

# St. Andrew's Preschool Seasonal Gazette

## Winter 2023

### From the Director

WE LOVE OUR FAMILIES! We wanted to let you know how much we love and appreciate your support of our staff and our program. Our hearts are filled with gratitude. Thank you to all of you for either responding quickly regarding your plans for the 2023-2024 school year or registering. I appreciate your help in finding a space for everyone who wanted one before opening up registration to the community.

Thank you to all of you who attended the Kindergarten Readiness presentation with Mrs. Page Nabywaniec, a Kindergarten Teacher with FCPS. If you did not attend but still would like the information, look for her presentation in the weekly email.

Save the date for Science Night Thursday, March 16th from 5-7 PM. This is our biggest event of the year. Please bring your family to enjoy many science experiments your St. Andrew's students enjoy doing with Mrs. Smith. Some extras include Molly the Bubble Lady, balloon animals, music and dental experiments, and a photo op with Trixie the dinosaur. More details to follow once we get closer to the event.

We opened our registration for the 2023-2024 school year to the community February 13th. If you know anyone interested in registering, please ask them to contact the preschool office at 703-455-8458 or email [preschool@standrews.net](mailto:preschool@standrews.net). They can also visit our web site [preschool.standrews.net](http://preschool.standrews.net) where they can take a virtual tour and fill out an inquiry to receive more information about enrollment or begin the registration process through our software ChildPilot.

Our days are filled with joy as we watch your children grow and learn. I love hearing their questions and watching them take in the world. Our students are so curious and observant which are two great attributes of a lifelong learner.

I look forward to seeing you at Science Night!

Warm regards,  
Tami



# The Lion Class



Happy winter Lion families! We have been having a good time in the Lion class. Here is a sneak peek at what we have been up to in the last few months. We came back from our winter break in January with gusto starting with a unit on transportation. The Lions always love this unit so it's a good way to jump back into school after having two weeks off. We discussed and brainstormed different types of transportation. We talked about the fact that transportation is anything that takes you from here to there. We named different types of land, air, and water transportation. The class made many projects relating to our unit. We played with the train table in dramatic play and in the block area we had lots of fun racing cars and directing traffic. After learning about transportation, we started our unit on snow, snow people and arctic animals. Despite the lack of snow here in Virginia, we still learned about it. We talked about precipitation and what that means and how it relates to snow. We talked about the science of snowflakes and that no two are alike. We read a lot of fun books on Snowmen and Snow and talked about all the fun things you can do in the snow. As I am sure you saw in our hallway art gallery, our friends were quite creative making their biggest, best snowmen (based on the book "The Biggest, Best Snowman" by Margery Cuyler). To bring STEM into the room the Lions created a snow world using cans covered in white paper and played at the tinker table with ice cubes, arctic animals, snow flakes and cotton balls. The Lions loved learning about and comparing different arctic animals. They made great connections, and we even used our background knowledge to figure out how the animals adaptations helped them in the arctic. The Lions pretended to be Arctic explorers, went ice fishing for alphabet letters and even went ice skating!

After learning about arctic animals, we started February with lots of Valentine's Day fun and playing at the post office. The Lions enjoyed writing valentines for you and their friends. They loved writing and learning different phrases appropriate for cards and writing their friends' names. We are going to keep this as part of the art center since the Lions loved this so much. The Lions pretended to blow you kisses and decorated a page full of hearts. The Lions had a blast on Valentine's Day and loved handing out cards to their friends and eating our chocolate fondue! The tinker table was filled with wood hearts and other heart themed manipulatives. Our Lions didn't find this tinker table very exciting, so I will need to start brainstorming for next year. It's always interesting to see what they embrace and what they find less interesting when we introduce new things in the classroom. After our Valentine's fun we moved right into an author study on Jan Brett. We started with reading several versions of the folktale "The Mitten". The Lions compared the different versions, which helped them recall details of each text and another opportunity to talk about the elements of a story (setting, characters, plot). This is an important step in learning to read. Also, this is a simple way to teach about similarities and differences between two things. It helps develop vocabulary and learning how to make text to text connections. We used a Venn Diagram to compare the two stories (introducing another way to graph and compare information). Back by popular demand, we brought the kitchen back in dramatic play. We will end February celebrating our 100th day of school! This is always exciting for our Lions since they have been working towards this from the start of the year.



## The Lion Class cont.

March will start by finishing up our Jan Brett unit and of course reading several Dr. Seuss books. We will talk about word families and rhyming words while we read the books by Dr. Seuss. The Lions will create their own words (both real and silly) by combining initial sounds and words families. We will then start a unit on rainbows which leads into St. Patrick's Day. We will talk about how rainbows are created, and we will make lots of rainbow art. The Leprechaun always seems to make a visit to our classroom on St. Patrick's Day and the kids always LOVE this. We will end March talking about Easter and an author study on Leo Lionni. This is always a fun unit to bring in Spring since Leo Lionni's books all focus on change and animals. It is also a chance to compare authors since we will have recently read books by Jan Brett and Dr. Seuss.

We continue to read the Magic Tree House series in circle time. This is a fun way to introduce kids to chapter books. The Lions love it, and they pay more attention to the books since they aren't concentrating on the pictures. I will continue to post kindergarten readiness tips outside our room each week. These are just suggestions if you want them of fun things to do with your kids to get ready for next year. We love having our Mystery Readers on Mondays. Thank you all for coming to read to our class. The kids look forward to it every week! We will be starting our book swap soon. The kids loved this last year. Each Lion will bring in a book from home that they are willing to share and when we collect enough books for everyone (with some additions from Mrs. Nyman) the kids each get a book to take home to keep. Our circle time activities have continued to evolve as they Lions just get smarter each day. Instead of just counting on the number line (aka Calendar), I will ask questions about numbers so the Lions really have to think about what I am asking vs. just guessing. Incorporating the words more, less, addition, and subtraction into the Calendar make it a great teaching tool for math. We have gotten through the entire alphabet now, so the "Letter Lover" gets to pick the letter. The kids are coming up with their own words that start with the initial sound of the letter instead of just relying on picture we provide. It's hard to believe we only have a few months left, but we are going to enjoy every minute with your children. Please don't hesitate to ask any questions.

With love and a roar, Mrs. Nyman, Mrs. Jacobs & Mrs. Kockler





## The Penguin Class

We hope you all have had a great start to the New Year as we have at preschool. During the month of January, the Penguins learned about winter and transportation. We spent time making snowmen, penguins, winter trees, traffic lights, cars with letters of our names, and vehicles with shapes. The kids enjoyed creating their own vehicle with various paper shapes. They were so creative! This is one of our favorite art projects as it really shows each child's individuality. In doing these art projects we have practiced cutting, writing our names, and gluing small pieces of paper. These are all wonderful ways to strengthen our hands and improve our fine motor skills. Reading many wonderful books related to winter and transportation has also been a highlight.

February brought our units on Valentine's Day and families. This was a wonderful time to work on our writing skills. The children practiced writing notes to friends and family. They made beautiful valentines and we prepared and mailed our "hugs" to relatives. We are so excited to start receiving mail back.

During morning circle, our class has spent time working on letter recognition by playing with letter bean bags and through games and art projects. We also learned about letters "S", "J", "D", "P", "B", "V", "W", "R", and "K". The children practiced writing the letters on slates. They enjoyed playing "What's Missing" using objects that begin with the letters we learned. A song we've been singing reminds us to start our letters at the top. The song is called "Where do we start our letters? At the top!" If you're lucky, your child might just sing it for you. We practiced identifying numbers, counting, and adding by throwing multiple dice and figuring out the total number represented. Lastly, we discussed and read books about feelings and how they change. The children loved the different facial expressions that accompany feelings.

In dramatic play, we enjoyed setting up rooms in a doll house, playing with a train table and car rug with lots of different vehicles, taking orders and serving customers in our 'restaurant,' and creating, processing, and delivering mail in our 'post office.'

Since January, we've been saying the Pledge of Allegiance during morning circle. There are many big words to learn! We've talked about the meaning of the pledge as well as learning to say it. We will practice this every day the rest of the school year.

In February we began talking about first names and last names. To practice learning our last names, we often called the children Mr. "last name" or Miss "last name". The children enjoyed this, and it helps them remember their full names.

During free art, the children can create whatever they would like with the supplies we have. Making bracelets with beads and pipe cleaners is an activity many enjoy. Some of you have been the recipients of their lovely creations! Making pictures with lots of stickers is also a lot of fun for the kids and another great way to improve fine motor skills.



## The Penguin Class cont.

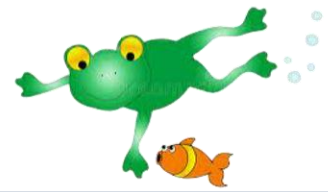
In March we will read books from our favorite authors, including Dr. Seuss. This is such a great unit filled with fun stories, rhyming opportunities, art, and writing. We will finish out the month learning about St. Patrick's Day, Spring and Easter.

We hope that the weather cooperates in the coming weeks for more outside play in the sunshine!  
Thank you for your support!

Mrs. MacArthur and Mrs. Kockler



# The Fish & Frog Classes



Learning through play is always fun but also provides our students with so many valuable life skills. Each Sunday we email a Sneak Peek to the Fish and Frog families which contains all of our weekly activities. Beside each activity we include what vital skills the activity teaches or reinforces. Below is a description of those skills and why they are so important for young learners.

Gross motor skills are abilities that involve the arms, legs and torso. Examples include running, jumping and hopping. We focus on gross motor skills activities to help students learn to move and control their bodies. The below daily playground activities are just some of the activities that are used to strengthen Fish/Frog gross motor skills:

- Kicking and throwing balls
- Balance beam practice
- Climbing structure practice
- Walking up the slide
- Pulling and pushing the wagon (full and empty)

Fine motor skills are abilities that involve movement in the fingers and wrists. Examples include picking up objects, working a zipper and dressing. We focus on exercises that strengthen fine motor skills to aid in student self-care and emergent writing. The list below are some of the daily activities used to strengthen fine motor skills in the Fish/Frog room:

- Pipe cleaner beading
- Painting
- Cutting
- Using tongs in the digging bins
- Playdough (pulling, stretching and cutting)
- Lacing

Letter recognition is an ability that enables early learners to start making connections between the printed text and the spoken language. In the Fish/Frog classroom this skill is mastered over time with positive reinforcement and play. Below are a few daily activities in our classroom that provide letter recognition practice.

- Spelling and writing names
- Letter and word of the week
- Letter matching (themed by month)
- Object identification with matching starting letters



# The Fish & Frog Classes cont.



Sensory activities are any activity that promotes learning through use of a child's five senses. Sensory play aids children in making connections to their environment through exploration, problem solving and creativity. It has also been found to aid in controlling emotions while learning. The Fish/Frog classroom is full of Sensory play.

- Digging bin (materials include: sand, beans, glitter salt, etc...)
- Fidgets (poppers, sound tubes, spinners)
- Free art (glue, stickers, finger paint, etc...)
- Blocks (pop blocks, Zoobs, wooden blocks, Magnatiles, etc...)

We enjoy playing with your children and watching them grow!

Amy Bailey  
Lisa Winand





## The Puppy & Kitten Classes



We hope everyone has had a happy and healthy start to the New Year. We really enjoyed talking to all of the families during conferences at the end of January.

We were very busy in January. We spent a lot of time talking and learning about winter and arctic animals, as well as snow, in our classroom - even though we didn't have opportunities to experience it firsthand!

The children played in a mini-Arctic Ocean with penguins and polar bears, with ice cubes. We also had a play station with woodland animals who went to "hibernate" in dens and caves, using wood blocks and magnetic tiles to build houses.

Our sensory table was a winter wonderland with glitter salt, glittery snowflakes, Styrofoam snowballs, shiny gems, pretend ice cubes, along with penguins and arctic animals. We discussed how water freezes to form ice and melts back into a liquid water.

