



CALENDAR: December 21st through January 1st **SCHOOL CLOSED** due to winter break. Classes resume on Monday January 4th. We hope you all enjoy a happy, healthy winter break with your family.

CONFERENCES: We want to thank all of you for your input at conference time. We truly value this special time to discuss with you your child's development and your expectations. We are so grateful to have such a great group of children and such supportive families. Please remember that if you ever have a question, concern or suggestion, please call.

DRESS FOR OUTDOORS: As winter sets in, please remember to send warm outdoor clothing daily. Weather permitting, we do go outside every day so your child needs a warm jacket and snow pants, boots, hat and mittens. Please remember to label everything. Also, we recommend that children do not wear scarves around their necks as this presents a strangulation hazard on the playground. Please return any CCDS clothing and outerwear your child has borrowed. It is clearly labeled and we need it to maintain a supply for children who forget an item at home.

WINTER CARTIME REMINDER: Your child will be dressed in their outerwear when you pick them up and will be placed in their car seat with outerwear on. If you choose to allow your child to not wear their coat and or other outerwear in your automobile, please park in one of the parking slots and pick them up at the benches. For safety reasons, we cannot take the time to remove coats etc. during car time pickup in the circle.

FOOD DRIVE: Thank you for your very generous response to our November food drive. The children loved helping other children and were excited to see how many items their class collected. A total of 667 pounds of food was donated to Neighborhood House food shelf and was welcomed with great enthusiasm. Your monetary gifts were also greatly appreciated.

WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL CLOSINGS: Children's Country Day School will be closed due to inclement weather if **School District 197 (West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Egan) is closed**. If ISD 197 is starting two hours late, Children's Country Day School will also start two hours late at 9:30 a.m. The closing will be broadcast on **WCCO Radio 830 AM and on WCCO TV – Channel 4**. In addition, our staff will make an effort to reach each family by phone and email to notify you of the closing. We will also have a message on our answering machine at school: 651-454-4000 and on our web site www.childrencountryday.org.

MUSIC AND SIGN LANGUAGE WITH SYLVIA: In Music, we've been learning a variety of dances. One of our favorites is Rig A Jig Jig which is a dance that we do with partners. We also sang a couple songs about friendship where the children danced with friends. With each new verse, they'd have a chance to pick a new partner. One week we had fun dancing with the violin and noticing the difference between classical and fiddle music. Along with my violin, we were fortunate to have Elizabeth Elcombe, (teacher in the llama classroom) who also plays the violin. We played a game where we'd dance with partners if they heard duet music and dance alone when they'd hear 1 violin. Special thanks to Elizabeth for bringing her violin in.

In Sign Language we've been learning to sign numbers. Sign Language is a great visual for the children to help in learning number quantity and recognition. Ask your child to sing and sign the number song, One Elephant went Out to Play. They especially enjoy signing with my puppets as we read books, play games and sign songs. We'll continue working with numbers next month, and also start signing the alphabet.

NATURE WITH MARLAIS: Pretty Squirrely! That's how we get when we can't get outside, but our November weather was so mild and delightful; we enjoyed the great outdoors a great deal. The month did begin with a study of our resident squirrel population, which includes two albino squirrels, who happen to be very dear to Ron's heart. Our squirrels enjoy their own heated water dish and a nice platform full of bird seed—what a silly name: *bird* seed! We learned that squirrels maintain a number of dreys (aka "nests") in order to escape predators and accommodate their pushy relatives (squirrels are very territorial). We mapped our dreys and conducted formal observations. We even got to see a squirrel build his drey, with the remnants of a school tablecloth!

We continued to celebrate the harvest and to look forward to Thanksgiving feasts with a week devoted to examining and preparing foods found at local farm stands and markets. "The Ugly Pumpkin" was a favorite book this week. We cooked at least four different varieties of squash, including butternut—certainly to be confused with our friend "Butternut" the squash, who was very happy to discover that he was indeed a squash and not an "ugly pumpkin" (Hans Christian Anderson is rolling in his grave no doubt!). And, when we sliced and diced our own "Butternut," I cheerfully explained that our friend was even happier to be eaten (I'm not sure it looked quite like this from the sidelines). Please try our cranberry sauce recipe, which is not cooked with cute little berries we have named:

- **1 bag of cranberries**
- **1 cup of sugar**
- **1 cup of water**
- ***mint, lemon/Clementine peel, Clementine wedges**

Bring the sugar & water to a boil in a good-sized saucepan. Add the berries and turn down heat to medium. Cook until berries pop and sauce thickens to desired consistency. Stir in mint leaves, citrus peel or Clementine pieces. Chill & serve. (Adults might appreciate adding cardamom and vanilla bean for a sophisticated twist!).

