Extended Afternoon 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, and Large Motor activities and Gardening activities with Ms. McMichael. A brief description of the focus book is included in each Monday’s email, and a list of activities is a part of each day’s email. The newsletter for each theme recaps the books and related activities through text and photographs.

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 and also sang songs that remind us of our city.

**Goodnight Pittsburgh** by Mark Jasper

The first week's focus book was “Good Night Pittsburgh” by Mark Jasper and Ruth Palmer. 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. We enjoyed beginning a process of building Pittsburgh structures during our start to our Pittsburgh theme. We also had a Pittsburgh original, lip-licking, delicious treat: banana splits! A Pittsburgh scavenger hunt, and some decoupaged boxes were additions to this week’s activities as well.
Pittsburgh A to Z by Martha Vandalay

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. The activities that supported the story were:

- T is for Tunnels, B is for Bridges - two things that are experienced daily by many people who live in Pittsburgh. The children had the opportunity to cross wooden bridges and crawl through different tunnels. They erected skyscrapers, created a zoo and a block neighborhood, then connected them all with tunnels and bridges.

- H is for Heinz Ketchup (which we experienced with french fries), but it is also for Haluski, a delicious combination of noodles and cabbage sautéed in butter. We made this and had a chance to taste it during our snack time.

Uncle Andy’s: A Faabbbulous Visit with Andy Warhol
by James Warhola

During the third week our focus book was "Uncle Andy's: A faabbbulous visit with Andy Warhol", written and illustrated by James Warhola and based on real events. 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 cans 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.

To deepen our explorations, friends made paint-by-number art inspired by Andy Warhol, as well used a computer app to create colorful Andy Warhol photos, covered soup cans with Campbell’s labels, “glued” together graham cracker skyscrapers, and sampled homemade dill pickles.

Making Friends by Fred Rogers

This week's focus book was “Making Friends” by Fred Rogers. 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."
This week, friends saw a quick video clip of Mr. Rogers and his friend Chef Brockett. They played games, made art and food that emphasized sharing, cooperation and encouragement of their peers. They mixed different ingredients together to make a special snack to share one another. We worked together to complete the Pittsburgh buildings for use during our Pittsburgh Party, and we made Friendship Bread starters to take home and share with friends.

Thank you for your contributions toward our Family Pittsburgh Party. It was a blast to do some square dancing, share Pittsburgh foods together, build with the blocks our extended afternoon children decorated, and enjoy a fun evening together - inside - while the outdoors was so cold. We are looking forward to studying our next theme together: Games!

The CMU campus is full of interesting places, art, and history!

Pittsburgh history can be found around many corners!

“Hey! While we are taking a ride in the car, look at the view of the city!”

Button, button, who’s got the button?

Together we can build a neighborhood!

Hooray for Pittsburgh!
Ms. McMichael taught us to sing, “Hands on the top when you chop!”

Look over there… the school of drama! Who knows… maybe one day it could be one of us on stage!

Andy Warhol style projects included soup can labels and brightly colored paint!

Graham crackers + marshmallows = Delicious Skyscrapers!

Using balance beams is a great way to practice our gross motor skills!

Yum! Baked potatoes fill our bellies!

FingerLight balls are great for beginners learning to toss and catch!

We worked as a team to decoupage “Pittsburgh boxes”!

Working hard on windows!

We chopped bananas and strawberries to top our banana splits!