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) and Instagram account (cmukindergarten), it is a link between our classroom and your home. We hope you enjoy!

Our 2017 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.

Eli, Colby, Emery and Julia playing a game with Mrs. Armbruster.
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 skin tone and hair. They added facial features and detail.

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?” Each child will have a turn to share the book with their family.
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.

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!

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Each week the children have the opportunity to practice their sight words and fine motor skills by writing in their photo journals. We choose a photo of the child and print it onto lined paper. The alphabet is on each page to help with letter recall and formation. At this time in the year, we are modeling the sentences on the Smartboard using the sight words that we have introduced such as I am Leo or I love Berry (the name chosen for our classroom bear mascot). Now that the children have been introduced to the activity, they are encouraged to write their own description of the photo using inventive spelling or continuing with teacher support.
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 a family, they all love us!

STEAM PROJECTS

STEAM is the combination of two or more of the core elements of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. We try to incorporate as many of these projects throughout the year as possible. This month, the children were then given the task to create a home for their family members and vehicles using a variety of building materials. The children used their problem solving skills and imagination to plan, measure and construct a house into which all of their family members would fit. It was interesting to watch the children engage in this task; no two homes were alike!

OUR STUDENT TEACHER, MR. LEHMBERG

We are so excited to have Andrew Lehmberg working in the Kindergarten classroom for the Fall Semester. Andrew is a senior at the University of Pittsburgh and a member of the School of Education CASE Program. Andrew has jumped right in to the learning environment by playing board games with the children, reading stories to the group, and leading small group activities such as introducing AB patterns. In just a short time, Andrew has become an integral part of the teaching team!
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. Each morning, we write our name on a slip of paper and answer the “Question Of The Day”. The chart is set up as a simple two column bar graph. We discuss the findings while counting and comparing.

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 of our first names.

The “Clipboard Helper” is a weekly job in which one child “surveys” the class with a simple question such as “Do you have any brothers?” The helper records the answer and marks the child’s name off the list so that a friend is not asked twice. At the end of the week, we count and discuss our findings.

We are committed to being kind friends in the classroom. Each morning we start the day by reciting the Kindness Pledge, “I promise to try my best to cooperate with others, use kind words, be responsible and stay safe.”

We also provide many opportunities for the children to work together on collaborative projects. Practicing sharing, cooperating, taking turns, and using kind words results in beautiful works of art!

Our classroom door is decorated with the children's unique handprints, each decorated individually and added to the phrase “Share our similarities. Celebrate our differences!”
This month was filled with new experiences! New classroom, new friends, new teachers, new routines, new spaces...and the list goes on and on. The children did a great job becoming acclimated with everything.

The class was introduced to our class mascot, a stuffed bear, to celebrate the Animals in the Wild unit coming in February. The children named him Berry the Bear. Berry receives many daily hugs!

INTRODUCING...THE MAKESHOP
We were introduced to the Make Shop by exploring something we all love, Legos! The Kindergarten is fortunate to have daily Makeshop time. It is a great space to explore, learn and cooperate!

INTRODUCING...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, Veggie Juice and Vegetable Salads.

INTRODUCING...ADVENTURE FRIDAYS
September was a beautiful month to enjoy our Friday adventures. Our first Friday was spent completing a nature scavenger hunt by the pond in Schenley Park. The next week, we collected natural materials on the hill overlooking Phipps Conservatory. We used these materials to create our self portraits. The children were eager to explore and found interesting items to share and discuss.

The following two Fridays, we spent exploring the campus on trikes and in wagons.