

PRESCHOOL PRESS

Special Guests Educate and Entertain

Time goes by so fast when you are having such fun! This would certainly pertain to The Griffin Academy. The winter months have been full of fun activities.

The children were in a paradise of dramatic play during their field trip to The Playseum in Washington, DC. This two-story building, which had the feel of being on the set of Sesame Street, was full of all of those wonderful things that make children's eyes grow big. Every available space, every room, was designed to excite a child's imagination. The children started their visit by either making strawberry slushies in the bakery or painting their own ceramic tile (to take home). From there, the children could stay on the first floor and pretend to be at a veterinarian's office, work at a Chinese restaurant, drive a fire truck, or dress up for their debut on the stage. On the second floor, the children were delighted to find a grocery store, an Italian restaurant, a spa, a country farm, a pirate's ship with sand tables, a jail, and a presidents' room, complete with a life-size, wax figure of George Washington. A fun time was had by all—including the teachers!

An annual highlight for the month of November is a pre-Thanksgiving feast provided for the children by the staff. In preparation for this special day, the children made dough bead necklaces which they gave to each other as a sign of friendship. This day, for the past two years, has also included a little skit written by one of the teachers and performed by all of the teachers. This year, Mother Goose made an appearance as she invited some of her nursery-rhyme friends for lunch at her "house." Mother Goose was sure to help teach her friends about good table manners and table etiquette—just in time for Thanksgiving dinner!

The month of December started with a delightful visit from a traveling children's theater, Caitriona's Castle. The Fairy Godmother arrived in costume, and she had hands and carts full of costumes and props. The Fairy Godmother, with assistance from the teachers, costumed each child in preparation for their participation in the enchanting play, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. After the children were assigned a role and dressed in character, the Fairy Godmother started the show. She called up each character and whispered a line or two and possibly a stage direction in the child's ear. Each child was a member of the show. The show included a king, a queen, a royal guard, a huntsman, a prince (and his horse), a cottage, a mirror, woodland characters (including butterflies, a bear and a bunny), flowers, a wicked witch (warlock in this production), seven dwarfs, and of course...Snow White. This was a very charming introduction to presenting plays, and speaking in front of bigger groups of people. The Griffin Academy looks forward to an annual visit by Caitriona's Castle.

The children could hardly contain themselves when Dr. House and her dog, Piper, made a visit to their school. This special visit by Dr. House was a culminating event to the Unicorns' dramatic play veterinarian's office. This special visit to The Griffin Academy taught the children a little bit about the job of a veterinarian. Dr. House brought real dog and cat x-rays and explained to the children what the x-rays showed. She used Piper to show the children how a dog gets a check-up—just like children get! Each child played the role of animal doctor when using Dr. House's stethoscope to listen to Piper's heartbeat. Dr. House's check-up ended with a visit to the Unicorn class to check on the sick animals that were at their pretend veterinarian's office.

As the winter break approached, The Griffin Academy traveled to Westminster School to join in the holiday fun. This is the second year for the preschool children to join the "big kids" in celebrating the season at the Holiday Cookie Party. The Griffin Academy arrived, ready for some homemade cookies, and ready to entertain their parents and the rest of the Westminster community with songs they had prepared to sing. As was expected, The Griffin Academy parents formed a small group of paparazzi as their cameras flashed away and video cameras kept running while the children delighted the audience with their cuteness and enthusiasm.

The second half of the school year promises to be full of many more adventures for the children, and they can't wait!



Friends exchange necklaces during their Thanksgiving feast.



Students dressed up as a part of the Caitriona's Castle show.



Dr. House's visit:
playing veterinarian and listening to Piper's heartbeat.

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."
~ John Whitehead