I'm sure you could see this coming, but we did "talk turkey," the following week and, yes, I did stop short of putting old Tom on the chopping block. Wild turkeys were our subject and I am happy to report that our MN turkeys have returned from the brink of extinction. Did you know that hungry settlers wiped them out and as late as 1970 there really were no wild turkeys here? The DNR reintroduced turkeys here (from Missouri) in 1973 and we have about 30,000 now. That is indeed a small number, although sometimes there seem to be more because we live in their favorite habitat, here by the Mississippi. So the next time you come to a dead stop on Highway 13 because three turkeys are standing in the road, consider yourself lucky to be seeing a pretty rare bird. Special thanks go out to Autumn Spaulding and her family for supplying us with those calls and decoys; nothing beats a great "prop" with kids this age. Maybe we need a Country Day turkey...

In December, we look forward to building the "Wolf Web" as we explore the relationships between rabbits, hares, lynx, deer, wolves and people. We'll be hosting the Deer and Wolf Boxes from the Bell Museum and spending plenty of time outside role-playing and gaming to understand how much we creatures depend upon one another.

Speaking of our delicate balancing act...I have a great film recommendation for you. I was fortunate enough to attend the Nordic Lights film festival and viewed a great Swedish feature called "Herdsman" by Kine Boman. The subject is three generations of women Sami reindeer herders in Samiland (the arctic regions of the Nordic countries, and a bit of Russia too). The movie is subtitled, but the photography is stunning and provides a glimpse into the landscape and culture that surround reindeer and the people who live with them. Parents and children will learn different things from the film, but even listening to people speak another language and seeing their culture in action is very valuable for young ones.

<http://www.herdsman.com/en/distribution.html>

NEWS FROM THE CHICKS CLASS: Thank you all for coming to conferences as well as helping your child make a turkey feather. Each and everyone was very unique and fun to see.

In November we:

- Made cornbread
- Took nature walks
- Fed the llamas oats and burros carrots
- Fed the Goats many pretzels

- Read flannel board stories
- Played with velcro food creating Thanksgiving dinners
- Marching/dancing with musical instruments
- Read many book on turkeys and sharing

Dramatic Play for December is Zoo animals. The themes will be Hat/Mittens 11/30-12/11 and Books 12/14-12/18.

Please remember to check your child's clothing box so that they have a warm change of clothing for the oncoming season and that they are the right size. Thank You.

Sandy and Beatriz

NEWS FROM THE DUCKS CLASS: We've loved looking at the family collages you've shared. Your ducklings still love showing us who is their mommy and who is their daddy. We then trucked on towards a world of construction vehicles. The children enjoyed getting dirty painting with sand and were enthralled with all of the truck books we had around. Last but not least we put on our feathers, made sure our gobblers were ready, and learned all about turkeys. We discovered how big turkeys are, what a female turkey sounds like versus a male and even ate what turkeys enjoy eating, so to speak. We continued to spend a lot of time outside caring for many of the animals and had a few visits to the Children's Park.

But looking ahead....we are looking forward to learning about how all creatures, even us, get ready for the cold months ahead. Then we'll spend time learning about all the beautiful holidays that surround us this time of year. Lastly we will discover all the "cool" stuff we can do outside in the snow.

Thank you again for taking time to meet with us about your child. We continue to value this time and insights you shared which will make your child's day even more successful. During the week of December 7th-11th if you would like to come in and share books, songs, pictures, or stories about what your family does over the holidays please see Nicole or myself to set up a time to share. We'd love to hear from you.

NEWS FROM THE BUNNIES CLASS: November was a beautiful and fun-filled month for the Bunnies Class! Our color unit was a smash hit with colored oil & water bottles, mixing paint, color tubes and color-themed snacks. We had fun finding hidden colors in our pudding, eating rainbow Jello and even painting toast!

