



## ROOTS AND BRANCHES November 2011



It is simply amazing to realize we are already in November of our school year! The children have been enjoying the cold but sunny days out on the playground! Thank you for changing out any summer clothes for their spare clothes they keep here at school! Before you know it we will be experiencing those rainy days so please remember to send your children to school with raincoats and boots (if they have them) on those days - a hood is great to have on a raincoat so that they can still play outside if it's just a fine mist. We will also have a few rain boots on hand here if your child does not own any or forgets them. There is nothing better for a child than to be able to splash in the puddles after a good rain!

We have now started exploring sand and the different types and textures of different sand. We have regular playground sand outside, *moon* sand inside, as well as the very fine grained sand for making patterns, designs and tracks on a table top. We are still exploring all the different materials, but this month we are focusing on sand. The four year olds have even made sand letters to take home (maybe you should keep a pan in your car to transport art this month ☺)!

I would like to take a moment to tell you about some wonderful things we have noticed with our new in/out schedule. First of all, the MWF children understand the schedule *amazingly well* and it gives us chills to see a child walk in and change his/her card like they "own" the place. What a true feeling of accountability and responsibility for these children. They are so proud to be able to walk in and out and they *definitely* do both. I have been able to share a few of these stories with some parents but would like to share the same with all of you - in the MWF classes, I know several parents of boys were concerned their boys might never return to the *indoors* for fine motor work or art projects (having a boy here before - I understand their initial concern), but what we have seen has been remarkable! The boys in all classes do usually venture outside in the beginning, but we are seeing them return after a point and then actually *choose on their own*, to read quietly with a teacher, or move into the domestic play area and set up restaurants, use fine motor skills making things with paper and scissors, and even, yes - inching their way over to the art table. The girls, on the other hand, who "typically" would stay away from the block area due to the boys claiming their stake in that room ☺, are now venturing into the block room to build "castles" that are so intricately built any architect would hire them on the spot! The detail and balancing skills used in building these castles is truly a work of art (and math)!

The three year olds are just starting the schedule and seem to be understanding they are free to move in and out, but are still (as we expected) learning to turn their cards. They will be learning name recognition using the cards as well, since their photo is on the front, but when they go outside, they turn their card to "green" with their name on it to show us they are out in the grass - yes, green for grass!

## Saying "good-bye" to the teachers at the end of the day

All classes will end up outside the last five minutes for pick up from parents (unless raining - then we will have them inside and will bring your children to you). Returning to outside for pick up will hopefully help you by being able to "check in" at the end of the day. Please bring your child by to say "good-bye" to his/her small group teacher as you are leaving. This is a good way to be sure your teacher knows your child has left and will help the teacher if there was something they needed to mention to you. This is also a very good way to model for your child how to say "good-bye" to someone. Many children are not developmentally ready to look an adult in the eyes and say "good-bye," but eventually they will learn by watching you say "good-bye" to the teacher. You might say to your child, "Let's go say good-bye to your teacher," but please don't feel that they must do so - they will do it when you least expect it! It could be third grade before a child is even ready for this - but they *will learn* these social skills by constant modeling from their parents. You might think about waving as you say good-bye, so your child could choose to just wave in the beginning. Just remember, *any* adult who has ever had a child will remember that children are learning and will not take offense to a child not saying "hello" or "good-bye."

**"My child is shy" and other things we probably shouldn't let our children hear us say in front of them! 😊**

At a recent teacher in-service, we reminded ourselves to watch how much we talk with parents in front of their children - *about* their children. It is so easy to forget, but we ask that you also refrain from discussions with the teachers in front of your child regarding any concerns, etc. Your children have *excellent* hearing despite their tiny ears and they are like little sponges on anything said about them. A "check in" at the end of the day is different than speaking with them about behavior issues or discussing how "shy" your child might be (or at least you think they might be). If you let them hear you say they are "shy" you are giving them an excuse to not speak to others, and also *reinforcing* the shy behavior. Children want to live up to their parents' expectations! 😊

## THANK YOU LIVE OAK FAMILIES!

Wow! What a wonderful success the wrapping paper and Walkathon were! Thank you so very much to all of the parents who participated in these events. In wrapping paper, we made \$1,820.00, which is terrific! In the Walkathon, we made \$3,284, which was another big success! Most importantly, this was a *big* hit just by the number of smiling faces I saw and those little feet literally *running* laps around our school! Once the children realized that they would get a sticker each time they did a lap, those feet *took off!* Many, many thanks to our very own office manager, Kacy Kohut, board member - Susie Cavallo, and the many parents who volunteered and participated. Thank you also to the many parents who donated items for the raffle, and helped with set up, check-in, or clean up for this event. We could not have pulled this off without your help! We will be looking forward to next year and hope to see even more families involved.

