

# Llama Class

## Newsletter for December, 2011

**Well, it's officially snowpants season!** We are so impressed with our Llamas and how independent they are in getting dressed for the outdoors! With the first snowfall came the first visible tracks of the season. We had a great time walking about Country Day trying to figure out who else has been here. We found MANY rabbits, squirrels and some unidentified visitors, as well. The nice, sticky snow was perfect for snowman building out in the llama pasture. This was a great team effort!



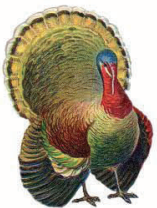
**Class  
Pictures**

**Nature  
News**

**Music and  
Sign Language**

### Getting Ready for Winter:

We spent the month learning about what animals do during these cold Minnesota winters; migrate, hibernate or adapt. We role-played being these animals and had a great time flying to Mexico, swimming up the Pacific coast and curling up in a den!



Before the biggest turkey day of the year, we learned all about this majestic bird. Every one of our Llamas should be able to identify “toms” and “hens” if they see them on the roadsides!

### December:

During the month of December we will be spending our time discussing holiday traditions from around the world and baking many treats. We invite you to please, please come in and share this time with us. You are welcome to share your family's traditions or bake a special treat with us...more information to follow.

***-Lora and Claire***

**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**