

Rocking Horse Review

Winter 2009

Editor-in-Chief Linda Ashness

Are your kids bored and bickering? Are you having a hard time getting back into the swing of things after the winter holidays and school vacation? If your routine's out of whack, and your family's out of sorts, welcome to the winter blues! Don't despair! Whether you like it cold or hot, you'll love our winter wonderland of cures for cabin fever. Find indoor and outdoor winter break fun activities to keep your kids happy and busy all winter long.

On the menu: Family Dinner Night

Make a Home Video

Watching episodes of your family's history provides a wonderful bonding experience, not to mention some great laughs. And kids love to see themselves when they were "little"! If you've been lax about capturing your family's precious moments on film, heed these three words: Lights, camera, action!

Grab a Book and a Blanket

Reading together is one of the best ways a family can relax and shut out the rest of the world. Share your favorite reading rituals

with us.

Pick a Game, Any Game Remember: The family that plays together stays together.

Top 10 board games?

Scrabble	Sorry
Chinese Checkers	Chutes & Ladders
Candy Land	Twister
Chess Life	Monopoly

Cool Crafts

Have some fun projects to do together when you're cooped up.

Dim the lights:

Pop the popcorn, unplug the phone, and press 'play'!

Don't let the weather get the best of you. Enjoy this opportunity to spend some quality time with each other.

Stay warm,

Rebecca Eichen
Director

Library Corner

It's been a wonderful year so far for book lovers! Extended holidays and chilly weather give great opportunities to curl up with a good book. There is nothing better than snuggling up with a child and a beloved book. I hope everyone takes the time to read aloud to your children every night, whatever the weather.

Rocking Horse Academy will be hosting a Scholastic Book Fair this year February 23rd-27th. We will also be celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday and the National Education Association's Read

Across America day on March 2nd. To help the NEA promote reading, I encourage every parent to stop by the book fair to find something special for you child. I will be happy to recommend age appropriate selections for your child during the Book Fair. Please join us in celebrating the importance of reading!

Maria Matts
Book Diva

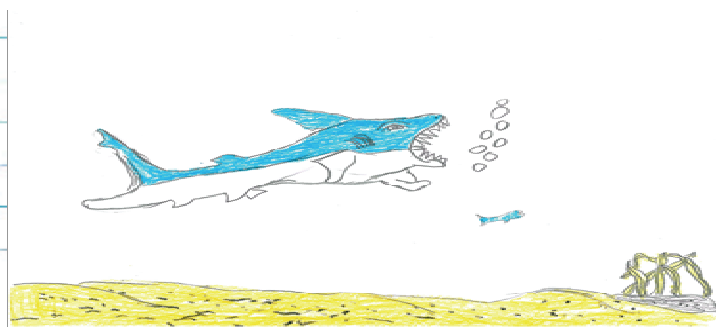


Read All About It!

Samuel is 7 years old and is in the second grade. He started at Rocking Horse when he was 5 years old. His favorite things to draw are sharks and monsters. Sam feels that he writes very good poems and draws very well. He is a good big brother to Ryan. His favorite colors are red and black and his favorite sport is football. His favorite book is Ripley's Believe It Or Not 2009.

You a very great white shark
you are very white.
You with the right, you
have a big dorsal fin.
Your eyes roll in.
You swim fast. Your
belly is a blast. You
smell far away. You
eat at the bar. You
eat fish. You don't
use a dish. You
are long. Your teeth
are strong. You out
at night. You give a
fright. You live in
a dark sea. I hope
you don't get me.

Samuel Courtney 1/23/09





Foals I



February plans for Foals I are centered around health and my body, feelings, and dental health. Our Spanish words are nose-nariz, teeth-diente, hand-mano, feelings-sentimientos, I love you-te amo and February- Febrero. Music and finger-plays are *If You're Happy and You Know It* and *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*. We will feel a cold teething ring on our growing teeth. Happy sounds from our mobiles perk up our ears. Books to read include A Visit to the Dr. and Sometimes I like to Curl up in a Ball.

Farm, gardens, insects and spring are the topics for **March**. Spanish words are farm-rancho, plants-plantas, insects-insectos, March-Marzo. Fun songs to sing are *Itsy, Bitsy Spider*, *Old McDonald*, and *Oats, Pears, Beans and Barley Grow*. For technology we will spin the farmer See 'n Say and for arts and crafts we will play with the insect-decorated bandana. Reading time will include Spring Surprise, My First Farm Book and The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Please have your baby practice sitting up for homework.

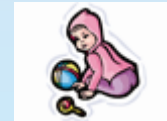
April topics include *space, birds and earth*. April-Abril, space-espacio and birds-pajaros are our Spanish words. We will sing *Five Little Ducks* and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. Looking at pictures of birds is the science unit and rolling plastic eggs the physical activity. Fun books to read are Little Quack, Below Us Under the Earth and Sea and Happy Easter.

If you take your baby to the doctor for an illness, please bring a doctor's note saying your baby is OK to be back at school. This may help keep our other babies and staff well.

We strive to meet our babies' developmental needs while caring for their physical needs. Thank you for your confidence in us.

Enjoy Spring!

Foals I Staff



Nubella

Got pesky allergens you want to exorcise? Then wash your family's clothes in water 140 degrees Fahrenheit or higher to get rid of all dust mites, dog dander, pollen, and other culprits that cause sniffles and sneezes, Korean researchers say. Doing the laundry in just 104-degree water will zap only 6.5 percent of the dust mites. If you're steamed about running up your utility bill with all that hot water, then wash your clothes in water between 86 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit and then rinse the laundry twice with cold water for three minutes each, says allergy specialist Dr. Jung-Won Park, a professor at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea.

Date Nights 6:30-12:00

February 14th

March 14th

April 18th



Foals II



Our February themes are **Feelings, Hero's, Black History** and **Our Bodies**. To incorporate these themes in our lessons, we plan on looking in mirrors and talking about our feelings, making happy faces, sad faces, questioning faces. The children will learn a new song, "Put Your Finger in the Air" to learn about our body parts, our fingers, and to work on a fine motor skills of managing our fingers separately. Every day we continue to exercise and work on our gross motor skills: pulling up, balancing, reaching. To practice fine motor skills, we introduce new toys where the baby can put a certain shape into a hole or close/open a toy door. Our Spanish words are: **love-amor, I love you-te amo, like-gustar, I like-me gusta, please-por favor, and thank you-gracias**. Ask your teachers for help learning these new Spanish words and phrases.

With March winds comes Dr. Seuss' Birthday Celebration. Our themes include Farm Life and Animals, Spring Plants & Growth, and Bugs. We will introduce a flannel board with farm animals and a barn story book. We will sing Old MacDonald's had a Farm and begin teaching the sounds animals make. Our Spanish words are **Dad-Papa, Mom-Mama**. Our new signs will be **Dad, Mom, and Please**.

April showers brings May flowers. We like to begin our daily stroller rides in early spring to look at the trees budding new leaves and watch the birds flying overhead. This month we focus on Birds and Eggs, Space, Planet Earth, and Recycling. We will practice our gross motor skills by pushing and pulling string toys. In our Learning Skills center we explore cause & effect. "Our Watch the Birdy" game will help our babies acquire some balancing skills, depth perception, social interaction and trust. (ask us to teach you). Our Spanish words are **more-mas, thank you-gracias**. Our new signs will be **more, juice, eat**.

As always, our children are learning about themselves, their world and their abilities, and we are here to help and encourage them to reach their goals.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please feel free to contact any of us. We enjoy the time we spend with your baby. Thanks!

Foals 2 teachers



WANTED SPARE CLOTHES

ALL SIZES FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

UNDERWEAR... PANT BOTTOMS....



Colts



How time flies when having fun. Hard to believe it is springtime again. We want to welcome our new Colt friends. We are glad to have you a part of our family. The next three months will be exciting ones.

The first month is February. We will learn about Health and My Body, My Feelings, Heroes and Black history. The first week we will learn about our bodies and how to take care of them. We will also talk about what foods are good for our body. We will practice how to brush our teeth, so please bring in a toothbrush and toothpaste for your child. We will have fun dancing to the ***Hokey Pokey*** and ***Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes***. To help us learn our body parts, we will make handprints and footprints. We will talk about and name body parts in English and Spanish. The second week, we will learn about our feelings and how people express feelings. We will make a collage of smiles. We will sing ***If You're Happy and You Know It*** and read ***I'm Feeling Sad***. We will work on using our gross motor skills by throwing and catching balls and playing *Ring Around the Rosey*. We will learn how to take our plates and cups to the sink. The third week, we will talk about our heroes and create a wall of heroes. On February 13th, we will have a Valentine's Party. Please look for the sign-up sheet and the class list.

