



Reminders...

... don't forget to visit the Dimension's preschool art show at the Lied Center (through the end of the week) 12th & R Streets. The show is on the third floor and it is suggested that you call ahead (472-4700) to make sure that floor is accessible.

... POGO Cards are available in the office (expiration date is December 2008). If you are searching for that perfect gift the POGO Card offers money-saving options for anyone.

... please label all of your children's outerware (mittens, hats, coats, snowpants, etc.). Thank you for dressing your children appropriately for the weather – we want to make sure everyone's clothes go back home with them.

... **school will be closed December 20–January 2** for our Winter Break. Remember, this is longer than LPS's Break.

... We will **NOT** follow Lincoln Public School's Calendar, but most vacation days and **ALL EMERGENCY weather closings of LPS** announced on the radio **will be observed by our program. If LPS is not** in session we will follow the Catholic School weather closing announcements.

Mark your calendars

Febr. 1... Annual Family Night including a Spaghetti Feed and Basket Auction. We'll have fun activities for the entire family. Bring the whole gang, including your extended family and neighbors!

Correction

The article by Barbie Jensen in the last issue omitted the photographer's name in the following paragraph. It is reprinted as it should read:

Following our prairie visit, the children were introduced to the work of two Nebraska artists – "Light in Late August" (a landscape of the Platte Valley), an oil on canvas painting by Keith Jacobshagen, and a color photograph of a rural landscape on Highway 6 of hay bales **by photographer Dana Miller.**

Family Night, a chance to practice being a gracious giver

By Michelle Zimmer
Parent & Programs Director

In our last newsletter, I talked about teaching our children to be gracious givers and creating opportunities throughout the year to help them learn this life-long and wonderfully fulfilling skill. An opportunity to practice this skill is coming up – our annual Family Night, Friday, February 1. This popular fundraiser includes a spaghetti supper, activities for children and a silent basket auction.



Here's how it works

Teachers choose a basket theme and suggest items to include in the basket. When we return from our holiday break you'll find sacks for each theme in the hallway. Attached to this newsletter is a letter with the

theme your child's teacher has chosen and a suggested list of items for that basket. If you would like to donate any of the items on the list, bring them back to school and put them in the sack. Collected items will be placed in a basket (or two or three or more baskets, depending upon donations!) and wrapped in cellophane so that the contents are visible and ready for bidding during the Silent Auction.

Some things to remember

When I go shopping with Caden for a gift or donation, we talk a lot about why we are buying the gift, who it is for, or what they might like. (Actually, he is better at coming up with ideas for gifts than I am.) One thing that I always stress before we get to the store is that we are NOT getting anything for him during that shopping trip.

Preparation is always key in a giving situation. Help prepare your child for the fact that they will be giving that gift away. You can do this by talking about how much fun it will be to buy the gift for the basket. Help your child carry the gift to school and put it

in the sack. Bring the whole family to Family Night to see what everyone else has brought to add to the gift!

This can also be a good time to talk about any feelings of disappointment that might come about if you don't have the winning bid on a basket that they are counting on. Remember, if your focus is on the giving, it makes the getting less important.



This song has a great message about giving. The children have been learning this song and if you hear them humming or singing the words, maybe you could learn it, too!

Simple Gifts

*It's a gift to be simple
It's a gift to be free
It's a gift to come down where we are to be
And when we find ourselves in a place just right
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we will not be ashamed
To turn and to turn will be our delight
For by turning and turning we'll come round right.*

Conference followup

By Sue Erdkamp
Operations Director

It was nice to see all the parents who were able to make it to Parent-Teacher Conferences. It is such a wonderful time to get to know each other better and to learn more about the children as parents and teachers share observations. Thanks to those who braved the snow to attend and to those who rescheduled because they were unable to make it.

We look forward to receiving your Parent Survey as we truly value your input. If you have not already turned it in, please do so as soon as possible. As we approach the spring sessions, we welcome your feedback, questions and suggestions.

Together, let us continue to strive for excellence for our children!



A gift of card making

Christopher James (Anika's dad) from Porridge Papers Inc. (1422 South Street), visited the Preschool Classrooms last week. He brought one of his small letterpresses to school along with homemade paper cards and two different designs, a snowman and a Christmas tree, for the children to imprint. They had fun making holiday cards for their families.

Contributed by
Kris Van Laningham, Teacher

Children learn to build literacy skills

By Holly Murdoch, Teacher

Reading quality literature together

During Small Group time our class listened to the story, *Down The Road* by Alice Schertle.

Afterwards, the 4- and 5-year-old children were invited to think about what they liked and what was important about the story. They illustrated those elements by creating pictures and approximations of written words.

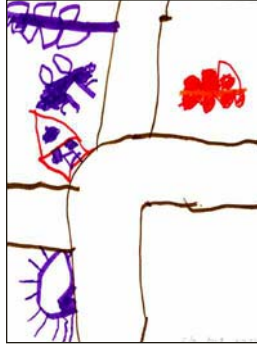
Making complex thought visible through writing and drawing

The children's drawings and writing clearly show a high level of active listening, plus visual

and auditory processing. Their representations show their ability to comprehend the complex language of the story. In order to make their drawings the children had to translate stored visual images and conceptual content into their own visual images. Map-like elements of the drawings show children processing events of the story through time and space.

