Important Notes
-November's theme: Native Americans
-Parent Teacher Conferences: November 14th (afternoon only) November 21st (all day-No School)
-Thanksgiving Vacation: November 26th-28th
-Please remember to send a change of cold weather appropriate clothes.

We began our study on the Elements of Art by talking about what we see around us, understanding how to tune into our observational abilities. We invited the children to be careful observers of the world around them and to take notice of details that can lead to important learning. Observational Drawing is the ability to draw and paint from life, creating an image not taken from either a photograph or the artist's imagination, but from real life observation. This initial activity helped set the foundation for our unit, inspiring the creative juices to begin flowing, as we delved into the world of how art is created. Refining our observational skills was a nice way to tie in our exploration of trees with our new October unit. During our unit we explored lines, colors, shapes and textures, beginning with drawing, cutting, and painting straight, curvy and zigzag lines. We worked with primary and secondary colors in different mediums, manipulating and mixing them to make interesting combinations. We learned how to maneuver shapes with the purpose of creating and drawing 2D and 3D objects. We used descriptive language to compare and contrast a variety of textures. Throughout the month of October, we learned by means of hands on experiences, making personal connections, reflecting upon stories, and immersing ourselves into the world of art, by truly becoming a classroom of artists.
The elements of art serve as building blocks. A person cannot create art without utilizing some of them. Line is essential as a concept to depict objects and symbols and to define shapes. The friends learned that “A line is a dot that went for a walk.” A line can be straight, swirl, wavy, jagged, dotted, dashed, zig-zag, diagonal, vertical or horizontal. We explored the many ways lines can be used in art, to create shapes, show movement or represent texture. One week, students were challenged to use their imagination to create pictures using the inspiration of a pre-drawn line in their journals. The next week we learned how to utilize lines to create shapes, then combined shapes to create everyday objects, such as a cat, a person and a house. Friends continued their exploration of lines (and shapes) on a daily basis, creating illustrations for a classmates’ birthday page, illustrating a book at the writing center, recreating the sequence of a story’s illustrations or drawing a teacher modeled prompt in their journals.

EXPLORING THE ELEMENTS OF ART

We added the element of color during our second week of study. Starting with primary and secondary colors, we sang, danced and painted until we had learned the order by heart. During this time, we completed several projects that combined color with lines. First, the children explored color mixing in the simplest form, with their fingers! Each child was given two primary colors and asked to predict the color they’d make when mixed together. After more finger-painting and exploration of color mixing, friends were eager to create a work of art. Next, the children painted two separate pieces of paper, one using warm colors (red, pink, orange and yellow), the other using cool colors (blue, purple, teal and green). Friends then cut and wove the strips of paper together, creating a mixed color weaving. We also had a chance to extend our exploration of self portraits by creating an artistic representation of a self portrait using shapes and colors. We explored the element of texture, by creating a printed/stamped work of art using various found materials.

In just over one month, the kindergartners have progressed greatly in their drawing abilities. Their fine motor skills, awareness of detail, and focus has developed, allowing for more elaborate and accurate drawings. Their representations of forms are clearly recognizable and will gradually become more complex as time continues. Their use of color is developing into more of a realistic representation, rather than a form of expression. To support the continual progression of their work, we have created a visual reminder of what a quality illustration (drawing) looks like at the kindergarten level. Ask your child to describe what a 5 drawing would look like. The answers included the following: it has five or more colors, the colors are used accurately, it includes tons of detail, is neat and represents that you took your time and did your best work!
COOKING AND GARDENING

Every week, the kindergarten friends have the chance to further their exploration of cooking and gardening, working in small groups with Ms. McMichael. On Tuesdays, six friends take turns (each week) cooking a yummy snack for the classroom friends. This year we have incorporated our kitchen cooking with birthday celebrations, using this time to make a snack based on recommendations of that child. So far this year we’ve enjoyed goodies such as applesauce bread, pumpkin pretzels, chocolate covered bananas, and yogurt parfaits. On Thursdays, friends have the opportunity to dig deeper into gardening, exploring the parts of a plant, how to root a flower, how to grow mungo beans, and the responsibilities of taking care of a plant. Both cooking and gardening are beneficial at a young age, allowing children to learn and practice basic math concepts, build language skills, encourage an adventurous palate, allow exploration of their senses, along with a boost of confidence when gaining a sense of accomplishment.

LOGIC CHALLENGES

Our weekly challenges and classroom manipulatives also incorporated the elements of art. One great resource, Pattern Play by Mindware, introduces matching, symmetry and congruence in a colorful and exciting manner. The children sharpened their spatial skills by replicating the patterns shown on the card and manipulating the blocks into the wooden tray. Another popular game that allowed us to flex our logic muscles is Castle Logic by Education Insights. The challenge is to assemble the wooden blocks and towers into one of the castles in the puzzle booklet. This game is designed to stretch a player’s logical thinking skills and develop their spatial reasoning skills while having fun!

