



October/November Newsletter 2012



Meeting for Sharing

When we met as a faculty in late August, we decided that this year we would set aside one day per month, during our regular Meeting time, for the children to share what they have been learning in their respective classrooms. While we strive to give children a voice every day at Meeting, having Meeting for Sharing provides us with an opportunity to celebrate learning across the school and reinforces how much we value and appreciate the children's work. We decided that sharing at our Meeting for Sharing was optional; classes could decide when and if they had something of interest to share.

Our first Meeting for Sharing was held on Friday, October 26th. Children were greeted by a teacher when they entered the Meeting room and then invited to sit on mats that were arranged in a circle. Four classes chose to share at our first meeting: the

Fireflies, Grasshoppers, Butterflies and the Kindergarten. We learned that the Fireflies had planted acorns and were documenting their growth. The Grasshopper class shared beautiful apple art creations and recited an apple poem that the entire class had memorized. The Butterflies taught us the "Five Little Pumpkins" poem, and the Kindergarten shared drawings and recycling tips that can help us take good care of the earth.

In addition to honoring children's work, Meeting for Sharing gives the children an opportunity to practice speaking/singing/reciting in front of a larger audience. Learning to do this at a young age helps children develop confidence and teaches them the power of words. Being an attentive listener when peers are speaking is also a skill worth practicing at any age-

Meeting for Sharing has just as many benefits for the listeners as it does for those who are sharing.

We invite you to join us for Meeting for Sharing at 9am on of the following dates:

November 29

December 14

January 31

February 22

March 21

April 26

May 23

Or, join us for our daily Meeting any morning at 9am. We truly enjoy having visitors!

Warmly,
Sharon



S.P.I.C.E.S.



Most of the classrooms at Fairville are mostly adorned with the creations of the children. There is one item in each of our classrooms that is hung by and for the teacher. We hang the S.P.I.C.E.S. plaques in prominent locations in our classrooms so that we have a constant reminder of the fundamental driving beliefs that guide our work and how we strive to conduct ourselves within our community. The Quaker Testimonies of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship are at work and present in all areas of Fairville. When I am asked how Quakerism is present in our little school it is a pleasure to speak about how deeply these testimonies are woven into the fabric of our community.

S Many appreciate the beauty of the simplicity at Fairville. Our classrooms are simple – using simple structures and wooden toys. We don't have computers in our classrooms nor do we promote the popular media characters. Instead, we prefer children use their imaginations and simple tools for play. We also enjoy simple meals together. And even how we choose to celebrate birthdays and holidays is simple. None of these examples should be mistaken for less meaningful, in fact, sometimes it seems to me that when there are fewer bells and whistles, more substance surfaces.

P Because we work with the 5 and under population, the Peace Testimony is an important one. ☺ We work with conflict resolution all the time. One of the biggest aspects of our jobs is to teach the children how one gets along in a community. Working out how to acknowledge another's feelings, take responsibility for your part in a conflict and take the steps to resolving the conflict are lessons that we use throughout our lives. At Fairville, even the youngest of us learn how to effectively resolve a conflict and honor themselves and the other (s) in the process. In this honoring of themselves and others we also see the Integrity Testimony at work. We speak of honesty and kindness in actions and doing the right thing. Integrity in your actions is fundamental at Fairville and many of our lessons with the children are to this end.

C Fairville REALLY understands the beauty of community. The children take part in the collections of food for families or animals, or pennies for victims of the hurricanes. And even at a simple, more familial level, the classes often do kind acts of generosity for one another. Making gifts, baking bread, bringing in things left in the taxi yard are all little acts that are communicated to be understood as the nice things that we do to take care of each other in community. It all begins at our Meeting for Worship each morning when we take the time to honor each other and our experiences. We all know the names of all of the children and most of them know each of the teachers by name. This sense of belonging and care of our greater community is part of the Fairville mission and the children's learning.

E Quakers believe in equality in all ways. This testimony in action is seen in many ways at Fairville. We have always treated all children fairly and honor that of God in each child. Regardless of age, respect is a fundamental expectation. In each classroom, as faculty we are thrilled to have families come in to share their unique cultural, religious or family tradition or situation. We have had the opportunity to learn about Hanukkah traditions, yoga demonstrations and even a discussion of an adoption process - to name a few. This is growth and learning for us all and is an opportunity to honor the unique beauty of that student. Among the faculty, we share school responsibilities and chores, reinforcing and modeling our belief in equality and a sense of community.

S The children experience the Quaker Testimony of Stewardship of the Earth in many ways at our school. We honor our surroundings by "being kind to plants and trees," planting flowers, and growing vegetables to eat. In our classrooms we recycle scrap paper and use "found objects" to create projects. We compost in the kitchen and talk about not wasting food at meals or water while we wash our hands. A day doesn't go by that the idea of caring for our planet and its resources isn't talked about somewhere at school.

