



Children's Country Day School
October 2009 Newsletter

GENERAL NEWS

CALENDAR: Tuesday & Wednesday Oct. 6 & 7 - School Picture Days
Thursday & Friday, Oct. 15 & 16 - SCHOOL CLOSED for MEA
Wednesday, October 28 - Preschool 1 (Billy Goats & Bunnies)
Family Night Halloween Party 5:00-6:30 p.m.

LABEL EVERYTHING: Please help us keep your child's belongings from becoming lost. PLEASE LABEL EVERY ITEM your child brings to school. This includes jackets, hats, mittens, dishes, etc.

SMILE! IT'S SCHOOL PICTURE TIME: On Tuesday and Wednesday, October 6th & 7th, Teddy Bear Portraits will be at school to photograph our students. **Picture packets will only be printed for families who have completed and returned the full-page Portrait Permission Form** which was sent home earlier. For those of you who do not want picture packets but do wish to have your child photographed for the class composite, please be sure to return the half-sheet composite permission form. Children without either form will not be photographed.

WARM CLOTHING FOR OUTSIDE PLAY: We do try to play outside each day. Now that cooler weather has arrived, please send a labeled jacket or heavyweight sweatshirt with your child daily. As the weather continues to cool, a hat and mittens will help keep little ones warm outside.

HEALTHY SNACKS: We make an effort to provide a variety of healthy snacks for your child. We purchase products that have "0" trans fats. Throughout the week we serve veggies, fruits and dairy products. The juice we serve is 100% natural juice. Our milk choice is "Select" which comes from cows that have not been treated with rbST. We welcome your ideas or suggestions for healthy snacks.

If you choose to celebrate your child's birthday at school we recommend a healthy snack. If your child wishes to share a sugar snack, we would appreciate "child size" portions.

DROP OFF REMINDER: When dropping off your child at times other than "car time" please use the parking lot spaces in front of, or behind the school. For safety, we have to keep the circular drive drop-off area free of cars in order to be compliant with fire department codes. Also, be sure to check you child in on the check in sheets if arriving before 8:30 a.m. and always make contact with a staff person. PLEASE NEVER SEND A CHILD INTO THE SCHOOL ALONE.

CALLING ALL CATS! October 12-14 the Nature Program will be hosting your feline visitors as we explore the sometimes spooky world of wild, and domestic cats. Please send a note or leave a message for Marlais if you would like to share your own cat. I'll give you a call back to schedule the visit. Meow!

SIGN LANGUAGE NEWS: It's great to be back teaching Sign Language on Tuesdays and Music on Thursdays. I'd like to share some of the areas we'll cover throughout the year.

In Sign Language the children will learn a variety of signs in group time where we read stories in sign, play games and sing songs in sign. The main areas I cover will be: Animals, colors, numbers, the alphabet, family, signs related with the seasons, basic phrases and deaf awareness. In September the children had fun learning some fall signs and the signs for farm animals.

In Music we'll be exploring music through a variety of activities. Each week the children will learn new songs and sing with string instruments such as the piano, guitar, autoharp and violin. We'll also do a lot of dance and movement and occasionally use the percussion instruments. Quite often the sign language we learn on Tuesday is reinforced with songs on Thursday. In September we sang about apple trees and farm animals. The children especially enjoyed singing "2 Little Apples Hanging on a Tree" and also some movement songs about horses galloping.

NATURE NEWS: What a great month! What a whirlwind! I love getting to know all of our new students and I am delighted to spend time with old friends too. We had a lot of fun in September, but before I give you all the delightful details, I owe a BIG thank you to all of the families who donated great plants for our Wild Walks area in the Lower Maka. We thank you and the bees do too.

Speaking of bees, we embarked on "Bee Hunts" this month to find and observe our friends and allies, the pollinators. I am thrilled to report that our new Wild Walk and our Butterfly Buffer have already attracted a bevy of pollinating visitors who seem to love the nectar and pollen that the young blooms have on offer. The kids enjoy watching bees acquire their food and they are pleased to discover that gathering bees (those who are out working to gather nectar and pollen) only sting when they are attacked or hurt. The most impressive fact about bees is that without them, we could not enjoy most fruits or veggies and neither would the animals that generously supply us with their meat—it's easy to see that we would be very hungry without bees. For more about bees and the current dangers they face visit: <http://www.thehoneybeeconservancy.org>.

Our exploration of apples is what led us to bees. First the flower, then the bee, then the apple! We examined our own apple orchard, harvested apples, sampled apples, sauced apples, sliced apples for pie and pressed them for cider. What a delicious way to kick off the school year!

Next month we head off in search of signs of fall, including changing leaves and nice ripe pumpkins. We look forward to hosting the Bell Museum Bat Box too.

