

Dear Families,

December was a short month with the holiday vacation but we packed a lot of learning and festivities in! We began the month of magic with a story on fairy houses then built our own in the woods by first packing down snow against the tree and burrowing a hole inside. Next, we gathered materials in the forest such as sticks, leaves and greenery to decorate our homes. This activity incorporated engineering and building in a way that is exciting, interesting and engaging to preschoolers, not to mention making a connection to the outdoors while being immersed in imaginative play!

At our morning meeting we began talking about patterns by making a boy/girl pattern with our bodies around the circle. We took this skill and transferred it to our bird feeders that we made from fruit loops. The children worked on first making a colored pattern of fruit loops at their stumps in the woods before carefully stringing them onto yarn. When their bird feeders were complete they looked for the perfect, special spot to leave it for the birds. We talked about what other animals might want to nibble on the food aside from birds. The list the children came up with included deer, chipmunks, raccoons, squirrels and bears. Through the whole month of December we did a mini unit on Evergreen trees, which I explaining on the paper included with your kissing ball gift.

In our woods spot we listened to the story of the Gingerbread Man. We went on a search throughout the building to find where the missing gingerbread man had run off too! This was an exciting way to learn about the geography of the whole school building. Ask your child where we ended up finding that sneaky gingerbread man!

The dramatic play area was turned into a bakery for the month of December. The play dough materials changed to pretend cookie dough, which smelled of cinnamon and included buttons to decorate the cookies with. In the final week of school before vacation we mixed, measured, and poured to make our sugar cookie dough. On Friday we rolled and cut the cookies and enjoyed our special treat at the end of the day. The children loved dancing and singing to the song “Cookie Bakers of the Night” by Laurie Berkner at our meetings.

We turned our donated collection of canned and non perishable food items into a math lesson by sorting and grouping the items by food type, before lining them up to count how many items we had, and lifting them to feel how heavy or light the boxes and cans were. The food was brought down to the cafeteria to be donated to the Marshfield food bank on the Friday before vacation. Thank you for your generous donations!

Anyone who came by our classroom during December would have heard the children happily practicing their caroling “Jingle Bells”. On the final day before vacation we went around the school building spreading cheer with bells and singing; they were a hit! Lots of smiles were spread across the halls.

We are continuing to learn how to wait for a turn to talk to teachers and children. We have had discussions around how to notice when someone else is talking, and how to wait until that person is done before sharing your own thoughts. We also talked about how it can feel hard to wait, but the more you do it, the easier it gets! This is a skill you can practice and talk about with your children at home.

As our final celebration we had a winter spiral in our woods spot. A beautiful spiral made from evergreen branches was places in the middle of our circle of stumps in the woods. The children each had a turn to walk into the spiral to place a “candle” (electric battery operated candle) down while everyone sang the song “This Little Light of Mine”. It was a beautiful, magical moment for all the children.

Important Announcements:

* A parent asked if I could add songs and lyrics to our classroom website. I always include a song we learned that month in our newsletters, I will be working on adding the lyrics to all the songs we sing to our classroom website. You can find them by pressing the button “songs” on the main page. I am asking for patience as I add these songs over time.
* We will be beginning out fire unit in the upcoming month, please look for literature coming home on this topic.
* January 26th is a early release day for the school, however preschool is still in session. This is a regular day for preschool.
* The most recent pictures have been uploaded to the classroom website. As always scroll all the way down to find the most recent pictures.
* Sonia, Sebastian’s mother generously helped supply our classroom with many well made, water proof mittens for children to borrow while they are in school. Thank you Sonia!

I’ll leave you with this song…

**Five Little Gingerbread**

**Five little gingerbread in a row**

**They look so yummy from head to toe**

**I’m not gonna eat one no, no,no**

**Crunch, munch uh-oh!**

**Four little gingerbread in a row (continue with the song while counting down)**

Wishing everyone healthy and peace filled New Year!

Warmly,

Elaina, Emily, Dianne, Brittany, Becca and Denise