

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

November 2010

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What's been happening?

This month the Sunshine Roomers furthered their social learning in several different ways.

They learned what Election Day is and why it is important to vote. They also learned why we honor veterans on their day.

As Thanksgiving approached, the teachers and children talked about the concept of thankfulness. They realized that they are not only thankful for toys but also for family and friends.

The Thanksgiving food drive was an opportunity for the children to learn that there are people who do not have much to eat and might not have a turkey for Thanksgiving.

They also learned that there are people who will spend Thanksgiving alone. They all felt very sorry to hear this and wanted to do something about it. They decided to make thanksgiving cards for elderly people who live in a nursing home, which they did, along with two edible bread dough cornucopias filled with bread, which Ms. Torri delivered to a local nursing home.

The residents greatly enjoyed receiving the bread and the cards from all the Sunshine Roomers! Check out Ms. Torri's photos on The Seed's web site:

www.theseedaycare.com



Language Arts

This month the children learned some rhymes and the short vowel sounds. They are learning that many common word families contain short vowel sounds.

The children have learned many words by making lists of word families. This has helped them with their writing during their daily Writers' Workshop activity. They realized that they know more words than they had thought. For example, if they can write "hat" they can also write "bat" and "cat!" Making these connections between sounds is helping the children write more and more and motivating them to write even longer words.

The children have listened to five books that are devoted to rhyming. Each book has a different character with a short vowel in their name, such as *Tog the Dog* or *Mig the Pig*. Listening to these stories helps them practice their knowledge about the sounds of each vowel and apply it when working with word families and writing during Writers' Workshop.

The kindergarteners have made vowel hand reminders for themselves. They traced their hands, cut them out, and wrote one vowel on each finger. They will be pulling these out as they continue to learn more about vowels and their sounds.

This month we also continued to practice the sounds of consonants and distinguish between consonant and vowel sounds. The children listened to a book called *The War between the Vowels and the Consonants*, and learned that both vowels and consonants are necessary for making words.

During shared reading, the children read books such as *The Pumpkin*, which has great rhythm. For a great challenge, they were asked to read along, making a rhythm with rhythm sticks.

The Leaves are Falling One by One is a songbook that incorporates counting. The children really enjoyed reading and singing along.

Announcements

You are invited to our
Holiday Show on
December 23 at 4:30
p.m. The children will
be performing songs,
dances and plays.
Come and enjoy!

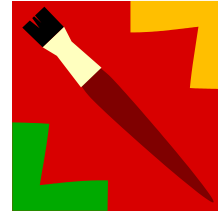


**The Seed will be
CLOSED Friday,
December 24
through Friday,
December 31**



**Evan
Catherine
Nicholas C.
Matthew Y.**

ART



At the beginning of the month, the beautiful colors of fall were the artistic inspiration. The children were shown how to draw a tree with branches: you just draw two parallel lines and then a V. Continue doing this and you will have a tree full of branches. The children then made leaves for their trees by tearing paper into scraps. The next day we went on a leaf hunt in the play yard. The children's only task was to find leaves with well-defined veins. They brought these back to the classroom, placed them under a thin sheet of paper, and rubbed a crayon over the leaves. Like magic, the shape of the leaf appeared!

The rest of the month focused primarily on Thanksgiving-related art projects, one of which was the Thanksgiving tree which we displayed on a classroom bulletin board. The children helped paint the tree and each child painted their own leaf to be placed on the tree. After talking about the meaning of the word "thankful", each child dictated what they were thankful for. As you can imagine, the responses expressed love, gratitude, and humor, too. The tree looked great.

The children also learned what a cornucopia is, and that it was used in former times to celebrate the harvest of the crops. The children created their own textured cornucopia with crops using various materials. Finally, the children made their own 3D Thanksgiving turkeys out of Styrofoam balls, adding details such as googly eyes and feathers. They learned that male turkeys are called toms, and females are called hens. For this project the children created their own Thanksgiving cards to go home with their turkey. The teacher painted one of their hands according to their choice of colors (and all knew exactly what colors they wanted) and then printed it. They wrote and decorated the cards beautifully.

