

Bunny Class

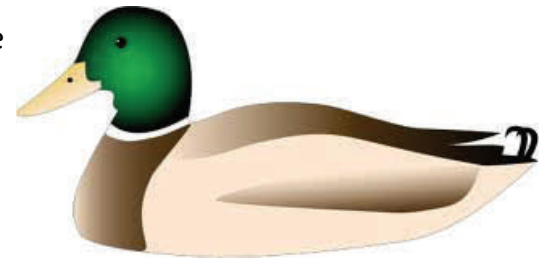
Newsletter for December, 2011



In November we were busy adapting to the constantly changing weather. We have been learning all about animals and what happens to them in the winter. It seems like some just disappear and some look different depending on what time of the year it is.

Getting Ready for Winter: We began talking about dormancy and hibernation. We made animal dens and have enjoyed playing with them in our classroom. We learned which animals need to hibernate and why it is important for them. We talked about our tortoises that are currently trying to hibernate. This has brought up a lot of questions from the class. We discussed why they do not need to hibernate and why they keep trying anyway. They are currently eating less and are not as active while they decide how they will spend the winter.

Our discussions about animals continued as we learned about adaptation and migration. We noticed that a couple of our ducks have already migrated and we will keep a close eye on them to see if more fly away. This made us wonder why all of the ducks have not migrated and what keeps them at Country Day. We looked closely at the animals at our school and discovered that many of them are getting more warm fur and feathers. We searched for bird nests and tried to identify which birds do not migrate in Minnesota.



We ended the month discussing Thanksgiving and talking about what we are thankful for. We enjoyed a fun snack of stuffing and some yummy jello. We read many silly Thanksgiving stories and had fun painting turkeys with our hands.

In Animal Adventures we have enjoyed hauling old pumpkins to the pumpkin patch. One of our favorite activities was rolling old pumpkins down the llama hill. The kids were eager to use their muscles to carry the pumpkins up the hill and then watch how quickly the pumpkins would race back down the hill. We helped bring hay to the animals and mixed up some tasty treats for the birds and burros.



We are excited to start hearing about your family traditions. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to join us for a special activity. We will try to spread out the special visitors throughout December.

Thanks!

Angie and Deidi

**Class
Pictures**

**Nature
News**

**Music and
Sign Language**

Getting Ready for Winter: This month in Nature we focused on learning how animals survive the cold and harsh winter. In Pre-2 we learned about migration and the benefits of moving to a warmer climate for the winter. We focused on the Arctic Tern, which migrates from the North to South pole and back every year. We talked about the obstacles that animals face as they travel back and forth and built our own obstacle course to practice migrating. Students practiced making mental maps of the nature room just as animals do when they migrate. We even learned some basic compass skills and the directions.

We talked about how animals use hiding as a way to survive winter. We learned how animals hide in homes, in groups, and by camouflaging. We talked about how birds hide in groups and may join noisier birds like chickadees to avoid predation. The kids played a game of a tag to demonstrate the benefits of hiding in a group. We also learned about how some animals are able to change color to avoid predation. They played a camouflage game by hiding animals around the school and searched them out.

Pre-1 students also played the camouflage game. They also tried on different colored furs to see which would be better for camouflaging in winter or summer. The toddlers tried to find animals camouflaged in winter scenes. We looked at pictures of animals changing colors and tried on different fabrics to pretend to be winter or summer arctic hares.

Pre-2 students learned the difference between hibernation and dormancy. We talked about which types of animals hibernate and why they choose to. Students pretended to be bears and went to the woods to find the best hibernating spots. Later in the week, we also focused on the woodchuck and the legends behind Groundhog Day. Students listened to a poem about the groundhog and illustrated the story with their own pictures. Pre-1 students and toddlers both looked at pictures of a number of hibernating animals. Pre-1 students also looked for places around school to hibernate.

Pre-2 students learned about insulation and how animals use fur, fat, feathers, and winter coats to help them survive the extreme temperatures. We conducted an experiment where students insulated a small container of gelatin. If the gelatin stayed in liquid form, they kept enough heat in; if the gelatin turned solid than it became too cold. We also talked about snow's ability to insulate small animals.

Animal Homes:

Later in the week, we started our transition into learning about homes for animals. We learned about how bees and wasps make nests using hexagons and use their homes to protect themselves in winter. We acted out how honey bees find a new home.

As always we love having parent visitors and artifacts sent from home. We will be learning about animal homes in December and then water in January.



-Emily

Sign Language and Music with Sylvia

Music

In **Music**, we've been learning a variety of dances. Dancing to music comes natural for all ages and a wonderful way for children to express themselves. A few favorites have been "Bow to Your Partner" and "I'm your Friend". They love dancing with partners and it's been fun to see how quickly they've learned the actions for each dance. I also brought in my violin and we had a great time playing a game where the children listened for the contrast between a quiet classical lullaby and the lively fiddle music. They'd pretend they were sleeping to the lullaby and then quickly jump up and dance when they heard the fiddle music. It's been a fun month!

Sign Language

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. They especially enjoy signing with my puppets as we read books, play games and sign songs. We also continue to sign our colors and animals. One of their favorite stories is my flannel board story "Little, Mouse". I have 10 houses, each a different color, where one house has a little mouse hiding behind it. They always love to guess which house the mouse is hiding in. Not only is it a fun story, but it also gives the children the opportunity to use their sign language to communicate a full story, not relying on any voice. Next month we'll begin signing the alphabet.



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-Sylvia