



General News

CALENDAR:

November 1: Daylight Saving Time ends – Set your clock back 1 Hr.
November 25: School Closed – Conference/Professional Comp Day
November 26 and 27 School Closed – Thanksgiving Holiday

CONFERENCES: If you haven't already done so, your child's teacher will be scheduling conferences with you soon. Please watch for notes coming home in your child's school bag regarding conference times. The parent/teacher conference is a time for teachers and parents to discuss the development of your child. Fall conferences usually focus on your child's social development and adjustment to the school setting. Please give some thought to any questions or concerns you may wish to discuss with your child's teacher. Also, please think about any expectations you wish to share with the teacher. We are all looking forward to this opportunity to meet individually with you and to share information about your child. We ask that children to not attend the conference.

WINTER IS COMING!: Cold weather is on it's way and it will stick around for awhile. We do try to get outdoors daily if weather permits, so it is very important for each child to have a warm jacket, hat and mittens. As the snow begins to fall and winter sets in, snow pants and boots will be essential. Also, please be sure your child's change of clothing box contains weather and size appropriate clothing. Remember.....LABEL EVERYTHING! Thanks.

THANK YOU MENDOTA HEIGHTS FIRE DEPARTMENT for visiting our school on Monday October 5th. The children were eager to look over the fire truck and meet real fire fighters. "Stop Drop, and Roll" were reviewed with the fire fighters. We encourage you to discuss fire safety with your family and to practice a home emergency evacuation plan with them. At school, we practice emergency drills monthly.

HOLIDAY SHARING: During the months of November and December we discuss with the children the importance of community, sharing and helping others. In conjunction with this discussion we will be holding a food drive at Children's Country Day School the week of November 9-13. The food collected will be donated to Neighborhood House, a local food shelf. Though we feel this is a great opportunity to help others, there is no obligation to participate in the collection. More information will come home soon.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING: We wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving. We are so thankful that you have chosen to share your precious children with us.

MUSIC AND SIGN LANGUAGE WITH SYLVIA: In music we've had fun learning songs about colors, fall and Halloween. They especially enjoy singing "Steppin on the Raindrops." In this song the children love to sing and follow music tempo as they walk around the room. Another favorite is the "Rainbow Song" were the children sing and sign the colors. It's great to see how quickly the children are able to use their sign language in the songs that we sing.

In Sign Language, the children have been learning signs for colors as they've been talking about autumn leaves. They especially enjoy signing a Sign Language Color Book, without using any voice. We also read the book "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? By Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle. I know many of the children have this book at home or have checked it out from the library. I'm sure they'd enjoy reading and signing it with you. We continue to review the animal signs and will begin signing numbers. Watch for a "Sign Language Color Book" that the children will be bringing home soon.

NATURE NOTES WITH MARLAIS:

Apples, Leaves, Cats, Bats & Pumpkins...Oh my! The October winds blew us right through a colorful array of curriculum. We had some premature sleet and snow to contend with, but we simply turned the wild weather into a learning experience.

Apples: Well, as many parents can attest, our cider was quite delicious and we enjoyed a great variety of "pomme" recipes, including crisp, pie and sauce. We harvested from our own trees and supplemented with apples from a nice little orchard in Lakeville: Applewood.

Leaves: The cool weather and handful of sunny days combined to produce some beautiful yellow ash leaves right on cue for our discovery and delight. We hunted and collected and pressed leaves in all colors and sizes. Some of the older children designed leaf faces and leaf people and preserved them in wax paper too.

Cats: Our short week prior to the long weekend gave us a few days to host visiting families and their feline friends. We got up close and personal with the most popular pet in the world. A big thank you to Figaro, Skippy John Jones (Skippy, you live up to your name), Bacchus, Penny and their human family members—nothing beats first hand experiences. We compared our cats to their wild MN cousins: lynx, bobcats & mountain lions. We also met Rotten Ralph, Nicole Rubel's and Jack Gantos' devious creation; their books, including, "Rotten Ralph's Halloween Howl" are great fun.

Bats: We explored the contents of the Bell Museum Bat Box for an entire week. We examined bat bones and stuffed bats. We became Bat Biologists, "trapping" bats, weighing them and measuring them. We had Q & A with Bart the Bat (a very friendly Big Brown) and we searched outside for likely bat hang outs and hibernaculums.

