February was a month full of freezing temperatures and more importantly, FEATHERS! The friends in the Red and Blue Rooms spread their wings and took a look at the world of birds.

We began our investigation by saturating the classroom centers with bird related material for the children to play with, observe, question. The teachers supplemented the independent play by adding information, answering questions and extending learning opportunities with songs, video clips and books. Transitioning from our building theme, we read “Birds Build Nests” by Yvonne Winer and “Owls Live in Trees” by Melvin and Gilda Berger. Other books included “Hank Finds an Egg” by Rebecca Dudley, “The Emperor Lays An Egg” by Brenda Guiberson, “There’s A Bird On Your Head” by Mo Willems, and “Grumpy Bird” and “Boo Hoo Bird” by Jeremy Tankard.

We utilized many real life examples of birds, nests and eggs. We received and observed specimens like Northern Flickers, American Robins, Ruffed Grouse (PA’s state bird) and a Great Horned Owl from the Natural History Museum, and Mr. Salinetro brought nests and eggs from a House Wren and a European Starling. The teachers stressed taking the time to look at the different colors, sizes and shapes of birds, nests and eggs in an effort to develop the children’s observation skills. A great deal of our learning is accomplished through play, so we capitalized on this fact by turning the dramatic play center into a Bird Clinic where the children could care for sick and injured birds. The teachers engaged the children as they developed their sense of empathy, played cooperatively with other friends, shared stethoscopes and thermometers, practiced writing and pre-writing skills, and used books and magazines to find information.
OUR IDEAS AND INTERESTS TAKING FLIGHT!

(STARTING WITH TOP-LEFT AND MOVING CLOCKWISE...)

* SAATWIK WORKING ON A DUCK FLOOR PUZZLE.
* PHOEBE AND FRIENDS INVESTIGATING BIRDS.
* BRYLIE USING A FEATHER TO CREATE A COLORFUL PICTURE.
* MATIAS PLAYING A COOPERATIVE GAME, “ORCHARD”.

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Brylie and the Blue Room friends pretending to be Emperor Penguins.

Phoebe hatching macaws and parrots.

Saatwik drawing a bird while looking at a model.

Matias enjoying a Snowy Owl.

Mrs. Tomer and some young veterinarians caring for injured loons and blue jays.
I'M YOUTH, I'M JOY, I'M A LITTLE BIRD THAT HAS BROKEN OUT OF THE EGG. ~JAMES M. BARRIE

Owl investigations!! Miss Stevens reading a book about owls and showing the Great Horned Owl specimen (bottom right). Santiago dissecting and finding bones in an owl pellet (bottom left).

I see you! Marley using the binoculars she decorated.

Roxie, Max and Cherry mending broken wings.

The doctors are in!
IF THEY PLAY, THEY WILL LEARN!

David carefully weaving string and yarn like a weaver bird.

Brylie with her bird creation!

Camryn gluing feathers on the Bald Eagle’s wing.

Rhys and Avery studying the colors and feathers of the Ruffed Grouse.

Jacob drawing an American Robin while looking at pictures and a real model of the birds.

Friends learning from the masters! A video clip of weaver birds in action.
On two separate occasions, we had the privilege of welcoming friends from the National Aviary to our school. Jamie, an amazing educator, talked to us about eggs and feathers and about everything that makes a bird a bird. We also enjoyed seeing a few live birds in the Red Room and watching them flap, eat, squawk and even poop!

Thank you to Owen’s father who visited and baked bread with the morning Red and Blue Room friends.

The three-year olds have had such a good time exploring and learning about birds this month. Look for ways that you can extend the experiences by feeding birds around your house, going on a bird walk in your neighborhood or park, or visiting the Natural History Museum, the National Aviary or the Pittsburgh Zoo. You can also visit www.aviary.org/NestCams to watch our Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons as they lay eggs and raise their young. Happy birding!!

Mrs. Tomer      Ms. Stevens      Mr. Salinetro