After a restful holiday break we began the new year with a new unit, Healthy Me. In this unit we took time to think about how our bodies work and how we take care of them. Discussions began when we placed replicas of the **BRAIN**, **HEART**, **ESOPHAGUS**, **SMALL INTESTINES**, **LARGE INTESTINES**, **LIVER**, and **KIDNEYS** on a velcro body. As we attached each **ORGAN**, we discussed the function of it.

The heart was introduced as a muscle that pumps blood through our body. We used a turkey baster filled with red water to replicate the heartbeat and simulate the pumping of **BLOOD** through our bodies. Although it looks blue in our veins, we learned that when blood is exposed to air/oxygen it turns bright red which is why it appears that way when we get a cut or scrape. We introduced white blood cells and talked about how they fight infection (boo boos). We created **PLASMA** by pouring two cups of water into a bowl and adding yellow food coloring. We added a handful of Cheerios dyed red with food coloring (the red blood cells) and mini marshmallows (the white blood cells) to the plasma. We also looked at a lifelike model of a heart and used a real **STETHOSCOPE** to listen to our own hearts.

With our Digesto-Rama (a plastic reproduction of the **DIGESTIVE SYSTEM**), we demonstrated how our digestive system works. Each child mixed together a cracker and water to make a paste, which we put down into the “mouth” of our Digesto-Rama. We helped push the food down the esophagus to demonstrate swallowing and showed how the food moves through our stomach, into the small and large intestines, liver, then out as waste.

We also discussed our five senses and played the Touch Game, a game of **SENSORY PERCEPTION AND MEMORY**. The dramatic play area was arranged as a doctor’s office with “sick babies” and models of the heart and muscles. We made homemade stethoscopes using cups and string and also painted a picture using lengths of string dipped in red and blue paint to represent our arteries and veins. We also traced our bodies and drew and labeled the body parts we had just learned.

The following week, we continued to discover how our bodies work and discussed at length how **GERMS** affect us. We performed an experiment called the White Bread Experiment in which the friends rubbed some cocoa on their hands and touched a piece of white paper shaped like bread, which made the paper turn brown. The friends then washed their hands with water and touched the paper again, but saw that the paper was still turning brown. Finally, the friends washed their hands with both soap and water, touched the paper and saw that the bread did not turn brown, demonstrating that germs will not spread when we use soap and water to wash. We also experimented using our **LUNGS** by blowing a feather or cotton ball across the table with a straw.
Next, we discussed **PERSONAL CARE AND EXERCISE** of our bodies. We used many visuals including a large floor puzzle to explain our **SKELETAL SYSTEM** and how it holds up our body and gives it shape. We looked closely at a model of a **MUSCLE** and discussed how it helps protect our bones. We talked about **BONES** and how they fit together at **JOINTS**. Some children made a model of a bone using a small paper tube to represent the hard outer layer, with a pink sponge in the middle to simulate the spongy layer, and red play dough for the bone marrow. We learned that the bone marrow is the factory for making red blood cells.

The dramatic play center became a yoga studio, with the children exercising their muscles on yoga mats. Later we changed the yoga studio into a gym using the Jump-o-lene, (a safe indoor trampoline for the classroom). We also emphasized other ways to take care of our bodies such as brushing our teeth and washing our bodies. The children painted pictures using toothbrushes, participated in square dancing, and played the game, “Body Parts Bingo”.

We concluded the Healthy Me Unit with **NUTRITION AND SAFETY**. We changed the dramatic play center into a restaurant that offered healthy meals and acted as chefs, waiters, and customers. The children chose from a variety of activities, with some doing nutritional puzzles, some painting with fruits and vegetables, and others playing games such as “The Curious George Nutrition Game” and the math game, “Strawberries In A Basket”. We discussed the **FOOD PYRAMID** and made fruit smoothies using a juicer.

**LETTER JOURNALS:** This month we were introduced to Ms. A, who says Aachoo when she is happy, Ms. E, who exercises for energy, Ms. I who develops inventions, and Ms. O, who is optimistic and has an interest in opposites.

**GYM:** This month Ms. McMichael concentrated on relay skills such as running a zig zag line, running around cones, hopping, and walking backwards. Next, she will begin fundamental soccer skills.
BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER EVENTS: This month we celebrated the birthdays of Gray, Trey, Eddie, Roland, and Simon. Thanks to those families for sharing stories and celebrating by having birthday snacks with us.

Also, thank you to Carter’s grandmother for reading to us, and thank you to Cora’s mom for signing the story Brown Bear, Brown Bear.

A special welcome to the newest members of The Children’s School Family: Grace’s sister, Lily, and Oscar’s sister, Quinn.

Louise Sturgess from the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation paid us a visit to introduce the children to February’s theme, BUILDING. It was fun to see the children recognize many Pittsburgh landmarks. She spoke to the children about our city, and discussed the similarities between buildings and the structures of our bodies. She brought a large flat outline of a house which we “built” together by having the children velcro parts onto the outline, after which we all walked around the completed house.
THE DIGESTO-ROMA EXPERIMENT

THE BREAD EXPERIMENT

MAKING PLASMA
This month we were lucky to have Korean Early Childhood Students from Duksung Women’s University, Seoul, South Korea visit. The ten students were here for two weeks and immersed themselves into our program as well as events outside the classroom. The Green Room Team would like to extend a special thank you to those families that hosted the students – The Balog Family, The Brown Family, The Cranor Family, The Fulmer Family, and the Sekula Family. The students engaged in many activities with our children, as well as many discussions with the staff. It was sad to see them leave, but overall, it was a rewarding experience for all involved.