



Newsletter April 2020

A Note from the Director's Desk

It is with a heavy heart that I share with you news of more teachers departing from ZALA. Mrs. Shelby and her family moved out of state when her husband took a job at another university. We will greatly miss the gymnastics program Shelby provided the children with. Savannah and her spouse made a decision to further their education. This requires them to move out of area to pursue their dreams. Savannah is a kind and gentle person who interacted well with all the children and teachers. She will be greatly missed. We wish her and her growing family the best on their new adventures. Malerie spent a short time on our staff but adapted well in the Bridge classroom. The children enjoyed the activities she planned, which is evident with the art hanging in the room and by the photos in Brightwheel. We wish her the best in her future endeavors.

We are hiring for a lead teacher and teacher in Bridge. Once the positions have been filled we will share that information with you. With these uncertain times we do not know how long that will take but are hopeful. Feel free to reach out to me or Rebekah Rebekah.nelson@zootweb.com with any questions or concerns you may have.

Rhiannon

556-7439

Dates to Remember

April 8: Zoot Health & Wellness Fair-postponed

April 11-17: Week of the Young Child

April 15: Scholastic Book Orders Due

Zoot Adventure Camp (ZAC/PIR)

April: 2nd & 3rd: ~~PIR Camp, Wonderful World of Children's Literature~~ **Canceled**

April 13: ~~PIR Camp, Easter~~ **Canceled**

Weekly Happenings

Music with Mrs. Rachel has been postponed until further notice.

Yoga with Miss Kristen a day or two a week, until further notice.

Gymnastics with Mrs Shelby will no longer take place.

Bookmobile has been postponed until further notice.

A Note from the Teachers

First Contact

March was fun month in First Contact! We loved the St. Patrick's Day themed lessons which included finding pots of gold and making music with the gold coins we found. Making music and dancing has been our favorite thing to do this month! As a class we welcomed Arlo. His infectious smile has brought joy and laughter to First Contact. We are excited for April and a glimpse of spring! Thank you for your cooperation during this crazy time of sickness. Stay well!

– Miss Marisa

Bridge

Hello Bridge Families! March was full of Dr. Seuss, St. Patrick's Day and the letter A. Check out our artwork and see all the fun things we've been making with our friends. On colder and extra snowy days we've been using the indoor balance beam, tunnel, and slide to help build our gross motor skills and safely use our energy. We are looking forward to seeing what April will bring and hoping it will allow for a lot more outdoor time :)

– Miss Katie

Warp Drive

Happy April Warp Drive families! March began with a great week celebrating Dr. Seuss and Read Across America Week. We enjoyed seeing our friend's fun socks and hairstyles. The kids were impressed with Miss Kristen's Dr. Seuss themed snacks, thank you Miss Kristen! Warp Drive then spent some time learning about St. Patrick's Day. This month's art work is still hanging in the classroom if you want to check it out! We have crazy socks, hot air balloons (Oh, The Places You'll Go!), pots of gold, shamrocks, and fruit loop rainbows.

In April we are looking forward to a week of colors! Keep an eye out for a Brightwheel message with each color of the day. Then we will switch over to all things Easter! April also has the Week of the Young Child which all of ZALA will be participating in. Warp Drive will have a fun family snack time for "Family Friday" on Friday April 17th. We would love for families to join us for a snack at 3:15, more details to follow! We are looking forward to the warmer weather and being able to explore outside without the snow gear slowing us down.

– Miss Katie

Holodeck

Hello Families! March was a month filled with surprises! We learned all about our teeth and the best ways to brush them so each one stays clean and healthy. It was a day filled with laughs and excitement when the dentists visited with their dental demonstration models. They even let us use a giant toothbrush to brush their dinosaur's teeth! We also talked a lot about overall hygiene and what our bodies need to stay healthy and happy in a time when everyone is talking about the germs going around. An extremely exciting moment arose when we discovered that not one, but several Leprechauns came to visit ZALA on St. Patrick's, leaving messes all through the classroom and even in the bathrooms! We were so glad that we got to tell Penny all about the holiday fun on her last day with us. We were sad to say goodbye, but we are also excited for the adventures she is going to have with her family in Texas. With the drop in attendance toward the end of the month, we have had the opportunity to take some long walks, play in the perfectly

A Note from the Teachers

Holodeck continued

art projects. We even made a few obstacle courses to romp around. As March comes to a close we look forward to seeing more of the signs of spring we have already been noticing on our walks, like the return of the robins and the new growth of plants that embrace the warmth as much as we do.

- Miss Cassie

Developmental Tidbit

Topic: Loose Parts in Outdoor Play

You might be asking yourself, “What are loose parts?” Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They do not have a specific use and can be combined or used alone. The items can be natural or manufactured. Examples of loose parts vary between sea shells, rocks, sticks, stumps, lumber products, toilet paper tubes, egg cartons, fabric, crates, utensils, cookware, pitchers, buckets, watering cans, PVC pipe and fittings, vinyl gutters, and tires off the rim, etc.

Loose parts encourage children to manipulate their environment and make choices based on the variety of materials provided. Children are able to turn every day play into novelty. It allows the indoor learning environment to be extended to the outdoor environment. For instance, by setting out cookware, utensils, a pitcher, and mixing bowls, children are able to role play cooking/baking. If dirt, sand, or water is available the experience is all the more enlightening. Children learn about measurement and mixing wet and dry items, all while providing sensory input.

Long sticks and sheets of fabric allow for fort building, creating shade and shelter, camping or places to hide during a game of hide-and-seek. Allowing children to figure out how to get the sticks to stand upright and then draping with fabric requires problem solving and patience. Sticks and branches can be cut into disc shapes and in various lengths for building materials and blocks that can be left outside in their natural environment.

Crates can be used for seating, storing items when not in use, displaying materials, and lining up as modes of imaginary travel. Stumps can be staggered in varying heights as stepping “stones” to develop gross motor skills, arranged in such a way that they form the boundaries of a sand play area, a dramatic play theatre, or used as work surfaces or seats.

Empty water bottles and juice containers can be added to a tub, table or hard sided wading pool to allow for pouring, which will teach children about volume, hand-eye-coordination, and provide sensory input. Empty, clean recyclable food containers can be attached to a sheet of wood to create an upcycled water wall. Just add a container for pouring water and poke holes in the bottoms of each food container to allow water to drain.

In order to have a successful outdoor loose parts play area it is important to provide sufficient materials with plenty of variety. The play area should encourage constructive play with plenty of storage space that allows easy access to the loose parts. Sparking creativity is the key to loose parts play. Have fun!