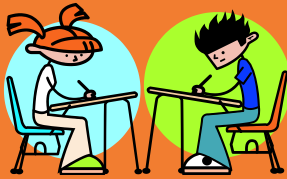
On a non-Thanksgiving related note, the children created their own unique self-portraits this month. This was a fun way for the children to see and depict themselves, as well as demonstrate where they are developmentally. This project will be repeated later in the year to mark the children's development in self-awareness.

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Handwriting



This month, the children completed the last of their uppercase letters, grouped together by the title “center starters.” Like all of the uppercase letters, center starters begin at the top, but in the center rather than the left-hand corner by the smiley face. This group of letters includes C, O, Q, G (in a subgroup called “Magic C” letters, since they all start by forming the letter C), S, A, I, T and J. The class’s favorite letter, unanimously, was letter S, which is formed as follows: “Little Magic C – stop, drop, and roll!” There’s a good chance your child will describe S in this way if you ask him or her! They love the Handwriting without Tears vocabulary and can be heard applying it during Writers’ Workshop.

In December we will finish up by using miniature slates, as we learn the numbers 1-10. This will aid the children during math class, when their two-month unit on numbers/counting comes to a close.

Math



The first of two months of learning about numbers and counting has been fun, educational and challenging! The children have honed their counting skills, one-to-one correspondence, number recognition and seriation through the use of literature, manipulatives and workbook and worksheet activities.

The children were first exposed to numbers by readings of *Feast for 10* and *How Many?* They practiced counting aloud, completing puzzles that tested number recognition and one-to-one correspondence (matching a number to an object as they count), matching numbered bottle caps to a numbered board, “fishing” for numbers, placing number cards in numerical order, and their favorite game, guessing the number! The children took turns being blindfolded and using their fingers to identify/trace the number placed in front of them (on a sensory card – the numbers felt like sandpaper and were described as rough, bumpy, and scratchy by the children). This activity has also been morphed into a center the children can explore, where one child is the “guesser” and the other is the “tricker.” They love working together on this activity and have demonstrated turn taking in an impressively mature way! Way to go, everyone!

The pre-Ks have completed daily worksheets on which they connect the dots, do one-to-one correspondence and trace numbers. The kindergartners have worked very diligently in their workbooks, completing tasks such as filling in the missing number, counting objects and writing the corresponding number, and getting ahead in handwriting class by tracing/practicing writing numbers.

We will continue with numbers and counting in December as the surface has merely been scratched in November.

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Drama

This month the children began by reading the book *Glad Monster, Sad Monster*, which focuses on emotions, and had a chance to dramatize different feelings, which is a great dramatic skill.

The next story they dramatized was the Native American *Legend of the Bluebonnet*, a beautiful story about sacrificing what we treasure most out of love for others. They used costumes and props to act it out. In the afternoon, they watched a video of a dramatization of this story by adults.

To become familiar with the story of the Pilgrims and the First Thanksgiving, the teacher read a story that described the historic happening. Then the children divided into pilgrims and Native Americans, dressed up in costumes and used props to dramatize the story. Before celebrating their Thanksgiving feast, they gave thanks for everything: the land, the food, the friends and everything they had learned.

The best dramatization, however, was the real Thanksgiving Feast we had on Wednesday, when we put the tables together for lunch and all gave thanks for being together.



Science

In science we have continued to learn about the human body and how to keep it healthy. We read books that taught us about our bones, heart, healthy eating habits, proper hand washing, and why we need to sleep.

We did activities to teach us about our heart rate and how exercise affects our hearts. The children got to use a real stethoscope and learned about how it works when using one made with plastic tubing, funnels and a balloon. We also watched educational videos and exercise videos to reinforce this knowledge.

We learned how the brain works and played a game to help visualize this.

Finally, the children reviewed where all of the major organs in the body are located.

While learning about the body, we continued to review the five senses and related them to our learning.

The next unit will be on the four seasons and weather.