We spent time talking, singing and learning about snow in our classroom. We sang a fun song that the children loved, called "Once There Was a Snowman". They really enjoyed the motions, starting as a tall snowman and then melting to a puddle at the very end of the song!

The children enjoyed making a variety of winter themed art projects too. We made sparkly winter pictures with white and blue paint, glitter and salt. The Puppy class enjoyed making snowmen using different shapes and gluing buttons and gems. The Kitten class enjoyed decorating snowflakes with gems and glitter. We also loved painting with frozen paint made into ice cubes. We enjoyed reading many books about winter.

February has been a fun month for the Puppies and Kittens! The Fire department came at the beginning of the month and put on a fire safety puppet show. We learned about fire safety and each child loved getting a fire hat to take home!

For the month of February, we focused on a Valentine Unit at the beginning of the month. We had a great time working on Valentine art and sharing our love and friendships in and out of the classroom. We read lots of Valentine's Day books, and the Puppy class loved making Valentine love bugs, while the Kitten class enjoyed making marbled hearts to decorate our room. We also spent time talking about family love. We read books about families and learned that all families are different.

The Puppy and Kitten classes enjoyed a special Valentine snack, and had the opportunity to deliver Valentines to their friends. Thank you for all the wonderful cards, words and gifts during the Valentine season. We feel blessed to have your wonderful children in our lives.







## The Puppy & Kitten Classes cont.



Our focus switched to transportation towards the end of February. The Puppy class enjoyed building their own name trains and the Kitten class created their own cars using sponge paint and different shapes. We also made boats and created rocket ships with various paper shapes. This is one of our favorite art projects, as it really shows each child's individuality.

Our sensory bin changed a couple of times. We started the month with colored pasta, plastic hearts, gems and Valentine heart erasers. For our Transportation theme, our sensory bin had sand and gravel with black rocks, glass beads, cars and shovels.

Most of the activities we do in the Puppy and Kitten class are centered around imaginative play and social/emotional development. For physical and cognitive skill development, we plan activities to help develop the children's gross and fine motor skills, hand/eye coordination, and hand strength. Here are a few examples from this month.

**Gross motor:** Riding the scooters and walking across stepping stones during indoor playground time; stomping, hopping and jumping in music class.

**Fine motor:** Picking up small items to glue onto craft projects; sorting jewels in the sensory bin; building with magnetic blocks; drawing circles.

**Hand strength:** Squeezing glue out of the bottle, rolling balls of playdough, making snowmen.

Looking ahead to March we will be doing a unit on St. Patrick's Day and Fairytales. We will then switch our focus to Easter and Spring.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Kroeger and Mrs. Stites





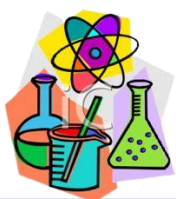
## The Discovery Room

### "Where no discovery is too small"

Over the winter months of December, January and February students studied three hands-on units. In December, students focused on various types of construction pretending they were "elves" at Santa's workshop. In January, students learned about bears and hibernation. February began with a concentration on Simple Machines and then transitioned to weather patterns.

Students found the Santa's workshop unit to be very "riveting" in December. The elves wrapped presents, constructed cars, robots, and even built castles. Students were architects and they designed blueprints of their dream homes. The piece de resistance was a life size "ski chalet" constructed by all the classes using Styrofoam and bamboo skewers!

