

Llama Class

News for January, 2012

Class Pictures

It was a fast December in the Llama class. This was probably because we were so busy and only had three weeks of school!

Nature News

Where Does Weather Come From?

We wrapped up November and kicked off December learning about weather and snow. We discussed the basics of the solar system and how weather is made from the mixture of water, air and heat. The children loved the experiment in which they learned about how hot air rises and creates wind. We also made a snow sequence, explored three different kinds of clouds, and experimented with a wind vane we made ourselves. We will probably delve back into this topic later on in the school year – lots to learn about weather!



Sign Language and Music

Holidays and Traditions

The remaining two weeks of school for 2011 were spent learning about holidays and traditions. We had many parents and grandparents visit the classroom to teach us about how they celebrate at home. We made ornaments, reindeer cupcakes, gingerbread, sugar cookies, chocolate chip cookies, pretzel treats, dreidels, and trifle. We learned how to play dreidel and even got to sample gelt (chocolate coins). We also learned about Hanukkah, Christmas, Finnish traditions, Santa Lucia, and a little about Kwanza. Thank you so much to those of you who were able to come in!

In January we look forward to learning about tracks, animals in snow, the St. Paul Winter Carnival, and Minnesota.

We wish you each a very special and happy holiday! Happy 2012!

~*Claire and Lora*



Animal Homes: Mounds, Nests, Webs , and Lodges

This month we have been very busy learning about animal homes and constructing them around Children's Country Day. We started out learning about termites and the homes they construct out of sand, dirt, saliva, and wood. Pre-2 students helped paper mache a life size termite mound as well as make clay termites. We also went outside and constructed a termite mound out of snow. From termites we switched to another animal architect, birds. Students learned about a variety of different birds and the nests they make. Oven birds construct their nests out of mud, while weaver birds create hanging nests that look like baskets. Pre-2 students created their own nests and hung them from a tree in the nature room. Pre-1 students and toddlers also attempted to build nests out of sticks.



Spiders were our next topic. Pre-2 students learned that some spiders make webs, while others actually dig their home. We talked about the different aspects of the trapdoor spider homes and students created pictures of their favorite spider homes in their nature notebooks. We went outside to the woods and students built webs from yarn. For our final nature classes,

we learned about Beavers. Students learned about the different steps that beavers use to

build their lodges. We went out to the woods to create our own beaver lodge. Pre-1 students enthusiastically helped build up the lodge. Toddlers had the chance to create their own little beaver lodges out of wood and rocks.



Coming in January:

If you are looking for some opportunities to explore nature with your family, here are some local options:

- The Minnesota Science Museum has an amazing exhibit on extreme weather. I highly recommend it!

- In February, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center will be hosting their annual open house.

The staff will share how they care and rehabilitate Minnesota's wild animals. Check out their website for more information.

In January we will be learning about water. Students will explore the different characteristics of water, learn about Minnesota's water habitats, and spend some time learning about the ocean.

-Emily

Sign Language and Music

In Sign Language we're learning to sign the alphabet and how to finger spell our names. Signing the letters is a wonderful visual that helps children in learning their letters and another way to practice the spelling of their name. The Preschool 1 classes have been signing the first letter only of their name. The Burro, Ponies and Llamas practice their full name. We've also learned to sign the phrase, "My name is _____" and "What's your name?" We ended the month playing a fun Sign Language Bingo Alphabet game.

In Music we've had fun with creative movement as we sing the winter songs we've learned. The children especially enjoy dancing with scarves as we sing "One Little Snowflake" or pretending they're a bear as we sing about the hibernating bears in the winter. We've also been singing and signing the "Alphabet Song" and "What is Your Name?" to reinforce what we're learning in Sign Language. Another favorite song has been, "Three Little Fishies". Everyone enjoys acting this out and swimming with the rainbow colored ribbons. There's also a rhythmic clapping part they love to do on the chorus. Your child might enjoy listening to it at this website. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK_wrM8OdGY&feature=fvw

