

Windmill Creek Academy Gazette

Volume 9

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April 2016

Letter from the Director

Dear Parents,

In like a lion and out like a lamb, March was an exciting month! The students enjoyed learning about Ireland and St. Patrick's Day, Space and Dr. Seuss! They especially enjoyed dying and coloring eggs for their Easter Egg Hunt. Thank you to all the parents for helping make March's celebrations so much fun! We look forward to April and the many themes the children will explore: "Fairy Tales, Spring, Life/Plant Cycle, and Bugs and Insects." Our Innovations curriculum will continue to explore "Castles," and "Spin Me a Tall Tale." These themes facilitate imaginative play, creativity, reading comprehension and vocabulary building. Our older students will be planting terrariums later in the month! Put on your seat belts as we rev up to April's learning activities! :)

Here are some important upcoming dates to remember and some reminders:

Tuesday, April 4 - Field Trip to Children's Museum of Naples (C'MON)!

The Giraffes' class will be going on their second field trip of the school year. This time we will be visiting the Children's Museum of Naples. If you've never visited the museum, we encourage you to do so! It's a great, hands-on museum for all to enjoy!

Free Vision & Hearing Screening

The Lions Club will be sponsoring a free vision & hearing screening for 3-5 year olds. If you are interested in having your child participate in the free screening, please fill out the required permission slip. These will be available from your child's teachers and at the front desk.

LifeTouch Picture Day - Friday, April 22nd

Get ready to say, "Cheese!" LifeTouch will be here to snap Spring photographs of the children. Graduating VPK Students will also be photographed in their "Cap and Gown." More information will be forthcoming.

Looking forward to May

The VPK students will have their Graduation Ceremony on Thursday, May 12th at 7:00 p.m.

Lost & Found and Labeling

Please, please, please, label your children's clothes and various belongings (i.e., sippy cups, pacifiers, etc.) with both their first and last names. If the item is too small for first and last names, please indicate first name and last initial. This is a requirement from our licensing department and, of course, is vital in preventing the loss of items, spread of germs, etc.

It's hard to believe we're about to be visited by the balmy ... okay, HOT! days of summer. Let's enjoy these cooler days before the summer rains begin!

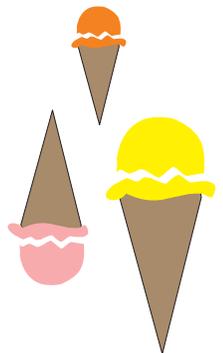
Fondly,

Janine

Janine Connell
Founder & Director
Windmill Creek Academy



The Frog students and Ms. Massiel put on their best "Cat in the Hat" in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday!



Character Training

April's Character Training Values

Courage = Bravery and Determination
Tolerance = Fairness and Justice



Windmill Creek Academy Classroom Updates

Bunnies

March was a very busy month for the Bunnies! They had their first St. Patrick's Day and everyone was dressed in green! Some of our babies enjoyed green veggies for lunch! Easter was a great hit as well! We made little Easter bags filled with baby treats and bubbles! We are waiting for April showers to bring May flowers! Ethan had his big number 1 birthday! Mary is eating all table foods now. She's learned to scoot around the classroom ... and is very happy to have found this newfangled mobility! Camila can pull herself up and sit on her own. Jackson loves playing on the floor and reaching for toys. Heath is our youngest "bunny!" He's so happy and makes everyone smile when they greet him. Our newest baby in the patch is Valerie! She is settling in so nicely and loves to watch her fellow bunnies! Spring has sprung in the Bunny room!

Ms. Diane, Ms. Iris & Ms. Lindsey

Cubs

This month we enjoyed a touch of the Irish luck! We learned about green and the Irish culture and what is at the end of the rainbow! We tip toed on green leprechaun feet that we stuck to the floor and followed them to a pot of "gold!" We learned about space by looking at pictures of the planets, galaxies and nebulas. We made our own galaxies and then protected the earth from space invaders by pretending to be aliens with masks we made! That was a lot of creative fun! Of course, we couldn't forget about Easter. We hopped like bunnies and played with Easter eggs. We even made our very own Easter eggs from clay as keepsakes. Last but not least, we sang a lot of nursery rhymes and played out some of the stories with puppets. It's fun to play with black sheep and itsy bitsy spiders! We can't wait for April and all the fun activities it will inspire!

