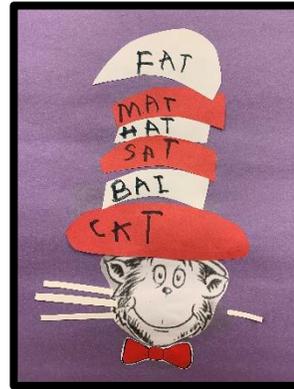


# York Avenue Preschool Director's Corner

## January/February 2020



We are always so amazed at how much the children seem to have grown after our winter break. This year is no different! While having two weeks off was certainly relaxing, I think we were all ready to return to school and get back to what we do best- playing and learning.

This semester has been exceptionally productive as the faculty and I (Carissa) have been exploring new methods to present our curriculum to our families. We have been diligent in working towards being as purposeful and intentional as possible, while providing all of our parents with the information needed to make a home-school connection. My door is always open for parents who have any questions.

Most recently, our **Twos** have been hard at work exploring the various themes that they have expressed interest in. Each room looks different and we love it! The five-day class is studying dinosaurs- be on the lookout for fossils, archeologists and tricky new vocabulary like; excavate, carnivore and herbivore. With such young children, keeping the activities concrete is the key to embedding skills in a playful way. The three-day class expressed interest in The Arctic and following their lead, the teachers have filled the sensory tables with "snow", gathered all of the arctic animals from other classrooms and even made snow shelters! The other Three Day & Two Day classes are diving into a study of transportation. They began their lesson by discussing how the children used their feet to get them from one place to another, as well as all the places their feet could take them. The children then worked together using black paint and butcher paper to create a giant road to use with all of their vehicles as they continue to explore and learn about all the things that go. March is quickly approaching and all Two's teachers are assessing progress to be sure that our youngest children have mastered the foundations needed to enter the Threes.

The **Threes** classes have taken two *very* different directions – one class is entrenched in a study of farm animals and barn life, while the other class is following their interest of princesses, stories and dramatic play in a unit on fairy tales. The class exploring the farm all worked together using recycled materials to create a large farm for their classroom play. The children have taken a particular interest in animal families, learning the names of various farm animals and their young. The other class built a giant fairy tale castle for their dramatic play. Children have been comparing and contrasting different versions of fairy tale stories, noticing the similarities and differences. They have also been asked to think critically and help problem solve certain situations. For example, what could we have done differently so that Humpty Dumpty did not fall apart when he fell from the wall? The children came up with a variety of solutions as they engineered different height walls using building materials in their classroom. Using a unit based, emergent curriculum model affords all of the

students the opportunity to be inquisitive, engaged learners. We are curious ourselves as to how far the children will take their learning!

**Fours** are busy, busy, busy! Both classes celebrated Valentine's Day by exchanging cookies and cards, discussing "kindness" and journaling on topics related to love and family. They celebrated Dr Seuss's birthday by thinking about rhyming words and silly stories. Similar to the Threes, our Fours rooms looked very different throughout the past two months. One classroom did an in-depth study of New York City, while the other focused on Presidents! For the NYC unit, children discussed transportation and city mapping. They used colored tape to create their own subway and bus lines. They also worked together in groups to create their own cities out of recycled materials. In the president unit, students were curious about how someone becomes the president. We read a lot of historical fiction and nonfiction texts about some of the first presidents and discussed qualities of a good leader. The children also enjoyed the idea of casting a ballot and voting as they campaigned for a new classroom "pet". Our block building areas in each room were filled with skyscrapers, the Empire State Building, train stations, the Statue of Liberty, the White House and the Lincoln Memorial. Block building is a key component of early childhood that stimulates development of all learning domains as well as helps children to collaborate- taking turns and sharing materials, becoming self-reliant, negotiating differences of opinions, cooperating with others and developing self-esteem. As the children in our Four-year-old classes move closer to five years old, they are more and more capable of developing the skill base expected in Kindergarten.

As a community, York Avenue Preschool is looking forward to our annual Gala/Auction Fundraiser. Each year this PA sponsored event is great night out and affords teachers, parents and administration the chance to socialize and raise money for our Parents' Association. The PA supports a variety of initiatives from teacher development and appreciation, to specialty programs such as Library, Living Science and Yoga. Each age group made different projects to be auctioned off, and whether it be a cookie jar or a chair, the highest bidder will be sure to treasure it for a long time to come!

Following a very successful Kindergarten Admissions process, we are entering into our very own Admissions season! Families who have applied to York Avenue Preschool for the 2020-2021 schoolyear will receive notification on February 27<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions about the process, please feel free to view the Admissions page of our website or reach out with questions.

Carissa Canovas & Nancy Baldaro

