six words belonging to a word family. The object of the game is to properly identify the six words on your board in order to say, "Bingo!" We will play this game again with multiple word families so we start getting the hang of rhyming.

Finally, to help us get into the Halloween spirit, along with reading *The Ghost* and *The Haunted House*, each group created their own version of *The Ghost*. This exercise was each child's first real opportunity to write a book this year, and they showed pride in their work and excitement at the prospect of becoming authors.

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Announcements

Thank you Ms. Lily Patel for the wonderful Diwali presentation and treats! The children were very interested and learned a lot about the Indian culture, widening their understanding of the world.



Happy
Diwali

Art



During October, the Sunshine Roomers have created many exciting and beautiful pieces of art! We finally finished our unit on line and began conquering the concept of shapes. We learned about vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines. We made multiple line designs using straight, wavy, zigzag, and curly lines.

The work of Spanish artist Joan Miró inspired another of our line projects, where we “took a dot for a walk” to create one giant line. The line created freeform shapes when it crossed itself. Like Miró, we used our imaginations to find hidden pictures in the meandering lines. To create a three-dimensional line project, we used paper strips to make all kinds of different lines in space! Our sculptures reminded us of amusement parks, skateboard ramps, and crazy slides.

To embrace the autumn season, we used our hands to print spiders on white webs made of diagonal and curved lines.

The Hindu holiday of Diwali inspired us to make our own rangoli designs, which aligned with our unit on shape. We learned about geometric shapes, symmetry and pattern, and used these concepts to make the rangoli with brightly colored oil pastels.

Our shape unit also included a Halloween mobile project where the students showcased their fine motor skills. They cut out small shapes to make pumpkins, bats, witch hats, spiders, ghosts and crescent moons.

Our last project of the month was based on the Mexican holiday of Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. Día de los Muertos is a joyous holiday that celebrates the lives of loved ones who have passed away. We learned about the skull motif, heavily decorated and shown smiling and happy for this holiday. We learned how to draw skulls with simple lines and shapes, and then decorated them with flowers, jewelry, and other brightly colored embellishments. It was a busy month filled with oodles of amazing art!



Happy
Birthday!
Juliette
Evan

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Drama



Drama this month was dedicated to preparing for our Halloween show.

The children chose their plays from the different script options they were offered. Since they would be wearing their Halloween costumes throughout the show, the plays were adapted to accommodate superheroes, princesses, a devil, etc.

The children learned their lines and their cues, and how to convey emotions through their words and actions. They also learned how to move and where to stand while "on stage."

The children enjoyed every minute of this preparation, enthusiastically contributing ideas to enhance the plays.

Ms. Angela made a really cute and awesome haunted house as a stage prop. The children liked it so much that it drew them like a magnet all the time it was in the classroom.

The children performed their Halloween show once for the Little Flower children and once for The Blossom children before finally performing it for their families. What a wonderful show they gave! Thanks to all who attended and collaborated, making it a great event!

Math



The children learned sorting, classifying and patterns during October. The book *A Pair of Socks* introduced the concept of sorting. By using a variety of small toys, the children engaged in sorting by one, two and three attributes. For example, beads can be sorted by color, size and/or shape.

Literature, again, helped introduce and further expand the next subject: *What Comes Next?*, *We Make Patterns*, *Making Patterns*, and *Patterns All Around*. At the beginning, the children made simple patterns using small toys. They also made patterns with movements of their bodies, such as "sit, stand, sit, stand" or "clap, clap, knees." They enjoyed lining up to make a "girl, boy, girl, boy" pattern. The children learn to copy and extend patterns. Impressively, they can now translate patterns: red, blue, red, blue becomes ABAB. And they are very proficient at this.

We took a break from patterns during the last week of October to use our pumpkins to learn different math concepts. We read the book *Our Pumpkin* and then used a measuring tape to measure it. We weighed each pumpkin on a scale and the children took notes of the data collected. Then they learned the difference between guessing, estimating and actually counting. They guessed how many seeds their pumpkin would have; after opening the pumpkin they estimated the number of seeds; and finally they counted all the seeds, making groups of ten. One pumpkin had 555 seeds and the other 541!

Upcoming Events



Picture Day: November 8

Holiday Show: December 23 at 4:00



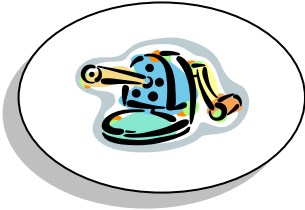
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Handwriting



October gave us the opportunity to learn some letters found in many words associated with the month. We learned to write, H, K, L, U, V, W, X, Y, and Z. As we did in September, we learned to write these letters using the Wet-Dry-Try method (trace the letter with a sponge, then with a paper towel, and lastly writing the letter with chalk) and with wooden pieces on laminated letter cards. To review all of the letters learned at the end of the month, we even got to form the letters using play dough! The children *loved* manipulating the play dough! We also wrote out the alphabet on paper, to be kept in their student files. We will begin keeping monthly records of their development in handwriting. It is amazing to look at each child's progress in forming letters from the beginning to the end of the year.

In November, we will begin a new family of letters and the kindergartners will begin using their handwriting workbooks! Just like they were in math class, the kindergartners are beyond thrilled to have their own workbooks and to really feel like "big kids"!

Science



The Sunshine Roomers are now scientists of all five senses! October had us finishing up our unit on the five senses with a focus on our senses of smell, taste, and touch.

First, the children put their sense of smell to the test for a game of "What's that Smell?". Each child was given the chance to smell a special scent and identify it on our board of smells. Together each group was able to recognize smells such as play dough, cinnamon toast crunch cereal, and pine needles. The children also performed an experiment to see how our sense of smell is related to our sense of taste by tasting an apple while plugging their nose, and then again after unplugging it. To learn more about how we smell, we read *Smelling* by Sharon Gordon. The children learned we have tiny hairs inside our nose that help pick up smells in the air. These hairs then send a message to our brain, helping us to identify what we're smelling.

Next, the Sunshine Room scientists learned all about the sense of taste. We read *Tasting Things* by Allan Fowler and an excerpt from *Tasting* by Sharon Gordon. The children were able to look at their taste buds in the mirror and learned that our tongue can taste sweet, salty, sour, and bitter things. We learned that saliva, together with our taste buds, is what helps us to taste. The children then had the chance to taste and classify eight different foods as sweet, salty, sour, or bitter. Bitter unsweetened baking chocolate elicited a particularly strong reaction from all the children who thought they were in for a sweet treat!

Last but not least was the sense of touch. Children had the opportunity to go blindfolded through a touch tunnel, where they had to use their hands to feel their way to the end, while paying special attention to different textures along the way. We also made handprints with ink and learned how no two people's fingerprints are the same. To learn about all the ways our sense of touch helps us, we read *I Can Tell by Touching* by Carolyn Otto.

To wrap up our unit, the children made a "My Five Senses" book using pages they had completed throughout the unit. For the cover, each child drew a self-portrait with Ms. Angela. To tie into their work on feelings with Ms. Diane, the children drew their self-portrait to show a feeling of their choice. The children took pride in showing off their hard work!

Our Halloween Day, science class was spent making tasty treats to celebrate! At snack time we shared the Hedgehogs' pumpkin bread, the Digging Meerkats' apple cider donut holes and the Gray Parrots' Halloween sugar cookies for a celebratory feast. Yum!

In November we will begin our unit on the human body. Children will have the opportunity to learn all about their bodies, inside and out!