Some children copied vocabulary words from a model written

on the board. When copying words from a model, children are learning to encode spoken word into the abstract symbols made of straight and curved lines. Drawing and early printing of letters are very closely related in terms of children's development of early literacy skills.



Cole D. – age 5



Nolan H. – age 4



Jagger A. – age 4



Artwork musically inspired by Hopi song

While Sawyer F., age 5, was working at the easel he began singing "The Earth is my Mother" (a song popular in the Preschool classrooms and referred to in early newsletters). While Sawyer was singing the song, he kept the beat with a dot maker. More friends soon gathered to help with the project.

contributed by Kris Van Laningham

The Earth Is Our Mother

The Earth is our mother, we must take care of her

The Earth is our mother, we must take care of her.

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan,

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan.

The Sky is our father, we must take care of him

The Sky is our father, we must take care of him

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan,

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan.

The Rivers are our sisters, we must take care of them

The Rivers are our sisters, we must take care of them.

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan,

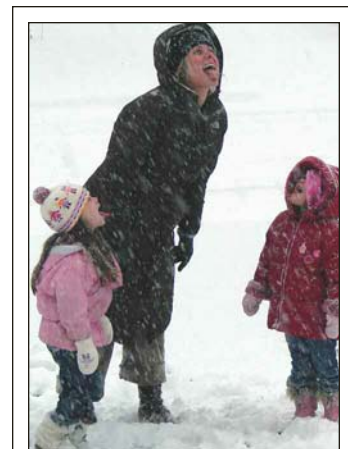
Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan.

The Trees are our brothers, we must take care of them

The Trees are our brothers, we must take care of them.

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan,

Hey yana, ho yana, hey yan yan.



Ms. Ragland and her friends were captured catching snowflakes early in the morning last week (the snow brings out the child in all of us)!

Infant Room notes

Winter celebrations have been our focus in the Infant Room. It's fun to see snow outside through our windows.

We're working on our secret projects and have also been listening to the sounds of the season through various styles of music. Ringing bells to the music in music time has been a big hit with the infants.

Three of the children are transitioning over to the Toddler A room. They are getting to know the teachers there and making new friends! And we will be welcoming new friends into our room!

contributed by Denise Topil



Sign up for the Lincoln Safari!

By Chris Kiewra
Family Programs Director

The Lincoln Safari is a free opportunity for families and groups to "get off the couch" to explore and discover the natural environments in the Lincoln community. Dimensions and the Nature Explore™ Family Club are excited to help sponsor this great adventure!

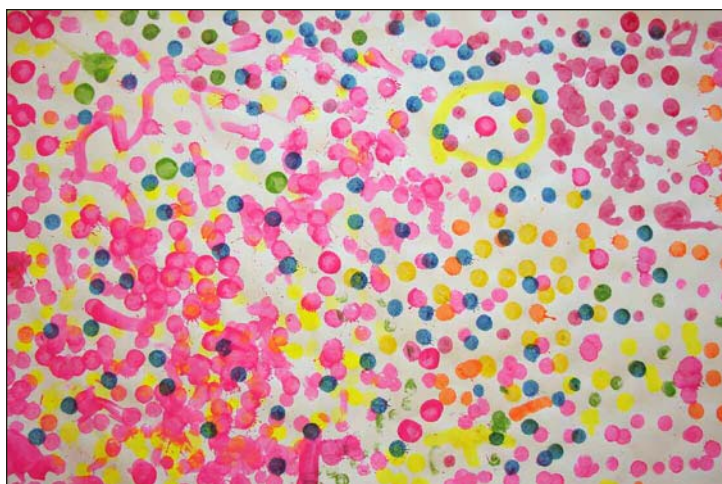
Register at any Lincoln City Library, at one of Dimensions' Nature Explore Family Club meetings, by going online at LincolnSafari.com, or at Pioneers Park Nature Center. Once you receive your official registration number go to any of the libraries, Pioneers Park or the Zoo to pick up a Safari satchel filled with a map, a safari guidebook, a package of crayons, and a pencil.

There are 35 Safari sites – some accessible from the hiker biker trails and some right on our city streets. Each site is identified by a different symbol on the map and in the Guidebook.

Safari sites are divided according to the seasons and you are encouraged to visit each site in its specified season. All of the posts are outside (explore the area around the posts, too). Your challenge is to visit all 35 sites and collect rubbings of each of the embossed plaques in the Guidebook. Achieve this goal and you will be entered into a Grand Prize drawing!

Each of the 35 sites will have a post with a plaque on top for you to make a rubbing in your Guidebook. Some sites will offer a surprise souvenir (Dimensions is providing one!). There will also be special events during the year where you may use the calling cards included in your satchel to register for special prize drawings.

Newsletter photos by Holly Murdoch, Beth Pauley, and Kris Van Laningham



Nature Explore™ Classrooms are part of a national initiative involving the partnership of Dimensions and the Arbor Day Foundation.

Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line ...
www.dimensionsfoundation.org or www.firstplymouth.org