We stayed busy as we moved onto a unit about shapes. We trekked around outside while on a shape safari. Check out the latest Bunnies photos for some of the shapes we found around school. We also made circular caterpillars and searched for Philip the Frog, who likes to hide behind different shapes.

We ended the month with a focus on harvest foods—making pumpkin cookies, corn bread and baking potatoes. Our harvest food unit led us right into Thanksgiving. We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. Here are some things the Bunnies are thankful for:

- Mommy
- Daddy
- Friends
- Toys
- Combines
- School

We also worked to help others during November. The Bunnies not only contributed food and supplies to our school-wide food drive, but we also helped load the collected food into a truck for delivery! Thank you for all of your donations. The Bunnies continued their altruistic endeavors by helping Phyllis pack boxes of school supplies and toys for children in Ghana, Africa. We love helping others!

Other important events from the past month:

- Pajama Day was so much fun. Everyone looked so comfortable in their PJs!
- We had such successful conferences this year. Thank you for taking the time to meet with your child's teacher.

Wishing you all the best for December!

-Angie and Hillary

NEWS FROM THE GOATS CLASS: Wow! We can't believe it's December already! We have been having lots of fun and been keeping very busy in the Billy Goats classroom. During the month of November we learned about squirrels and had fun looking for "drays" around the Country Day property. We 'made' lots of cookies and cakes in our dramatic play Gingerbread Bakery. We learned about being Thankful and enjoyed a yummy pumpkin pie as we talked about Thanksgiving. And we played outside a lot as we enjoyed a rather warm month.

In the next few weeks before Winter Break, we will be spending time talking about Families. We would like to invite all our families, if you are willing and able, to come and share some of your winter traditions with our class. You are welcome to come in and share stories, play games, bake, whatever it is that you do to make this time of year special for your family. If you have any questions, or are interested in spending time with us, please let us know. We appreciate your participation! We wish you all a wonderful and relaxing Winter Break!

~Sara & Shannon

NEWS FROM THE PONIES CLASS: Surprise, surprise what a wonderful November it was! We were able to spend a great deal of time outside soaking up the warmth and sunshine! We enjoyed exploring the Children's Park, riding the cars before being put away for winter, going on turkey hunts with Marlais and tromping around the llama pasture with Seth.

We started off the month with a wrap up of fall including leaf projects, raking and checking out the decomposing pumpkins in the garden. Hopefully they will produce some beautiful pumpkins next fall so we can observe the pumpkin life cycle.

Our study of hibernation, migration and adaptation took us on adventures around Country Day observing our animals as they prepare for winter and on a pretend trip to warmer destinations (Mexico and the Caribbean). We will remember this trip during those long, cold winter days☺ We practiced cutting skills and letter/sound recognition with our hibernation chart. The Ponies also created some amazing hibernation portraits on display in our classroom.

Thanksgiving time brought many turkey arts and crafts projects and talk of favorite foods! We were so excited to wear our pj's for the day and load up during our Thanksgiving feast....ahhh, food coma☺

Only 3 weeks left until our winter break. We will be busy talking about families and keeping healthy. The theme for the week of December 14th will be "holiday baking". If you have any treats you would like to bake with us or just want to help out with something we already have planned, come on in! We also welcome you to come in and share your family's holiday traditions with us anytime during the next 3 weeks.

NEWS FROM THE BURROS CLASS:

November Wrap Up

The Burros kicked off November with a **transportation** theme. We learned about many ways we can get from one place to another. The children enjoyed listening to stories about airplanes, trains, bicycles, boats, cars, and many other vehicles. The Burros practiced their pedaling skills as they drove their own cars around throughout the week.

The following week we learned about **occupations** and listed as many as we could think of. The Burros learned ways they

could help others and discussed our jobs as teachers and students. Kelly talked to us about her families' occupations in the airline industry. We also had a special visit from Anna's parents who taught us about dental health. If you'd still like to share about your occupation please let us know!

