

Vestal Universal Pre-Kindergarten News



January/February 2009
Volume 1, Issue 3



Dear Parents,

The New Year brings promises that we make to ourselves and to others: losing weight, exercising more, eating less, etc. For you and your family, I would wish that you can find more time together. I would wish that this time would be relaxed and not so cluttered with feedback from your busy day.

I would wish that you could have time to play and read together, create and share ideas together, time to talk and giggle together.

As you open up your new calendars and write in all of the important dates and appointments, try to schedule some time with your child. As we all know, the time flies by, evaporating in front of our eyes.

Happy New Year, UPK families!

Diane Olivet, Coordinator of Instruction, Vestal Central School District

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ 1/19 JCC, week-long celebration of life of MLK, Jr.
- ◆ 2/09 Recess Resources will visit the dentist
- ◆ 3/5 Literacy Day

1 Mrs. Tanis & (Mrs. Haskell AM) & PM Class

January was a busy month in UPK 3. We enjoyed a lot of activities that involved the theme of winter weather and how PEOPLE prepare for the cold weather. We've participated in a finger paint activity with cocoa powder, rolled dice and then counted the corresponding number of snowflakes, brainstormed winter weather clothing and then decorated winter hats with collage material. We also helped our animal friends through the winter by making bird feeders out of pine cones, sun butter and bird seed. For Martin Luther King Jr. Day we celebrated the "Colors of Us!" We discussed how we are all different, but we come together to make a strong community of learners. We created a class project of different skin-tone painted handprints.



The last two weeks of January we concentrated on a baking unit! February was a short month and it flew by! February is all about healthy hearts and healthy teeth. We talked of food to keep us

healthy for the New Year. We brainstormed foods from the different food groups and then went through newspaper clippings and cut out some of those healthy foods for a class collage.

We enjoyed activities like creating a toothbrushing chart and making a healthy heart hand prints as well as x-rays. Some of the books we've enjoyed are The Tooth Book, Niki Bunny Goes to the Doctor, and My Body. We ended the month with a study of the 5 Senses. We had an I Spy activity on the 100th Day of School, baked and ate pizza and participated in a blind smelling test! We also enjoy center time when we write with erase markers, build race car ramps in the block area and sift sand in the sensory table. We are looking forward to moving into March and some spring weather.

*Mrs. Tanis & Jamie
Mrs. Haskell & Susan*

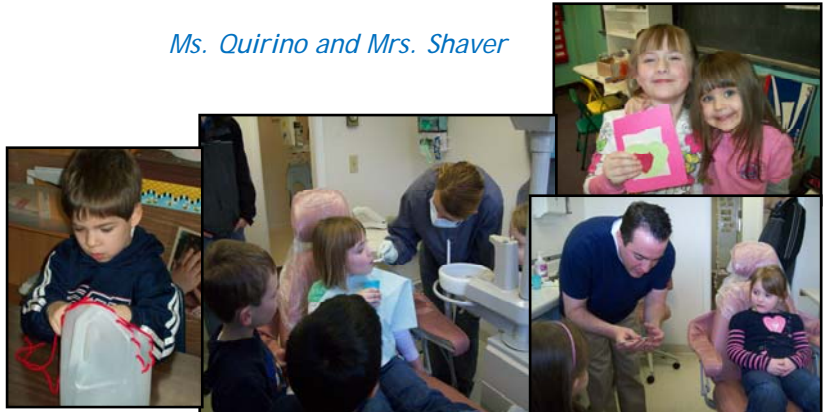
Ms. Quirino's AM Class

The school year is flying by! We can't believe it is already half over. In January, the students learned all about winter time. We talked about winter weather and the clothes we wear to keep us warm. The students had a great time exploring real snow in our water table. We painted the snow and watched it change colors! Our class also learned about hibernation and the night sky. The students helped create a space ship in our classroom and made space journals about their travels. We also had a pajama day to end our unit about night time.

In February, we learned about friendship and the mail system. The students learned what happens to a letter after you place it in the mail. Each child decorated a paper bear and we mailed them from our school to their homes. The children received their bears at their homes and are passing them on to friends and family. We are looking forward to mapping all of the places that our bears traveled to!

We also learned about dental health in February. Our class went on a walking field trip to the dentist's office. We learned all about the tools that the dentist uses and how to keep our teeth healthy. We are looking forward to learning about dinosaurs and transportation in the month of March!

Ms. Quirino and Mrs. Shaver



Ms. Crane's AM & PM Class

UPK 1 News

In January UPK 1 spent our days engaged in snowy activities. We made snowmen, dressed as snowmen, glittered and cut snowflakes and read snowy books.