Pumpkins: We read "Pumpkin Circle" and explored the life cycle of a pumpkin. We tried hard to figure out how to get into a pumpkin, experimenting with a variety of tools and techniques; look for pictures of the "dissections" online soon.

In November: We'll document our squirrels-in-residence, locating their nests, observing and mapping. We'll also enjoy cooking harvest foods for a week, and take a closer look at the life of the wily wild Minnesota turkey. We can't forget to clean up the gardens and put them to

sleep for the winter.

ATTENTION: if you have any turkey items, including turkey calls, feathers, hunting dummies and so forth, we would love to borrow them right before Thanksgiving. If you'd like to come in and demonstrate any of these items, even better!

Speaking of Spooky... the Bell Museum is hosting a fun post-Halloween event:

Animal Haunts

Sunday, November 1, 2009, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Registration required; \$6, \$5 members.

Pre-register a group of up to six people for \$15

Don't put away your Halloween costume just yet—hear spine-tingling animal tales, have fun on a spooky flashlight tour of the museum's dioramas, make a climbing spider puppet, touch real live slimy and slithery animals, and eat a crunchy bug—with your choice of dipping sauces, of course. Win prizes and enjoy many more tricks and treats. Appropriate for children grades K-5.

<http://www.bellmuseum.org/calendar.html>

*The Bell is also a great place to see lynx, bobcats, cougars and other interesting Minnesota critters. The Touch & Feel Room is a must. The museum is free on Sundays (when there isn't a special event).

Please take a look at the photos from our staff workshop at the Minnesota Arboretum; despite an early snowfall and very chilly temps, we enjoyed a great training with Jean Larson, head of Horticultural Therapy at the U, and Tanya Welsch of MN LINC. Our subject was horticultural therapy in the classroom. We explored meeting the needs of students with autism spectrum disorders and using animals in the classroom for therapy and enrichment. The Arboretum is a great fall family destination. Here are some links of interest:

<http://www.mnlinc.org/>

<http://www.sustland.umn.edu/design/healinggardens.html>

http://www.bachmans.com/tipsheets/general_gardening/HorticulturalTherapy.cfm

<http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/sensorygarden.aspx>

Happy Fall!

Marlais Brand

NEWS FROM THE CHICKS CLASS:

In the past month we enjoyed learning about:

Leaves:

Book: How Winds Blow Leaves

Song: "Leaves are Falling Down"

Art: easel painting (red, yellow, and brown)

Cats:

Book: How kittens Grow
Flannel Story: "Color Cats"

Pumpkins:

Song: "I'm a little Pumpkin"

Book: Where is my Pumpkin

Art: Orange painting and group project of pumpkin planters

Large Muscle:

-Cat Movements

-Walk around the farm

-Tunnels and balls

-Large trucks/push toys

Nature:

-Leaves in sensory table

-Raked leaves

-Exploring bats

-Cleaning out and exploring the inside of a pumpkin

Other:

-Helped make cornbread and pumpkin shakes

In the Month Ahead:

We look forward to learning about squirrels, where they live and what they eat. We will be taking a walk to look for them in our trees. Also we'll be focusing on families as many families will get together for thanksgiving. To help us celebrate and talk about each individual family we are asking you to send one 4" by 6" family photo with family members name on the back of the photo. We will return this picture at the end of November.

Dramatic Play in the month of November:

-Pet Shop

Thank You

Beatriz and Sandy

NEWS FROM THE DUCKS CLASS: Hello Duck parents! Although it has been kind of a rainy, dreary October, things have been bright and cheery in the Duck room. We have been very busy with our October themes. We started out learning some fire safety and even had a visit from a real fire-truck. The Duck friends were in awe of its giant size and loud sirens! We also went leaf hunting and did some raking for our leaf and Fall themes as well as painted with real leaves and flowers! We finished the month learning all about pumpkins and Halloween. We had some yummy pumpkin shakes and the Ducks all helped clean out a pumpkin and we carved our very own Jack-O- Lantern!

Our themes for November:

Nov. 2-6 Family

Nov. 9-13 Construction

Nov. 16-20 Turkeys/ Harvest Foods

Nov. 23-25 Manners

We just want to say thank you to all the parents who have been sending labeled, outside gear with their Ducks each day. The strings and clips on the mittens seem to be working too for those of you who have tried them out! As Winter and cold weather is quickly approaching, we ask that on days that there is snow on the ground, or it is very cold to please send all necessary gear including snow pants and boots. If you own more than one pair of boots and snow pants, feel free to leave one pair at school so that they are always available.

