

K-K News

October 17, 2008

Dear Families:

One of the many things I love about teaching kindergarten is the enthusiasm with which the children approach their learning. Several weeks ago, I introduced a number of alphabet books to the children as they were learning about our classroom library. One of the books we shared was Alphabet City by Stephen T. Johnson. This wordless picture book features paintings of city scenes, each with a letter of the alphabet embedded in it. For example, the side of a sawhorse is an A, the platforms and stairs of a fire escape form the Z, and so on. The children were captivated by the beautiful artwork in the book, and it has become a popular selection for independent reading in the classroom. What happened next is where the joy enters in. One day at recess, a few children noticed that there was a letter H on the platform of the climbing structure at recess. When they pointed this out, a few other children connected that immediately to the book we had read. Children began searching for - and finding - letters all over the Hunnewell playground. I began bringing my camera to recess, and you may have seen me following clusters of children as they enthusiastically shouted letters at me during subsequent recesses. With some time and creative thinking, we have found all of the letters of the alphabet on our playground. We will write an introduction to our book and bind it next week, and copies of the photographs will be posted in the hallway for all to see. The children are justifiably proud of their work, and I hope you will take a minute to admire their work when you are in for conferences or other purposes in the next few weeks.

In other news....

- This week, we had both a bus evacuation drill and a visit from the Wellesley Fire Department. Please take a few minutes to review with your child some of the safety tips he/she learned from these visits.

-It is an extremely busy time of year. I want to give you some quick curriculum updates in all areas. In **mathematics**, we continue our work in our unit on counting. The many sheets your children are bringing home represent some of the counting games and activities in which they participate each day. The children continue to work on accurate counting, strategies for organizing items to be counted, and clear recording of their counting in the classroom. In **reading**, the children have been searching for labels in the books they read in independent reading. The books we have been sharing by Lois Ehlert are loaded with labels, and the children have discovered that they are often able to read the labels, even if they are not yet ready to read the full text of the books. We are working on labeling in writing, as well. In **handwriting**, the children have been practicing the straight line that starts at the top and is the beginning stroke for most capital letters. This week, we began working on the "C curve," which is the foundation for letters like C, G, and many lower case letters. In **science** this week, we enjoyed our first nature walk of the year. The children applied the descriptive vocabulary skills we have been working on in class to their work outdoors, and they drew recordings and some labels of their observations from the walk.

- Sincere thanks to Lisa Furnald, Betsy Homa, Meghan Murray, Dianna Kanter and Hope Crosier for their time and assistance with the nature walk this week!

- **Halloween is coming.** As a reminder, children will come to school in their costumes that morning, with a change of clothes underneath. All are welcome to line the Hunnewell field to watch the parade. After the parade, we will come in, remove costumes, and continue with our day. Volunteers are still needed that day! If you can take pictures before/during the parade; help remove costumes after the parade; or help with centers in KK and KM between 10:30-11:45 that day, please let me know next week. (Thanks to Jenny and Chris Cavallerano and Anne Jackowitz for already having volunteered to help with centers that day.)

- Temperatures in the classroom have been highly variable over the past week or two. I strongly advise you to send your child to school in layers to maximize his or her comfort each day.

- Double stay days begin next week. That means children who used to stay just Monday or just Thursday stay both days; and children who stayed just Tuesday or just Friday will stay both of those days. *Sharing days remain the same as they were - your child's original stay day.* Please be sure that your child knows his or her lunch and stay day plans each day, and try to limit after school activities and play dates as they adjust to this next big transition. Julie and I are looking forward to more time with the children!

- Thank you to the many families that have sent in a family picture. If you have not already done so, please send in a picture of your family next week for a class book. (Photos will be returned at the end of the year.)

- If you have not had an opportunity, please come in to sign up for a parent conference next week. The sign up sheet is in the hallway.

- Here are some important dates for the calendar:

- October 20 - Double stay days begin
- October 29 - Parent conferences begin
- October 31 - Halloween parade, 8:45
K centers time, 10:30
- November 4 - Early release, Parent conferences (NO STAY DAY)
- November 5 - Parent conferences
- November 7 - KK parent gathering
- November 12 - Parent conferences
- November 21 - tentative - Family celebration in KK (8:15-9:00)
(Details to come)

Finally, some personal news: I wanted to thank all of you for the generous invitation to join you for the parent gathering on November 7. I know that my husband, Dave, will not be able to join

us that night, due to a previous engagement. I am hoping to attend, provided the babysitting schedule works out. However, Dave and I did want to take this opportunity to share some exciting news with the KK community: we are expecting our second child in April. While we, and our daughter, Shira, are thrilled to be sharing this news, we know it may raise some concerns for parents in KK. Please know that Sheryl and I will be working closely together to find an appropriate teacher to complete the year with your children. Also know that Julie Felo's continued presence in the room provides great comfort for me, and the children, as someone who knows the room and the children extremely well. As we have updates, Sheryl and I will keep you informed. Please know that I did not share this news with the children yet, as I wanted to give parents the opportunity to know and discuss this development with children in whatever way makes sense for your family. However, I also want you to know that I do plan to share the news with the children on Monday, in case you wanted to speak to them at home prior to my announcement in class.

As always, I wish you a wonderful weekend with your children. Know that Julie and I are looking forward to seeing them - and to double stay days - next week.

Warmly,

Lynn