

St. Andrew's Preschool Seasonal Gazette

Fall 2023

From the Director

We are off to a great start with beautiful fall weather for lots of outdoor play. The last section of the outdoor classroom is complete. Many thanks go out to Thomas Phillips and Collin Wyman for agreeing to complete their Eagle Scout projects at our preschool. Thomas laid down the foundation and included a storage box for the nature class supplies. Collin built the kid size picnic tables and teacher bench. We are grateful to our boys for choosing St. Andrew's. I told them both that this is a project that will be used every day! I hope that you will think about participating in the Trunk or Treat for our students and come to Stone Soup. Dates, times, and sign-ups are in Celene's weekly mail. Picture Day with Victor O'Neil Studios is November 1 and 2. Pictures will be taken during their class time. Sibling photos will take place before preschool. All the information is in the weekly email.

Fall brings so many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and of course a variety of pumpkin flavored treats. It is also a time when our classrooms begin to come together. Building a community of learners will always be my favorite part of preschool. The children start to understand their schedules and routines. They look comfortable and confident walking down the hallway. The students begin to notice what's around them and how the different parts of the preschool work. They always ask great questions but this was a favorite. One class walked by my office and a student asked me "What do you do here?" I replied, "I make sure everyone is taken care of and is safe." The student's reply, "That's good to know." Just priceless!

We enjoy working with your children each day. They are funny, smart, and curious! Now let's have some fall fun!

Warm regards,
Tami



The Lion Class



Hello Lion families, here is the first edition of “The Life of a Lion”. We are loving our Lion class this year and we are enjoying getting to know all the personalities that we get to see five days a week. The kids are really coming together as a team and we are seeing new friendships form each week. The beginning of each year we really focus on transforming our little people into the pre-k wonders that they are today (and they will only continue to grow during the year). In this newsletter, I will try to highlight and give you a “sneak-peak” into the life of your Lion. So here it goes...

In September we try and keep things simple since we are trying to focus on getting to know our Lions and just teaching the general rules of the classroom. We had learning units about starting school, all about me, families and apples. We did many projects that were multi-purpose to teach skills, while also assessing what our Lions can already do (cutting, writing etc.). We learn so much sitting with our Lions as they draw and create. They usually talk/narrate as they go which is why sometimes you will see us write something on their paper that helps explain or narrate their pictures. Self-portraits are fun since we use them to see how far our Lions progress during the year. Our Lions loved playing at the Apple Orchard and it was amazing to see how the kids took turns shopping and checking out all the various apple items. This class has fantastic imaginative skills. They really work together in dramatic play and on the playground. This year we made apple crisp as our cooking project for September. In the past we made applesauce in the Lion class, but it isn't always a fan favorite, so we mixed it up this year. Most of the kids liked it! We will do more cooking projects during the year since it is a great teaching opportunity, and the kids love it! On to October...

In October we continued our apple unit, talked about scarecrows, bats, pumpkins and Halloween. October is such a fun month to teach preschool, it is so magical for a child (and for big children who happen to be teachers). There is a reason most of us teachers love teaching this age group! After being in school for a month our Lions have really adjusted to our routine. The Lions know their jobs and are taking responsibility for them and often remind us of what still needs to be done each day. Scarecrows and bats are great fall units to start off the month of October. We had fun with the puppet theatre in dramatic play and the kids made up fun stories with all the puppets. After the puppet theater our Lions trick or treated at the “pumpkin playground” in dramatic play and had a blast! During October we made many fun projects to celebrate Halloween. I love how unique each project ends up. Our crazy pumpkins and/or witches are always a hit. We read the story “Creepy Carrots” and made our own carrot patch (this is one of Mrs. Nyman's favorites). Pumpkin bread (really it is cake) is always a hit in October. We love to bake with our Lions. We started our Alphabet Journal this month. The kids practice cutting, sounding out words and writing the letters of the alphabet in their very own composition book. We will work on one to two letters a week depending on what we have planned for the week. Our Lions are working hard writing their names. We are encouraging our Lions to use initial capital and lower-case letters where appropriate. We are so proud of them no matter how they write their name, but most of all we are just happy to see how proud they are of their success. Seeing their growth is very rewarding, but most of all I am just excited that they are excited to learn and succeed. If you aren't excited about something you might end up learning it, but it will not be a lot of fun and what's the point of being a kid if it isn't fun? On to a preview of November...

