

Duck Class

News for February, 2012

Class Pictures

January was a busy month with lots of time to get outside and enjoy the unseasonably warm temperatures. We had the chance to go out for walks and explore areas of the Country Day property that are usually inaccessible to toddlers in January such as the path down past the Children's Park and under the pine trees in the front yard.



Nature News

In the classroom we painted birds to go along with the pine trees that are decorating our classroom walls. We have been working on building skills such as sitting "criss-cross applesauce" on our bottoms and listening quietly at group time. We are also on gaining more independence in the process of dressing for outside time. The children take so much pride in what they can do by themselves.

Sign Language and Music

In Nature we learned about water, ponds, and aquatic and marine animals such as turtles, whales, dolphins, sharks and rays. We had one very cold week in which we did our Nature lessons in the Nature room with Emily rather than our room or outside. The Ducks loved exploring the items on Emily's shelves like sea shells, plastic animals, magnifying glasses, cool rocks, and books. She also took Digger the snake out of his cage for the friends to look at and touch. He is a very cute little snake!

NEW ARRIVALS: Charlie returned from holiday break with a new role as a big brother. He and his parents, Chris and Jennie welcomed baby Colin on December 30th. Congratulations!

We would like to welcome Juliet Pickens to the Duck classroom. Her big sister is currently in the Llamas classroom.

PARTY TIME: Thanks to the Pony class, we had the chance to attend a Winter Party down in the lower llama and burro pasture. There we enjoyed cocoa, cider, and cookies, and got to mingle with Country Day friends of all age groups as we played in the snow and enjoyed a sing-a-long with Sylvia and Seth.

Speaking of snow...now that we have gotten enough of that white stuff to cover the ground, it feels like winter has finally truly arrived. Better late than never! It's hard to believe Valentine's Day is just around the corner. The toddler classrooms will not plan to do a Valentine exchange this year, but we will have special activities and snacks planned during that week. Look for a note to come home in your child's bag sometime in early February, detailing our plans for celebrating.

WINTER GEAR: Thanks to all the families for labeling all of your children's gear. It has been so helpful to us when there is a heap of mittens on the floor, knowing that the owners' names are written on them. If your child comes full days, you may want to tuck a second pair of mittens inside his/her bag so that when we go outside again in the afternoons, there will be dry ones to put on.



Happy February!
-Angela and Nancy

January Nature News

Nature Pictures

January has been a water filled month at Children's Country Day School. Pre-2 and Pre-1 students began by learning about the different characteristics of water and how much water there is on earth. Students conducted their own freezing and melting experiments. All students, including toddlers, tested different objects' ability to float.

LAKES AND PONDS: From our study of water, we moved into water habitats. Pre-2 students constructed a mountain range and then sprayed the geographic feature with colored water to see where rivers and lakes would form in their habitat. We discussed the challenges of living in a river environment and examined river organisms for adaptations that would help them survive. We then began our exploration of lakes and ponds. Pre-2 and Pre-1 students learned about the different types of habitats that animals can live in within a lake or pond. Pre-2 students learned about the different zones in a lake caused by different amounts of sunlight that they receive. Pre-1 and Toddler students read the book *Scoot!* about 6 little turtles and their friends in a pond. Toddlers played with turtles in make believe ponds. Pre-2 students also learned about wetlands. We talked about what they are, where we can find them, and who lives in them. Students learned about the cleaning abilities of this habitat. We used a wetland model (made of sponges and aluminum foil) to test a wetlands ability to clean pollutants out of water.



OCEANS: Once we had studied the different water habitats of Minnesota, we began our exploration of the ocean. Each Pre-2 nature group got their own ocean habitat to focus on. The groups became experts on the kelp forest, coral reefs, sea shore, deep sea, and open ocean. After learning about the habitat and the animals that live there, they created the habitats on the walls of the nature room. We spent the whole week creating an underwater world in the nature room. From our exploration of underwater habitats, we started studying mammals of the sea, specifically whales and dolphins. We reviewed what mammals are and talked about the characteristics that make a whale or dolphin a mammal. Students learned about how some whales have teeth because of the big prey they eat and others have baleen to catch very tiny krill. Students had the opportunity to listen to a variety of whale and dolphin noises. We then learned about sharks and rays. We focused on the characteristics that make sharks great predators in the ocean. Students were able to see and feel real ray skin, eggs, and a shark jaw from the Bell Museum. We created sharks in our nature notebooks based on what we learned about their anatomy. Students also examined a real puffer fish, four different kinds of coral, a sea sponge, and a sea urchin from the museum.



To begin our unit on Minnesota and start to wrap up our unit on water, we learned about Minnesota fish. Students learned about the characteristics of prey and predator fish. Students then pretended to fish and we studied their catch. We began to learn how to identify the different types of Minnesota fish and learned about their place in the food chain.

-Emily

Sign Language and Music

In Music, we've learned some new chants, rhythms and echo songs and enjoyed singing with the autoharp as well as the piano. The children especially love the chant, Oliver Twist, where they feel the beat in the movement.

The all time favorite echo song is I am a Pizza by Charlotte Diamond. You can find the song online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2Zwvyhms8c and I'm sure your child would have fun singing it with you at home.



We've also been singing songs about the zoo to reinforce our sign language. A great one to sing and sign is Going to the Zoo Tomorrow, by Raffi.

It's been a fun month in **Sign Language**. We started out the month with a special guest. You may have heard from your child that my son Trent came in one week to help with Sign Language. He is deaf and was home from college over winter break. (Many of the children already know Trent as this past summer he helped with summer camp.) It was a great experience for the children to sign with him and learn about his hobbies and interests. Trent was amazed to see how so many of them could finger spell their names and felt so comfortable signing with him.

We've also have been learning the signs for a variety of zoo animals. We had fun singing songs, reading books and playing games using these signs along with the signs we've previously learned. They're looking forward to bringing home their own coloring book with zoo animal signs. I'm sure your child will enjoy teaching them to you.

-Sylvia



American Sign language for "hippo"