The Theatre Arts Unit was such great fun in the Green Room! It began with introducing the concepts of acting, costuming, lighting, props and set design through reading stories at Circle Time such as *The Bunny Play* by Loreen Leedy and *A Play’s the Thing* by Aliki. Some of our vocabulary words included lobby, ticket counter, main stage, audience, box seats, actor, role, orchestra pit, musicians, backstage, wings, set, scenery, curtains, spotlight, stage voice, narrator, “Bravo!” and microphone. Many other theater-related experiences contributed to making the unit relevant for the children. Circle times focused on matching theater terms to related pictures, a study of different emotions and how people show them with their whole bodies, and the parts of a story (beginning, middle, end). We read and discussed many stories and practiced being story tellers. Our locker tags this month were each child’s drawing of themselves on a theater stage. Each child made a Hollywood Star with glue and glitter, added their photo and signed their name to put on the Green Room Wall of Fame!

The weeks in December concentrated on the production and performance of three plays in addition to expanding on the concepts introduced at Circle Time. We moved furniture and built a stage in the Green Room using our large wood blocks, and made space for an audience to sit while watching.
The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Retold by Paul Galdone

The familiar classic fairy tale of The Three Billy Goats Gruff was our first production. The repetitive nature of the story made it simpler for the children to memorize lines and to be cued easily by a narrator. The children created their own scenery by painting a grassy meadow and making a three dimensional tree. Some children made goat horns for costumes. Many of the children playacted the story multiple times, each time trying different roles and improving on using their bodies and voices to represent the characters and tell the story! Some children used the basic style of the story to create their own versions such as "The Mean Dragon and the Three Little Pirates."
Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story

By Helen Cooper

Our second classroom production was based on a new story called Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story by Helen Cooper, in which a group of animals try some different homemade soups. We painted paper fish and formed and colored vegetables from Model Magic dough for the props. Mae’s mother, Jennifer Balog, came into the classroom to create a house front and a market stand with the children for the set. The children made cat ears, duck bills and squirrel tails as costumes. Mrs. Solomon led groups of children in making the creamy “orange” vegetable soup in the kitchen, and it was “DELICIOUS!” as we tasted it along with fresh baked bread. After just a day or two of prompting, the children once again enthusiastically recreated this story over and over.
Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story

By Helen Cooper
Our final production was once again a familiar story: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. The set design included a boat constructed and painted by the children, and some forest scenes made with the help of Felix’s mother, Corinne Guillou, as we practiced the French words for red (rouge) and green (verte) during the Friday morning French class she leads. The Wild Things were costumed in paper claws and horns, and they carried hand made wands for the “wild rumpus.” Many children made crowns, such as the one Max wore in the story, and created their own wild thing paper bag puppets. The Green Room friends shared the stage with many others as the Extended Morning friends and younger preschool friends visited the room. Everyone had the opportunity to participate in multiple “shows.”
Birthday Celebrations and Special Visitors

This month we celebrated Isaac’s birthday with his mother, Beth Lott, and his Grandma Joyce. Isaac’s mom read a story and we had a special birthday snack of frozen vanilla yogurt with blue sprinkles!

We had some special visitors this month who shared their talents with us. Thanks again to Corinne Guillou for creatively teaching us French, Jennifer Balog for set design, and Miss Debbie, from the Carnegie Library, who shared some theatre songs and stories with us.

A big thanks to:

Collin’s mother, Kelly Rosenberg, who did a special reading of “Where the Wild Things Are” for Collin’s circle time friends.

Ari’s mom, Julie Paris, who visited the Green Room during Hanukkah to read a story and to share some of their family’s holiday traditions.

Officer Campbell and some of his colleagues from the CMU Campus Police Department, who visited our school in early December to talk about the police officers’ job, general safety, and bike safety. Everyone walked to the school parking lot to see his police car. Officer Campbell showed us the different parts of the car and demonstrated how all of the lights work. Everyone got a chance to sit in the car!!

We read many classic fairy and folk tales, and different versions of these classics during the Theatre Unit. Some other theatre related books we read included:

Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper; Full Moon and Star by Lee Bennett Hopkins; Starring Harry by Thea Feldman; Moses Sees A Play by Isaac Millman; Louise the Big Cheese by Elise Primavera; The Fabulous Feud of Gilbert and Sullivan by Jonah Winter and Richard Egielski; All the World’s a Stage by Rebecca Piatt Davidson. Check these out at your local library!