

November Newsletter

Dear Parents,

-October Highlights-

I enjoyed meeting with all of you at **Parent Conferences** and sharing some of the work that your child has been doing and what our goals are for the upcoming months. Remember that any time you would like to come and visit for a morning and/or afternoon, you're more than welcome. It's one thing to hear about what your child does, and quite another to actually see it in action.

We had a very big study unit this past month. In **History**, we traced the **beginnings of human history** which occurred in Africa. From there we followed the nomadic tribes crossing into and across Asia, and then over the land bridge to North and South America. We then learned of the change to an agrarian society in North America after the discovery of seeds by the Cavewomen. The children have begun Journals, using this newly learned information, to write about life in the caves, and also will create art work to depict those first homes, which will create a very nice "booklet."

In **Math**, a number of children have been transitioning to the next "less concrete/more abstract" material to work their problems. That is always an exciting time. "I'm on the Dot Board now!" We're also starting to see progress on some of the **timed tests**. The masters I sent you for making copies of the tests should give them a big boost. Thank you for giving them that help. It's only 3 minutes, but it makes a huge difference when done on a daily basis.

Our **read-aloud books** this month were from a genre for "now you're older" - *scary stories*, complete with darkened room and read to them by candlelight. The children were introduced to some old classics like the *Baba Yaga* folktales from Russia and our own American *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, along with more modern tales like *The Widow's Broom* by Chris VanAllsburg. After hearing all these stories, we discussed as a group what the elements were that we encountered in the "scary story" (darkness, full moon, mystery, element of surprise, etc.).

To end the month, but before we had our Halloween parade, we had a wonderful early **Halloween surprise**. Yoon Mitchell, Eddie's mom who is a choral music teacher for Hayward Unified, gave the children a huge treat one afternoon. She brought her keyboard with her and then taught the children *many* fun Halloween songs, which they were overjoyed to learn and sing - so much so that they were singing them all the next day in class, and at lunch, and I heard some were still singing them when they went to bed! Yoon not only brought her music to share with our class, but she brought joy to them as well. We thank her so very, very much!

We happily were able to finally once again have a real, in person **Historical Halloween Parade!** Thank you for all the help and assistance you gave your child to "become" his or her historical person. It really takes on a feeling of epic drama to see them all lined up: kings, statesmen, inventors, literary figures, and humanitarians. We know that a lot of effort goes into planning and putting together the costumes, but we think you would all agree that seeing them as these inspirational figures makes it very worthwhile. I can assure you that they talked extensively among themselves about their "people" for days ahead of time. It was a great learning experience. A special thank you to the parents who helped the children get dressed in their costumes, and to all the families who put together goody bags of treats to share. A very fun and memorable day!

-Upcoming Events-

In **Language**, Second Years are finishing their work on **Root and Compound** words. It is very important for them to understand and be able to readily identify and use the term "root," particularly with spelling. ("What is the root word of the word 'baking'? And what is the rule you use when you add the suffix 'ing'?) Third Years, having completed their work making singulars into plurals, are now finishing up work on the very challenging use of the **apostrophe for singular possessives**. So when do you use which: -s -'s ? The next step in the sequence? **using an apostrophe to make a contraction**.

The next step in our **History** study, since we have seen how the Early People crossed a land bridge into North America, will be learning about these different **tribes of now Native Americans** throughout our continent, and how the life of each tribe was in large part determined by the climate and habitat of the specific area where they settled. Later in the month we will also then learn about the first European settlements in North America at **Jamestown** and later the **Pilgrims at Plymouth Plantation**.

Besides learning about our American November celebration of Thanksgiving, we will have several other cultural celebrations this month. This Tuesday we will be marking the important Mexican holiday, **Dia de los Muertos**, or Day of the Dead. It is a time to remember those loved ones who have passed away. We will read some books about the customs of this day, and have a Dia de los Muertos "altar" with traditional decorations and marigolds. In the upcoming days, if they wish to, the children may write the name of a loved one in their family who has passed away and leave that slip of paper among the flowers. On this day, Hispanic child may wear any special clothing they have that is worn in their country.

On Thursday begins another celebration - **Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights**. Our room will have some special decorations and many lights (of course!) added, and the children will be able to create intricate, symmetrical designs on

paper for *diya* lamps. On Thursday Indian or Fijian children may wear their special clothing too.

A few last notes - Because we've had some chilly days and more are to come, we still will need to leave the windows open somewhat for good circulation. Because of this, the children may want to have some outerwear on to keep themselves comfortable. We do however, still want to maintain a "uniform" look to our classroom. So, if you do not have any Lands' End sweatshirts, sweaters, vests, jackets, etc., Kavita has quite a lot in her school uniforms "store." They are used, but we have kept only the ones that are still in very good condition, and offering them at a very reasonable price. Lands' End has told us they are having a lot of difficulty filling orders because of the "supply chain" problems that are happening most everywhere. So Kavita's "store" is really the easiest, quickest, and least expensive way to take care of always having school uniform clothing on in class. Just let her know when you'd like to look at them.

One more important piece of information for you. Harrison Gee's mother, Lena, has been giving a lot of time to our website to greatly improve not only its look and format, but also the information you can access. Please be sure to give it a good look, especially the Parents tab on the far right of the homepage. For instance, since we will not be going on any field trips this year because of COVID, Lena has created a wonderful list and description of all the places we normally would go for class trips. In this way, you can still visit them for weekend "family field trips." In addition please check out the "Supplemental Learning Resources" near the bottom of the Parents page for many more great suggestions. Another reminder: all calendars for the year and any COVID information you might need is also right there. So very helpful! Huge thanks to Lena for doing this for all of us.

Many good wishes to you and your families for a warm and happy Thanksgiving.

Mary Anne and Amira

Calendar:

Tues, Nov. 2nd - Celebrating Dia de los Muertos, or "Day of the Dead." This will continue throughout the week.

Thurs, Nov. 4th - Celebrating Diwali, Indian Festival of Lights. This will continue until Monday, Nov. 8th.

Fri, Nov. 5th - Sharing Day, a picture of someone or something you are thankful for

Thurs, Nov. 11th - Veterans' Day - no school and no Day Care

Thurs/Fri, Nov. 25th/26th - Thanksgiving Holidays; no school and no Day Care.

Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.

-John Whitehead