

DESERT DAWN NEWSLETTER

February, 2009

Lovely spring weather seems to have returned early to our desert community. The mild temperatures and sunny skies served as a perfect backdrop to outdoor play and learning. The children love to spend mornings in the gardens and on the playgrounds and the late afternoons playing with their friends under the canopy of a blue sky. The month of February also provided an opportunity to focus many learning activities on love and friendship with the Valentine's Day holiday. Thanks to all the parent and grandparent support we received, we had a fun filled party.

Art and Music

As might be expected, the children had a great time in art class creating Valentine "heart art." They found so many ways to express their love in hearts made of foam paint bubble paper, tempera, glued on macaroni, and even people hearts. The students have also been working on group projects which will be available to purchase at the art auction. We think you will be pleased to see how nicely they turned out. The children also did a self portrait and a painting dealing with the element of texture.

February is National Music Month and the boys and girls created their own instruments to celebrate. Their collective band includes shakers, tambourines, and guitars. The month also offered many holidays about which the children could sing. *Big Red Hearts* and *Valentines Are Made to Share* were two of the many songs learned about that special day. The *Presidents' Day* song celebrated Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays. Now the children are working on songs about St. Patrick's Day and leprechauns with the March holiday just around the corner.

Ponies

The Pony group has been busy in the garden. After harvesting spinach, carrots, and lettuce, the students are preparing the garden for spring planting. In math class their theme has been comparison. They have compared the number of letters in names and words and graphed their favorite party activities, cookies, and breakfast foods. As an introduction to money, the children love to play such games as the \$10 Bill Game and The Dimes Game. Pattern blocks, shapes, unifix cubes, and Cuisenaire rods also help in their understanding of math principles such as adding and subtracting. They have enjoyed sounding out key words, working in their journals, and sharing them with their classmates. In the afternoons, the children have been working on a desert landscape for the bulletin board. While enjoying stories about havalinas, tortoises, and Jackrabbits, they are learning about their home, the Sonoran Desert. The Ponies listened to *Wake-up Mr. Groundhog* on February 2 and made their own pop-up groundhog puppets. There were many stories about Valentine's Day, too, like *The Day It Rained Hearts* and *Arthur's Valentine*. While continuing to review letters and their sounds, the children have nearly covered the alphabet.

Goats

The Goat group began the month with a focus on the letter "p" and the many wonderful things that begin with it. Starting with popcorn, the popped, ate, and danced to the *Popcorn Song*. They heard the story of *Strega Nona* and her magic pasta pot and used pasta noodles to make a tactile letter. "P" games included Pin the Poofy on

the Pink Poodle, parachute play, and pinwheel parade. They did not forget the *Three Little Pigs* either, as they read and acted out their story with puppets. The week of Valentines' Day was a change from letter study. The Goats made heart rubbings, did heart math, made heart men, and listened to Valentine stories. Letter study continues with "q." The class will make a quilt together after making individual city scenes based on Faith Ringold's book, *Tar Beach*. The children look forward to rainbow science, painting rainbows, and studying the rain and water cycles.

Bunnies

The Bunny group really enjoys song and movement activities. The children are developing good coordination skills as they learn about rhythm. They have been focusing on learning shapes by using them in various projects like painting, collage, games, counting, and by finding familiar objects that resemble basic shapes. A triangle can represent a fish or an ice cream cone. For Valentine's Day they continued to talk about love with interactive reading and exchanging hearts. Rectangles were the next shape they explored by finding them in their outdoor surroundings. They also loved talking and learning about pets. One favorite Bunny activity is dress-up and imaginary play.

Other News

Friday, February 20	Urban Forestry Department (Desert Plants and Animals)
Friday, February 27	Pizza Lunch
Friday, March 20	Wildlife World Zoo Presentation (Desert Animals)
Friday, March 27	Pizza Lunch
Saturday, March 28	Silent Auction and Picnic
Friday, April 3	Magic Show
Thursday, April 9	Spring Party
Friday, April 10	Closed for Good Friday

Special Thanks to:

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