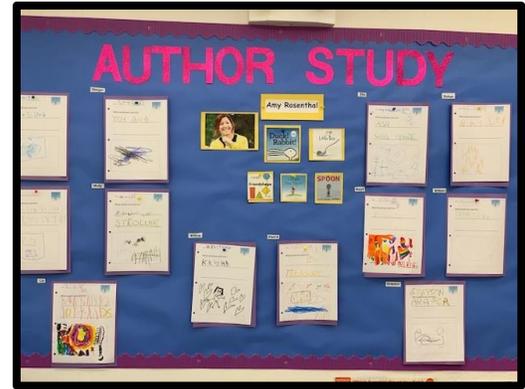


November/December 2020



We are already well into November, as surprising as that seems. The leaves falling from the trees and carpeting the ground serve as reminders that the winter is around the corner.

We had impressive participation from our students and families for the New York Common Pantry food drive; we collected more food than any other year! Students had to engage all of their muscles to drop their bags full of heavy cans into our donation boxes. In December we held a toy drive to benefit The Ronald McDonald House. We heard so many parents tell us how much fun their children had choosing a toy for another child. We are so proud of their participation and their generosity!

For our November Spirit Day, each student expressed what they were thankful for, and participated in class projects to display in the playground windows. December brought the children an opportunity to create beautiful ornaments that were displayed on our tree in the school lobby. We made sure it was visible from outside so the children could share their creations with their grown-ups. We held a virtual Holiday concert in which our Threes and Fours participated. Mr. Alex, our amazing music teacher, coordinated the event and live streamed from the classrooms. It was a huge success and allowed us to keep our school community connected.

In November, the Twos students have enjoyed learning about apples, pumpkins, and are now branching out into a hands-on exploration of seeds. The children used their senses to look inside, smell, and a few brave souls even tasted cucumbers, peppers, and tomatoes. The teachers helped the children to figure out the shapes of the different foods once cut – they were mostly circles! Our twos students also planted some lima beans, so they can experience what happens when you plant and care for seeds; some beans have already started sprouting! Even though it is not the spring, if the children are interested in seeds and planting, we are excited to open up the classroom to this investigation.

December brought much discussion about Holidays and how we celebrate them. The excitement was contagious and it was so much fun to hear the children share their ideas. The changing weather was noticed and the Twos enjoyed cataloging what they wear to stay warm when it's cold outside. Our weather Frog started needing a hat, scarf and mittens just like the students! The students painted with winter colors of blue and white and made some special gifts for their parents. Christmas and Hannukah songs were sung with gusto, accompanied by Mr. Alex.

The **Threes** classes, in the month of November, are very focused on developing their burgeoning fine motor skills, though the students themselves might not realize it! Classes have been lacing, ripping and cutting paper, drawing up shopping lists, manipulating playdough, and painting with Q-tips. On top of these being enjoyable activities for the children, they all have the benefit of helping them exercise their fine motor dexterity, precision, and strength. Developing these skills is an important antecedent to handwriting, so our threes teachers are sure to integrate lots of fine motor activities into each day. In December, one class explored the story of the Nutcracker, while another experienced celebrations from other countries, incorporating food, music and dance. Snowpeople were abundant and speculation abounded as to when it was going to snow here! One Threes room took a deep dive into the ocean and explored the creatures that live there along with where the oceans are on the planet. There was an ocean research center and octopuses were seen hanging from the ceiling!

November brought the **Fours** a new author of the month, Amy Krause Rosenthal. The children enjoyed *Duck, Rabbit*, and during journaling, they wrote what they saw and illustrated it accordingly. Kandinsky was the artist of month and the children used paper circles and Kwik Stix for their interpretations. In December, the class has learned about the artist Gerhard Richter, with Ms. Jess, our art teacher. The children used oil pastels, paint and squeegees to create their masterpieces. We continue to count how many days we have been in school, in anticipation of the 100th day! Math took on a Holiday theme by counting menorah candles and patterning of candy canes. Letter of the week continues and the list of words grows each week, as the children become more proficient and are eager to share their words. In library, the fours continued with both fiction and non-fiction sessions.

Thanksgiving and "Friendsgiving" was celebrated throughout the school. We talked about what we were thankful for and delicious foods were shared. In December, the smells of latkes and gingerbread wafted through the hallways as we discussed the foods that are eaten at the holidays.

We look forward to a New Year that will bring us all happiness and health. I hope that you will visit our Director's Corner next month as we ring in 2021!

Becky Laird + Nancy Baldaro

