

March, 2011

Dear Parents,

The last month has sped by quickly. As usually happens during the winter months, there was a large increase in the breadth and depth of the work going on in our class. The variety of work seen at any given time is amazing. In math, work with the Golden Beads and Stamp Game experiencing the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are frequently going on. Other groups of children are learning their addition facts with the Addition Strip Board and Finger Charts. The younger children are enjoying work with the Number Rods and other beginning math materials. The older students love to help their younger classmates with learning to write numbers on a chalkboard using the Sandpaper Numbers. They are so proud of the accomplishments of their friends!

Lately there has been high interest in dinosaurs. Much of the recent Movable Alphabet work has been the spelling of the long dinosaur names. The children love making such long words! As the older students strengthen their reading skills, they are able to beginning to experience the functions of the basic grammatical parts of speech. Verb work is especially popular, as they get to run, skip, hop, etc. in the classroom.

Beautiful handwork is being done by many of the students on cardboard weaving looms. The concentration and eye-hand coordination this work promotes is so beneficial to their overall development and helps develop the skills needed in other areas of the curriculum. I love watching the artistic sense develop in each child. Drawings are becoming more representational and colorful. Puzzle map drawings are becoming more precise.

Practical Life materials are being used as much to beautify our classroom as for the process of the lesson. My assistant Misty and I recently observed a four year old polish an intricate brass bowl for a fairly lengthy time. She had such focus and concentration on her task and was so calm and absorbed, that she was totally unaware of what the other children were doing. When she was finished, the bowl was gleaming. She didn't look to others' for their praise, she just enjoyed the internal peace that comes from such great work. Most adults rarely get to experience and long for that kind of "flow" in our daily tasks!

The children are noticing the beginning of spring. They love to observe the emerging leaves and buds. Many discussions about the gardens at their homes take place with lessons on flower and leaf vocabulary. I am also looking for a source of frog eggs (no bullfrogs please) so that the children may observe the metamorphosis of an amphibian from egg to adult. I've learned in past years to start this process early enough for them to see an actual frog! Last night at my home I heard the spring peepers for the first time. Please let me know if you have a source for frog eggs. You would also need to be willing to supply fresh water from that source on an ongoing basis.

I hope many of you will be able to come and observe our classroom. One recent observer (a perspective parent) lamented that she didn't know about us a few years ago, as it would be a perfect fit for her child. She can't wait for him to start. It is truly an amazing experience to see how capable and interesting all the children are and how they form a cohesive "Children's House"!