The Lion Class cont...

In November we will learn about all the colors of Fall, Stone Soup and Thanksgiving. It is a fantastic month to reinforce all the soft skills we teach in the classroom. Kindness, thoughtfulness, and being thankful are just a few of the skills we reinforce every day and there is an entire holiday devoted to this! We talk about red and green choices in the Lion class and this is a great time to support those choices that we taught them at the beginning of the year. We are excited that we get to celebrate Stone Soup as a group again. The kids will get to use a knife and cut our vegetables for our soup (such an amazing fine-motor activity, but obviously it needs to be highly supervised) and the kids get to host a special person to share their soup.

December is always a whirlwind and we try to create lots of things the kids can give to you. We teach about giving, not just receiving since that is hard for kids to internalize especially during Christmas. My favorite dramatic play of the year shows up in December – Santa’s workshop.

It has been an amazing start to the year. At back-to-school night, we try and tell you how our day works, but I will be honest it always ends up changing and we keep it a fluid process, since we have to make changes based on what works with the new group of Lions. I am so excited that our question of the day is a success. The kids ask about it as soon as they come into the classroom. I am always learning as a teacher and sometimes it takes a year to learn how it will work with a different group of kids. We are constantly talking about patterns, sorting, counting and we have added math equations to our circle time routine. Not all our kids get this right away, but the more they are exposed to something the less scary it becomes.

As always, if you have any questions, please let me know.

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





The Penguin Class

Happy Fall, everyone! The Penguin class has been enjoying the gorgeous fall weather while outside on the playground. The children love to run around and chase each other as they climb and slide. They enjoy giving each other rides in one of our wagons, bouncing together on our school bus structure, tossing a ball back and forth between teachers and friends, and playing in the sand box. It is so important that they have this time to move about freely to develop muscles, coordination, and friendships.

We have spent time in morning circle learning class rules to keep each other safe and happy. The children enjoy all the jobs we do in the morning, some of which include counting the days on the calendar, singing our "days of the week" and "months of the year" songs, identifying the daily weather on our weather dial, and choosing a greeting song to sing.

In addition, circle time is an opportunity to work on learning our letters. We have learned the proper formation of the letters A, F, E, H, T, I, and U. We start every letter at the top (and there's a song for that!). We begin with the easiest letters to form and work our way to the hardest ones. We've enjoyed playing the "What's Missing?" game with objects that start with the letters we are working on in class. This game helps us identify the beginning sounds of the items. We've also been learning the "Mat Man" song, which helps children remember to draw all the parts of a person in a picture. The children have learned so much already! You might ask them to sing one of our songs for you.

We continue to work on handwriting using our name cards and spending time with number recognition and cutting practice.

New friendships have formed during our classroom free play time as the children play with playdough, sort items in our digging bin, do free art, play games, build with blocks, or "cook" together in our kitchen. These activities incorporate matching, color recognition, alphabet recognition, counting, sharing and the ability to take turns in a larger group activity. Some favorite toys among the children that you might be hearing about are Magna-tiles (magnetic building tiles) and Alpha-Bots (letters that transform into 26 cool robots).

In our units so far, the children have enjoyed learning about Halloween, Fall, Apples, and Starting School. We have done many fun art projects geared to these units and read some wonderful books. In November, we will have a unit about giving thanks. We look forward to talking with the children about giving thanks for all the wonderful people, places and things in our lives.

Some upcoming events for the Penguins: Trunk or Treat, 10:00 am on Tuesday, October 31; Stone Soup, 11:30 am on Wed., Nov. 15; Thanksgiving break, Nov. 22-23, no preschool.

We are thankful for the many children in our care along with their families!

Mrs. MacArthur and Mrs. Kockler



The Fish & Frog Classes



Play or work?

When your child arrives at preschool each day, we always have a busy schedule lined up with lots of fun activities. Did you know that ALL of the “play” activities that we do are actually achieving educational goals?

As you all know, the Fish and Frog Classroom weekly newsletter is titled The Lily Pond and it contains the planned activities that we will be doing in the classroom each week. Below is an explanation of some of the broader educational terms found in The Lily Pond.

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:

- Sorting small objects such as beads
- Using tweezers
- Lacing
- Manipulating play dough
- Flipping through books

When we find fun activities for the class that will work on both gross and fine motor skills it is a win for everyone!

