

December 1, 2019

Dear Families,

Where oh where has November gone? Whether it was coming together for your child during conferences or coming together as a family during the holidays, we were all able to appreciate one another as friends and as families. The gratefulness of friends and families was our focus for the month of November. Ms. Kenzie and I do believe we achieved that throughout the month! As the month began, we discussed the importance of friends and friendships in many of our circle times. We introduced a brand-new game to our circle time. The "compliment game" was a huge hit with our class! The directions for the game were quite simple. As we sat in our circle, each Brancher was asked to look to their neighbor and give that friend a compliment. As we went around the circle, each friend was able to give a compliment as well as receive a compliment. We brainstormed just what we thought a compliment was. As a whole group we came up with the conclusion: A compliment means that you're saying something kind to a friend. All summed up, we like to have "happy hearts", and giving compliments achieves that feeling in your heart. At the end of each game, we were able to reflect individually and as a group on how our hearts felt after hearing such kind words from their neighbor. Throughout the month, we played this game numerous times, with compliments becoming more detailed! We hear compliments being given left and right between our Branch friends. Learning and feeling empathy is such an important piece to being not only a Brancher, but a friend as well!

Participating in 'Friendship Addition & Subtraction' proved to be quite fun and engaging with each Brancher. By using unifix cubes we participated in a group activity by adding and taking away. Each Brancher was given a certain amount of unifix cubes. They were then asked individually to add their cubes to the stack. Once each Brancher had participated in adding, they were then asked to 'take away' the number provided by the teacher. This was a fun hands on learning math experience! We're now hearing the

children adding things up all through the day! Math is being enjoyed throughout the classroom, but so has beading! As part of an activity station, we had "Friendship Beading Bracelets". At this station you would find colored pipe cleaners (we liked to call them fuzzy string) and small beads. The object of this activity was to place as many desired beads on the pipe cleaner improving and strengthening their fine motor skills), then with a wrap around the wrist and a simple twist, each Brancher sported a beautiful one of a kind bracelet. We discussed how each bracelet was made of the same items, but when created, each bracelet was uniquely different, just like each one of us!

"Friendship Stew" was yet another classroom hit! As we participated in a morning circle time, we debated on 'what makes a good friend'. At the end of our discussion we came up with the 'main ingredients' to our stew. They included: Hugs (potatoes), Sharing & Caring (carrots and peas) Hugs & High Fives (celery and onion) Handshakes (broccoli) and "Love All Around" (BRANCHERS). We then added water and seasoning, mixed all our ingredients together and let the crockpot do the rest! We enjoyed our "Friendship Stew" as part of our afternoon snack! Who knew that creating a friendship could not only be so fun, but delicious too!

Friends are important, but families are just as equally important! As a class we discussed how each one of our families is different. It was so nice to hear the children speak about their family and what they think is so special about them. Whether it was family graphing or last name memory game, we discovered a fun new way to learn more about one another's families! Our classroom "Family Board" is filling up quite nicely! If you haven't had the chance to bring in a family photo, please do so! We also encourage bringing in more than one picture! We cannot wait to see how the "Family Board" grows throughout the school year!

As the month of November progressed, our Branchers participated in many fun, hands on and creative and independent art projects. Whether it was colorful finger printing for 'friendship fingerprints', using plastic forks as paintbrushes to create 'thankful fork turkeys', tracing and lacing to cutting and gluing, we stayed quite busy at the art table! The art didn't stop there...we are in the process of creating "Family Portraits" and what a better time than now to display and share them! Keep an eye out for them, as they will be displayed for you to discuss and enjoy! Each Brancher is showing more attention to detail, and it shows on these portraits!



Before enjoying a few days off for Thanksgiving, pumpkin pie was a must and because we enjoy baking and making food in our classroom, we decided making our very own pumpkin pie was non our list of things to do! Thanksgiving wouldn't be the same without pumpkin pie! With just a few simple ingredients, we were able to create a tasty masterpiece! We put our taste buds and opinions to the test as we graphed out our 'likes' and 'dislikes' to an all-time favorite Thanksgiving treat!



With December fresh in the air, please remember that a lot of our gross motor development is outside play. Whether snow, sleet or rain, we are busy, busy, busy moving and playing outdoors. Proper clothing is encouraged. Below are a few items that might be a great idea to bring in:

- Snowsuit/Snow Pants
- Gloves
- Beanie/Hat
- Snow Boots

December will be filled with the sights, sounds, scents and science of the season and all it brings!

Heather & McKenzie



