Friendship and Community

Routines In Our School

A new year, new friends, and new experiences!
The children have been busy becoming familiar with new spaces and teachers. Each morning or afternoon, our friends walk into the Children’s School, find their lockers with their names and then hang their backpacks and outerwear. Next, the children wash their hands and look for their attendance photograph and name to place on the “I Am Here” attendance chart. During free choice time, the friends can choose a puzzle, build with blocks in the Green Room, explore what is in the sand table, or choose some other independent activity. At 9:15 or 1:00, Circle Time begins, and the friends make their way with their teacher to their group circle area. During circle time, some friends do their jobs. The children enjoy being the calendar helper, the weather helper, and the number-of-school-days helper. These jobs are rotated weekly so every child has the opportunity to lead a part of the circle. At the beginning of the school year, Circle Time was a wonderful time to discuss expectations and school rules with the friends as they learn about becoming part of the Children’s School Community. Circle Time is followed by Activity Time, where we might play group games, such as our classroom picture friend Bingo, Candyland, and Alphabet Adventures. During Activity Time we also go for science activities, cooking lessons, woodworking, and theme-related projects. Snack Time is next. In the Green Room, we serve snack family style. This approach gives the children an opportunity to pass a bowl of food while socializing! The friends have also been learning how to pour their own drinks from a pitcher into their glass. When snack is done, every one cleans his own space.

After snack, the children pack their backpacks, put on their coats, and head outside for playground activities. When the bell sounds, the children know it is time to go home or transition into the extended day program. Our friends leave excited for the next school day, when we are ready to do the whole routine again!
At the Children’s School, our year is separated into theme-related units. During each theme, the teachers change the classroom materials. In September, we planned various activities that made the Friendship and Community theme meaningful to each individual Green Room friend.

**All About Us Graphs**

We sorted and graphed ourselves according to eye color, hair color, the number of letters in our names, and if the children are boys or girls. The children learned that they are part of the Children’s School, and we all live in the city of Pittsburgh. While the children explored information about themselves and each other, they discovered that we look different, but are also similar in many ways. Through our explorations and discussions, the children were amazed to discover how many sets of 2s we have: eyes, ears, arms, hands, legs, etc!

**Family Graph and Family Collage**

First each child had to think about how many members are in his or her family. After that, each child then collected that many people shaped papers to draw the family members. The friends then added their drawn family members to a strip of colored paper. The children used these strips to build a graph to compare the number of family members from one child’s family to another. Next, the family collage pages began at home. The friends worked on this project with their family by selecting photographs to include in their project. The children were proud to share their collages with the peers. These activities were beginning practice for public speaking!

**Community**

Our Dramatic Play Center and Block Center were the stages for the children to pretend to be various community workers. The first two weeks of school, the Dramatic Play Center was a home set up for cooking and housekeeping. The following week, the Dramatic Play Center became a flower shop, with flowers to arrange, a cash register and telephones to answer for taking orders.
**All About Me**
Each friend worked on a multi step project about themselves. The first step was to write over their traced name. Next, each child identified the first letter in the name and then used golfballs to roll glitter paint on their letter. For the third step, the children looked in a mirror and sketched the shape of their face, followed by choosing a paint color to match their skin. The last part of the process was to paint eyes, a nose, a mouth and yarn for hair. Everyone then had an opportunity to tell what they like best in school!

Everyone’s work was mounted on their own foam board to display in their classroom for everyone to see at our **Open House on October 22nd**.

**What is a friend? The Rules of Friendship**
You may have heard your child talk about “Mango Monkey,” a puppet that we have used at circle time. Mango Monkey helps to teach our young students that we are all friends at school and we can learn to play together. The teachers began with talking about and using pictures of how they can be kind to one another at school. We talked about three Friendship Rules: 1. Use kind words such as: Please, Hello, Thank You. 2. Keep your hands and feet in your own space. 3. Everyone can be a kind friend and play. The teachers asked the children in their circle groups, “What do you think a friend is?” All the children had thoughtful ideas to contribute to the discussion. The Green Room teachers will continue this theme throughout the year, using different puppets in scenarios to help the children learn how to react in social situations.

**Work At The Learning Centers**
*The Discovery Area* is where we go to explore at the sand, water, light, and magnet tables. These tables create opportunities for problem solving, cooperation and collaboration. The children have also been painting and exploring various art materials at the tables and easel.

*The Woodworking Center* is part of the Discovery Area. We have introduced the children to working with hammers and nails. Puzzles, sorting by colors or shapes and pegs are favorites in the *Math Center* and on tables. At the *Science Center*, the children have learned about our classroom worms, what they eat, how to handle them gently, and how to prepare their food. The children have enjoyed group games such as Strawberries In A Basket, Alphabet Adventure, and Green Room Friends Bingo!
Message From Me gives the children opportunities to learn to use an iPad to take photographs, choose one, and send a recorded message to a family member in their community. The children are beginning to learn using this technology for communication. We have also been using our iPads to introduce simple games and websites that complement the curriculum. The classroom Library is another popular center in the room for reading books and listening to audio books. All of these activities are helping our children develop technology, language, and social skills.

Gym With Ms. McMichael
During the month of September, the focus in the gym was Balance and Control. Gym class begins with warm up exercises such as walking, stretching, shoulder rolls, arm circles, toes and heals stretching. Next, the children learned beginning balancing skills using small hoops to balance on different parts of our bodies. Everyone had lots and lots of fun trying to balance on scooters! We tried a variety of methods such as sitting, laying on our stomachs, and riding with partners. A tricycle ride around campus was a fun way to see our campus and practice pedaling and steering skills.

The Carnegie Library
The children were smiling and laughing when Debbie Priore from the Carnegie Library helped to support our theme by visiting the Green Room with fun songs emphasizing following directions, including fingerplays, and sharing stories about communities, animals, and friendship. The books included: Nibbles by Charlotte Middleton, Who Put The Cookies In the Cookie Jar by George Shannon and Julie Paschkis, Possum’s Harvest Moon, by Anne Hunter, and Help by Holly Keller. The children learned several new vocabulary words from the books she read, such as “harvest moon” and soiree.” We look forward to Debbie’s monthly visits.
WHAT DO PEACE AND BEING A KIND FRIEND MEAN?

The Children’s School is collaborating with the University to encourage thoughts of PEACE for two weeks coinciding with the International Day of Peace and Gandhi’s birthday. At circle time, we began with reading the book *PEACE* by Todd Parr. Then the Green Room friends painted with bright colors the letters that spell PEACE on a fabric made to hang outside on our playground for all to see. While painting, the children were encouraged to paint in their own space to promote cooperation. After discussions about peace we went to a recording studio on campus to record each child’s idea about peace. We also decorated plastic squares that were folded into pinwheels to make the banner and playground festive!

**Turner’s Dairy in our community**

We enjoyed a visit from Becky Turner from Turner’s Dairy Dairy who taught us about cows and the milking process. Becky also brought examples of the foods that cows eat such as silage, corn, oats and hay. Our friends learned that cows have teeth only on the bottom of their mouths, have 2 stomachs, and eat their food 2 times.

**CMU Police**

Officers Moran, Harrison and Campbell from the CMU Police Department also visited our school. After a discussion about traffic safety and dialing 911 for emergency help, we all had a first hand look at their police vehicle and had the opportunity to sit in it.
Max’s exploration of our classroom worms.

Camryn and Ethan take a curious look at a sunflower leaf.

Jacobo explores his easel painting creativity.

Nick and Marley enjoy the counting game Strawberries In A Basket.

Charlotte, Camryn and Jacob identify the friends pictures in a Classroom Bingo Game.

Daniel shows off his cutting skills by cutting a “car wash.”

Finn created a red and yellow pattern.

Sara, Miyako, and Owen learned about a weather vane on the playground.

Jacobo, Rhys, Jillan, and Mira painted their names.
Special Thanks To
Alexis Tuckfelt (Marly PM) for a Sign Language lesson. Mrs. Wendowlowski’s class learned the sign for friend, a song in Sign Language and the Sign for the first letter in everybody’s name.

Rashmi and Hemalata Shah and Amee Chaundry (Sahil’s grandparents and mom, Mrs. Bird AM) for reading a story in the Gujarati language and translating it into English. The name of the story was “Paki Bhaibandhi” which translates into English “Best Friends” or “The Strongest Friendship.” The moral of the story is, “A friend in need is a friend indeed!”
Jacobo, Sahil, Jack and Judah built with the Imagination Playground.

Brylie moved a magnetic figure with a magnet while following a maze.

Saatwick and Hudson enjoyed painting at the easel.

Sardor stopped to get gas from Miyako and Sara.

Tyler and Roxy used their imaginations with community helper figures.

Nick took charge of the cash registers in the flower shop.

Daniel and Beau filled a pot with soil and planted spider plants.

Mattis manipulated playdoh.

Jack fished for magnets with a magnetic rod.