From the Desk of the Director

by Dr. Mandy Medvin  (email: medvinm@westminster.edu)

Happy December! I hope that all of you had a great Thanksgiving!

As the holidays approach and families gather together for holiday meals, I would like to address the importance of the family mealtime for child development. Research shows that eating together during meals promotes language, academic and social development in children of all ages. Mealtimes that are well-organized and positive provide opportunities for responsive parenting, clear communication, ‘checking’ of child behaviors (particularly in adolescence), and modeling of appropriate eating patterns. In our program, we ‘model’ the family meal by making snack time an opportunity for socialization and conversation. So make family mealtimes a regular event all year round.

Recommendations for preschool aged children include: a) turn off the television, b) set a regular mealtime c) expect good manners (please and thank you), d) have mealtimes last around 15-20 minutes e) talk with your children about events that happened in the neighborhood or during their school day.

Have a happy and healthy holiday season!

M/W/F Class Head Teacher’s Notes

by Melissa Moore  (email: mooreml@westminster.edu)

In December we will explore cultural differences by celebrating traditions from countries around the world. We are privileged to have some guest speakers throughout the month, a few from our preschool family and a few from the college. Through creative art expression, music, food, and literature your children will be able to appreciate the unique and multifaceted world in which we live. Our guest speakers are noted on the calendar.

We’d like to share with you our philosophy and goals about cultural diversity. Our purpose is to heighten the awareness of differences by presenting ideas in several ways.

- We talk about the background of people that we know or are in stories and note

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T/Th Class Teacher’s Notes

by Jennifer Matyasovsky  (email: matyasja@westminster.edu)

Almost every family has some tradition for the holidays whether it is being together at a certain place, making special holiday food, singing certain songs, or lighting candles. Traditions give us a framework for celebrating, and can be especially important when families feel the frenzy that sometimes comes with the holidays. Commotion, crowds and holidays can be over-stimulating for children. Below are some suggestions that may help you and your child manage the holidays better.

- Find some quiet time before the holidays to ask your child what traditions they enjoyed over the years. They may be the ones you will want to preserve.
- Involve your child in the pre-holiday activities, i.e. setting up candles, making

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similarities and differences.

- Guest speakers from our preschool families, the college or community are frequently invited to share their heritage with us at Circle Time.
- Lessons about diversity are integrated into our day-to-day activities. On the walls and shelves there are books and posters depicting people of diverse backgrounds living in contemporary United States and other parts of the world. In the art center materials are provided such as tan, beige, and brown markers and paints so children are able to create "real" people. In the dramatic play area dolls are included with a range of skin colors and features.
- We try to listen to what children talk about and raise questions that encourage them to explore their ideas and feelings about differences in cultures. Those early opportunities are used to teach about stereotyping and discrimination. The goal is to facilitate cultural sensitivity in children who are indeed the future of our society.

We will wrap up our month with a Polar Express Pajama Party! The teachers are busy planning a special day where your children will wear jammies to school, drink hot chocolate, wrap up a special art project, play holiday games, sing songs and much more!

December Recipe: St. Lucia Buns

1 loaf frozen bread dough
1/2 cup butter or margarine
Cinnamon and sugar

Let bread thaw in refrigerator overnight. Pull off pieces of dough and roll them into a ball. Place on waxed paper and let dough rise 30 minutes. Brush melted butter on top of the bun. Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar. Place on a greased cookie sheet and bake 15 minutes at 375 degrees.

Our college aides Ashley Stubbs (MWF class) and Romie Schweickert are bidding us a fond farewell on December 6 and December 7.

The preschoolers will be welcoming college aides Anna Brock (M/W/F) and Samantha Dubetz (T/TH) for the Spring semester.
We're Building a Better World
We're building a better world
We're building a better world
We're building a better world
One person at a time

And the world goes round and round
And the world goes round and round
And the world goes round and round
(repeat)

We're building a world of peace
We're building a world of hope
We're building a world of love

Dreidel Song
I have a little dreidel,
I made it out of clay,
And when it's dried and ready,
Oh, dreidel,
I will play.
(repeat)

Here at the Preschool Lab we will be reminding the children that the holiday season is a time of sharing with those less fortunate. Both classes will be asked to participate in our yearly City Rescue Mission Toy Day on Thursday, December 6 and Friday, December 7. We will be asking your children to bring a new or gently used toy to donate to the City Rescue Mission. This gesture for many, especially the three-year-old class, is a very difficult thing to do. Parting with toys sometimes brings tears. However, we have found this to be a positive experience as preschoolers learn to share and give to others. Please spend some time at home discussing this concept with your child. Help them to choose a special toy or go out and buy a special toy for the City Rescue Mission. The toys should be unwrapped.

The children will share their gifts during Show and Tell time.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PARK IN THE LOADING ZONE DRIVEWAY RATHER THAN ACROSS THE STREET IN THE BIG PARKING LOT. MANY TIMES CARS ARE NOT AWARE OF THE LOCATION OF THE PRESCHOOL AND DRIVE TOO QUICKLY WHILE CHILDREN MAY BE CROSSING THE STREET. PLEASE USE THE PRE-SCHOOL DESIGNATED PARKING SLOTS AND THE PARKING ZONE FOR SAFETY.

ONE OF THE STAFF WILL BE HAPPY TO TAKE YOUR PRESCHOOLER TO YOUR CAR IF YOU HAVE AN INFANT OR TODDLER IN A CAR SEAT. JUST CALL US TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAKE A SLEEPING INFANT OR LEAVE THEM IN THE CAR UNATTENDED.
HAVE A WONDERFUL AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN 2019!