We wrapped up November with a unit on **turkeys**. We learned that a male turkey is called a tom and a female turkey is called a hen. We also talked about words like snood, caruncles, and spurs. The Burros explored outside as they found what turkeys could eat, and where they would sleep. They even practiced strutting like a tom. Just before Thanksgiving we discussed the first Thanksgiving and shared all the things we are thankful for. Also this week we had pajama days and a Thanksgiving feast!

Throughout November we learned a lot about **Switzerland** and what it's like to live there. Isabella and her family were there for a month as they e-mailed us photos, stories, and answered our questions. Your child just might be able to show you where Switzerland is on a map!

A **special thanks** to Will W's, Norah's, Zander's, and Anna's families for visiting our classroom this month. Families are always welcome in our classroom!

Next Month

- November 30-December 4: Winter Traditions
- December 7-11: Bundle Up!
- December 14-18: Winter

Last month we enjoyed celebrating Norah's and Zander's October **birthdays**. In December we will be celebrating with Olivia, Maik, and Bella.

Thanks for all the ongoing donations to our **Recycled Art** centers. In December we will be collecting unwanted bows and scraps of ribbon. Keep in mind that we will be collecting calendar pictures and the fronts of holiday cards for January!

We enjoyed meeting with all of you at conferences. We appreciate your continued kindness and support.

Happy Holidays!

~Kelly, Denise, Britini, & Laura

NEWS FROM THE LLAMAS CLASS: We welcome Decembrrrr!! Looking back, it has been a busy November indeed. We would like to thank each of you for the opportunity to conference with you. We enjoyed sharing your child's day with you. We will continue to observe, and guide, your child socially. In academic areas, we recently began "working" independently with the children. We have been working with the first letter/sound box. (a,m,p,t,n). When your child brings home their "work", please take the time to review it with them. The boys and girls always show so much pride in their work and accomplishments. It is amazing to us that each of them is so motivated to learn about letters and the sounds they make. As always, if you ever have questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact one of us.

Happy birthday wishes to Catherine. We enjoyed having your mom and dad celebrate your special day with us. We hope that you enjoyed your visit as much as we did. Thanks also, for the story and the healthy snack, that each of us enjoyed.

The children each enjoyed their turn with the "mystery bucket". We have recently moved onto the letter/sound bucket. We are going in alphabetical order. We would like to apologize, in advance, if you happen to get a vowel sound! The next time we do this bucket, your child will be choosing the letter/sound that he/she would like.

Thank you 205 times!! This year the food drive was a HUGE success. Our classroom, alone brought in 205 items - plus some monetary amounts ? ?? It was heart warming to see the smiles and excitement on the children's faces as we counted one by one, then charted each donated item. As we charted, our thermometer grew and grew -almost

to the ceiling! A total of 667 pounds of food was donated by the kind and caring people of Country Day.

Thank you so much to Sorens mom Kristin, and brother Milan for coming in to share with us fun facts about India. We enjoyed seeing the pictures of people and animals of India, as well as the beautiful cloth that is worn. Having a chance to taste different foods was a treat. Thank you also for the candles, of which we now share with our families, in friendship and thanksgiving. Thanks also, to Williams mom, and his Oma, from California, for spending time with us. We enjoyed the story, as well as the special snack. We truly do welcome each of you to be a special guest. Plan to come in and enjoy this class as much as we do!

Upcoming Holiday Celebrations: We would like to extend an invitation for each of you to come in and share your families' Holiday tradition with us. It is always fun for the boys and girls to have mom, dad, Grandma or Grandpa come in to talk about their special holiday. We have an open calendar, and would love to have you. If interested, please contact one of us. Thank you.

Winter Weather (Cold) is here! If the cold isn't enough, we can always plan on the snow. The children truly enjoy opportunities to explore, play and learn while outside. Please remember to send your child dressed with appropriate labeled winter gear. Please note, when we are finally needing to wear boots, it is always nice to have an extra pair of socks kept in a labeled Ziploc bag in your child's school bag. That way, when (not if) their socks get wet, they will have independence in changing into dry ones, and bringing the wet ones home in the Ziploc bag.

We realize that the month of December is going to find each of us slipping, and sliding through the cold, busy days. As each of us gets "wrapped" up in all we have left to do, we would like to wish each of you, and your families, laughter, happiness, and especially, quality time together. Happy Holidays to each of you!!

Nancy and Elizabeth