The month of March. We will discuss the Farm: who lives on the farm, how do plants grow. The first week, we will celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday by making cats and the hats out of our footprints. We will also read some of his books that he wrote like, ***Cat and the Hat*** and ***Green Eggs and Ham***. The second week, students will learn about the farm and the animals that live there. We will paint a horse with string and glue a tail on our horse; we will color spots on a cow. For

our science center we will learn how to milk a cow using rubber gloves. We will have great fun with that experience. The third week, we will learn about gardening and how plants grow. We will also measure how much we have grown in the last year. As one of the art projects, we will make a spring tree with our handprints. The last week, we will study bugs. We will make ink blot butterflies, ladybugs out of paper plates, and other fun projects.

The final month is April. We will learn about Space, Eggs and Birds, Our Earth and Environment and Recycling. The first and second week, we will talk about space and make our solar system in the room. We will read a book called ***Space***. The third week, we will learn about eggs and birds. We will do a golf ball art project. We will also go on a bird-watching walks and count how many birds we see. The last week we will learn how to take care of our earth and how to recycle our trash. We will play a sorting game and sort paper and plastic items.

Just a few reminders:

- * Please label **everything** with first and last name.
- * Please bring in clean sheets and blankets every Monday.
- * Please bring in a sippy cup with a name on it.

Thank you for your help and understanding.

Ms. Erica

Ms. Lydia

Ms. DeDe

Ms. Esthela



***If you wish success in life, make perseverance your bosom friend,
experience your wise counselor, caution your elder brother, and
hope your guardian genius.***

Joseph Addison



Ponies



The next 3 months will be as busy as the fall. We have lots of new and exciting activities for our children.

In the month of **February**, we will talk about feelings such as *happy and sad*. Also, we will look at face books that will show a variety of emotions to name with the students. Sanitation is very important in our class. We will continue learning how to wash our hands, ask for a tissue, and throw away food that has fallen on the floor.

"My Body" is an exciting theme to learn with children of this age. We will learn how to say elbows, knees, head, nose, mouth with our song *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*. P.E. and outside activities will be a major focus this month

As a class, we are always working on our ABC's, numbers, shapes, and colors. You will see this around the room, and they are regularly used in instruction.

Sign language: heart, happy, sad, beautiful
Spanish words for the month: Love-amor;
Friends-amigos; Heart-corazon; Sad-tristes;
Happy-feliz

We will have our Valentine's party on February 13th, so watch for sign-up sheets.

In the month of **March**, farm animals are great themes with our class because, although their language skills are not fully developed, they love to repeat the sounds of farm animals as pigs, cows, ducks, sheep, horses, and chickens. When reading farm animals' books with your child, stop to make the animal sounds with them. They will love interacting with you and the book.

Spring is finally approaching and we will talk about the weather and the budding flowers. There are a lot of great activities such as painting flowers and using sponges to make clouds.

Sign language: rain, flowers, cloud, duck, cow, chicken .

Spanish Words of the month: Vaca-cow;
Pato-duck; Lluvia-rain
Flores-flowers

In the month of **April**, birds are colorful and a lot of fun for our children to talk about. We will play with colored feathers and paint different kinds of birds. We will learn the word star while using different shapes to create a spaceship. Your child will love going outside to look at the stars with you. Questions to help your child explore the world around them as follows:

Where are the stars? What color are the stars? Talking about the earth is a great time to focus on the colors green and blue and recycling.

We will also plan our spring break party. We will sing the songs *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* in sign language.

Spanish words: Cielo- sky; Estrella-star;
Tierra-earth; Juevos-eggs

The Pony teachers would like to welcome our new students to the Ponies' classroom. Please help us out and **label** any items that come into the classroom. This will help us to get the sheets during naptime to the right student. Also, it will ensure that they are using the correct cup or wearing the correct jacket/sweater. Remember we all shop at some of the same stores and buy the same cute outfits.

Thank you for your help. We are looking forward to the fun.

Ponies Teachers





Charger I



We promise to be the best at having fun while creating the perfect learning environment. Every interaction is an experience and an opportunity to build a trusting relationship with children and their families. We encourage each child everyday with one-on-one, positive guidance, role playing, reinforcing the concept of sharing and being social with his/her classmates. We introduce potty-training by providing a sturdy step stool to encourage self-help with independent hand-washing.



In February these are the following units we will explore: Feelings -- no matter what they are. We will use puppets to help us with scenarios to help us make the right choices when dealing with frustration. Black History week will include stories about our African American hero's from today and yesterday, like Oprah and George Washington Carver. We hope to reinforce the need to respect and love all of our friends. During the remaining weeks, we will discover the names of our body parts and practice making more healthful choices in what we eat, like vegetables and milk and drinking plenty water. We want students to begin to understand the importance of grooming their bodies, brushing their teeth and hair, and washing their faces and hands. We will exercise by taking walks and doing aerobics during our PE period.

Our theme for March is Farm Life and Farm Animals. Children love to make the sounds that our farm friends make. We'll sing *Ole MacDonald Had a Farm* to help us learn all of the animal noises. We want to teach the students what the name of baby animals are, too, such as calf or puppies or ducklings.

As the weather warms, we plan to create our classroom garden. For our science unit we'll introduce the parts of the plant: stems, petals, leafs and roots. We plan to show and discuss our class plant "Jack", and we will also plant a

new class plant. We will name our plant and let the class assist in caring and watching it grow. We will end the month with one of my favorite units: Bugs, Caterpillars, Bees, Butterflies and more. Students can count the legs to learn the difference between insects and spiders. They will sort them depending on which ones crawl and which ones fly.

And April's theme will be Birds & Eggs: blue birds, crows, owls and cardinals. We will build a nest, paint eggs, chirp and fly around the room, and let's not forget about Pete our class parakeet. Students will learn what our feathered friends eat and where they sleep. Not all birds sleep in the trees, Pete sleeps in his cage. We will also discuss which birds are winter or summer birds.

Space is our next unit, as we introduce the moon and stars, planets, comets. Don't forget a shooting star (meteor). Naturally we'll sing songs like *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, and learn riddles like *Hey Diddle Diddle*.

We will end the month with Earth and Recycling. We will study the planet earth and about the geography: trees, mountain, volcanoes, and rivers, lakes and oceans that make our earth $\frac{3}{4}$ water. We will use earth as a transition into our recycling and environmental unit. It's vital that our children learn good ecological habits now if we want to keep America beautiful and have enough air, water, and food for their future. We also want to keep our centers clean, so we will encourage children to clean up, even if they did not make the mess. Be a good citizen of the class. We plan to create a recycling center so the students can practice recycling: aluminum cans, paper, newspaper, or a plastic bottle can get a new life to help better our circle of life.

Ms. Mary
Ms. Courtney

Ms. Laurie
Ms. Annette



Charger II



In our first week of February, Chargers II will study about "Health and Our Body." Chargers II will learn the parts of our body, and we will learn how important each member is. We will sing "Head & Shoulders," and we will dance to the "Hokey Pokey." Our class will even talk about the parts we don't see: our brain, our heart, and our stomach. It is important for us to "think" with our brain, "feel" with our heart, and "feed" our stomach. We will learn about the things that are good for us to eat and the things that are not good for us to eat. We will learn about exercise and the importance of keeping in shape. Our gym class will start to "shape up" with some fun routines (jumping jacks and dancing).

Our next unit in February will be on feelings. We want to encourage our children to express their feelings using their words. This can be challenging when you are two years old and your vocabulary is limited. Therefore, we will learn to express our feelings by making and sending Valentine messages expressing our love for our family and friends. We will sing songs about feelings, such as "If You're Happy and You Know It."

We will continue on into a study of dental health, as February is dental health month. Our class will have fun practicing brushing and flossing our teeth. We will use egg cartons (as teeth), toothbrushes, floss and shaving cream as tools to help us learn.

After our studies about ourselves, Chargers II will begin a study on American heroes. We will begin by looking at money: dollars, quarters, and pennies. Whose picture is on there? And why? We will learn about George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and their importance to our country. We will then learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. and his heroic contributions to America and we will also celebrate February being Black History Month.

March blows in with a study of farm animals and life on a farm. Our class will read "Down on the Farm with Grover." Chargers II will learn and sing "Farmer in the Dell" and "Old MacDonald." We will learn the names of the animals and their babies. Expect to hear a lot of mooing, neighing, quacking, and oinking coming from our room as we study the different animals.

Our farm unit will be followed by a study of plants. The children will learn how to plant seeds. We

will also learn that it takes soil, water, and sun for a plant to grow. We will talk about the many types of plants: trees, flowers, bushes, and cactus. We will create bluebonnet pictures out of popcorn and tempera paint. Our plant study will continue into a study of bees. We will sing bee songs and make bee puppets.

Toddlers love insects and spiders so we will continue from our study of bees into a study of butterflies and a study of spiders. We will watch a movie about the life of a butterfly. We will have fun making fuzzy caterpillars and scary spiders.

April springs in with color everywhere. The trees are green and the wildflowers are popping out in many colors. New life is springing up everywhere. The birds are laying eggs. We will read books like "The Best Nest," and "Are You My Mother?" Chargers II will have the pleasure of decorating eggs and making baskets. Then we will hide the eggs and hunt for them!

Our class will learn about birds and how they are alike and different. We will talk about ducks, chickens, turkeys, geese, and ostriches. We will quack, peck, gobble, honk, and tweet as we learn the different sounds each bird makes.

After weeks of nature study, we will blast off with a study of space. Chargers II will talk about our planet earth, the other planets, the sun, and the moon. We will make a rocket ship from recycled materials. Our class will paint a picture of our earth with watercolors. We will learn to count down to blast off...10..9..8...

Next, we will introduce the importance of taking care of our earth. We will learn about recycling. Recycled material will be used for creative art projects, like when we make necklaces from bottle tops and rocket ships from boxes. We will conclude the month with, "Week of the Young Child." Every child is so important to our class, and this is the week we will be celebrating them. It is very enjoyable watching your children grow, as they are growing at an amazing rate, both physically and mentally. Each child is special to us, and we hope that all our children and parents have a beautiful and happy spring!



Ropers



The next few months will be packed full of fun and learning. I have been having so much fun with all the children. They learn so quickly that it is sometimes hard to keep up. At the age of three those cooperative little guys start turning into independent and sometimes hard headed bigger guys. They start to learn that they can control some situations, like toileting and eating, so they practice that power in those areas by refusing to cooperate. This is very natural and important for them to learn the natural consequences of not going potty or refusing to eat. Our job as caregivers is to let them experience those consequences in a safe way.

February is a very exciting month. Not only do we have a chance to appreciate our friendships on Valentine's Day, but we will also learn appropriate ways to express our feeling and learn new vocabulary at the same time.

Keeping our bodies healthy is very important. We do this several different ways: eating healthfully, exercising, and getting check-ups. We will study which foods are healthful foods and which foods just taste good but don't help our bodies grow. We will also learn about the journey our food takes in our bodies when we eat it. We will practice different kinds of exercises, showing the children how fun this can be. To help the children understand how important check-ups are, we will talk about and pretend play doctoring and dentistry.

What a perfect time of year to learn about how plants grow and what they need to grow. The best way to learn about plants, of course, is to grow some of our own. We will experiment by planting seeds in different ways and places to see how well they do in each environment. For example, planting seeds in water versus soil, planting seeds in shade versus the sunlight and finding out which combination works best to grow our seeds. Learning about plants is a great way to start learning about why farmers are so important to us and where our food really comes from. Along with plants and farms, we will study fun facts about insects!

In April we are going to talk about where our

earth is in space and learn about the stars that we see at night. While studying about earth, it is very important to understand the importance of taking care of our earth. We will be picking up trash outside, learning how to recycle, and how to reuse different materials.

Around Easter time, the children see, and some even decorate eggs, so I will take this opportunity to teach the children about birds, eggs, and their life cycle. Natural science is always fun to learn about. Also in April, we will celebrate how important the education of our young children is by having a full week of just plain fun!

I will concentrate on teaching the children how to enter a group that is already engaged in play. I will do this by giving them some short phrases to use as well as modeling by being a part of their play. Some of those phrases are: "Which blocks may I use?" "I can be the mommy." Another important social skill to learn is how to invite someone else to play with you. I will use the same strategies for this as well. Some common phrases that I use are: "Do you want to build blocks?" "I need help fixing dinner." "Do you want to play chase?"

During this time, I will have already done an assessment on each of the children. This will give each family a set of strengths and a set of goals to continue working on. Each child develops at his/her own rate, so I will take where each child is and build on those skills. Some of the skills that the children work on are letter recognition, starting to draw familiar shapes like faces, circles and the letters in their name. I will also focus on sorting objects by different aspects, (size, shape, color), as well as counting objects.

February

Dental Health Month

Valentine's Day

March

Dr. Suess' Birthday Scholastic Book Fair

Spring Break

St. Patrick's Day

April

School-wide Portraits

Week of the Young Child

Spring Hunt

Earth Day



Pintos



The Pintos hope that the new year will bring many blessings to all. There have been changes in our class within the last month. First, we want to say that we miss our friends who moved into the Mustangs. We are very proud of their accomplishments while they were with us. We want to welcome our new friends Emme and Joshua who moved up into our class. I also want to take some time to welcome Ms. Becky in our Pinto class as our new assistant teacher. She is doing a great job and we are so happy to have her!

The month of February will be very exciting for all of us. We believe that we will all have "heart madness" this month as we try to make different animals out of hearts. Since Our Feelings is a theme for February, we will express various moods on heart-shaped faces distinguishing the difference between a sad face from a happy one. We will include many of our emotions in this project. The children will make friendship bracelets and their own valentine's cards to give to their relatives and friends. The Pintos will celebrate Valentine's Day by having a party! We will talk to the children about their body, their teeth and how to stay healthy. Our party will only include very nutritious treats to illustrate that we can have yummy food that is also good for our bodies. We will have quizzes to see who knows the most body parts! And for exercise and fun, we'll sing Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes and If you are Happy and You Know it.

February is also black history month, and we want to remember Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and other African American heroes that influenced a great change in America. Our shape will definitely be a heart and a diamond, too. Our colors for this month will be pink and red. On Thursday the 12th it will be pink day for everyone who wants to wear pink and on Friday the 13th it will be red day for everyone to wear red. A couple of Spanish words for this month will be amor (love) and amigo (friend) just to name a few. We will continue with the letters S, T, U and V and please don't forget brown bag on Fridays. The children love to share what they have brought from home.

Spring will arrive in March and with that we will have different science experiments to support our Nature theme: growing grass, beans, flowers

and more. We will talk about farm animals, what they like to eat and what sounds they make. A short trip will be planned to Ms. Barbara's room since "farm animals" is her classroom mural! One challenge that will be fun for all will be to learn our animals in Spanish. Don't forget to wear green for the luck of the Irish on St. Patrick's Day. Our students will go on a treasure hunt as if we were leprechauns searching for that pot of gold at the end of a rainbow midway through the month. Our shapes will be an oval and a clover and our colors will be yellow and green. The letters will be W, X, Y and Z.

In April, we will make a bird feeder for our class to watch the real birds eat out of it. We will make chocolate pudding and pretend it is mud and we are going to dig for (gummy) worms. We will go over what recycling means and what items can be recycled and help clean up our playground to learn about a clean environment. Perhaps have a "green" dinner one night too and allow your child to help cook. As a part of that unit, I will ask the children to bring recycled items from home to school, and I'm sure it will come in handy for future arts and crafts. Later in April, we will also study space: the stars, the moon, comets and other planets, too. The shapes for this month will be a circle, star and we will introduce the crescent as well as translating it in Spanish. Staying up one clear night to view the stars could be a fun family-time experience. We will start having our alphabet review after we go through the whole alphabet.

Our goal will be to make the most of these months and to have fun while we all learn together! Don't forget to help your child do his/her homework and review the letters and numbers at home, too. Throughout these months we will work hard to have the Pintos work on tracing their name and learning to spell out their names as well. Again, we suggest that you practice these activities at home, too. We are looking forward to the upcoming months and hope the children enjoy them as much as we will!

