Me and My Community!

Welcome families and friends to the first edition of the Kindernews!

The Kindernews is the Children’s School kindergarten class newsletter published to keep our families and friends updated on what is happening in the kindergarten classroom. The Kindernews is filled with photographs of your children working, learning and playing together. The Kindernews features your children as artists, inventors, explorers and authors. The Kindernews also addresses the philosophy behind the activities that engage your children. It is one link between our classroom and your home. Enjoy!

WATERCOLOR CITY

Our 2012 school year began with getting acquainted with our classroom, the routine, the other friends and teachers. The children created All About Me collages using photos of themselves and their families. The poster was decorated and labelled using sight words such as me, mom and dad.

Each child shared his or her collage during circle time. After the poster is shared, the child has the opportunity to answer two questions about the poster from the audience. The audience members practice formulating and asking relevant questions while the speaker develops public speaking skills.

The posters are displayed in the hall along with your child’s self portrait and family portrait.

This month the collages will be sent home in the All About Me bag. Each child will have a turn to take the bag home, giving you a chance to “meet” your child’s classmates and families.

Giovanni sharing his All About Me with the group.

Kiana creating her All About Me.

Will decorating his poster.

Lili’s hallway display.
MATH CONCEPTS

We practice recognizing, recalling and writing our numbers by completing the missing numerals on the monthly calendars.

During our Morning Work, the children were given different opportunities to practice their counting. We counted gems and placed them in the corresponding numbered containers. We also played “Grab a Handful” with blocks, counting how many we were able to grab out of the bowl and recording that number.

We also introduced the concept of patterning. The children begin with a simple ABABAB pattern and added an ABB pattern. The children are finding, building and reading a variety of patterns everywhere!

We play a patterning challenge game where the group has to guess the pattern that I make using several children, such as long sleeves, short sleeves, long sleeves, short sleeves. This is a great way to build their patterning skills and to hone their observation skills.

KINDERGARTEN GRAPHING

We introduce graphing the first week of school. Each morning the children record their answer to the Question of The Day on the classroom graph.

The Question of the Day helper reports the findings to the group during circle.

The Clipboard Helper is a weekly survey/graphing job. This child asks each friend to answer the survey question. The child records the answer and keeps track of who has participated. Once the survey is complete, we tally the results and share them with the class.

As we were getting to know each other, we noticed that although we were all kindergarten students we were also different from each other. Our eye and hair color was different. We were different heights. Our names were different lengths. The children recorded these differences using bar graphs, pie graphs and a height chart.

We also have different tastes. We tasted red, green and yellow apples. The children recorded their preferences on a tasting chart.

Elena counting gems.

The math concepts covered during the month of September are counting, number recognition, number recall and patterning.

Sasha creating a ABB shape pattern.

Jacob reporting the question.

Benjamin recording his apple preference.

Hair and eye color graph.

John asking Liam the survey.
KINDERGARTEN LANGUAGE ARTS

In Kindergarten, we incorporate reading and writing into every part of our day. Along with reading books to and with the children, we practice letter recognition and recall of upper and lower case letters by finding the "Letter Path" of a specific letter. The children use bingo dabbers to mark the path.

Kindergarten Bingo is a game we made to practice recognizing the names of our classmates and teachers as well as developing the social skills of game playing. We also sent a photo memo home with your child. Please practice recognizing faces and reading the friends’ names. Names are sight words too.

We practice sight words with an activity called “Writing, Building and Decorating” the chosen sight words. The children copy the sight word, use stamps to spell the sight word, and then write the word a third time and decorate around the word. These words are being added to a booklet so the children can practice reading on their own.

KINDERGARTEN PORTRAITS

Each week in September we focused on drawing a different portrait. The first week the children worked with Mrs. Perovich to draw a portrait of themselves. Examining our reflections in a mirror, we paid close attention to the details on our face using the correct shape and color. Next we moved on to drawing our friend’s portrait, “Just like Leonardo DeVinci”! The children used the easel and drew their model focusing on detail. When the portrait was complete, the model and artist switched. It was interesting to hear the conversations taking place. The children really concentrated on their works, taking particular care to draw their models happy!

