

November 2015

A Message From Pat

Greetings Letterman Families!

Our school year is well under way and the teachers and children have adjusted quite well. The teachers have been getting to know the children in their classrooms in order to be able to meet the differing needs of this year's class. Each group brings a different set of strengths and areas of growth and the teachers have been observing so that they can make sure their program is individualized. They strive to make the program the best it can be for this group of children!

Our Pillar Decorating Contest is gaining momentum! One of the criteria in this contest is PARENT PARTICIPATION! (The points are doubled in this category...) That is why you may have been getting quite a few e-mails from the teachers asking for help. Judging for the contest will be on Nov 19th and the prize is a pizza party for the winning class in each wing. However – don't be fooled – the bragging rights are really what's at stake here! Give us a hand if you can – and thank you in advance for taking time out of your busy schedule. We know everyone is busy this time of year!

Have a stellar month – we all have much to be thankful for!

Important Dates

Tues, Nov 3rd – Election Day – Go Vote!

Wed, Nov 11th – Veteran's Day

Nov 17th – 19th – International Pot Luck Events

Nov 19th – Pillar Judging

Thur, Nov 26th – Thanksgiving – Center Closed

Friday, Nov 27th – Center Closed

International Pot Lucks!

The Parent Partnership Group rep from your classroom will be contacting you soon to introduce themselves AND to share the details of the International Pot Luck event for your child's classroom. The events will be held between Nov 17th and Nov 19th. Stay tuned for more details!

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Classroom Highlights



Honeybees

The Honeybees have been practicing self help skills this month. Macarleigh, Lou, Annalise, Elliott, and Harris mastered holding their own bottles. Violet and Charlotte started eating solids at school during lunch time. Alice is practicing to move to her side in order to master rolling over in the future. Jack is pulling himself up using large toys and furniture as support. Everett is learning how to communicate with his teachers when he is hungry or tired. The Honeybees have also learned about polar bears. In order to become polar bears for the Imagination Parade, we learned about them first. We started with looking at polar bear toys such as a plastic toy polar bear and a stuffed polar bear. We also read “Little Polar Bear” by Hans be Beer with all of our friends. The Honeybees also helped paint snowflakes that decorated the cribs for the Imagination Parade. Lou, Macarleigh, Charlotte, Violet, Harris, Jack, and Annalise used their hands to paint, while Everett and Alice used their feet to finish their painting. Here’s to wonderful November!

Butterflies

This month we’ve had a lot of fun learning about the fall season. We read a book to our babies called The Little Yellow Leaf which explained what happens to the trees and weather during Fall. The babies loved the book as they looked at the pictures and studied the book individually. After reading and getting better ideas of what leaves looked like, our babies took some time to make leaves of their own. They made some maple leaves using the different colors we see during the Fall, just like in the book we read. We even made some pumpkins to make things a bit more festive. It also gave the teachers a reason to bring out the foam paint, which the babies enjoyed! After reading and painting Fall themed art projects, we introduced the babies to different colors of leaves that we saw on the trees around LDAC. Most of the trees had a lot of green leaves but there were a few trees that were definitely changing color. We collected lots of leaves on our many walks and did some sensory activities with them; the babies loved exploring them using all five of their senses. Some of the leaves were smooth and quiet while others were old, dry, and crunchy. We are excited to continue learning and exploring the upcoming Winter season!

Penguins

Happy November everyone! October was a surprising month; our friends wanted to do everything with paint this month. The Penguins were drawn mostly to LANGUAGE WORKS and SCIENCE ROCKS activities this month. We explored with applesauce ice cubes, blocks of ice with toys frozen inside, ice cubes with watermelon frozen inside and a thin layer of paint on paper for the toddlers to draw shapes and make scribbles. On many of our walks outside of the center, we saw and learned about worms and squirrels. This month the Penguins would have sat and listened to books all day if they could. Friends did not want to leave circle time to come to lunch because they were so engaged with all the books we got from the library this month. Some favorites were Where’s Spot?, Who’s Behind the Tree, and Grandpa and Me. These books all consist of flaps to lift that reveal surprises. Many of our friends were able to recall what was under the flaps even before we revealed the surprise. We made a large copy of Spot the dog and we have been hiding it all around the classroom. When friends come in the room they are always trying to find where Spot is. We did do a lot of painting this month, exploring with roller brushes. They said, “Wow” when they saw the patterns they had made. We want to thank our Penguin parents for all of their help with the Imagination Parade costumes. We couldn’t have done it without you! Thank you for the snacks and for attending the parade and Fun Fest.