We would also like to thank the Traverso family for their donation in bringing the Sonoma County "Museum on the Go" to our school! It was a wonderful event for all the families! You may have also noticed a new piece of "art" in our back yard. Thanks to Todd Woolman, we now have a piece similar to a piece of art they brought from the museum. Todd made us a wonderful new "toy" that the children love to play with - even Teacher Therese loves it! ☺ We also can't forget the dads who always pitch in to shovel our new sand in the sand box or repair our diggers - thank you to Peter Mork, Jason Frost, and Paul Fleckenstien!!! Last but not least - our room parents ARE AMAZING!!! Thank you to Jessica Wilhelm, Elizabeth Traverso, Jennifer Threlfall, and Kimberly Wright for organizing such fun events for our children!



### What do my children learn from playing with blocks?



As you know, the teachers here at Live Oak pride ourselves on maintaining a play-based and developmentally appropriate preschool, while exposing your children to the academics. Many of you may still be wondering "what is my child learning from playing all day?" I thought I would first talk to you a little about our *block play*. If you ever research *block play for preschoolers*, you will soon find that all research shows that block play is strongly related to and promotes math and science competence. When you see your child holding, moving, and stacking blocks, they are experimenting with weight and height, learning about geometric shapes and balance, as well as using their gross motor skills. They are able to experiment by watching cause and effect. Not only do they learn pre-math and science concepts, but language, emotional and social development are also developed in a block area. Have you ever watched your child work diligently on building a tall tower of blocks, only to see their disappointment and frustration (and sometimes excitement ☺), as it collapses to the ground? They learn to use descriptive words as they talk about their frustrations, as well as learn how to share, work with a partner, and control their frustrations when things don't always go their way. If you sit and talk with your child about what he/she is building, many times you will see that he/she is recreating their world or things they have experienced by stories that have been read to them. By asking questions about their structure, you can help in promoting language development, and prompt *what if* situations that might lead to more scientific and math concepts, etc.



### Holiday Happenings!



Believe it or not, before we know it the holidays will be upon us. In November we talk with the children about what they are "thankful" for in their lives. It is so nice to hear them usually mention "mom and dad" first, knowing that as young as they are, they remember what's truly important in their lives. Holidays are always a hectic time in the lives of the children and their families, so try to remember what your child remembers when things get a little too crazy . . . remember to take time to simply be together.

Just to give you a Live Oak "heads up," the following is a list of a few things that will be happening around our school. We will be having our "Thankful Feasts" in each of the classes, 45 minutes prior to the end of class. We hope that you will be able to join us to share food and friendliness with us! This is usually a *big* deal for the children, so if one parent or grandparent could attend, that would be wonderful! The Mon/Wed/Fri classes will have their feast on Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, and the Tues/Thurs. classes will have their feast on Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. All families are welcome to join us. If you are unable to come due to work constraints, etc., (which we completely understand), please let his/her small group teacher know in advance so that we can plan to be with your child as a "special" person. This has always been a potluck feast, with signup sheets out the two weeks prior to the date. We will have up on the walls, the children's "thankful lists" that are always very enlightening to read!



We will also be celebrating the December holidays with our annual Holiday-Family Sing-a-Long! On Tuesday, Dec. 20th and Wednesday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. We will have our annual sing-a-long with Star Tom in each of the classes and, of course, our delicious pot lucks! We will be practicing the songs with the children all throughout December. The children love having their families join us for the sing-a-long to join in our fun! So please join us on Dec. 20th for the Tuesday/Thursday classes at 10:30 for the a.m. and 3:00 for the p.m. class. The Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes will have their party on Wednesday, Dec. 21st at the same respective times. Everyone is welcome, but please be ready to join in on the floor at circle time for this fun event! I will have a "pot luck" sign-up sheet out as the day approaches. Moms and dads, please join us if you can!!

### Dates to Remember

Tuesday, November 15 <sup>th</sup>	FREE - Parent Education Night at Live Oak with Barbara Joy! 6:00p.m.
Monday, November 21st	Thankful Feast for the MWF children (10:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.)
Tuesday, November 22nd	Thankful Feast for the Tues/Thurs children (10:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.)
Nov. 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> and 25th	Thanksgiving Holiday - School closed
Dec. 20th and 21st	Family Sing-a-Long
Dec. 22 <sup>nd</sup> - Jan. 6th	Winter Break
Jan. 9th	Live Oak classes resume