Ms. Donna, Ms. Haven & Ms. Jazmyne

Bears

March was a wonderful month! The Bear were very excited to learn about Dr. Seuss and hear his books and funny rhymes. We learned about Space and St. Patrick's Day. The Bears truly enjoyed a "gold dig" in shaving cream as we searched for gold at the end of the Irish rainbow! Our favorite part of March was Easter week. We had lots of fun dying eggs and hunting for Eggs! We learned about baby chicks, bunnies and new life! Thank you parents for your Easter party contributions. The Bears enjoy learning about the days of the week, numbers, ABCs, colors and shapes during our daily circle time. We love story time and it's amazing how many books we read each week. We have enjoyed welcoming spring this month with plenty of spring-related arts and crafts. Have you seen our sheep displaying in the lobby of the school? In April we will learn about "Fairy Tales,"

"Space" and more about plants and the life cycle. We will end the month learning about "Bugs and Insects!" We will hone our fine motor skills by picking up plastic bugs and in art and crafts. We would like to welcome our newest Bear, Owen, to the Bear's class! *Ms. Cece, Ms. Karen, Ms. Kayla, Ms. Kaycee, Ms. Massiel & Ms. Sofie*

Frogs

We started the month celebrating Dr. Seuss! It's always a joy to read his books to discover his imaginative use of language and whimsical characters! We made masks depicting "The Cat in the Hat" which we took a class picture of! "Oh ... how cute we all looked!" Next we touched upon space and made a moonscape with puffed paint and bottle caps for the craters. We also enjoyed making rocket ships – picking our own colors from paint chip samples and using triangles for the top of the rocket and rectangles for the bottom. Sticker stars finished the project – encouraging fine motor skills! St. Patrick's week was so much fun – coloring and making our shamrocks, gluing different squares of green to learn about shades of different colors. Our St. Patrick's Day Party was a great success and thanks, once again, to all who participated. Easter was another egg-citing week! Coloring eggs, decorating our Easter pails and hats and of course our Easter Egg Hunt! The Frogs hunted for eggs in small groups at a time and then hid more eggs for the next group ... a good time was had by all! We ended the month learning about different nursery rhymes, including "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Humpty Dumpty" using bingo markers for precise placement on dots (good hand and eye coordination, fine motor skills). We look forward to next month -- learning about fairy tales, the season of Spring, the cycle of life using plants and caterpillars and finally ending the month with bugs and insects ... one of the students' favorites!

Ms. Caitlin, Ms. Carina, Ms. Lena, Ms. Lesley, Ms. Massiel & Ms. Pat

Giraffes

The Giraffes had a blast in March ... as we learned about space and even created our own rocket ship. We loved learning about St. Patrick's Day and making shamrocks and creating all things green! We loved our Easter crafts and dying eggs – the colors of the season are bright and cheerful! We had fun hunting for Easter Eggs and placing them in our beautifully decorated Easter baskets made out of milk jugs! In Social Studies and Social Science we enjoyed our "Peeps" experiment and water changing colors. The "space ship" was a great hit! In April we will be making a "castle" in our housekeeping center. We will also be learning about sharing and growing plants, the life cycle – and even plant a terrarium. In Reading, Writing and Math Readiness we have been very busy as we have almost reached the end of the alphabet! Our class has enjoyed searching for items from home for each letter and sharing them at circle time. We will continue to work on writing our letters, numbers and names. We will also be developing phonological awareness by trying to break words into syllables and individual sounds – adding and deleting beginning and ending sounds and rhyming words. End of year assessments will begin soon. We are looking forward to seeing individual growth and showing how much we have learned this year. Please mark your calendars for our Graduation Ceremony, Thursday, May 12th! *Ms. Ally, Ms. Astrid, Ms. Jenner, Ms. Krystal & Ms. Kristen*