In the month of September the class enjoyed playing in the sandbox which combines gross and fine motor in one setting. When they fill their buckets to the rim they use all of their strength to lift them which builds strong muscles. There are several small treasures hidden in the sandbox and they enjoy finding these tiny objects and sharing them with us which helps with fine motor.

The Fish & Frog Classes cont...

In October the class had the opportunity to visit the outdoor classroom several times. In the outdoor classroom some students fill their buckets to the rim with small stones and some place one at a time into smaller containers both of which provided gross and fine motor growth.

November will bring new activities to the classroom that will help strengthen the student's motor skills such as the wooden marble run. No matter what the "play" activity, the students are working hard each day to grow stronger!

Amy Bailey, Holly Welty and Cynthia Steele





The Puppy & Kitten Classes



The Puppies and Kittens have been learning our classroom routine and they are already doing a wonderful job transitioning from one activity to the next. They are making new friends and we have enjoyed watching them interact with each other, especially on the playground. The children really enjoy playing outside in the sand box, climbing on the “bus” and sliding too.

Both classes are starting to learn responsibility from doing their classroom jobs, such as line leader, weather watcher, calendar helper and schedule helper. We take turns with the jobs so everyone can have a chance to do each one.

At the art table, we have had fun doing a variety of arts and crafts and projects that pertain to our theme each week. In September, our themes were “All About Me” and “The Five Senses”. We learned about all the wonderful things our bodies can do. The Puppy and Kitten class enjoyed making texture collages. Texture collages allow the children to explore various materials and how they feel, look, and sound. In October we enjoyed making our own barns, creating apples and painting pumpkins.

For the month of October, we shifted our focus to learn about Farm Animals, Apples, Pumpkins and Halloween. The children played with Little People barns, farm animals and farm vehicles and did some classroom activities related to the season. October is a fun month; we will also have the opportunity to dress up in Halloween costumes and do “Trunk or Treating”.

Our Dramatic Play area changes when our theme changes. The children enjoyed playing in the kitchen and with baby dolls in September. In October, we set up an apple pie stand which is then converted into a pumpkin patch with a cash register and baskets. The children had a lot of fun pretending to bake apple pies and buying and selling pumpkins.

Our sensory bin changes as well. In September, we filled the bin with rainbow pasta, colored beads and magnetic letters. We then switched it to corn kernels for October. We added plastic farm animals, farm vehicles and apples and later switched to pumpkins, bats and spiders for some Halloween fun. After Halloween we transition to Fall and Thanksgiving and add leaves, acorns and turkeys and feathers for November. The children love digging for all the different treasures.

We've enjoyed reading books together at our closing circle.

To wrap up, here are some of the books we read and activities we have been working on that helped our Puppies and Kittens work on important developmental skills:

- **Books:** The first week of school we read, “Mouse’s First Day of School”. We also read “Five Colorful Crayons”. One of our favorite books about our bodies is “Eyes, Nose, Fingers and Toes”. We had fun acting out all the motions in the book, like clapping our hands and stomping our feet. Our books change when we change themes. In October, some of the books we read were, “All About the Farm”; “An Apples Life”; “Down by the Farm”; “Five Little Pumpkins” and “It’s Pumpkin Time”.

The Puppy & Kitten Classes cont...

- **Fine motor/eye-hand coordination:** The children enjoyed creating various pictures using stamps and peeling the backs off stickers. We also have a puzzle that gives the children an opportunity to practice zipping, snapping and buttoning. Beading straws and plastic beads on bead trees gave the children another way to practice these skills. All of these activities require precision and control of the fingers, which strengthens the fine motor skills and the pincer grasp.
- **Hand strength:** We used scissors and other playdough tools at the playdough table.
- **Gross motor:** We had fun with playground activities such as pulling friends in the wagon, climbing on the playground equipment, and walking across the balance beam.

In November we will be learning more about Fall and Leaves. We will be talking about all the changes that happen as the weather changes and becomes cooler. We will also discuss the idea of thankfulness and giving, and we will make stone soup. We are looking forward to having parents join us to celebrate. We will also be making Thanksgiving crafts.

In December, we will focus on the holidays and making fun Christmas projects. We will also be having a Christmas program.

We're looking forward to a wonderful year of learning and growing with the Puppies and Kittens!

