

Dear Parents,

It is hard to believe that it's December and we only have two short weeks before Winter Break! We have been busy with some rock exploration, some holiday exploration, and daily practicing of our song and lines for the Holiday Program. Thank you for working at home with your children and helping them to memorize their lines. Please continue to help them rehearse and gain confidence in reciting their lines. We only have a few more days to practice at school before our rehearsal at the Bridge on Wednesday.

This week we did some painting with some of the rocks we found on our rock hunt last week. I gave the students bowls of paint and shallow boxes in which to put paper and rocks dipped in paint. I envisioned them tipping the box from side to side to create patterns with the rocks. What actually happened was rocks flying through the air along with paint, rocks that refused to budge, stuck in the paint, students dipping the rocks in paint and using them to smear the paint, students using many heavy rocks with paint to eventually tear through the paper, and students giving up on the rocks and just smearing all the colors around with their hands, creating a lovely shade of "poop" brown.

This type of art activity is one of the things I love about our philosophy at Plato; we are all about process art vs product art. Product art focuses on the end result while process art focuses on the experience of making art. Process art has no right or wrong way to explore and create. It focuses on the experience and exploration of techniques and materials. The art produced is unique and original. If you look at your child's creation and have no idea what it's supposed to be, the answer is that it's process art! Encourage your child to, "Tell me about your creation", and I'm sure they will tell you more than you could've ever imagined!

This week we discussed and wrote out wish lists. When I mentioned that we would be doing this writing activity, one student told me, "I've already done this at home." I explained that our wish lists would include thinking of other important people (and pets!) in our lives and writing down what we would like to give them. After writing what we would like our mom, dad, siblings or pets to receive, we then included one thing we wished for. It was fun and insightful to read what the

children wished for their loved ones. Some examples: For the moms - a coffee maker, a new pet, a Chicago Bears jersey, flowers, jewelry, a Dunkin Donuts gift card and a hug. For the dads - lots of socks, a Blackhawks jersey, a ticket to see the Chicago Bears, fish, and a Corvette. You have thoughtful and generous children. Let's hope some of those wishes come true!

Some notes: A very happy note - I found out this week that I was selected to receive a \$500 grant from the Meemic Foundation. I had written a grant application titled "Listening for Literacy" hoping to receive funds to purchase items to create a listening center in our classroom. Not only do I want the children to have the ability to listen to books on CD/tape, I also want them to be able to write their own books and record them so that we can add their books to our listening library. Hopefully we will receive the money in January and can purchase all the items we need to get our listening center up and running!

Our Scholastic order from November finally arrived Monday. I have sent out the December book order forms this week and plan on placing an order this weekend. The books will definitely arrive before school gets out later this month. If you would like to order something as a gift for your child, please email me and I will keep it hidden until we can get it to you.

The weather has definitely turned colder and we will continue to go outside for recess as long as the temperature permits. Please send your child with a hat, gloves, a warm enough jacket, boots, etc. If you have spares, feel free to leave a hat and gloves at school to keep in your child's cubby.

Finally, tomorrow (Friday) we will be going to the bank to make deposits. If you want your child to participate, please send them with money in an envelope or ziploc bag with their names printed on them.

Thanks for sharing your amazing children with me. Have a great weekend!
Ms. Leslie