What did the bear say after hibernation? I'm 'bearly' awake. You guessed it! January's unit focused on everything associated with bears. We began by learning important facts including: bears are mammals, identifying eight bear species by name, bear habitats, various adaptations, and finally migration versus hibernation. The students absorbed these facts and concepts with incredible ease. Just ask your child to name all eight bear species. They can do it! After a common characteristics introduction, we dove into individual bear units beginning with the polar bear. This species of bear was introduced using a non-fiction book. National Geographic Readers: Polar Bears revealed that polar bears are the largest carnivorous land mammal. The students role played how they lived using plastic polar bears and foam blocks in individual water bins to replicate their balancing act on floating icebergs. They also played in a large fake snow diorama scene complete with white pillow stuffing caves and polar bear prey. The next bear study we concentrated on was the brown or grizzly bear. We began by reading Animal Adaptions and National Geographic Readers: Sleep, Bear! Activities related to this literature included playing with a brown bear forest scene complete with bear dens, sorting animals into hibernating versus non-hibernating categories, and a life size stuffed bear named "Big Bear" hung out in the reading nook section for companionship. During the final bear study, we focused on the cutest bear species based on class votes--the giant panda. National Geographic Readers: Level 2-Pandas taught students that Pandas are primarily herbivores spending the majority of their day eating bamboo. When they need to move quickly pandas forward roll. Since giant pandas are excellent climbers, students practiced balancing figurines in a bamboo forest composed of thin wooden boards and bamboo support beams. The light table was also panda themed with more plastic figurines to place inside a forest they built from green Magnatiles. There were two new board game additions to the bear centers this year. In the Beware of the Bear game two players tried to take as much food as possible from a hibernating bear before he leapt out from his den, Jack in the Box style, surprising and making the player who triggered it return the food. The player with the most food at the game's conclusion wins! Grizzly Gears is a one player game that builds problem-solving and spatial insight skills by challenging you to twist trees and guide characters across a forest labyrinth. Board games are excellent at teaching students critical life skills such as waiting your turn, decision making, problem solving, and how to handle losing graciously.



## The Discovery Room cont.

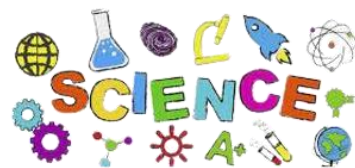
Why did the bike fall over? It was "two" tired. Beginning in February, we explored the physics field by switching 'gears' to simple machines. I was amazed by how much information the students retained during this unit. I spoke with a fellow teacher and she informed me that her child is also learning simple machines right now--in the eighth grade! Students explored wheels and axles, pulleys, levers, screws, wedges, and slopes (with a little mini unit on springs as well). Students carried pom-poms in buckets across the Discovery Room without walking by using a pulley system. We explored wedges by hammering nails into Styrofoam blocks. We also made many slopes using found objects and raced cars with different weights/body types to compare velocities. With self-constructed inclined planes, we tested to see how slope steepness, friction, and ball mass impacts speed. Students tested catapults and used them for target practice by shooting pom-poms into containers. Students drilled plastic screws into boards and assembled mini vehicles. During review, I was overcome by how well students could identify which type of machine is necessary for various tasks. In fact, ask your child about what simple machine can be found inside your body right now.

What type of bow can't be tied? A rainbow! February concluded with a meteorology unit focusing on how seasons, clouds, wind, temperature and the water cycle impact our weather. Students created their own rainclouds by pipetting blue water over shaving cream clouds to demonstrate rainfall. Students also sorted different types of sensory weather bottles and created their own tornadoes using plastic soda bottles. They built snowmen using Floof and the digging bin contained a rubbery substance called Ploof which moves when touched. Rainbows were constructed using melted skittles and by rolling play-doh into ROYGBV arches. Students made the four types of clouds (Cirrus, Stratus, Cumulus, and Cumulonimbus) using cotton balls. There were numerous season puzzles and a season sorting game. One popular station was the Penguin Race in which penguins slid down a slippery slope and then climbed back to the hilltop using electronic gears.

Next month we will travel to space and beyond! We will explore astronomy throughout March. It seems like almost each day I come home with an adorable story to share with my family about your funny, brilliant, and insightful children. Please mark your calendars and save the date for Thursday, March 16th-Science Night! I look forward to seeing everyone immerse themselves in various science units we completed throughout the year and some new bonus experiments! Thank you for sharing your little learners with me. They never cease to amaze me with the immense amount of knowledge they are capable of absorbing and retaining!