Monkeys

For the month of October, the Monkey Room continued to follow the children’s interest in transportation! The children were engaged in a number of transportation related projects. At Curriculum Night, we were able to implement a very engaging SCIENCE ROCKS activity—cars frozen in big blocks of colored ice! We talked about how the ice was “cold”, the different colors we saw, what we noticed happening as we touched and warmed the ice with our hands. For MATH COUNTS, we experimented with different sizes and lengths of cardboard tubes. We taped these on various shelves around the classroom and the children took turns driving cars down the tubes. We were able to see which cars and trucks fit inside which tubes and how they went fast or slow depending on how high up the tube was placed. Throughout the month, we read a number of transportation books from the library. Some of the children’s favorites included Boats Go..., The Little School Bus, and And the Cars Go. The Monkeys enjoyed making different boat, truck, and car noises and experimenting with sounds (Brrmmmm, grakakaka, vroom, BOOM, chug chug). Our LANGUAGE WORKS activity involved painting a big yellow bus and gluing the bus parts—wipers, wheels, windows, and PEOPLE! We were able to take afternoon buggy rides to watch the cars, buses, bikes, and motorcycles driving by. The children waved and yelled excitedly as different vehicles passed by. We have been noticing an increasing interest in animals lately and are looking forward to creating some fun learning experiences with the children that build off of this interest!

Classroom Highlights



Teddy Bears

Hello Teddy Bear Families! We worked all month painting our Imagination Day costumes. Thank you to all of our parents for bringing in paper bags and t-shirts and snacks on the day of our parade! The Teddy Bears looked great! We had a special guest for music and movement this month, Courtney Campbell is an award winning singer and master storyteller—she travels around the world giving concerts for children and parents. The Teddy Bears had a lot of fun and listened attentively. We also had curriculum night and loved having parents come and visit and see what activities the children do each day. It was also a great opportunity to explain each activities purpose as it relates to each child's development. We hope that everyone was able to see how much children learn through play!

Pumpkins were the main focus this month. We used them for math counts, using them to talk about opposites, size, weight, and colors. We also used them for Art Smart. We cut them in half and used them to make pumpkin prints. Thank you parents for donating these pumpkins! We had a fun-filled month! The next big event that is coming up is our Pillar Decorating Contest. We are excited to see all the fun and unique designs our families come up with! Here's to an exciting November!

Turtles

The month of October has been filled with lots of creepy crawlers. We have continued our insect project this month and have learned lots of exciting new things. We explored insects that live in the dirt with black moon dough, how worms live closely together with spaghetti worms, and how spiders create their webs with white string. The Turtles had a lot of fun creating a giant spider web in the dramatic play center where they had a chance to pretend to be the spider themselves. They crawled and climbed through the web and some of them even were pretending to catch flies and eat them! In the art center, friends helped cut out lightning bugs and got to "catch" them in jars. After gluing all of their "caught" lightning bugs in their jars, friends got to count how many they had. Another favorite activity that the Turtles got to do was make butterfly and dragonfly wings. They used sparkles, contact paper, and string to make beautiful wings with the help from the teachers. Our final exciting activity this month was having a special insect guest come in and tell us all about some very interesting insects. She even brought in a few of them to explore including a grasshopper, an African millipede, and a Madagascar hissing cockroach! Each child had a chance to touch and even hold the insects.

Dolphins

It has been an exciting month in the Dolphin Room. We began our storytelling project this month with a special reading by Pat! She came in dressed in her storytelling hat and read the Dolphins both *The Giving Tree* and *Tikki Tikki Tembo*. These were both familiar stories to the Dolphins and they were so excited to hear them from our special guest! The project has also started to bring out the inner storytellers in each of the children. They love to tell each other stories at lunch time and will often ask teachers to tell stories throughout the day. With the love of storytelling, has come a love and interest in letters and words. The teachers introduced the game Word Man to the children where they are asked to guess letters to complete a larger word. The Dolphins have also shown a great interest in board games and we have loved introducing different games that help strengthen their turn taking skills.

We ended the month with our annual Imagination Parade and Family Fun Fest. The Dolphins (and teachers) had a great time showing off their Dolphin costumes and then had fun participating in some Halloween themed activities. Thank you to all of the parents for helping and for contributing to make this Imagination Parade such a success; we couldn't do it without you! Here is to an excellent November!

