

Dear parents,

Yesterday we took a brief detour from all things Thanksgiving to introduce Henri Matisse for this month's artist study. We read a beautiful book that explored Matisse's use of collage, vibrant colors, and shapes that took their inspiration from nature: *Matisse's Garden* by Samantha Friedman, and then we looked at several of Matisse's works (including one Pam recently saw in Notre Dame Cathedral). Then we worked together to create two class murals, using two different techniques. First, the children used scissors and paper just like Matisse to create a beautiful collaged "community garden" (one last hurrah for our community unit). The children each had the chance to cut a folded piece of construction paper to make a symmetrical design. When they were finished with their cutting, they noticed that the inside piece fit perfectly inside the outside, just like a puzzle piece. We glued the outside pieces down, then glued the inside puzzle pieces (along with some birds and squiggly shapes) elsewhere on our mural to make what looks like a beautiful garden. The class also worked together to paint in the style of Matisse. We taped down plastic cut-outs of Matisse-style leaves, flowers, and birds directly on the paper. The children painted around them, and we then removed the cut-outs to see the white negative left behind. We think both our Matisse-inspired works are gorgeous!

Of course it was back to Thanksgiving today, and we were in full feast mode. To get us in the mood, we read *The Night Before Thanksgiving* by Natasha Wing, which featured a group of youngsters who, like all of us, were very excited for their big Thanksgiving feast. Then we sang a song about the foods we'd each bring for Thanksgiving dinner - turkey was a popular choice, as were sweets of all sorts, mashed potatoes, pie, and stuffing. We talked about how all of us have our own food preferences and dietary restrictions - some of us are vegetarians, others are omnivores; not surprisingly, most of us love dessert. We agreed that every choice is the right choice as long as we try to eat a healthy, balanced diet. In the classroom, the children wrote a journal entry identifying their favorite food. And in the art room, we served up a tasty Thanksgiving dinner, complete with cotton ball mashed potatoes (don't forget the felt butter!), pom-pom peas, pipe cleaner corn, dried and dyed macaroni, construction paper green beans, foam carrots, and felt cranberry sauce, all of which they could help themselves to and place on a paper plate. There were also foam turkey legs (the vegetarians amongst us wisely decided to pass on the turkey) and big slices of foam pumpkin pie, which the children got to cut themselves. Before we hit the playground, we read *The Very Stuffed Turkey* by Katharine Kenah, about a young turkey who got to enjoy the fun (and food!) of five very special Thanksgiving meals with friends.

A big thank you to all of you for our real "Thanksgiving feast," which we all enjoyed at lunchtime today. Our Show and Tell was a particularly delicious one - the children were excited to tell us what they brought to share with their friends, and we enjoyed sampling everyone's offerings. It was such a fun and tasty way to celebrate our very special Red 4s family, and by the end we were all almost as full (and definitely as happy!) as *The Very Stuffed Turkey*. We are immensely grateful for you and for your children, today and every day!

Looking ahead to important December dates:

December 1 - Thanksgiving Photo - If it's not too much trouble, please send us (via email) a photo of your Thanksgiving fun - it could be a family dinner, a museum visit, a trip to the beach, playtime with cousins, you name it. We will plan to write a journal entry about what we did over the break next Tuesday, so ideally we'd have them by this coming Monday morning. Don't worry if you don't have the chance to get us a photo. We find that photos serve as great prompts for our journaling, but we can always draw a picture in a pinch.

December 5 and December 12 - Show and Tell - Next week's Show and Tell (**Friday, December 5**) will feature the **letter D**. In the spirit of encouraging kindness and generosity, for Show and Tell on **Friday, December 12**, we thought it would be nice for the children to bring in a **new, unwrapped toy** that they would like to give to a child in need this holiday season. Pam and Carolyn will deliver the toys to the Toys for Tots toy drive on Saturday, December 13. We hope this is something you all will enjoy doing with your children. We know our collection of toys will bring smiles to lots of children's faces.

December 5 - Ugly Holiday Sweater Day - On Friday, December 5, we will be hand-crafting our very own (miniature) ugly holiday sweaters in the art room. Please feel free to send your children in wearing their favorite (ugly or otherwise) holiday sweaters/sweatshirts that day.

December 8 - Holiday Traditions - Over the next few weeks, we will be talking about holiday traditions from around the world, and we would like to compile a book of our holiday traditions with something from every family. **Please fill out the attached document and return it to us by Monday, December 8.** (We'll send hard copies home in backpacks next week too.) We are excited to learn about everyone's favorite holiday traditions!

December 19 - Holiday Show - Our 4s Holiday Show (featuring holiday songs and a very special performance by the Red and Blue classes) will take place on Friday, December 19 at 9:30 in Parish Hall. Our morning will wrap up right after the show. If your child will be unable to attend that morning, please let us know. Don't worry, they will still have the fun of rehearsing and participating fully with us over the next three weeks. We'll send more reminders about all this as we get a bit closer to the big day.

We wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday, full of family, friends, food, and fun!

Pam and Carolyn