Jennie Kroeger and Kristin Stites





The Discovery Room

"Where no discovery is too small"

Why did the germ cross the microscope? To get to the other slide! Our September unit began with an introduction to class rules, materials, terminology, and safety. We learned about scientist parts (such as the scientist's nose to smell and four other senses); utilized scientific tools (pipette, microscope, beaker, magnifying glass, balance scale, etc.), and I introduced the experimental method. We read a book about Einstein and students explored outdoors collecting scientific specimens while on a scavenger hunt. The next unit we covered was "Colors." Students were excited to mix colors using pipettes and "primary" colored water within ice cube tray compartments to create "secondary" colors. Pipetting is a fabulous way to develop pincher grip skills and I will include more experiments developing this skill throughout the year. Students sorted color balls into different test tubes; painted on a milk canvas and categorized giant water beads. We read Mix it Up! and everyone reviewed their color knowledge using colored overlays. The students learned ROYGBV by creating rainbows using playdoh. We learned more in-depth color terminology including: shades, tints, and complementary colors.

October was action-packed as students explored three topics: magnets, pumpkins, and spiders! Beginning with magnets, students performed numerous hands-on activities such as sorting objects to determine if they were magnetic/ not magnetic and painting using magnetic balls. New terminology was introduced including north/south poles, horseshoe magnet, bar magnet, attract, repel, metal, magnetic field, and compass. We made many magnetic structures such as tunnels and buildings. Students even developed writing skills using a special magnetic drawing board. The next unit focused solely on pumpkins, their composition, and life cycle. Terms in this unit included the life cycle process beginning with seed, seedling (sprout), vine, flower, green pumpkin and finally the orange pumpkin stage. This process was brought to life with many nonfiction pumpkin life cycle books and pumpkin activities. The most popular science station was pumpkin hammering. The students used mallets to hammer golf tees into pumpkins while practicing counting skills. The students picked "ripe" orange pumpkins from a large faux pumpkin patch and identified the life cycle with card labels. Real pumpkin dissections using tweezers were performed by students to aid in part identification of pumpkin skin (rind), stem, blossom end, ribs, flesh (pulp), fibrous strands, and seeds. The pumpkin unit culminated with a final large group experiment called "foaming pumpkin" during which I mixed two chemicals to show the process of a "chemical reaction" placed inside a jack-o-lantern resulting in spooky oozing from its mouth and eyes. It was so much fun to hear the students giggle as they observed this creepy experiment. The last week of the month we increased the spookiness factor by studying spiders. Powering a remote-controlled tarantula all around the school's hallway really seemed to make their arachnophobia disappear!

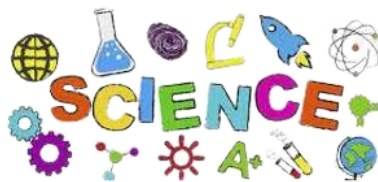
November will be extra exciting since it is time for our month-long celebration called "Dinovember!" I will begin the unit explaining that Dinosaur means "terrible lizard." We will review important dinosaur related terms including herbivore, carnivore, predator, prey, oviparous, extinct, paleontologist, fossil,

The Discovery Room cont...

and reptile. Classes will complete a fact or fiction identification sheet in their science journals. We will sort dinosaurs into herbivore and carnivore categories using a Venn diagram. Students will distinguish that a carnivorous dinosaur ate meat, walked on two legs, moved fast, had sharp teeth and claws, eyes in front, and was predatory. Herbivores were prey who ate plants, walked primarily on four legs, had flat teeth, and eyes on the sides of their skull. We will learn that the purpose of spikes, plates, and fancy spines were to protect themselves against predators. During the latter part of the month, we will focus on individual dinosaurs including the Iguanodon, Ankylosaurus, Triceratops, T-rex, Velociraptor, Apatosaurus and Stegosaurus. Students will complete individual chit-chat sheets within their science journals by filling in missing words after listening to in depth articles discussing each dinosaur. I expect an exceptionally popular activity will be playing in Dino Land, where students recreate dinosaur habitats through dioramas using wood pieces, rocks, figurines, and fake plants. The students will transform into paleontologists with brushes and sifting tools in hand to excavate dinosaur skeletons and fossils from sand at the digging bin. Students will create their own fossils using molds and magic sand. Students will apart and reassemble a T-Rex and Triceratops using a battery-operated 'power drill.' Students will learn to match dinosaur figurines to their names and use dinosaur Toob skulls to identify them. We will watch a few YouTube clips of dinosaur episodes from a show called Storybots. If you have the chance, check them out. You won't be able to get the songs out of your head! One, two, three, check out my horns! Dinosaurs will be everywhere in the Discovery Room. They will be in the digging bin, on the light table, and in each of the building buckets. A special dinosaur named "Trixie" will make an appearance at the end of the month. The dinosaur unit will conclude with a paleontological dig challenge using chocolate chip cookies to determine how many chips students are able to excavate using miniature "tools" without breaking them apart!

