KINDERNEWS

Me and My Community!
Welcome families and friends to the first edition of the Kindernews!

Our 2013-2014 Kindergarten Class!

ALL ABOUT ME

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.

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. Along with our kindergarten classroom website (cmukindergarten.webs.com), it is a link between our classroom and your home. We hope you enjoy!
KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES: PLAYING BOARD GAMES

Our days have been filled with a wide variety of activities as we are getting to know each other and the space. One way to get to know each and practice our social skills is through the playing of board games.

Board games are rich in learning opportunities. They satisfy your child's competitive urges and the desire to master new skills and concepts, such as: number and shape recognition, grouping and counting, letter recognition and reading, visual perception and color recognition, eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity.

Games don't need to be overtly academic to be educational, however. Just by virtue of playing them, board games can teach important social skills, such as communicating verbally, sharing, waiting, taking turns, and enjoying interaction with others. Board games can foster the ability to focus, and lengthen your child's attention span by encouraging the completion of an exciting, enjoyable game. Even simple board games like Around the Castle offer meta-messages and life skills: Your luck can change in an instant — for the better or for the worse. The message inherent in board games is: Never give up. Just when you feel despondent, you might pick the card that moves you to the winner's circle.

In Kindergarten, we take winning and losing in stride. To be a fair player we use the rule, if you start a game then you must finish it. After a game, all players tell each other “Good game!”. If you lose, we encourage playing again. We emphasize the fun of playing the game with each other!

KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES: FOSTERING COOPERATION

Friday mornings are the perfect time to work collaboratively as a group. While one half of the class is at gym, the other half has been completing group activities. Painting our circle mural was a wonderful cooperative project. We began the project with a discussion on how to share paint. The children each had one cup of paint and a given space to use on the paper. The children had to politely ask a friend for a new color of paint or to add details to a child's circle. The project sparked lots of cooperative and encouraging language. They all worked harmoniously together and created an amazing piece of art!
KINDERGARTEN LANGUAGE ARTS

Fine motor skills activities for children are the best way to ensure proper development, and the practice of fine motor skills promotes the most functional use of a child's hands. The small muscles in a child's hands will be used for essential functional activities. Childhood is the critical time to properly develop these muscles.

In Kindergarten, we strengthen these muscles by practicing fine motor skills in a variety of ways; manipulating playdoh, using scissors, drawing, painting, and building with small materials all are everyday activities in the classroom. Adding novel manipulatives such as stickers, Cheerios on spaghetti noodles, beads, and colored glass gems with tweezers, keeps the children’s interest levels high, which helps lengthen the time spent at each activity.

Emmet working with stickers.

John stacking Cheerios onto spaghetti noodles.

David stringing beads onto pipe cleaners.

Alexander, Collin and Ari transferring gems into a jar using tweezers.

KINDERGARTEN PORTRAITS

In September, each week we have 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. The children used the easel and drew their model focusing on detail. When the portrait was complete, the model and artist switched places. It was interesting to hear the conversations taking place. The children really concentrated on their works, taking particular care to draw their models in the correct clothing and always with a smiling face!

Alexander drawing David

Ari drawing Alice

Dany and John discussing her drawing.

Mela drawing Clark
Henry's mom, Jessica, a former Children's School teacher, has graciously volunteered to cook with the children on Tuesday mornings. Cooking with children has many benefits: Children learn to use kitchen tools to pour, cut, squeeze and chop, which help strengthen muscles. Children broaden their palates as they prepare and taste different foods. Children build math skills as they measure, count, add, multiply and divide.

This month, we used some interesting small kitchen appliances for our recipes. The children used a blender to prepare their own fruit smoothies, an orange juicer to squeeze fresh orange juice, a fruit/vegetable juicer to make apple-carrot juice, an apple peeler to peel the apples for apple pancakes and a Squeezo-Strainer food mill to make applesauce.

Being involved in the food preparation has helped all the children appreciate and enjoy the recipes!

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

We practice recognizing, recalling and writing our numbers by completing the missing numerals on the monthly calendars. We also introduced the concept of patterning. The children began with a simple ABABAB pattern and added an ABC pattern. The children decorated a frame in an AB pattern using colored squares. Using their photos of their friends they created an ABC pattern.

The children are finding, building and reading a variety of patterns everywhere! We enjoy playing 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 as well.
The Science/Discovery Area has been a busy place since the start of school! Throughout the month, we have been working on our observation and description skills.

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 Ivory Soap Experiment**

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

**I think**...The children were encouraged 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 Shaylee’s mom brought in a 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 purchased crickets to observe the praying mantis’ predatory skills first hand.

Each week the children have been acting like scientists as they work on their observational drawing skills. Focusing on really studying the object’s lines, color and shape, the children have been creating realistic representations of the particular subject of study.
KINDERGARTEN STUDENT TEACHER
We have wonderful help in the classroom this semester.
Ms. Amoscato is our student teacher from the
University of Pittsburgh. Ms. Amoscato works with us
Monday and Friday mornings and all day on
Wednesdays.
She is creating lessons, leading group time and working
with all the children in small groups. Plus Ms. Amoscato
plays the flute for the Pitt Marching Band!

KINDERGARTEN INTERN
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. Ashley will be working with the
children while observing theories discussed with Dr. Carver.
We appreciate her help and the children love the extra
attention!

Ashley painting with Benjamin.

KINDERGARTEN WORK STUDIES

This is Sam’s fourth year working in the class!

Arielle works with us on Tuesday and Thursday.

This is Airiss’ second year working in the class.