ECEC Newsletter Winter 2013

ECEC Families-

This been such an interesting fall and winter with regards to the weather. With the exception of a few really cold days in December, I have not seen such a mild winter in quite a long time. However, it has been nice to be outdoors with the children—I think they have enjoyed the ability to play outside more than normal. With the arrival of a new year, we are able to celebrate on many levels: we are so appreciative having three new lead teachers who have already made an impact at the ECEC and we look forward to all that they have to offer. Welcome Christy, Jaclyn, and Stephanie! We are also very fortunate to have the wonderful families that attend the ECEC. Many of you have helped, volunteered, and supported the ECEC and staff this year—we truly appreciate it!

The winter semester should have a lot of fun activities to look forward to. We plan on holding another “Light Night”. We also feel that the fall Family Potluck was a big hit, so we would like to do another potluck this semester. Please watch for more details regarding these events.

I will send out more information later, but UW is currently revisiting their Emergency Response Plan on campus. I hope to incorporate some of those ideas with our current Response Plan and will be seeking some assistance from the UW Police Department, Laramie Police Department, and Laramie Fire Department regarding our current plan and any ideas that they may have to help us make the ECEC a safe environment for your children. I will of course notify you all when this process is going forward and be sure to share any changes in our policies.

Also, be sure to check our website for updates on menus, newsletters, photos, and other information. We hope to be working on that more this semester.

Have a great remainder of the winter and watch for more news to follow in the spring!

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Infant Classroom: Michelle

We are starting out the semester by exploring paint using our hands, feet, a variety of utensils and our bodies. We have created a variety of masterpieces so far by finger painting and painting using brushes and loofas. We will showcase their artwork around the room in the coming weeks, so keep an eye out for those. As you probably know, water is one of the children’s favorite activities. I hope to continue to support their interest by providing opportunities to explore water in many different forms.

The children are really enjoying the outside more, now that most of them can move around on their own. We try to get out every day, even for just a few minutes, to get some fresh air. Please make sure your child has appropriate shoes, clothing, coats, hat and mittens/gloves.

One last reminder, if you haven’t already done so, please stop and check out the documentation that Bethaney developed last fall regarding the importance of families in the classroom. The children love it when their siblings come in to play. It is fun to see them interact with each other and the older siblings are so helpful with the other children as well. We want to thank each of you that have been able to take time out of your busy schedules to hang out with us and hope that you will continue to stop in and play. Our door is always open!
Forts have always been an instinctive creation for children. There’s something about the necessity of crawling into an area on hands and knees that gives it a higher level of appeal than others. Our exploration of this intriguing concept began inside in the big room. As the weather grew colder we spent time creating unique spaces inside. We used special fabrics to create billowing ceilings, walls, and even hammocks. We varied the location, sometimes incorporating existing structures such as couches, tables, climbers, and even plants. We also experimented with securing the fabrics to ceilings in order to make walls of our own. The children were always excited to pick a new place and experiment with new materials, finding out what would hold and what wouldn’t. When the snow finally fell, we immediately took this exploration outside. Initially we only had enough snow to create a sort of castle, snow walls, but no ceiling. Over break we had enough snow to create a giant snow mountain. We patiently waited as it hardened over a day and night. The next morning we dug out the insides, and there we had it, our first snow fort with both walls and a ceiling! We then connected a tunnel to it, again adding the enchanting element of entering on hands and knees into the fort. We are hopeful this winter/spring will bring even more snow that will allow us to create an even larger snow fort!

We have jumped right into a new semester in P1, and it has been full of excitement! We have been making good adjustments to help adapt to classroom life without Jaclyn. We miss her and are excited to have her back in a couple more weeks.

Throughout the last few weeks the kids have become more and more interested in building and constructing towers, castles, and race car tracks. It is great to watch them work together to build the tallest tower, or the biggest castle. We are confident that this great start is only a good sign of a fabulous semester to come!
Preschool Classroom 2: Linda

Preschool Room 2 has been very busy over this past fall semester. Every day we have built ramps learning and experimenting with how they work. The children have experimented with laws of physics with the ramps! We hope to continue ramp exploration into the spring semester. In addition we have been noticing phases of work at the hospital. We watched as trees were taken down and bulldozers and excavators moved earth. We took a field trip to see the work closer and stopped to visit with hospital staff to ask questions. In the photo we were looking at a sign that tells us what you need to wear to go into the construction site. The children were relieved when they were told that no birds were hurt in the taking down of the trees!

Preschool Classroom 3: Stephanie

Preschool Three friends have been very excited about cooking and baking these past few months. We have had a classroom bakery, a store and now we have started a classroom pizza shop. This expressed interest has allowed us to begin making more foods and try new things, both in dramatic play and in our daily meals. The class is currently talking about making their own pizzas and possibly ice cream! It is exciting to see all the things that have come from this play. We are counting the scoops, sorting by colors and even talking about what letters we need to spell the words on our menus. The friends in Preschool Three are very excited about all the great ideas that can come from this simple idea. Not only have we been talking and playing a lot with food, but using our senses in general to explore throughout the day. On our last trip to the art museum we talked the whole way there about what we could see, hear, and even smell outside in the fresh winter air. Cooking and baking has allowed us to use our senses a lot in the classroom. The most popular space in our room has been the ever changing sensory table. Each week there is a different material to explore. Somehow they all seem to find a way to cook and mix with it! It has been a blast learning and growing with these kids. we are looking forward to all that this new semester has to offer!

School Age Program: Jenna

The school age classroom has been quite busy lately! All of the children have been showing a great interest in building and constructing 3 dimensional objects. Our set of Magna-tiles has been a huge hit. Spaceships, garages, garbage dumps, homes and so much more are built and transformed each day. The children have been exploring building with toothpicks, marshmallows, straws, Lego’s, and different combinations of each medium. We are enjoying getting to know each other and learning more about each individual in our classroom!
**Morning Glory Muffins**

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1-1/4 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups grated carrots
- 1 apple - peeled, cored, and chopped
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 egg
- 2 egg whites
- 1/2 cup apple butter
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 2 tablespoons toasted wheat germ

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Lightly oil 18 muffin cups, or coat with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, egg whites, apple butter, oil and vanilla.
3. In a large bowl, stir together flours, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Stir in carrots, apples and raisins. Stir in apple butter mixture until just moistened. Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling them about 3/4 full.
4. In a small bowl, combine walnuts and wheat germ; sprinkle over the muffin tops.

Bake at 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the tops are golden and spring back when lightly pressed.