Ms. Krystal - April's Teacher of the Month



Ms. Krystal is April's Teacher of the Month! Ms. Krystal excels in teaching children of all ages, as she was teaching previously in the Bears' class before taking on her new role as the Art Teacher in the Giraffes' class. Ms. Krystal is very creative and loves to explore artistic media with her students. "Caring, calm, conscientious ..." these are all great parts of Ms. Krystal's personality and come in handy when working with preschool-aged children! Ms. Krystal and her husband have two elementary-aged children. Thank you, Ms. Krystal, for being such a creative - and fun - teacher and colleague here at Windmill Creek Academy!



LeighAnn's Easter egg hunting skills have hit their prime!



April Birthdays

Michael "Mac" C - April 5
Ms. Haven - April 10
Isabella S - April 15
Kaylynn T - April 20
Mary M - April 21
Noel Z - April 24
Andrew M - April 27
Ka'Mari P - April 28

20 Tips for Parents from Preschool Teachers Getting the Best From Your Child

by Marguerite Lamb

I worry that my 3-year-old, Sophie, has a split personality. At school she cleans up her toys, puts on her shoes, and is entirely self-sufficient at potty time. At home, she whines whenever I ask her to pick up anything, insists I join her in the bathroom whenever she has to go, and lately has started demanding that I spoon-feed her dinner. Clearly, her teacher knows something I don't. But then, what parent hasn't occasionally wondered: Why is my child better for everyone else than for me? The simple answer: Your child tests her limits with you because she trusts you will love her no matter what. But that doesn't mean you can't borrow a few strategies from the preschool teachers' playbook to get the best from your child. We asked educators from around the country for their tips so listen up -- and take notes!

Promoting Independence

While 3- and 4-year-olds still need plenty of parental help, our preschool experts agree that kids are typically able to do more than many of us think. Here's how you can encourage them:

1. Expect more. Most people have a way of living up (or down) to expectations -- preschoolers included. "At school we expect the kids to pour their own water at snack, to throw away their plates, to hang up their jackets -- and they do," says Jennifer Zebooker, a teacher at the 92nd Street Y Nursery School, in New York City. "But then they'll walk out of the classroom and the thumb goes in the mouth and they climb into strollers." Raise the bar and your child will probably stretch to meet it.
2. Resist doing for her what she can do herself. While it may be quicker and easier to do it yourself, it won't help to make your child more self-sufficient. Quick hint: Appeal to her sense of pride, suggests Donna Jones, a preschool teacher at Southern Oregon University's Schneider Children's Center in Ashland, Oregon. "Whenever I'm trying to get kids to dress, put jackets on, sit on chairs during meals and so on, I'll ask them: 'Do you want me to help you or can you do it yourself?' Those words are like magic," promises Jones. "The kids always want to do it for themselves."
3. Don't redo what they've done. If your child makes her bed, resist the urge to smooth the blankets. If she dresses herself in stripes and polka dots, compliment her "eclectic" style. Unless absolutely necessary, don't fix what your child accomplishes, says Kathy Buss, director of the Weekday Nursery School, in Morrisville, Pennsylvania. She will notice and it may discourage her.
4. Let them solve simple problems. If you see your child trying to assemble a toy or get a book from a shelf that she can reach if she stands on her stepstool, pause before racing over to help. "Provided that they are safe, those moments when you don't rush in, when you give children a moment to solve things for themselves, those are the character-building moments," says Zebooker. "It's natural to want to make everything perfect, but if we do, we cheat kids of the chance to experience success."
5. Assign a chore. Putting your preschooler in charge of a regular, simple task will build her confidence and sense of competency, says Buss. A child who is entrusted to water the plants or empty the clothes dryer is likely to believe she can also get dressed herself or pour her