This year has been off to a wonderful start! I am impressed with how seamlessly students have learned to transition and follow class procedures. Thank you for sharing your most precious family members with me. They are an absolute joy to work with!

Yours in Discovery,
Mrs. Karolina Smith



Music



Greetings from the music classroom at St. Andrew's Preschool! I have enjoyed getting to know all of our wonderful students over the past few weeks. We started the year singing "Hickety Pickety Bumble Bee, Will You Say Your Name for Me?" to help us learn everyone's names. During the song, my bee puppet buzzed around the room and invited each child to tell us their name in turn. The children had fun whispering, clapping, and singing each of their classmate's names.

We also did some fun songs to learn names of body parts. "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" is always a hit, especially when we do it faster and faster, or sing it with a baby or a grandpa voice! The children also got a kick out of the words and motions for "Tony Chestnut," especially when we met his friends "Eileen," "Skip," and "Russell" - just use your imagination to figure out how we acted out those names! We learned that just like some body parts come in pairs, some instruments come in pairs as well. One example is the claves, which the children enjoyed tapping along with the beat of the music. The older classes also used the claves to perform "syllable rhythms," where we tapped the claves together for each syllable of different words.

This month we celebrated the arrival of fall with activities involving apples, falling leaves, and scampering squirrels! The children enjoyed singing a song called "Autumn Leaves are Falling Down," whose lyrics included leaves falling, raking them into a pile, jumping on them and crunching them with our feet, and finally, tossing them into the air. The best part was that we got to use pretend leaves to act out all the motions in the song! The kids (and teachers!) had so much fun tossing the leaves all around the classroom. Another day we used scarves to perform the actions of leaves spinning and dancing as the wind whooshed through the trees. We also learned all about squirrels, who are very active this time of year gathering acorns and preparing for cold winter weather. We listened to a recording of actual squirrel sounds and enjoyed hearing the funny squawking and chattering sounds they make. Sometimes they even sound like birds! We sang a song called "Let Us Chase the Squirrel" and then added a game to go with the music. The children took turns being "trees" and we sang the song while the "squirrels" went from tree to tree to find a home.

To wrap up October, we will celebrate Halloween with songs and activities about pumpkins, spiders, and bats. In November we'll learn about sharing and community with our Stone Soup song and story. And finally, we'll begin working on our songs for the Christmas singalong performances! Every day is a fun day in music class at St. Andrew's!

Mrs. Rachel Elliff



Chapel News



Fall is here! In chapel we are still learning our rules and songs and having a great time! This year we are trying something new – one story every three weeks or so, with the second and third week of the story being extension lessons to deepen the children’s understanding of the story. We will often send home extension lesson options for you to do at home if you’d like! Parents are always welcome to observe chapel, but the more interesting ones will probably be the actual story days so reach out to me at (amy@standrews.net) if you would like a copy of our schedule.

Mrs. Amy Dutton



Church News

Upcoming Activities at St Andrews Episcopal Church

We are having our Advent Festival on Sunday 12/3. Immediately following our 10:00 service, we will have yummy treats and craft stations including making your own advent wreath. All are welcome!

Our annual Christmas pageant will be during our late afternoon service on Christmas Eve. If your child(ren) would like to participate, please drop me an email!

If you have any questions, please email Amy Dutton (amy@standrews.net).



Stone Soup



Mark your calendar for our Stone Soup Program in the Multipurpose Room.

November 15

Puppy, Fish & Penguin classes 11:30 a.m.

November 16

Kitten, Frog & Lion classes 11:30 a.m.

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!!

Christmas Program



Mark your calendar for our Christmas Program in the Parish Hall.

December 11

Fish class 9:30 a.m. & Puppy class 11:45 a.m.

December 13

Lion & Penguin classes 11:45 a.m.

December 14

Frog class 9:30 a.m. & Kitten class 11:45 a.m.

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St. Andrew's
EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL
BURKE, VIRGINIA
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*Happy Thanksgiving!
To You And Your Family*