



**UPCOMING EVENTS...**

**Please Note...**

☛ Parents, please remember to remove all items from your child's cubbie when picking up your child. This is our main way of relaying information (newsletters, notes from teachers, etc.) to you.

**February 14...** Nature Explore Families' Club at Pioneers Park, 10:30AM-Noon (see attached flyer)

**February 16...** We will be closed.

**March 5...** Open House

**Coffee and Conversation**

For anyone raising young children. Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 9:15-10:15AM in Courtyard Lounge (may last longer when we have a speaker). Call the office at 476-8304 for more information.

**Febr. 18...** Discipline Strategies; loving discipline for children.

**March 4...** Revitalizing

**March 18...** Childhood Obesity, speaker Carla Lester

**April 1...** Mother Identity

**April 15...** Centered Parenting

**May 6...** Refreshing

**May 20...** Party

**Reminders/Requests...**

☛ ACH automatic withdrawal to pay tuition is available anytime during the year. Call the office at 476-8304 for details.

☛ POGO cards can still be purchased for \$20 (exp. 12/31/10) and include tons of savings for the whole family!

**ALL EMERGENCY weather closings of LPS announced on the radio and TV will be observed by our program. If LPS is not in session we will follow the Catholic School weather closing announcements.**

**Bookshelf**

- Be My Valentine* by M.J. Carr
- Best Friends* by Miriam Cohen
- Footprints in the Snow* by Cynthia Benjamin
- It's Groundhog Day* by Steven Kroll
- Find a Face* by Francois & Jean Robert
- Friends* by Helme Heime
- Friends in the Park* by Rochelle Burnett
- Friends to the End for Kids* by Bradley Trevor Greive
- My Friend Bear* by Jez Alborough
- Hugs* by Alice McLerran
- Penny & Pup* by Linda Jennings
- The Secret Valentine* by Johanna Maron
- That's What a Friend Is* by P.K. Halliman
- Together* by George Ella Lyon
- Valentine's Day* by Anne Rockwell
- You Are My I Love You* by Maryann K. Cusimano
- We Are Best Friends* by Aliko
- When It Starts To Snow* by Phyllis Gershatov

**Husker wrestler Sanders scores big as volunteer at Dimensions**

by Keith Zimmer, UNL Associate Athletic Director for Life Skills & Dimensions parent volunteer  
photos by Suzan Haley, teacher

University of Nebraska senior wrestler Rob Sanders has scored many victories in his stellar wrestling career. A regular starter in Coach Mark Manning's lineup at 149 pounds, Sanders was 51-0 during his senior year of high school in Blanding, Utah and posted a career mark of 169-9 winning two state championships under the guidance of Head Coach and father, Bob Sanders.

An NCAA qualifier in 2006, perhaps Sanders' greatest victory comes off the mat when he serves as a weekly volunteer at Dimensions Early Education Programs. Adored by pre-school children, Sanders shows his versatility by serving snacks, reading books, building blocks, dressing-up, playing on the playground and assisting teachers with necessary tasks. On occasion, Sanders has been known to demonstrate some wrestling techniques with the children



emphasizing the importance of safety and sportsmanship. Parent volunteers, such as myself, have zero chance of

Rob demonstrates his movement skills.



It's all about style in the classroom!

garnering the attention of the children in the presence of Rob as he has achieved legendary, celebrity-like status among the children who often chant "Rob, Rob, Rob, Rob" ... in anticipation of his appearance and are frequently seen exchanging high fives, fist bumps and smiles.

Considering the demands of a Division I collegiate athlete, it is quite amazing and impressive that Rob has committed to volunteering every Thursday for several hours the entire 2008-2009 academic year. Early morning workouts, conditioning, classes, study demands, leadership groups, practice, travel and competition don't leave much time to be a hero to four and five year olds. "I look forward to every Thursday and the chance to make the kids smile. I respect so much the important work that the teachers do with children and I'm excited to contribute in some small way," explained the humble



Rob serves snacks to children at Dimensions.

Sanders. Rob is a member of Nebraska's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and one of the most involved student-athlete leaders in the entire Husker program. He is the catalyst for team community involvement initiating several team-wide community projects to instill the importance of service and volunteerism with his peers.

Sanders has been a great ambassador for Nebraska Athletics. In addition to his success on the mat and in the community, he has excelled in the classroom. Majoring in Nutritional Science and Dietetics, Sanders has been named to the Academic All Big 12 team in both 2007 and 2008. Recently engaged to Erin Haley, he will graduate this coming May. Like most of his Husker peers, Sanders will miss the camaraderie with his teammates but has countless special memories to enjoy. Similarly, the pre-school children of Dimensions will sense a void when "Thursdays with Rob" come to an end, however; they will never forget how Husker Rob stole their hearts and scored a major victory in the game of life!