School Readiness Myths

It is not unusual to hear school readiness “myths” in the broader culture. These typically are not based on sound educational theory. Here are a few common school readiness myths and the accompanying correct information:

- **Myth #1:** Learning the ABCs/alphabet is crucial to school readiness. **The Truth:** Learning the ABCs/alphabet is a memorization skill. While it is important, and will help children understand the idea of alphabetical order in the future, learning to recognize and name letters and identify their sounds is even more important.
- **Myth #2:** Children need to know how to count to 50 before going to first grade/primary school. **The Truth:** Similar to learning the ABCs/alphabet, counting to 10, 50, or 100 is a rote memorization skill. Again, while it helps children understand that there is an order to numbers, far more important is understanding the idea of 1-to-1 correspondence (that each number you count has a corresponding object, person, year, etc. to go with it) and understanding quantity (i.e., that “three” means “three objects”).
- **Myth #3:** The more “teacher-directed” the learning, the better. In other words, if a teacher is directly telling children something, that will increase their learning. **The Truth:** Actually, we know that children internalize concepts more fully when they are doing things – when they are digging, building, balancing, jumping, writing, counting, etc. vs. being told by someone else.
- **Myth #4:** The more a program looks like the “school” we remember as children (desks, teacher up in front of the classroom, etc.), the more the children will learn. **The Truth:** Young children learn best in an environment that allows them to make choices (builds decision-making skills and independence); to select their own learning materials for at least part of the day (children are inherently motivated to learn); and empowers them to try new things with a teacher who guides the learning (children learn through active engagement with the people and materials in their environment).
- **Myth #5:** Children need quiet to learn. **The Truth:** Actually, children need a language-rich environment where caring adults provide responsive language interactions (your child makes a sound; you respond); where children’s language is expanded (your child points to a cat and says “cat”; you say – “Yes, that striped cat is getting ready to climb the tree”); and where new vocabulary is regularly introduced.
- **Myth #6:** Learning to write is all about letter formation. **The Truth:** While letter formation is one part of learning to write, equally, or even more important, is understanding the idea of recording one’s ideas on paper. When a child makes some scribbles and says “This is my daddy,” write your child’s words on the picture and she will begin to make the connection between the spoken and written word. Regularly record what your child says. Longer dictated stories can become illustrated “books” which can be laminated to read again and again.

Learning some “school skills” like lining up and raising hands before transitioning to school will certainly make the transition to formal schooling easier. However, what is most important is giving children the chance to fully explore and experiment in an environment with caring adults who guide, support, and extend their learning.

Bright Horizons News



Family Matters Webinar Series Recap: *Parent/Teacher Partnerships: The Keys to Successful Relationships*

Miss the September Family Matters webinar on Parent-Teacher Partnerships? We featured Bright Horizons education experts Melanie Brooks and Ruth Fidino, who shared ideas for how you can partner with your child's child care and elementary school teachers. Together, Melanie, Ruth, and the webinar audience tackled key issues like mutual respect, trust, and open communication between teachers and parents.

Visit our [Family Resources](#) page to [watch the webinar on demand](#) and access the [webinar resource pack](#).

<For centers who are participating in the Foundation's FUNdraiser. Please remove if this does not apply to your center.>

Join Us to Change the Life of a Child

This November, many centers are raising money for the *Bright Horizons Foundation for Children*® in a special "FUNdraiser" in support of *Bright Spaces*®. We invite you to join us and help change the life of a child in crises. So, when you buy a cookie at a bake sale, or bid on a piece of art at an auction, or participate in a walk-a-thon, YOU are the power of change for children who are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, or other trauma.

Bright Horizons families have a long history of supporting Bright Spaces through donations to the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children. You have been part of making real and meaningful changes in the lives of thousands of children through our Bright Spaces. We sincerely thank you for your generosity.



This superhero family recently participated in a Superhero Walk at the Bright Horizons at the Ranch Reserve in Colorado.

Bright Spaces are warm, safe, enriching places in homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and other agencies for children and youth experiencing homelessness or other crises to: build caring relationships, heal from trauma through play, and experience the joy of childhood. They are created and supported through partnerships with community agencies, financial sponsors, a Bright Horizons center, school or department, and the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children.

www.brighthorizonsfoundation.org