

Dear parents,

This week featured lots of color, with letter P **p**opping up throughout the week as well. For our fairy tale grand finale, we spent some time with *Little Red Riding Hood*. Just as we did with *Jack and the Beanstalk*, we read two versions of the story, one by James Marshall and the other by Mara Alperin. The children enjoyed thinking about the similarities and differences found in the two versions, and both elicited lots of conversation - among other hot topics, we discussed whether you might really encounter a wolf on a walk through the woods, how it would feel to be inside a wolf, and what we thought about the methods the huntsman used to get rid of the wolf (the last being a key difference in our two stories).

After much speculation by the children about what our shoeboxes could be for, we finally brought them out and turned them into Little Red Riding Hood dioramas. We likened diorama-making to creating the set for a play - you start by painting the backdrop, then you create the set props, and finally the actors can take the stage. It was a three-day affair, and the results are adorable. After a great yoga class on **Monday**, the children painted their shoeboxes, using brown, blue, and green paint to depict ground, sky, and forest. On **Tuesday**, they really got to work, using a variety of supplies - construction paper, tissue, paper towel rolls, cotton balls, moss, and pinecones - to complete their diorama "sets." We've got Grandma's house, trees, bushes, colorful flowers, sidewalks, clouds, suns and moons, and some sneaky hiding places for the wolf. The children also carefully colored and cut three very important characters; these we glued on to wine corks and placed in our dioramas on Wednesday. They can tell you who features; hint: the woodsman did not make the cut (pardon the pun). The children were rightly very proud of their dioramas, and they were eager to share with teachers and friends all the clever details of the scenes they had built. As we've remarked before, these artistic creations are so fun for us as teachers to see. They highlight all the good skills we've practiced over the past few months, they are a testament to the children's creativity, and they are so expressive of our crew as 11 unique little people.

On **Tuesday**, we also inspected our greenhouses to see how our beans were coming along. We saw it all: plenty of roots and shoots, a bit of mold, and a few beans that hadn't budged at all. Please be on the lookout for them in backpacks today! Apologies to those of you who were greeted by unpleasant beans - science is nothing if not interesting and unpredictable! Despite the differences we observed, we could all agree that these beans would likely not be tasty to eat, and that they were probably never going to send up beanstalks tall enough to reach the giant's castle. (If anyone can prove us wrong, please do let us know.) At lunch time, after re-reading *The Three Little Pig*, we all cast a vote for our favorite fairy tale. The top vote-getters were *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Princess and the Pea*.

Color being the name of the game this week, on **Wednesday** we thought it would be interesting to learn about an artist known for his use of bright, bold colors: Jackson Pollock (so accommodating of him to fit neatly into our letter P week!). The class was very interested to hear the story of *Action Jackson* (by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan)

and to look at some of his splatter paintings. Each painting was greeted with cries of "that's my favorite!", and the children told us they loved the colors and style Pollock used. Since Easter is just a hop, skip, and jump away, we decided we would employ eggs to create some Pollock-esque art of our own. The children chose two or three paint colors in beautiful spring shades of pink, red, orange, and yellow, they splattered and dotted the paints on a piece of paper, and then they rolled a wooden egg this way and that across the paper. We ended up with an artistic "two-fer" - both egg and painting "splatterpieces" look awesome, and you can really see the resemblance to Pollock's works! We will hang on to the paintings to display at the upcoming Art Show, but the children brought their splatter eggs home today to add to the ones the Easter Bunny might bring them.

Since we knew our Thursday would be jam-packed, we also got a head start on some productive letter **P** work. We read a couple of good **poems** featuring letter **P** and completed our letter **P** worksheets. And then to **put** an exclamation **point** on our **poetry** unit, we celebrated with a fun **Poetry Picnic**. We enjoyed juice and **peach pie** while we **pulled** out all the **poems** from our **pockets**, read them together, and gave them a thumbs up or thumbs down vote (mostly thumbs up, we're **pleased** to report). The children wowed us with their great guesses when we teased our surprise **P** treat - we heard **pancakes**, **pasta**, **peanuts**, **pickles**, **pineapple**, **pizza**, **popcorn**, **popsicles**, **potato chips**, and **pretzels**. They are really getting the knack of identifying initial sounds!

We got **Thursday** underway with a very apropos book - *LMNO Peas* by Keith Baker - and a rousing rendition of *I Am a Pizza*, a silly song the class knew from the 3s. Then we made some extremely colorful pizzas. The pizza-making had some good number recognition and counting "baked in," as the children had to count the toppings on each slice and **place** the slices in the correct numbered spot in the **pan**. Looking at the sticker toppings, we decided ours must all be "everything" pizzas, since they had every topping under the sun. As Ms. **Pam** **pointed** out, our **pizzas** had **pizazz**! Alas, we could not have pizza at snack time, so we decided to serve some delicious **peas** instead (actually peas two ways, both green peas in their native state and pea crisps). You might remember from last week, there was great confusion about what a pea was when we read *The Princess and the Pea*. Hopefully that's now been cleared up. We also decorated our classroom letter **P** with **purple pompoms**.

We then **played** host to some very special visitors. Chris, who works at the Greenburgh Nature Center, introduced us to a quail named Quevelyn, Emma the box turtle, and an Arizona mountain kingsnake named Aries. We learned all about their **protective** features, habitats, and diets, and we were introduced to the words "**predator**" and "**prey**." Inquiring minds wanted to know: Were any of the animals **poisonous**? Thankfully they were not! The children took turns **petting** each of the animals. They did a great job of listening attentively and handling the animals with care. We bet they came home full of news about the animals they saw.

Our **Friday** Show and Tell was, of course, **perfect**! Our letter **P** items were **pigs**, **pencils**, **purses**, **pickup trucks**, a **pin**, a **pony**, a **princess**, and lots of **pink** and **purple**. We took to our journals to document our Show and Tell. We read a very silly Easter story called

*Bunny Trouble* by Hans Wilhelm. And in a final nod to Easter, we played some Easter egg alphabet bingo. We took turns opening up plastic eggs, each of which had a letter inside - the "bingo caller" had to identify the letter in their egg and the group then had to hunt for the letter on their bingo cards. Just like with initial sounds, this group are really gaining great letter recognition skills!

**Looking ahead to next week and beyond:**

•Next week is Spring Break! As a reminder, **Monday, April 6 is a Mamaroneck School District snow giveback day, so school will be in session for us too.** We know some of you may already have planned to be gone that day. If you haven't already, please drop us a quick text or email if your child won't be in school on Monday the 6th.

•**Don't worry about finding an elusive letter Q item for our April 10 Show and Tell.** We'll do something fun for Show and Tell that day that requires no parent participation!

Wishing you short security lines, safe travels, delicious treats from the Easter Bunny, and lots of fun,  
Pam and Carolyn