**Come support Rob on Husker Wrestling Senior Day, Sunday, Febr. 22nd, 2PM, at the NU Coliseum.**

**Repetitive building can be a way to enhance visual memories**

by Kristi Reitz, teacher and mom

One Thursday afternoon, after I had finished with our weekly staff meeting, I stopped to pick up my five year old son, Elliott, from his late afternoon group with Natalie Ragland. I was thrilled to see that Ms. Ragland had used tape to divide the floor into 'pie-shaped' segments and was allowing children to build with blocks, bricks, and small manipulatives.

The children were building "on their own" but were encouraged to try to link their arrangements together. I was fortunate enough to have the time to sit and observe my son and his classmates as they worked. I watched as Elliott built a 'garage' with small blocks and bricks.

Being his mom, I knew that this was not the first garage he has built. We often have block-constructed garages or sheds on our floor at home for cars, trucks, semis, or tractors. Being a

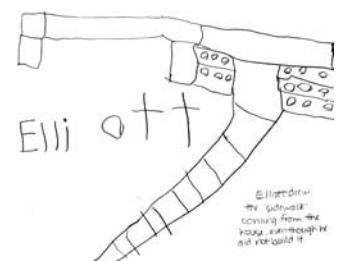
teacher and researcher, I knew the significance of seeing him recreate similar structures time and time again, this helping to enhance his visual memory.

As Elliott seemed to finish his building and backed a truck into his garage, I began to create a visual note of his structure. He glanced at my drawing occasionally. I asked him if he would like to sketch his garage and he did, looking only at his structure and not



Rory R. with Elliott R. and the 'garage' Elliott built using small blocks and bricks. photo Beth Pauley

at my sketch. I felt so fortunate to have this opportunity to observe my son at work and play.



Above: Elliott's sketch of his garage. Below: the visual note done by Mrs. Reitz.



# Toddler B's winter explorations foundation for early learning

text & photos by Kristine Luebbe

It's amazing how something so simple as snow can provide so many opportunities for learning. After reading several winter books the children shared their knowledge about snow. "When it snows, water turns to ice," George D. explained. Lucy C. told us the grass was "under the snow." Nathaniel V. said, "When the sun is out, it melts the snow." Drew L. recognized that the marks in the snow in the picture were "tracks!" This knowledge is the foundation of science for young minds. With these



Hank H. stomps like a bear.



Hank H., Jake B., Lucy C., and Mira H. walk in the snow.

ideas, children are beginning the understanding of seasons.

We next took our learning outside where our close observation of nature uncovered animals tracks in the snow. Ben E. thought that some of the tracks were

"from a bear." Hudson W. thought that one track looked like a worm track. After pointing it out to his friends, Carson T. slid his feet through the snow to make his own "worm tracks." These experiences provided development for the children in language and social skills through conversing and sharing their own ideas with others.

Our outdoor exploration of snow and tracks also helped develop our body awareness skills. Walking in snow is very different from walking on a sidewalk, especially for a two- or three-year-old dressed in many layers of clothes. This experience encourages muscle development and introduces the new challenge of navigating their bodies through space.

Miley G. added another challenge by walking backwards through the snow. This allowed her to see her tracks as she was making them and at the same time experiencing the sensation of maintaining her balance. While in the snow, Hank H. stomped like the bear does in one of the books we have been reading. This allows for not only a kinesthetic experience but also a way to link that experience to literacy. Lucy C. also connected her experience of making footprints outside in the snow to literature. "Just like in our book!" she announced as she pointed at her tracks in the snow.

As simple as these activities may seem to an adult, they are the everyday moments that provide so

much learning in early education, providing the foundation of learning for the rest of each child's life.



Ben E. and George D. look at tracks in the snow.

## Nature Explore Families' Club update

by Chris Kiewra, Families Program coordinator

We had a wonderful time exploring our outdoor classroom after dark at our last Families' Club event. We also enjoyed pizza, the greenhouse, and building animal homes and forts in the North Preschool room. It can be good to enjoy nature both indoors and out, especially on cold winter evenings! It was our first time trying an evening event and it was great to have such good attendance and to see so many new faces of family members that haven't been able to attend before! Thank you also to all of the teachers who came to help out and to enjoy time together.

Our next Nature Explore Families' Club event will be Saturday, Febr. 14 at Pioneers Park Nature Center from 10:30-noon. Let's meet just outside the south building to get started. It is the Backyard Bird Count so the Nature Center has some special activities organized that we can join in with and you will have a variety of

## Valentine's Day plans

Your child is invited to bring valentines for friends on Valentine's Day (we're celebrating Feb. 12th & 13th)! Here are numbers to help you to determine amounts if you choose to send valentines.