Photos left to right: Noah drawing Megumi, Aaron drawing Thomas, Liam drawing Sasha and Ali drawing Zen.
The Science/Discovery Area has been a busy place since the start of school! Throughout the month, we have been working on our observational and descriptive skills. Early on, we learned about the life cycle of butterflies. We watched caterpillars make chrysalises and turn into butterflies! We discussed the life cycle in stages: egg, caterpillar/ larvae, chrysalis, and butterfly. We drew each stage and painted a butterfly.

Our first experiment of the year involved putting Ivory soap in the microwave. The changing state of matter was our focus concept to be observed. We described attributes of the soap before heating and after heating. We used the focus phrases: “I wonder . . ., I think . . ., and I learned . . .” for this experiment. Below, an example of our focus chart is listed.

**The IvorySoap Experiment**

**I wonder...** what will happen if we put Ivory soap in the microwave.

**I think...** The children worked with Ms. Kroll to make some predictions about the Ivory soap. Some friends said: “the soap will melt like butter in the microwave.” “It will be soft like shaving cream and feel like sticky goo.” “The soap will be warm and feel like liquid soap.”

**I learned...** that air inside the soap expands when heated in the microwave. Before heating, the soap was rectangular with the word “Ivory” on it. It smelled clean and fresh – like flowers. It felt hard and could not be broken easily. In the microwave, the soap got bigger, like a marshmallow. After heating, the soap changed shape and the word “Ivory” disappeared. It got really big and felt warm. It looked like shaving cream, but didn’t feel the same as cream. The soap crumbled and flaked when touched after heating.

We had another great opportunity to use our observational skills when Mrs. Perovich brought in Larry, the praying mantis. We first observed him, noting our initial impressions of the insect in a drawing. Then, we watched a video about praying mantises and used what we learned in the video for further discussion and observation. We even caught bees on the playground and purchased crickets to observe Larry’s predatory skills.
Our days have been filled with a wide variety of activities as we are getting to know each other and the space.

Play is a doorway to learning. Play stimulates our imaginations, helping us adapt and solve problems. Play arouses curiosity, which leads to discovery and creativity. The components of play - curiosity, discovery, novelty, risk-taking, trial and error, pretense, games, social etiquette and other increasingly complex adaptive skills - are the same as the components of learning.

Block building, puzzle building, and game playing are a few of the independent activities that we have available for the children to interact with during our free choice time.

Neve, Megumi, Yu and Noah playing a board game.

As the children were getting to know each other, we also began sharing information about our families. Ms. Scholes guided the children in drawing a family portrait focusing on relative size, dad is taller than you, your baby sister is smaller than you. Combining the skills they learned from the self portraits with this new perspective, the children created wonderful colorful, drawing of their families!

We also talked about our homes and where we live. The children made colorful houses using basic shapes. We practiced writing our addresses and then mapped our address onto the Pittsburgh map. The children linked the point on the map to their shape house.

Our Kindergarten map.

KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES

Roland, John and Noah building in the blocks.

Shahrzad and Abigail building a puzzle together.

Our family
OUR STUDENT TEACHER

We have wonderful help in the classroom this semester.

Ms. Kroll is our student teacher from the University of Pittsburgh. Ms. Kroll works with us Monday and Tuesday mornings and all day on Wednesdays. She is creating activities, leading group time and working with all the children.

KINDERGARTEN INTERNAL

Dr. Carver teaches a Practicum in Child Development class. The students are placed in the classrooms for 6 hours of field observations and then meet for a weekly discussion. This semester the kindergarten is fortunate to have an intern placed with us. Marisa will be working with the children while observing theories discussed with Dr. Carver. We appreciate her help and the children love the extra attention!

KINDERGARTEN GROUPS

Stingrays
Aaron
Elena
Gabrielle
Giovanni
Jacob
John
Liam
Lili
Maya
Megumi
Noah
Shahrzad

Seahorses
Abigail
Ali
Anna
Benjamin
Kiana
Neve
Roland
Sasha
Thomas
Will
Yu
Zen

Our 2012-2013 Kindergarten class!