We will also be helping our toddlers learn to start dressing themselves to go outside. One trick we teach them to put on their coats is called, "the flip." To do this, place your child's coat on the floor, zipper side up. Have your child stand by the hood of the coat. They will then bend down, put their arms inside, lift the coat up and over their head. Some have already gotten this down very well! If this description seems a little confusing, look for the same description with pictures attached to the next "peek at the week."

Well, that is it for now. We look forward to meeting with you soon for Fall conferences! Have a wonderful November!!!

Nicole and Deidi

NEWS FROM THE BUNNIES CLASS: October was another busy month in the Bunny Class. We started out the month learning about fire prevention and safety. The Mendota Heights Fire Department stopped by Monday, October 5th in the afternoon and the children were able to learn all about the fire truck. They really liked meeting Snuffer the fire dog,

We spent the next two weeks learning about friendship and self-esteem. We worked on projects together and had fun playing group games. During this time we continued to meet our classmates and make new friendships. We focused on these important things:

- Cleaning up our Work
- Sharing our Work
- Using Kind Words
- Using Manners "Please" & "Thank You"

We ended October having fun learning about leaves and pumpkins. We were very busy making art projects to decorate our room and enjoyed playing with pumpkins in our building area. We loved smashing a pumpkin and exploring the inside. Our Halloween Celebration was a great way to end the month of October! We had a blast.

Thank You: Thank you for your quick response with conference times. We are so excited to get the chance to tell you all of the great things your child is doing!

Baby Pictures: Please continue to send in a baby picture and current picture of your child. We will use these pictures to decorate our dramatic play area. These pictures will be returned.

Coming Up in November
Nov. 2nd-13th Colors and Shapes

Nov. 16th-Nov. 24th Harvest and Giving Thanks

Thanks,
Hillary & Angie

NEWS FROM THE BILLY GOATS CLASS: The Billy Goat class has been full of energy and enthusiasm for all of our indoor and outdoor activities this month! We kicked off the month of October with continued discussion about apples. We thoroughly enjoyed all of the tasty treats that came out of that project, as well did the horses when we stopped by to feed them our leftovers.

A Mendota Heights fire truck made its annual Fire Safety Week appearance in our back parking lot and the Billy Goat friends couldn't wait to wake up a few minutes early from nap to take a tour around the gigantic truck! We all learned the importance of keeping safe from fires, had the opportunity to shake the hand of Snuffer, the fire station's mascot, and were each adorned with a Jr. Fire Fighter badge and hat.

As the cold weather wind came blowing the leaves off of the trees in our backyard, the Billy Goat class took the time to discuss leaves and the season of Autumn. We found out why leaves turn from green to various brilliant colors, what animals begin to do when the weather turns its cheek the other way, and how we have to dress in Autumn: goodbye shorts and bathing suits!

We are wrapping up the month of October with pumpkin activities and a fabulous Halloween party. We are genuinely interested in breaking a pumpkin open so we can play with the guts! The Billy Goat friends have also spent a lot of time practicing getting Halloween costumes on in our Halloween dramatic play area so by the time that night arrives, they should be out the door in no time!

Lastly, kudos to all of the Billy Goat friends for working so hard to clean up the room when it is time to do so. The Billy Goats have truly worked hard as a collective to get beads in the "clean-up jar" so that we can have a pajama party sometime before Thanksgiving break!

Shannon and Sara

NEWS FROM THE PONIES CLASS: October was a busy month for the Ponies. We spent a lot of time talking about "Fire Safety" and what to do if there were ever a fire. We had a visit from the Mendota Heights Fire Department and got to tour their fire truck and meet their mascot Snuffer the Fire Dog. We got creative making a giant fire truck. The Ponies were having so much fun with it that we brought it out to the Lower Maka so some of the other classes could enjoy it!

Our unit on fall/leaves was made kind of interesting due to the weather feeling a bit more like winter than fall! The Ponies didn't seem to mind much. Outside they had a blast playing in the fresh snow...making snowmen and snow angels! We did get to rake some leaves and each child made their own "Leaf Book" by doing different leaf rubbings. They turned out great!

The end of the month was spent getting excited for Halloween! Our Messy Materials area in

the Lower Maka was turned into a “Pumpkin Patch” with all different shapes, sizes and colors of pumpkins and squash. Baskets, wheelbarrows, and wagons were used to cart the squash around. In the classroom the Ponies continued to work on cutting skills by making all sorts of pumpkins, jack-o-lanterns, and other fun Halloween projects. The story Big Pumpkin was enjoyed over and over again! The children couldn’t seem to get enough of it!