KINDERGARTEN LANGUAGE ARTS

In kindergarten, we are immersed in the world of printed text. As the students write, they put more effort into their writing as they are allowed to initiate their own ideas. Consequently, their writing becomes meaningful to them. Students explore invented spelling or as we refer to it, “Kindergarten Spelling”. Kindergarten spelling enables the children to use what they know about letters, sounds and spelling patterns to spell the words as well as they can. Spelling is a developmental process in which children acquire certain ideas about spelling as they are exposed to printed language and make connections between the sounds that make up words and the letters used to write the words. In the kindergarten classroom, children use invented spelling with thoughtful attention to letter-sound relationships. Writing in journals, on birthday pages and throughout the classroom helps build personal relationships between the teacher and student, builds independence, fosters attention to details, strengthens self confidence and creates a community of learners.
DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

The Science/Discovery Area continues to be an active place in the kindergarten classroom! This month we focused our exploration on several experiments with the element of color and have sparked excitement and interest in the students for our future units, wondering which experiments the kindergarten teachers will come up with next! Here are some of our favorites...

Color Mixing

I wonder...how can we make the water move from one cup to another without touching the cups.

I think...
• the colors will mix.
• the water will move like a slide.

I learned...
• a paper towel will absorb the water and carry it to the empty cup.
• water will move down hill but not uphill due to gravity.
• the water will move across to the empty cup until the water levels are equal.

Tie-Dyed Milk Experiment

I wonder...what will happen when we add drops of food coloring and dish soap to a bowl of milk?

I think...
• the colors will mix together.
• the milk will change color.

I learned...
• when you add drops of food coloring to milk, the color sits on the surface, as it is less dense than milk, so it floats on the surface. The colors also won’t mix unless you stir the milk.
• The action begins when you add the soap. The soap reduces the surface tension of the fatty milk molecules. The surface of the milk has a higher surface tension, so it pulls the food color away with it as the soap spreads (mixing the colors together).

Pumpkin Exploration

With the fall season upon us, it was a great time to integrate pumpkins into our science and math exploration. (Thanks to friends on campus, pumpkins were donated for each child!)

Each friend had the chance to measure the height, weight and circumference of their pumpkin. Students first used unifix cubes to compare and contrast the height of their pumpkin to their classmates’ pumpkins, recording their data, then ordering the pumpkins from shortest to tallest. Next, the students were given a balance scale and asked to predict its weight compared to other objects found in the classroom. Students had to determine which objects were lighter or heavier than the pumpkin. To conclude our exploration of measurement, each child was given counting links and asked to predict how many would fit around the pumpkin’s middle, the circumference.

Sunflower Exploration

The friends were eager to explore the sunflowers that tower over them each day on the playground. We used unifix cubes to measure the length of the stem and leaves, string to measure the circumference of the flower, counted the number of petals and used tweezers to explore the seeds. While on the playground, friends also explored the inside of the flower and stem.
MUSIC MONDAY

Each Monday after work time, we enjoy Music Mondays, an interactive circle time when friends have a chance to listen to a musical instrument mystery sound, make a guess and learn about a new instrument. Recently, the friends learned how they use dynamics and pitch everyday. Dynamics focuses on the volume of a note, such as piano (quiet) or forte (loud). Mrs. Armbruster explained that pitch is related to our talking school voice, our outdoor playground voices and singing voices. Pitch, whether or not a note sounds high or low, was explored using the help of Mr. Bumblebee. The friends were asked to sing high or low, based on the bee’s movement in the air.

THANK YOU!

This month Lena’s dad, Tom Lauwers, spent a Friday morning with the kindergarten class helping us create robotic bugs using sensors. The kindergarten friends first created the shape and look of a bug using styrofoam balls, toothpicks, paint and glitter glue. The friends then learned how sensors work to help create movement/action within a robot and recalled various everyday objects that use sensors to operate, such as a paper towel dispenser. Next, each friend was able to choose how they’d like their sensor to work, emitting a glowing light on their bug, through either motion detection, light detection or sound detection. The finished product included a wonderful community of little, glowing bugs in the kindergarten classroom.

MRS. WISHY WASHY

“Oh, lovely mud.” said the cow, and she jumped in it. During the last week of our unit, friends eagerly anticipated the arrival of a kindergarten favorite, “Mrs. Wishy Washy.” After reading and rereading the story, the students transformed the dramatic play center into a stage and themselves into actors. Each child had the chance to become Mrs. Wishy Washy, the Cow, the Pig, the Duck or a narrator and bring the written word of Joy Cowley to life on a stage. The class learned valuable lessons on how to use their voice, body and imagination as tools. Students had to concentrate on their role, remember their lines and use cooperation as they worked together, performing for the preschool friends. Be sure to look at the kindergarten website for a recording of each performance.
In the kindergarten classroom, students use technology on a daily basis. Each morning during circle time, students use the smart board to record the weather and date on the calendar. Our smart board also allows us the opportunity to introduce interactive media into the classroom such as video clips, google maps, writing, drawing and hands-on math lessons, such as patterning and sorting. During free choice and activity time, students have the option of navigating the iPad or computer. Students have been eager to explore Kidpix (computer), Bugs +Bubbles and Bugs+Buttons (iPad).

**FAMILY OPEN HOUSE**

Thank you to all the families who came to our Kindergarten Open House on Wednesday, October 22nd! We really enjoyed meeting all the moms, dads, grandparents, brothers and sisters. We hope everyone had a great time exploring our classroom and learning about our daily activities. Families experienced a daily work activity (counted a handful of unifix cubes), created with floam, enjoyed a game of Kindergarten Bingo, read some books written by the kindergarten friends and so much more! We look forward to meeting with you for conferences in November.