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.weebly.com), it is a link between our classroom and your home. We hope you enjoy!

Me, You and Us

Our 2016 school year began with getting acquainted with our classroom, the routine, the other friends and teachers. The children all know our morning routine of checking for notes in backpacks, hand washing and answering the Question of the Day. We became familiar with the classroom routines of freezing when the lights go out, coming to the teacher when the bell rings, walking in a line, pushing in our chairs, etc. The children learned our “necklace or chair system”, which monitors the amount of spaces at a center.

We spent time in each classroom center and learning how to appropriately use the materials there. The children were given time to explore the materials freely. We learned where the materials live so that we can all share in the responsibility for cleaning up our space. During lunch and snack, we are responsible for cleaning up our table space and taking care of the trash. The children are being introduced to time management and independence. Giving a two minute warning and providing a mailbox for them to keep unfinished work allows them to keep track of their own progress.
ALL ABOUT ME

We have spent an enjoyable September getting to know the children. Our first project was having the children create their self portraits using a variety of mediums. They used paint, crayons, playdoh, gems and items found in nature to produce a version of themselves. Self portraits are a great way for the children to express various aspects of themselves and their identities beyond the surface of their physical appearance. Self portraits can teach students to draw beyond just what they think they see, but to draw what is really there.

All students were given a mirror to observe their facial features and look for small details. For this portrait, we concentrated on form and shape. The children concentrated on using the correct color of markers to draw the outline of their head and bodies. They added facial features and detail to their clothing.

During the first week of school, the friends were asked to take home, fill and return an All About Me bag to share with their classmates. Using three special objects from home, the kindergarteners were able to share and learn something new about each other. Show and Tell is an effective and enjoyable way for young children to refine their public speaking and oral communication skills, especially while learning more about their classmates.

The objects were photographed and made into a class book entitled “Can you guess the friend?”

We also wrote a classroom book entitled “What I like Most About Me.” The children were asked which part of their body was their favorite and why. We recorded the answers and photographed their favorite parts. One example is Robin who said “I like my head because it stores all of my memories.”
The children created an All About Me collage using the photos of their family sent in to school. The children labelled the family members in their photos. Stickers and colored tape were added to personalize the collage. These collages were shared with the group and questions could be asked by the group. The children did a great job sharing their family photos with us.

The children used a variety of materials to dress a paper doll to resemble themselves. After being taught to safely use a glue gun, the children used scraps of material, buttons, yarn, pearls and google eyes to create a mini “me”.

The children created a display space in the hallway to hang their work. Painting their names in large bubble letters allowed the children to personalize the space. Their self portraits, bubble names and all About Me collages along with their family portraits are displayed for the school to enjoy.

**GRAPHING**

We continued to get to know each other by graphing our eye and hair color, as well as how many people are in each family and how many letters are in each first names.

Graphing is an important math tool. It can be a simple way to introduce broader concepts of greater than/less than, or most and least. Being introduced to graphs at an early age can help children to understand important mathematical concepts such as sorting, organizing, counting, comparing, and analyzing.

**KINDNESS IN KINDERGARTEN**

Each year the class takes the Kindness Pledge by adding their handprint onto our class collage. Starting in October during morning circle we will renew our pledge to be kind by reciting this pledge, “I promise to try my best to cooperate with others, use kind words, be responsible and stay safe.”
ALL ABOUT OUR FAMILIES

We continued getting to know each other by sharing stories about the most important people in our lives, our families. The children began the week drawing a family portrait. As we shared these portraits with the class, we began to notice similarities and differences. We had a great discussion about the most important part of families; no matter how many people or animals are in are family, they all love us!

After discussing who makes up your family, the children naturally began talking about their homes. Using a variety of shapes, we made our houses and noticed the differences between them; we also talked about what was the same, especially the rooms that we need to live comfortably.

The children were then given the task to create their family members with paper and popsicle sticks and then presented with the problem, “Your family needs a house to live in. Can you build one?” Using a variety of building materials the children used their problem solving skills and imagination to plan, measure and construct a house in to which all of their puppets could fit. It was interesting to watch the children engage in this task. Each child was able to house their families but no two homes were alike!
ALL ABOUT EACH OTHER

The children continued to get to know each other through the month. To help with the process, we created Kindergarten Bingo. The game gave added practice in helping the children to identify the friends by their names and faces.

We used the children’s pictures to create our ABC patterns. We also practice each others’ names by showing their pictures as we line up from the rug.

After we had practiced drawing ourselves, we moved on to drawing a friend's portrait. The children used the easel and drew the 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!

As the friends began learning more about each another, it was the perfect time to explore stories that emphasized the importance of being proud of who you are and what makes you unique! As we read, the friends discovered that most characters, at one point, experience the same basic emotions (happy, sad, angry) as we do, but we noticed that the authors used words such as artistic, selfish or compassionate to describe a character's personality or abilities. We first explored character traits by reading “Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse” by Kevin Henkes. We discussed the differences between what you see on the outside (physical traits) versus what the character is like on the inside (personality traits). Physical traits can be seen with our eyes. Personality traits are harder to identify; you have to use what you know about a person or a character-actions, choices, words, thoughts, feelings and more.

The friends learned that you must use all of these clues to draw conclusions about the personality of a character or person. While we read different stories, we brainstormed a list of personality traits. Using this list as inspiration, students brainstormed character traits for each friend that we used to create Wordles.
MAKE SHOP
In the Make Shop this month, we have been busy learning how to use certain tools. Starting with screwdrivers, the children began taking apart old appliances. They learned the difference between a phillips and flathead screwdriver and when to use each.
Moving on to hammers, we hammered and pulled out tacks, first in a foam cushion and then into an old stump.
The last week was spent exploring nuts and bolts, by attaching pieces of wood together with these.

KINDERGARTEN COOKING
Mrs. Mack cooks with the children every Thursday. After explaining the safety rules to the children, she works on a specific skill. This month we have been working on chopping, cutting and peeling.
Using their favorite fruits and vegetables, the children made Friend Fruit Smoothies and Vegetable Salads.

KINDERGARTEN FRIDAYS
September was a beautiful month to enjoy our Fridays in Schenley Park. Our first Friday was spent collecting natural materials to create your self portraits. The children were eager to explore and found interesting items to share and discuss.
The following Friday, we spent the morning at the pond. After exploring the area, we gave the children colored pencils and clipboards to do observational drawings. We were amazed at the level of detail that was included on these. The drawings were put into a classroom book for us to enjoy.