We have been continuing on with the “Letter of the Week”. Now that we have done a few letters, the children are really catching on! It is fun to come in every day and hear all the words that they have come up with either on their own or with the help of family. As we move into November we will continue to discuss fall and begin talking about hibernation, Thanksgiving and families!

NEWS FROM THE BURROS CLASS: What a month! It’s not too often that we get to dress for the sun, rain, and snow all in the same month. Apparently in Minnesota you have to be ready for anything! With a wide variety of rain jackets and winter coats, the Burros had a great opportunity to work on buttoning buttons and zipping zippers. Be sure to let them show you their skills!

We kicked off the month with a unit on fire safety. Some Mendota Heights volunteer fire fighters visited our school and gave us a tour of their truck. We also had a visit from Casidy, our fire fighter friend. Casidy taught us what we should do if there is a fire, showed us her protective gear, and gave us some tips to prevent fires from starting. Throughout the week we learned about emergencies and practiced dialing 911 on play phones.

Next we spent a week and a half talking about families. We read some wonderful books and learned that all families are unique and special. Thank you for all the wonderful family pictures you sent to school. We added to our “Home Family Tree.” Then we talked about our “school family”. It was a delight to have Isabella’s mom come and talk to us about their family. We had a fun, busy week filled with many great activities!

October came to an end as we explored pumpkins. We learned how pumpkins grow, and discovered all the parts of a pumpkin. We carved & painted pumpkins, made pumpkin pie, decorated t-shirts and did lots of fun art projects. Also throughout the week we had some special visitors. Molly’s family read us “Goodnight Goon” and brought cookies for us to decorate. We also had a visit from Simon’s mom, who sang pumpkin songs with us. It was another great week!

A special thanks to Molly’s, Simon’s, Lucy’s and Isabella’s families for visiting our classroom this month. As always, we love having visitors ☐

Next Month

November 2-6: Transportation

November 9-13: Occupations

November 16-24: Turkeys & I’m Thankful For...(No School November 25-27)

Last month we had a blast celebrating Lucy’s October birthday. In November we will be celebrating with Norah and Zander.

This month we’ll be learning about what it’s like to live in Switzerland. Our friend Isabella and

her family will be in Switzerland for the month of November. Throughout the month we'll be in contact with Isabella as she answers our questions and tells us about her adventures.

In November we'll be adding scraps of wrapping paper and clean bottle caps, milk caps, lids, and pop tabs to our recycled art area. Thanks for sending in stickers and note pads in October!

We look forward to meeting with all of you at conferences in November!

~Kelly, Britini, Denise & Laura~

NEWS FROM THE LLAMAS CLASS: We look back with delight to the month of October. We will remember the many days of which we had beautiful weather and an abundance of opportunities to play, explore, problem solve and most of all, enjoy our wonderful outdoor environment. Then, as quick as a blink, we found ourselves, bundling up, zipping our own jackets, of which many of the children can now do - parents, don't let them tell you differently!- as we journey out into the cold, wet, sometimes snowy days. That's why there is a saying about Minnesota that we all know.....

Within our environment we have decked the walls with an abundance of Halloween decorations, a paper chain that with the cooperative work of many children now hangs from here to there, and back again. Ghosts, bats, skeletons, vampire bats, witches and candy corn are some of the many festive decorations. Along with an abundance of shelf materials in which friends are able to do independently, or as groups as friends. We also spent time baking some most delicious treats, Cinnamon Streusal bread, and pumpkin bread, were served as warm tasty snacks that left the children wanting more!

During this month we celebrated 5 birthdays - 4 of them in one week! We sincerely would like to thank each of the parents who were able to spend time with us, read to us, and feed us, each of the healthy snacks were enjoyed by all. We are excited about the upcoming conferences and the opportunity to meet with parents and share your child's day with you.

During the month of Nov. we are looking forward to giving thanks, discussions about people in need and how each of us can make a difference during our upcoming all school ???????? (food?) (clothing?) drive. More info to follow. Please remember as the weather continues to change - and, in some peoples opinions - not for the best! - to send your child to school in weather appropriate clothing, and to clearly label everything. We would like to sincerely thank each of you for sharing your child with us. We are so happy to be a part of their growth and development.

Happy November!!
Nancy and Elizabeth