Ms. Doris, Ms. Becky and Ms. Yuri



Mustang



Play - based learning is our priority in the Mustang Room. Keeping the importance of play in mind, our curriculum is bursting with plenty of art activities, music & movement, science experiments, games, and special monthly events- including theme days and party celebrations.

In addition, during the months ahead we will continue to head outdoors to enjoy our playground. Please don't forget to wear your jackets; it's still chilly in the mornings for recess! We are happy to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of the Mustang class.

February's days are guaranteed to be filled with fun! In fact, there's no need for a calendar- you will know when it is February because everyone & everything in the Mustang classroom will be **tickled pink**. We start the month looking for our shadow like our friend, the groundhog. We will make predictions and log our findings. As we learn facts about the weather, we will also explore and emphasize the importance of keeping healthful by exercising and eating a nutritious diet. With cold weather comes illness. We will emphasize and remind the Mustangs of how to take care of our bodies and help them to understand through art activities, music, and song to take care of our bodies and wash our hands. Don't forget to cover our sneezes and coughs with our arms/sleeves and not our hands. The key to a healthful and active lifestyle for your child is to engage in and model a healthful, active lifestyle as adults.

The joy of learning continues... We will expand our learning about our presidents...

We celebrate President's Day. We have been taking advantage of this historic election year by participating in age-appropriate lessons to learn about our country. Earlier this year the Mustangs voted for our 44th president in our classroom. Before each student's vote was cast in November, they learned how to take turns, make choices, and use their words to express themselves. We saw how our lessons made an impact recently. One of our Mustangs announced in our circle-time that "Our President is moving!!! He's moving out of the White House. He's gunna live where we live, in Texas!"

Before February comes to an end, our attention will turn to Black History. African Americans that have helped make our world a better place will be featured

in our circle time lessons and books. And, of course, we will remind them of the significance of Obama becoming the first African American US President.

Will March come in like a lion or a lamb?

March winds will carry in many opportunities to explore Mother Nature. We will focus on science using hands-on learning. We will perform experiments that will help the children to learn about solids & liquids. To make predictions related to weather, we will begin recording and tracking our findings about the weather this month using charts, graphs, and journals.

March themes include weather, plants, growth, and gardening. We want to plant seeds and watch them grow, learning the importance of sunlight and water.

A Birthday celebration is planned for Dr. Seuss beginning March 2. We will create a classroom display to honor Dr. Seuss. Throughout the week at story time, we will read his books. As every day, we want the children to love reading and know the worlds we can create with literature.

Spring is in the air Various theme-related activities will be provided to help reinforce how April showers bring May flowers. We will continue to expand on lessons learned in the months before. In celebration of Earth Day, we will learn how and why we recycle. In the effort to learn the three R's- Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, many recycling projects will be put into practice in the Mustang class.

Rocking Horse Academy celebrates the Week of the Young Child. At R.H.A. teachers have as much fun as your children. Each class introduces fun and imaginative exercises, activities, songs, and games on a daily basis. Instruction and positive reinforcement is critical at all ages. In providing a safe and fun-filled environment each day, we all learn every day. April is not the only month young children are recognized in our school; every day is special.

Partners in Education,

Ms.Barbara
Ms. Pat

Ms. Anna
Ms. Katherine



Trotters



February is here and so is another newsletter from the Trotter class. As you may have seen Ms. Jessica has returned from maternity leave. She gave birth to a healthy baby girl named Mckenna on December 4, 2008. As the Trotters settle back into their routine with Ms. Jessica and Ms. Rachel, they will spend the month of February learning about feelings, heroes, black history, and health & my body. During the first week we will explore our feelings through many avenues. We will gather as a class and graph our feelings at that moment. We will also use a mirror to see our many different facial expressions that convey our moods. Moving through the month we find ourselves celebrating Black History Month. Some of the African American heroes we will discuss include Jackie Robinson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Madame CJ Walker. The Trotters will also take tips from George Washington Carver on how he invented peanut butter and try our hand at making some. As we round out the month, we move along to health and our bodies. This gives the Trotters the opportunity to learn about the food pyramid and putting healthful things in their bodies. Be on the look out for a giant food pyramid in the Trotter hallway. Please feel free to stop with your Trotter and ask him/her what foods go in what categories. Just a reminder Friday, February 13th will be the Trotter's Valentine's Day Party. Please check your child's folder for upcoming information regarding the party.