Events Calendar

December 6 OR December 14 December 14 Dec. 20 - Jan. 2 January 3	Pajama Storytime and craft with John from Kennett Library 6 - 7 pm Pajama Storytime and craft with John from Kennett Library 6 - 7 pm No afternoon classes—school closes today at 12:30 pm Winter Break—School Closed—Happy Holidays! Welcome Back— Happy New Year!
---	---



In the Classrooms.....

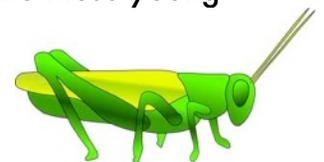


Vicki and Liza's Ladybugs finished a unit on bears in early October while the Bumblebees focused on fall, then the Ladybug and Bumblebee classes joined together to study farms. Both classes completed some work independently, but often the classes joined together to listen to stories, sing songs, create art or cook! Both classes painted big red barns, carved pumpkins and made scarecrows. Children brought in vegetables so the classes could make and eat Friendship Vegetable Soup—it was delicious! Both classes also picked apples from the orchard and made homemade applesauce. Math, literacy and social skills were woven into the unit, too! It is such a pleasure watching the children (and teachers) from different classrooms working and learning together!

Meaghan and Rita's afternoon Ladybugs are experiential learners, so it was appropriate for them to spend a good deal of time outdoors enjoying the sights and sounds of fall. The Ladybugs collected fall leaves, sorted and counted fall leaves, practiced cutting out leaves, and raked and then jumped into piles of fall leaves. The Ladybugs are also learning what it means to be in school: to bring down the silence during meeting, say goodbye to parents, share, take turns, express their wants and needs, etc. I enjoy seeing them smiling and enjoying their afternoons at school!



The Fireflies became interested in acorns earlier this fall, first collecting them, then later planting them and watching them sprout! As a result of this experience the class has become interested in trees, leaves, roots and bark. They examined the texture of leaves, made stick sculptures, and went on a tree hunt. After Hurricane Sandy the Fireflies took on the task of cleaning up the play yards by picking up sticks that had fallen during the storm. We all appreciate these young stewards of the earth!



The Grasshoppers studied apples during October, using them for taste-testing, counting, sorting and graphing. They read many apple-related books, made applesauce, and then made applesauce ornaments for each classroom, for the office, and for each student to take home. In early November the Grasshoppers learned about spiders and spider webs, making their own interesting, artistic webs. Just before the Thanksgiving holiday they spent time discussing and expressing gratitude for all that they have. The Grasshoppers also began to study bats right before the break; they will continue with that topic when we return to school on Monday.

In the Classrooms (continued)...



The Butterflies learned about fire safety during the month of October. They practiced the stop, drop and roll technique and talked about firefighters and their role as community helpers. A visit from the Longwood Fire Company supported this theme. Later in the month the Butterflies spent a couple of weeks talking about autumn. They read books about, made leaf men and leaf rubbings and used fall objects for sorting, counting and patterning activities. In early November the Butterfly class began a study of the Lenape Indians, learning about their homes, family life, food, games and customs. The class created their own Lenape village, complete with a wigwam, baskets, clothing and typical tools used by the Lenape. The children will continue learning about Lenape culture over the next few weeks.



During October the Kindergarten classroom ocean became polluted! The children had to learn about recycling so they could figure out how to clean it up again. They read recycling books, shared recycling tips with the rest of the school, and practiced using less paper and water during the school day. By mid-November the class had learned a lot and their ocean was returned to its former beauty. The class also had a visit from Hetty Franke, the Worm Lady. She taught the class about vermi-composting and now the Kindergarten has their own worm bin! The children are experimenting to see just how much kitchen waste the worms can consume. The class hopes to keep the worms healthy and well-fed as the school year progresses. Kindergarten also created a forest in a corner of the classroom and will soon be reading, re-writing and acting out familiar forest tales to help further develop their skills as young readers and writers. A study of woodland animals will follow in the new year.

Generous Gifts

Fairville families support our school in so many ways. Many thanks to all who purchased pies at the pie sale, bought holiday greens at our greens sale, volunteered to work at the Book Fair or purchased books for the school library in addition to the books that were purchased for family and friends. We were awed by your amazing support of our La Mancha pet shelter drive, our Hurricane Sandy penny drive and our Chester County food cupboard drive. The children were pleased that they could participate by placing donated pennies, pet supplies and food items in the jars or baskets during Meeting.

Teachers enjoyed a steady supply of yummy treats during October and November, too! Thank you for thinking of us!

It takes a village to run a successful school and we want you to know that your support does not go unnoticed. Thanks so much for all that you do!

