



Our Classroom News

February 2010

Dear Parents,

Astonishingly, February is already upon us! I really enjoyed speaking with so many of you last week and sharing information together about your child. It is so helpful touching base with you to learn more about how Mrs. Hoeck and I can best support your child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth in the classroom. We will have formal conferences again in May, but as always please feel free to be in touch with me before that if you have any questions or concerns about your child's experience.

A huge shout out to our parent volunteers in January: Cynthia Vivian, Katrina Ford, Shelley Moreno, Eva Manning, and Kokeb Betemariam. We *so* appreciate your time and support in the classroom. A very special thank you also goes out to Adelma Diaz for all her help at both morning and afternoon carpool most days—her extra hands help the process to go so much more smoothly! If anyone is interested in volunteering (or sharing a talent or hobby) during the second half of the year and didn't have a chance to sign up during conferences, just let me know and I will share available dates...

We had a wonderful walkabout to the bridge near school on Tuesday—we particularly noticed how much more we could see of the neighborhood and woods without leaves on the trees. In the classroom, we have been investigating color this past month—what colors mix together to make other colors, how kaleidoscopes work, building with translucent Duplos on the light table. The ideas of light and shadow will be an upcoming topic of conversation and study. The mealworms have arrived! We have been examining them with magnifying glasses and drawing them as well as predicting what we think they will become. (SPOILER ALERT: I'm afraid I spread mealworm misinformation in my January newsletter—the mealworms eventually become *Darkling* beetles!) We have also just begun our Question of the Day, an activity which allows the children the opportunity to communicate with each other and develop critical thinking skills as well as practice counting, graphing, and comparing and contrasting sets. If your child tends to be quiet about details of the day, both the Question of the Day and news on the progress of the mealworms may provide a spark for conversation.

As you read in Dr. Deadman's newsletter, St. Matthew's will host a Kindergarten Night on Monday, February 8th. The presentation will offer information and insight from a Prince William County kindergarten educator. Although none of the children in our class will be going to kindergarten in the fall, the meeting may help those of you with children who have summer or early fall birthdays to better understand the realities and expectations of kindergarten.

Our Dad's Night will be held on Tuesday, February 9th from 7 to 8 p.m. The children will have the opportunity to take their dad (or dad stand-in) through a (mini)

version of our day, from the arrival routine to large group and centers to snack and story time. The children will prepare a snack to share, so all you need to bring is your sense of humor (I'll be singing), and come prepared to play!

We will be celebrating Valentine's Day on Thursday, February 11th. We will not be having a party or sharing treats, but we *will* be exchanging cards, giving the children an opportunity to express friendship and practice one-to-one correspondence as they deliver their cards. Please send in 18 cards to share; the children should sign their cards in whatever way they can. (Starting the signing process early helps to eliminate any frustration the children may feel about signing so many times.) No need to write names on envelopes—we are looking to keep the delivery process as simple as possible for the children.

Take good care,
Jen McLaughlin & Kitty Hoeck

***Fruit of the Spirit:* GOODNESS**

Important Dates:

Feb. 2nd: School Spirit Day—wear your St. Matthew's t-shirt!
Feb. 8th: Kindergarten Meeting
Feb. 9th: Fire Drill, Dad's Night
Feb. 11th: Valentine's Day celebration
Feb. 22nd: In-House Registration begins

Favorite Stories:

Mouse Count and *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stohl

If You Give a Mouse a Cookie and *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* by Laura Numeroff

The Snowy Day by Ezra Keats

(Touch the floor.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe.

(Lift your toes, point to shoe.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do.

(Bow dramatically.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, climb the stairs.

(Pretend to walk up steps.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers.

(Put your hands together and bow head.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn out the light.

(Lift arm and flick an imaginary light switch.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say goodnight.

(Put hands together and place them under your cheek.)

Favorite Songs:

The Polar Bear

Brr! Brr! Chilly, chilly bear.

Brr! Brr! Chilly, chilly bear.

The secret of the polar bear

Is that he wears long underwear!

Teddy Bear

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around.

(Spin around once.)

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground.