Extended AM Newsletter

February 2015

Carnegie Mellon University Children’s School

Extended Morning has a weekly Focus Book that expands on the Preschool theme of the month. The teachers support the stories through related activities that include experiences in each of the Developmental Domains. The story is further enhanced by weekly Cooking Projects with Mrs. Loomis, Large Motor activities with Ms. McMichael, and daily music with Mrs. Bird. A brief description of the focus book is included in each Monday’s email, and a list of available activities is a part of each day’s email. The newsletter for each theme recaps the books and related activities.

February’s books focused on the city of Pittsburgh. We learned about what makes our city unique through pretend play, games and art projects. The children cooked foods that have a connection to Pittsburgh, as well as moved and sang along with songs that remind us of our city.

The children listen to a story during circle time in the green and red rooms. Friends draw a group picture of their neighborhood.
The first week's focus book was “Good Night Pittsburgh” by Mark Jasper. This story highlights some of Pittsburgh's wonderful landmarks and special attractions that children and families may know and enjoy. The list includes the skyline, the Duquesne Incline, the fountain at Point State Park, Phipps Conservatory, Kennywood, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Pittsburgh Zoo, the PPG Aquarium, the Steelers, the carousel at Schenley Plaza, the Heinz History Center, the National Aviary, the riverboats, the Penguins, the Cathedral of Learning, the ice skating rink at PPG Place, the bridges, and the Allegheny Observatory.

Children played hockey and made a logo to wear proudly. They explored splatter painting to make a Pittsburgh night sky with collaged buildings. They also constructed bridges in the block center and set up a pulley system for inclines. Friends played catch with beach balls and Finger Light balls in the Red Room. The cooks made french fries with Mrs. Loomis. At lunchtime we all tasted the delicious homemade fries with Heinz ketchup!
The second week's focus book was “Pittsburgh A to Z” by Martha Vandalay. In this story, two children and their dog explore Pittsburgh. From the Aviary to the Zoo (and places beginning with all the letters of the alphabet in between), they travel the hills, roads, tunnels, and bridges that together, make up our unique community. Throughout the week, we had an array of activities that highlighted the unique culture and history of Pittsburgh and start with different letters of the alphabet including:

- P is for Pittsburgh, Puzzle and the Point: A detailed city scene jigsaw to explore and the Point State Park Fountain to create, then paint the surrounding rivers and green space.

- S is for Steel: Children learned the process of making steel and what we use steel for.

- H is for Heinz Ketchup, but also for Haluski! Friends helped prepare the ingredients and then shared the finished noodle dish at lunch time.

- M is for Museums: Young curators created displays of art, dinosaur skeletons, and minerals.

- T is for Tunnels, B is for Bridges: The children crossed wooden bridges and crawled through different tunnels in the Red Room.
During the third week, we explored Pittsburgh’s special connection to the pop art icon: Andy Warhol. "Uncle Andy's: A faabbbulous visit with Andy Warhol" was written and illustrated by Andy Warhol’s nephew, James Warhola. James and his six siblings grew up in rural Fayette County surrounded by junk that their father (Andy's older brother) collected for money. They would also use the scraps of metal, old tires and other found items to make art. Sometimes the whole family would pack up their car and drive to New York City to pay a surprise visit to Uncle Andy and their grandma, "Bubba"! While visiting, James helps his Uncle Andy work on a large paint-by-number art piece. The artist’s famous replications of Campbell’s soup boxes tower over the children as they sleep. Over the years, they visit Uncle Andy many more times and James is even inspired to create his own art studio at home.

During activity time: friends played horseshoes with Ms. McMichael, colored in paint-by-number butterflies and cooked grilled cheese and Campbell’s soup. They also enjoyed putting together Warhol portrait puzzles, junk art inspired by the Warhola family, and making mono-prints of the Pittsburgh skyline inspired by Warhol’s use of printmaking.
We ended this month with a story from a special neighbor from Pittsburgh, Fred Rogers. The focus book was “Making Friends”. Here is an excerpt from Fred Roger’s description of this important book.

“One of life’s greatest joys is the comfortable give-and-take of a good friendship. It is a wonderful feeling not only to have a good friend but to know how to be a good friend yourself. Learning about friendship begins at an early age when children "graduate" from playing side by side to playing with each other. There is so much to learn about sharing toys and sharing loved ones as children begin to share themselves with others” ---- Fred Rogers

During the week, friends heard the music of Mister Roger’s Neighborhood, played cooperative games, made art together and food that emphasized teamwork. In the kitchen friends learned about Mister Rogers’ friend, Chef Brockett. They mixed different ingredients together to make a special snack to share with everyone at lunch time. The children also worked together to build ramps on the