

Duck Class

Newsletter for November, 2011

FIRE TRUCK!:



We could hardly believe our eyes when there was a big, red, shiny fire truck at our school. The Mendota Heights Fire Department did a great job talking to us about fire safety, showing us their gear, and teaching us about the important parts of their fire engine. We encourage

you to discuss fire safety with your family and to practice a home emergency evacuation plan with them. We practice emergency drills every month at Country Day.

MANNERS: The Duck class has been doing an excellent job learning polite manners. We are practicing saying, “Yes, please.” or “No, thank you.” at snack time. We are also all working on taking turns with toys both inside and outside the classroom. Manners take time and practice, but the children are starting to show us how respectful they can be at school. We hope they are showing you their manners at home as well!

DRESS FOR THE WEATHER: We’ve had an unseasonably warm Fall so far, but cold weather is starting to blow our way. Please continue to send warm clothing for your children, and please continue to label everything. We encourage children to wear heavy duty socks instead of mittens during the winter. Socks stay on hands, which keeps little fingers warmer. We try to get outside every day and it’s a lot more pleasant when we’re all warm!



CHANGES IN THE CLASSROOM: We continue to change out our books, puzzles, art, and other materials to help the children learn and explore. We are also going to be changing the Dramatic Play area into a dressing room for practicing our winter dressing. If you have old or extra winter gear such as snow pants, coats or mittens that you would like to donate to the class, it would be much appreciated. This is a great opportunity for the class to practice dressing independently.

HAND WASHING: One of the easiest and most effective ways to stay healthy this time of year is by hand-washing. The children are doing a great job washing after the bathroom, before they eat, and when they arrive at school. Keep up the good work!

THANKSGIVING: We are so thankful to have all of you be part of the Duck Class “family”! In November we will be talking about what things we are thankful for. We will also be learning about “Harvest” and “Getting Ready for Winter”.

- Nancy and Angela

**Class
Pictures**

**Nature
News**

**Remembering
Sylvester**

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Nature News:

Nature Pictures

October has been an amazing month in nature class exploring trees, different types of animals, and cranberries. In pre-2, students started out the month by learning the difference between wild and domestic animals. The kids showed off their acting skills in a lively game of animal charades and categorized each animal as wild or domestic. Students also had to choose pictures from magazines that represented the two different kinds of animals. We talked about why wild animals would not make good pets.



Trees: We then moved on to a thorough study of Minnesota trees. Students learned to differentiate between deciduous and coniferous trees. We got to know the trees on a more personal level when students were blindfolded and had the opportunity to meet a tree. The kids were divided into partners for this activity. One partner was blindfolded while the other guided him or her around the front yard to a specific tree. After feeling the tree with their hands, the blindfolded partner had to guess which tree they had felt using the memories of what they felt. We made bark rubbings in our nature notebooks and used a dichotomous key to identify a few CCDS trees. We continued on

our tree study by learning about how paper is made and making some of our own! From the paper exploration, we were ready to learn about fall leaves. Together we completed a science experiment that extracted leaf pigments so students could actually see the 3 different pigments responsible for fall foliage. We collected a number of leaves of all different colors and shapes to press in the flower press.

Mammals, reptiles, and birds were next on our list of topics. Students learned to differentiate these three different kinds of animals from one another. For our mammal study, we measured the length of an elephant, the height of a giraffe, and the length of a blue whale. For reptiles we viewed and touched a number of artifacts from the Bell Museum, including an alligator skin and snapping turtle shell. We practiced moving like lizards, snakes, turtles and alligators. Digger the snake, Zeus the tortoise, and Charlie the lizard helped us learn about different kinds of reptiles. In our bird unit, we made pine cone bird feeders for our feathered friends, and spent some time using the binoculars to identify the birds around school.



Cranberries was the final topic of the month. Students had the chance to practice being cranberry farmers. We tested their ability to float and corralled them into a boom in our man-made ponds. Students participated in a cranberry taste test where they ate berries, craisins, and some drank cranberry juice. We also learned to bounce cranberries to test their ripeness.

(Nature news continued)

Pre-1 students learned to differentiate between pets and wild animals. Students learned about the different parts of the tree by creating chalk drawings using outlines of their body. They also helped collect leaves for the flower press. Pre-1 students also had the opportunity to feel the reptile artifacts, practice reptile movement, and meet some of the school reptiles. They also had the opportunity to learn about the cranberry farming, float cranberries and taste.



The toddler class helped collect leaves for leaf pressing and learned the different parts of the tree by creating a large tree drawing. We spent time collecting pumpkins and gourds in the garden. To study reptiles, toddlers were able to meet Zeus, the Greek tortoise, and see the different Bell Museum artifacts.

Upcoming Units: We are about to begin an exciting month exploring the amazing capabilities to withstand harsh winters. Parent involvement is always welcome and appreciated. We also appreciate any artifacts that you would like to share.

-Emily

Remembering Sylvester the Rooster



Our dear friend Sylvester the rooster disappeared at some point on October 23rd. We are unsure whether he was attacked by a predator (fox, hawk, cat), or disappeared for other reasons, but he appears to be gone from our school. Thankfully Sweet Pea is still with us, and though she seems a little out of sorts, she is otherwise in good health.

Sylvester has been an important part of the children's time at Country Day for many years. We have caught worms for him, followed him around the playground, and held him in our laps. He has been with this school since 2004, and was eleven years old which is ancient for a free ranging outdoor chicken. He will be missed by the teachers and students of Country Day.

We have already spoken to many of the children at school about Sylvester, but it's only natural if they have questions or concerns about his disappearance. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me any time.

-Seth



Sign Language and Music with Sylvia

Music

In **Music**, we've had fun singing with the piano, guitar and autoharp. October is a great month to learn songs about colors, autumn and Halloween. One of their favorites is "We See a Pumpkin Patch". In this song the children act out going to the pumpkin patch, getting a pumpkin and carving it into a jack o' lantern. They also love to sing "Steppin on a Raindrop" where we follow the music tempo as we walk around the room. Ask your child about the "Rainbow Song" where the children sing and sign the colors. It's great to see how quickly the children are able to use their sign language in some of the songs that we sing.

Rainbow Song

Red and yellow and pink and green
Purple and orange and blue
I can sing a rainbow,
sing a rainbow,
sing a rainbow too.

Sign Language

In **Sign Language**, the children have been learning signs for colors as they've been talking about autumn leaves. They especially enjoy signing a book about the colors in a rainbow and will be bringing home one of their own that I'm sure they'll want to sign for you. (They love signing without any voice) We continue to review the animal signs and will begin signing numbers in November.

-Sylvia