February was a busy month! We celebrated Healthy Heart Month and Dental Hygiene Month. UPK students spent February focused on Healthy Habits. We learned about healthy foods, healthy bodies, exercise, visiting the doctor, and visiting the dentist. We learned about the bones in our body and examined some actual X-rays of our body. We worked with a felt board food pyramid to sort and classify different types of foods and to learn which foods we should eat a lot of and which foods we should limit to small quantities.

We were visited by two dental hygienists who taught the children about healthy dental habits. We practiced brushing and flossing a large set of teeth. Each student received a toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss.

We also had a special presentation by Tom Tasbor of the Finch Hollow Nature Preserve. Tom brought preserved animals for the students to examine as he explained how animals survive the winter by migrating, hibernating, and growing warmer fur. We were able to touch and examine an owl, fox, heron, squirrel, and many other animals.

We had two celebrations in the month of February. We celebrated the 100th day of school on February 24th and our color day Red Day on February 26th.

We're looking forward to fun spring activities in the month of March! Happy Spring!

Teresa and Chrissy



Brushing and flossing



Reading a book about our body



UPK Doctors examine bones



Finch Hollow Fox exhibit



Red Day makes a connection with literacy.

Mrs. Reibel's AM & PM Class

What's new in UPK 2? In January, we spent a lot of the month learning about friendship. We learned about Martin Luther King Jr. and how important it is to be kind to all people regardless of the color of their skin. We made friendship quilts where the children had lovely words to say about their friends. Our color for the month of January was blue. Who knew how many blue foods we could find!? We had blue corn chips, blue gummy worms, bagels with blueberry cream cheese and blueberry grape juice. When we brainstormed what we thought we *could* be having, the children had even more ideas! We even made a blue jeans project. We started our UPK Lending Library. The children are so excited about picking their library books on Fridays.

February kept us very busy too. We had a few special visitors: Finch Hollow Nature Center and some Dental Hygienist students from Dr. Bixby's dental office. We learned about the human body and how we can keep ourselves healthy. The children really enjoyed dressing up as doctors and nurses and taking care of each other and the dolls in the dramatic play center. We celebrated 100 days in UPK! Many of the children exchanged 100 pennies for \$1.00 bill at "The Bank of UPK." Red Day was spectacular! The children made collages, painted and helped make their own snack, "Queen of Hearts Cherry Tarts." Mmmmmm!

To end the month of February we learned about our Five Senses and how they keep us safe. We did experiments for each of the senses. We graphed the different color eyes we have in our class, went on a listening walk, smelled mystery smells, used our sense of touch to describe different objects hidden bags and found out what salty, bitter, sweet and sour taste like. I think the children enjoyed using their sense of taste the best!

Susan Reibel & Rachel Greenblott



*Finch Hollow Visit
Kyle checks out the feathers.*



*Dramatic Play
Esme and Eunjae dress up as doctors.*



*Our Five Senses
Ashley works on the eye graphs.*



*Learning About Our Bodies
William shares.*



*Finch Hollow Visit
Nicholas holds the beak.*

Ways that you can help your child:

- Read...read...read to your child! Try to share some rhyming books.
- Talk and listen to your child. Conversations between a child and an adult teach language patterns.
- Volunteer to assist in the classroom when it works for you and the classroom teacher. This shows how important your child's education is to you and your family.
- Play games with your child. Fun = learning rules + taking turns + sharing + memories. Make up a new game!



UPK Teachers and Professional Development

The UPK Teachers continue to participate in Vestal Central School District's Professional Development Program.



Rhonda
Ruhm



Cathy
Willis

Kindergarten Forum Session 5 took place on December 15th from 4:00-5:30 p.m. It was entitled: *Centers: Utilizing, Improving, Expanding*. Tioga Hills Elementary School Counselor, Rhonda Ruhm, and Vestal Hills Elementary School Speech Pathologist, Cathy Willis, shared ways that teachers can incorporate the school counselor and the speech therapist into classroom centers. This approach builds school relationships and helps to troubleshoot possible problems early on in a student's school career.

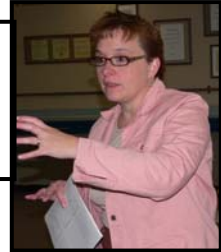


Sarah
Evans

Presenters Margaret Dein and Tammy Wanck use a SmartBoard to illustrate a teaching strategy.

On Monday, January 26th, District Literacy Specialist, Sarah Evans, shared information in her session: *Phonemic Awareness*. Many of the participants are enrolled in the multi-session workshop (Phonemic Awareness) which is offered throughout the school year.

Cathy
Willis,
Phonemic
Awareness
Presenter



LEFT: Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Judith Marsh, works with UPK teachers, Laura Tanis and Teresa Crane during a curriculum mapping session.

RIGHT: UPK staff from Recess Resources, Lori Smith, Pre-School Program Coordinator and Teacher, Tara Quirino, team up while mapping our UPK curriculum.



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