Please take a second look at the Nature Curriculum for the year and see if there is something you'd like to come in and share with us.

Our entire staff will be attending a Horticultural Therapy workshop at the Minnesota Arboretum in October and I will be eager to share with you what we learn there.

Thanks to all families for making the start of the school year fun, smooth and very successful.

Happy Fall!
Marlais

NEWS FROM THE CHICKS CLASS: We would like to welcome all of our parents and families to the school year. It's been an exiting time in the Chicks class and we are happy to see all of the children are adjusting well. The beautiful weather has enabled us to get outside to feed the animals, blow and chase some bubbles, as well as some painting with sponges and brushes.

As the weather cools we ask that you send light jackets everyday as the morning air has quite the chill. Thank you for labeling all items, it makes our lives that much easier. Also thank you for attending our apple extravaganza. It was fun to see everyone. Our current dramatic play is transportation. Thanks so much for a wonderful start to the new school year. It looks to be a great year!

NEWS FROM THE DUCKS CLASS: Welcome back! What a wonderful group of little ducklings we have! We've been quite busy these last couple of weeks learning about both our indoor and outdoor learning environments. We've been working on how to take work out, play with it and then when it's time to clean up put it back where it's home is so another friend can play with it later.

We've really enjoyed feeding all the animals here at school. The goats are our favorite though. The dancing and singing time with Sylvia has been a blast. We've even learned the sign for apple and how to gallop like a pony. We have a couple of professional gallopers in our group.

We've been discovering apples in our classroom with our friend Marlais. We've had our hands busy coring and peeling apples with the apple corer. We then fed the apple peels, or apple spaghetti as we like to call it, to our pony friends. Speaking of apples, our apple breakfast was great fun. We sure enjoyed washing apples in the bucket of water then into the cider press for some homemade cider to enjoy with our apple muffins.

Looking ahead to October we have a feeling the air will begin to feel a bit chillier so we're expecting to see our coats, hats, and maybe even mittens. We ask you to please label everything. Also if possible, we would love to have your mittens to either have clips or strings attached to them. With many Ducklings to dress you can imagine that the mittens often come off both while getting ready and playing outside.

Some October Themes:

Fire Safety: October 5th-9th

Leaves: October 12th-14th

Fall: October 19th-23rd
Pumpkins: October 26th-30th

Thanks for the great start to our year!

NEWS FROM THE BUNNIES CLASS: It's hard to believe September has come and gone. The Bunnies had a fantastic start to the school year. We began our school year by getting acquainted with our rooms, routines, friends and teachers. We had a great time exploring our school: learning in our outdoor classrooms, meeting the animals and working with Marlais in the nature room.

Our first unit of the year was farm life. Our model farm school is an ideal place to learn about farms! We took time to feed the animals, read books about farms, created paper barns and painted with hay! We even cooked a special farm snack—scrambled eggs!

We ended the month of September and will dive into October with our school-wide apple unit! We decorated our own apple trees, made apple sauce and collected and compared different types of apples!

Our school year is off to a great start and we look forward to the coming months! Please mark your calendars for our Halloween-themed open house: October 28, 2009 from 5:00-6:30. More information will follow. We hope to see you there.

NEWS FROM THE BILLY GOATS CLASS: The Billy Goats have had a great start to the 2009-2010 school year! We have been getting to know each other, learning the routines of our new classroom, and exploring our beautiful environment.

To kick off the year, we began with a theme about farms. We read stories, created some fun art projects, and visited our own farm animals. Thanks for the wonderful fruits and veggies donated by our families as we learned about what produce people grow on farms. We tasted corn, zucchini, peppers, celery, squash, green beans, eggplant, apples, and pears. We also charted our produce by color and counted each item as it arrived. (Green was the most popular color during this activity.)

We have recently begun a unit on apples. We plan to do some taste-testing as well as cooking up a few tasty recipes. We will also learn a little bit about apple trees through the seasons and talk about the different parts of an apple. Through our nature program, Marlais will be sharing more fun apple activities that will enhance our experience.

One last thing before we go... Soon, we will begin sending "Take Home Bags" home with your child. These homework bags are filled with thematic activities for you and your child to work on together. There will be books to read, games to play, and occasionally, a worksheet that will become part of a class book. Please take the time to do these activities with your child. When you are finished, please ensure that all the materials are placed back in the bag. Return it on your child's next school day so we can send it home with the next child. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Thank you,
Sara and Shannon

NEWS FROM THE PONIES CLASS: What a beautiful September to start off the year! The Ponies spent much time outside soaking up the last days of summer...we played in the Messy Materials area and the Red House which were turned into apple farm stands, explored the woods and the Children's Park, picked the last of the summer's raspberries and tomatoes from the garden, and did lots of climbing digging, dancing, playing and discovering on the Upper and Lower Makas.