Yours in Discovery,

Mrs. Smith



# Music



2023 started off with a Happy New Year dance party in the music room at St. Andrew's, complete with party hats and light up balloons! The children had a great time singing, dancing, and bopping balloons back and forth to each other. During the rest of January, we celebrated the joys of wintertime, and even though we didn't see very much actual snow, we still had fun pretending to build snowmen, throw snowballs, and engage in winter activities like skiing and sledding. We spent a few days learning about penguins, polar bears, and other creatures who spend their lives in the cold, snowy regions of the world. One of the children's favorite songs to sing and act out was "Walking Through the Arctic," where we pretended to see reindeer, arctic hares, and walruses, just to name a few! We also enjoyed celebrating Donuts and Pajamas Day with some fun songs and activities. We talked about when we usually wear pajamas (at bedtime - not to school!) and then we pretended to get ready for bed. We "took a bath" using bean bags for our washcloths, "brushed our teeth" with maracas, and then listened to a lullaby while we "went to sleep."

February brought more celebratory fun with some Valentine's Day action songs and dances. We also spent a week focusing on different forms of transportation. We used the sand blocks to imitate the sounds of a train chugging along on a track, speeding up down a hill and then slowing down as it approached the station. We sang "The Wheels on the Car" and used claves to do the motions for windshield wipers, seatbelts clicking, and windows going up and down! We also did a unit on community helpers and had a fun time dancing to the "Community Helper Hop" while we learned about all the people who help us, from doctors to farmers to teachers! The children also enjoyed playing with our community helper hand puppets and figuring out who we were describing while singing "What is My Job?"

During the first week of March, we'll celebrate Read Across America Week with songs and activities that highlight beloved children's stories and authors. We'll also welcome the arrival of spring with music about flowers and springtime weather. I'm also planning a unit on musical concepts, during which we will use instruments and songs to learn about tempo, pitch, and dynamics. And finally, when the season of Lent starts to wrap up at the end of the month, we'll sing some Palm Sunday and Easter songs to reiterate the stories that the children are hearing during their weekly Chapel lessons.

I love having the opportunity to share my love of music with your children every week. Their joy and enthusiasm bring me so much happiness!

Mrs. Rachel Elliff



## Chapel News



Chapel is humming along nicely! Your kids know the routine and know the songs and are feeling more and more comfortable participating in the wondering questions after the story and helping me do the hand motions for the songs! Ask them to show you!

This season we begin our journey through Lent; each week the story is of a different stage of Jesus' life, all building up to Good Friday and the joy of Easter. We will round out the year with lessons about the Good Samaritan and Pentecost. Father Will continues to lead chapel for each class once a month in the "big church" which the kids love. Join us any time!

Mrs. Amy Tibbetts

## Church News

During Lent we are bringing back our popular Soup Supper series – this year the focus is on Prayer and 2 of the 5 Sunday evening sessions will be kid-friendly. The dates are 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26 from 5:00 pm- 6:45 pm. The kid friendly dates are 3/5 and 3/19. Email Amy Tibbetts at [amy@standrews.net](mailto:amy@standrews.net) for more information and to sign up.

During Holy Week we will have an evening Maundy Thursday service, a noon Good Friday service, an evening Easter vigil service on Saturday April 8th and 3 services on Easter with an egg hunt. More info on this will be out later in Lent. Please join us for any/all of these services. Kids are welcome at ALL of our services.

Save the date! Our Vacation Bible School will be July 17-21 this year so mark your calendars. More info to come.



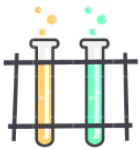
# Science Night

St. Andrew's Episcopal  
Preschool

Thursday, March 16

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Come join us for an adventure into the world of science. We will have more than 20 hands on stations, raffle tickets for prize baskets and Mollie the Bubble Lady. Look for more details in the upcoming weekly emails.



As the weather is changing please make sure your child has a seasonal change of clothes in their bag as well as jackets and appropriate shoes for outside everyday!!



## St. Andrew's Episcopal Preschool

6509 Sydenstricker Road  
Burke, VA 22015

Phone: 703-455-8458  
FAX: 703-455-2927



**St. Andrew's**  
EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL  
BURKE, VIRGINIA  
*Where the Adventure Begins*

Emails

[preschool@standrews.net](mailto:preschool@standrews.net) (Tami)

[preschooladmin@standrews.net](mailto:preschooladmin@standrews.net) (Celene)