



# Classroom I Newsletter

December 2010

Everyday in Classroom I is a day filled with children moving about the environment making independent work choices while fulfilling their love for learning. It is gratifying to watch them blossom as they gain confidence in their own abilities. We encourage you to come and observe the wonderment of children doing what they love to do the most.....learn!

## The Latest

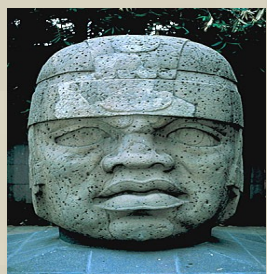


At the end of October, Mrs. Spencer did a variety of lessons which included some seasonal work choices for the children – parts of a pumpkin, life cycle of a pumpkin, and pumpkin scrubbing. In addition, we discussed the

Mexican cultural celebration, Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead. Dia de los Muertos is a time for families in Mexico to gather and honor their friends and loved ones who have died. Though it sounds like a sad occasion, it's actually a happy holiday full of festivities – food, flowers, and parades, as well as a private altar placed at the deceased family member's grave. The streets are lined with papel picado, which is the Mexican folk art of cutting tissue paper into elaborate designs. The children had a chance to cut their own squares of tissue paper, and our classroom looked very festive with strings of papel picado hanging in our kitchen windows!

The class was also shown some beautifully decorated skulls which are an important part of Day of the Dead. We discussed how the skulls are Mexican folk art and are not meant to be scary like the skull decorations seen in our country around Halloween. The children had an opportunity to decorate a skull using vibrant colors, much like the festive Mexican art we discussed.

Lastly, the class was shown a color mixing work choice. Starting out with colored water in the primary colors (red, yellow, blue), the child pours the water into the designated slots of a round painter's palette. Then, using a medicine dropper, the colors are mixed together in adjacent slots to make the secondary colors (purple, orange, green). When finished, the color wheel is revealed. This is a popular work choice! The children love mixing the colors and, we love that using the medicine dropper helps to increase fine motor skills each and every time a child chooses this work!



Leading up to Thanksgiving, Mrs. Kessinger spoke about Native Americans. The Olmecs, Aztecs, and the Tiwanaku were very different tribes, but played a huge role in who we are as Americans today. The Olmecs left us many beautiful ruins but they are most remembered for their Colossal Heads. In Mrs. Kessinger's lesson she scaled the heads down and showed the children how to make their own version with clay. The Aztecs are also remembered for many things, including their artwork. To represent the Aztecs, Mrs. Kessinger showed the children how to make a mask that looked like an eagle. The Aztecs believed that if they wore a mask that looked like an animal they would gain the animal's most powerful strength. Many masks represented eagles because the Aztecs wanted "Eagle Eyes" for hunting. Lastly, Mrs. Kessinger spoke about the wonderful people of the Tiwanaku tribe. Even though they lived in South America where Bolivia is located they still had an impact on how we farm today. The Tiwanaku had the challenge of farming in the mountains. They discovered that if they let water flow between flat, raised crop beds it would insulate the crops during a freeze and water the plants when needed. This made the farming season last much longer throughout the year.

The second week of Mrs. Kessinger's Native American lessons were dedicated to the Native Americans that celebrated with the Pilgrims on the first Thanksgiving. As a class we told a story of the first Thanksgiving and learned about a very special Native American named Squanto. Squanto helped the pilgrims learn about the animals and plants that are indigenous to America. We talked about what it means to be thankful. The children shared with each other what they are most thankful for this Thanksgiving. We discussed our favorite Thanksgiving Day foods. Many children said that their favorite food was pie so Mrs. Kessinger made an apple-pie-making choice for her final lesson!

The United Kingdom is a current topic in our classroom. Mrs. Dugan, our classroom intern, is teaching the children about her birth country and where she lived until she ventured to Kentucky to attend the University of Kentucky.



The children were introduced to the subject by learning five important facts about the United Kingdom. 1. The United Kingdom is an island nation in North West Europe. 2. It consists of four countries which are England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. 3. The island of the U.K. is surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean, the Irish Sea, the English Channel and the North Sea. 4. The Queen of England is the Head of State. 5. The flag of the United Kingdom is red, white and blue and is called the Union Jack. After reviewing the facts about the United Kingdom, Mrs. Dugan presented a lesson with an enlarged outline of the U.K. explaining that many parts of the U.K are mountainous. As a work choice, the children were given the opportunity to use play dough to fill in the outline of the United Kingdom creating the mountain ranges of this great country.

This past week, Mrs. Young has done some community building lessons with an emphasis on “friendships”. During large group, we brainstormed on the qualities it takes to be a good friend. We agreed that in order to “have good friends” you must “be a good friend”. The children had the opportunity to make “friendship soup” by adding the ingredients that make a good friend...such as caring for someone, being helpful, sharing and giving away smiles! Mrs. Young took a photo of each of the children smiling their most beautiful smile. Each photo was duplicated and only the “smile” was cut out of the duplicate. The children love laying out all 25 photos trying to match the sparkly smile with its rightful owner!



For the weeks leading up to the holidays, Mrs. Young is going to discuss holiday traditions from around the globe. We will learn about children from every continent and how they and their families celebrate the holidays. We will be learning about the traditions of Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Many crafts will be available for the children. We hope to give an understanding and appreciation for the many ways in which people of different cultures celebrate the holidays.

## Reminders and Requests

Please return any clothing that belongs to our classroom. We are in great need of boys pants and underwear. We would appreciate any donations.

Many of the little girls love wearing glitter shoes to school. Although they are very cute, the glitter is found all over the classroom. Glitter can be very damaging if it gets into a child's eye. If possible, please save glitter shoes for home.

Angel tree gifts are due by the 10th of December. Please remember to include the tag along with the unwrapped gifts.

# Just for Fun

Mrs. Young recently made homemade play dough and brought it to school to share with the children. Many children have asked for the recipe to be sent home. It is simple and lasts much longer than the store bought brand.

2 cups flour

1 cup salt

3 TBL.Oil

4 tsp. Cream of Tarter

2 cups water

Food coloring of choice

Cook over medium heat-knead with flour.

# Open House

On Friday December 17th, our classroom will be hosting an Open House for our families. This is a time for you to accompany your child to school and share in some holiday festivities. Please stop in anytime between 8:30-10:30. Please mark your calendars and join us for some holiday cheer. The Open House is in lieu of a typical half day.

# Dates to Remember

December 17th- Winter break begins

January 3rd- Classes resume

January 14th- Scheduled conference day for 3rd year. After the break, Mrs. Young will be contacting parents of third year students to arrange a time to conference.

January 17th- No school- MLK Day

# Thanks To You

To the Okpebholo and the Swan families for the donation of clothes.

To Mrs. Snider for her wonderful impromptu lessons with the 3rd year children!

To the Swan family for sending in bagels and goodies to the teachers!

We wish all of our families a wonderful holiday! May your homes be filled with laughter and excitement as you enjoy time together!

Joan, Christie, Diane and Bermie

“As soon as children find something that interests them they lose their instability and learn to concentrate.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