Nature this month was spent learning all about apples! Marlais took us on walks to explore the Country Day orchards, taught us about the many types of apples, how the trees grow and, of course, picked some for us to taste. In the Ponies class we used these apples for tasting, graphing and baking.

We began talking about the "Letter of the Week" this month. For the letter B we came up with over 50 words!! It's so exciting to see the wheels turning in their heads thinking up words! The Ponies also are working hard on their cutting skills and beginning to write their names independently. Thanks for reinforcing these skills at home!

We look forward to October to start discussing Fall Harvest, getting a visit from the Mendota Heights fire truck and getting geared up for Halloween!

NEWS FROM THE BURROS CLASS: Fall is finally here! The Burros spent a great deal of time this month observing changes that come along with a new season. We harvested food from our garden for some tasty snacks, including salsa! We studied apples this month as we explored the many apple trees around Country Day. The Burros enjoyed some delicious apple treats including applesauce, apple cider, and many different apple varieties for tasting.

Also this month we learned about farm animals. We spent time visiting our own farm animals as we learned how to care for them. The animals enjoyed our visits as we brushed and fed them. Simon's mom, Brenda, visited our classroom to teach us some songs about farm animals. The Burros loved her songs and stories!

We had the best turn out yet for our open house! **Applepalooza** was a great success. It was so wonderful to visit with so many families. Thanks for taking the time to come!

Next Month:

As always, we invite our families to schedule a time to read a story, share about their jobs, cook with us...anything! Throughout the year we'll be talking about the world around us. If you lived, studied, or traveled in another country or state we'd love to hear about it! Also, here is a list of our upcoming themes; let us know if you have something you'd like to share.

October 5-9: Fire Safety

October 12-23: Families (No School Oct 15-16)

October 26-30: Pumpkins

Sometime before **Families** week please send family photos with your child that can be kept at school. We will be sharing about our families and learning how unique we all are.

During the month of October our dramatic play areas will be transformed into costume shops.

If you have any **costumes** you'd like to donate to our class, we'd love to use them!

Last month we celebrated the **birthdays** of Anisa and Isabella B. We look forward to celebrating with Lucy in October!

Thank you for all the cereal boxes, toilet paper rolls, and fabric pieces for our **recycled art area**. For October we're collecting **unwanted stickers** (plain white sticker labels would be great too) **or notepads**. Please don't go out and buy anything for this donation. If you happen to find any around your home, just send them in!

We've really enjoyed meeting all of you these past few weeks. It's going to be a great year!

~Kelly, Britini, Denise & Laura~

NEWS FROM THE LLAMAS CLASS: The school year is off the a terrific start! We would like to thank you for attending the Appleplaoza, open house. What a wonderful turn out. We always enjoy visiting with each and everyone of you, and watching the children as they take pride in showing their families around. It's also nice to see the children as they introduce their friends to their families.

Daily, we explore both our inside and the outside environments. Each child moves through the classroom with direction and purpose. We observe children who are independent with a "work" cycle, doing language, math or sensorial skills, or groups of children "playing" (socializing) cooperatively. We are so happy with how quickly each of the children have adjusted to our classroom. Daily, new friendships are being formed and old friendships are renewed. Within our environment, the children are learning the importance of being a kind, and caring friend. We see and hear great examples of friendship often. Each of them understands the importance of sending non verbal, "yes please" rather than "no thank you" messages during group times.

At this time we have celebrated 3 birthdays. We are thankful to the parents who were able to celebrate with their child. Thanks also, for the variety of healthy snacks. It's nice to hear the children asking for seconds. Daily adventures outside find us visiting the animals, riding the big wheels, visiting the garden, or enjoying the playground.

With "apples" as our theme, we have taken time to bake the following snacks, which were enjoyed by many. Applesauce, Applesauce with Raspberries (fresh from our garden) were used as a way of topping ice cream, and Apple Crisp. (many children were asking for the recipe - Here goes!)

Apple Crisp

- 4 med sized apples - enough to cover an 8 X 8 pan.
- 3/4 Cups of flour, 3/4 cups of packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup of quick cooking or regular oatmeal
- 1 1/2 tsp. of ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup of softened butter or margarine.

#1 heat oven to 375 degrees.

#2 Peel, slice and dice the apples.

#3 spread the apple slices in the bottom of the non-greased pan.

4 Mix remaining ingredients with a fork. Sprinkle over the apples.

#5 Bake uncovered until the topping is golden brown and the apples are tender, about 30 minutes. Makes about 6 servings, Enjoy this warm, tasty treat!

As always, thank you for sharing you child with us!

Nancy and Elizabeth