- Preschool: 22 + 2T (teachers)
- Toddler A (everyone): 17 + 2T OR (your child's class only) 12 + 2T
- Toddler B (everyone): 18 + 2T OR (your child's class only) 12 + 2T

Generosity and caring about the feelings of others doesn't always come naturally. Many children learn these traits over time through play and holiday traditions, which is why Valentine's Day is so great. With all the greeting cards and classroom activities, it's easy to teach your child the value of sharing, giving and compassion.

things to choose from. Our plan this time will be to look for not only birds but signs of other animals living or traveling through the area. *The Mitten* by Jan Brett, *Nuts to You* by Lois Ehlert, *Animal Houses* by Aileen Fisher, and *Stranger in the Woods* by Carl R. Sams II are all good books to read to get your family excited about animals in their natural habitats. If you have binoculars you may want to bring them to get up close views of birds and nests overhead.

Club activities are free, the whole family is welcome and you can come whenever your schedule permits. Contact me with questions or to RSVP at [chrisk@dimensionsfoundation.org](mailto:chrisk@dimensionsfoundation.org). Hope to see you all there!

February 14... Pioneers Park Nature Center 10:30AM-Noon

March 14... Colonel Dinsmore Park 10:30AM-Noon

April 3... Fishing at Holmes Lake 6-7:30PM

May 2... Tree Adventure at Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City 10:30AM-Noon

June 27... Location TBA, 10:30-Noon

July 25... Location TBA, 10:30-Noon

## Plants on Nature Explore Classroom engage preschool children through all seasons

by Kris Van Laningham

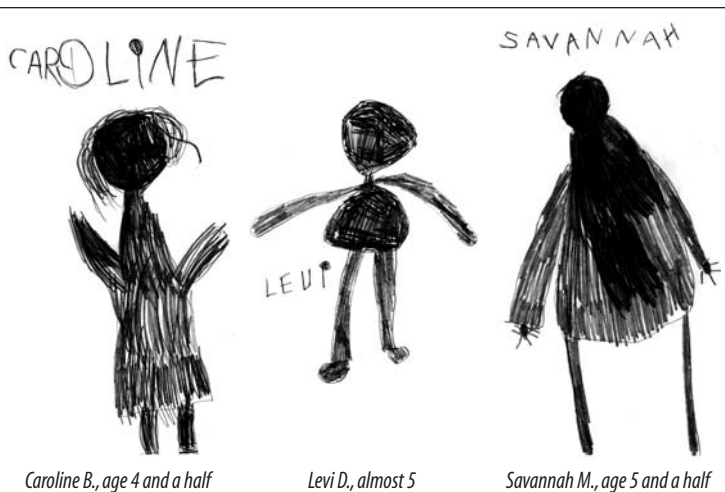
One day on the Nature Explore Classroom Regan L. brought a stick with a bit of blossom left on it. She asked, "Is this broccoli?" I said, "No, but

let's go find the broccoli in the garden and see what it looks like." During the late summer and fall we regularly cut broccoli out of our garden and tasted it. During the winter, Poppy M. even tried it after it had frozen. (It wasn't her favorite taste.)

When we found the broccoli's location in the garden we compared the stick to the broccoli plant. Regan said the color was different (brown vs. tan) and the stick was hard and broccoli was soft. She experienced a lot of learning while outside... understanding seasonal changes, math classification, close observation, developing questioning skills, experiencing nature's textures, sharing knowledge and sharing conversation with a teacher... all from finding a stick on the Nature Explore Classroom.



Regan L. and Mrs. Van Laningham compare plants in the garden. photo Beth Pauley



Caroline B., age 4 and a half

Levi D., almost 5

Savannah M., age 5 and a half

## Winter shadows outside intrigue children

by Barbie Jensen, teacher

Just before the weather turned wintry cold again, our class went outside for a walk. We decided we wanted to look for the signs of winter. The children first remarked about the bright blue sky and that the sun was shining. We noticed the bare trees without their leaves and the trees called Evergreens that keep their needles.

As we headed west on the south side of the building, Levi called out, "Hey,

there's my shadow!" How exciting it was to watch all of the children find their own shadows. They jumped, leaped, skipped and ran while their shadows followed.

It turned out to be the perfect way to celebrate Groundhog Day! February 2, Punxsutawney Phil popped out of his hole at Gobbler's Knob in Pennsylvania and saw his shadow so keep your hats, coats, boots, and mittens handy; there will be six more weeks of winter as the story goes.

Nature Explore™ Classrooms are part of a national initiative that we are working with in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation.

Dimensions First-Plymouth Early Education Programs is a non-profit 501(c)3.

Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line... [www.dimensionsfoundation.org](http://www.dimensionsfoundation.org)