March brings all things spring! Farm-life and animals will be the first topics we cover in the month of March. Our block center will become a farm complete with animals and barn. We will spend time as a class charting out our favorite farm animals. March 20th marks the

first day of spring. We will spend time outside planting our very own garden. We will learn to till, water, and prep the soil, along with planting the seeds and caring for the plants. When the time comes to reap what we have sown, we will celebrate with a party. Bugs will wind down the month of March. As we pick up our magnifying glasses and head outside, we will become bug hunters in search of the greatest insects of all. Be on the look out for the leprechaun around St. Patrick's Day; he has been known to leave gold coins in the shoes of boys and girls.

April will be here before we know it, and we're not fooling. It brings topics such as birds, space, our earth and recycling. The Trotters will study the process of an egg maturing to a hatchling. We will also make bird feeders and study what birds we attract with them. Moving to the middle of the month, we focus our attention on space and our earth. We will learn the solar system and discuss the earth's orbit. We will also ask parents to take time one night at home to look at the stars and record which constellations we could see. As the month winds down, we move into recycling. The Trotters will work together and create a recycling center in our classroom. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this endeavor. We will discuss what materials can be recycled and what the materials are recycled into.

As the weather changes once again, please change out your child's extra clothing and don't forget to label. The Lost and Found box is in the lobby full of nice jackets and sweaters with no name. And many of us shop at the same store, making duplicate items common.

To climb steep hills requires a slow pace at first.
Shakespeare



Broncos



Now that the holidays have ended, and we are back in full swing, I wanted to start the New Year off right by taking a moment to officially introduce myself. My name is Casey Hall. I attended Texas State for two years and then finished at the University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelors Degree in Mathematics and a Teaching Certification. I have been teaching 6th, 7th, and 8th grade math for the last 7 years but was ready for a change. I enjoy working with children and love to watch them learn and grow. I am also a mother of two young children. Madison is 3 and attends Rocking Horse, while Ashley, who is 6, attends Negley Elementary. I want to thank each of you for allowing me the honor of teaching and caring for your children. It is truly a pleasure.

We have an exciting three months approaching. In February we will study Health and the Body, as well as Dental Health. We are hoping to have a dental specialist come to talk with the class about appropriate brushing and flossing habits. We will also learn to about our Feelings, American Heroes and Black History Month. Some exciting news: We will take a field trip to the McKenna Children's Museum in New Braunfels some time in February, so please continue to check the take home folder for more information. We are also having a Valentine Party Friday the 13th. Each child needs to bring a shoe box to decorate. Please begin bringing these as soon as possible.

In March, I am pleased to announce that we will plant our own garden on the playground. The children will prep the soil, plant the vegetables, tend to them, and when ready, we will eat them. We will also study farms and farm animals in March as well as insects and spiders. What a fun month.

April will be packed full of wonderful themes and activities. We will begin the month with Eggs and Birds, followed by Space, Our Earth and Environment. We will end the month with Week of the Young Child. Some cool things we have planned are to take another field trip and while studying our environment, we will learn how to recycle paper. We have a science experiment kit that teaches us how to make our own paper, too.

We continue to work hard on our phonics, handwriting, and basic math skills on a regular basis. We have made a few changes to our current daily schedule; therefore,

I am attaching a copy of the new schedule. As you will notice we begin lesson activities as early as 8:15. It is important for your child to be here for these activities if you want them to get the full benefit of the curriculum

We are making some changes to the Bronco classroom. In case you have not noticed, we have already changed the physical layout of the room and added extra centers as well as enriching our current centers with new and wonderful items. I believe centers are a wonderful way for the children to learn through play and interaction with friends. Centers will now be on a rotation, so that each child will have the opportunity to play in at least three to four different centers each day. In order to begin preparing each child for kindergarten, we will make a few other changes. First, I am asking that each child bring a backpack to school each day. We will keep an extra change of weather appropriate clothes, as well as their daily folder in their backpack. This will help to make communication between the staff and parents easier; however, in order for this communication to work, I am asking that you check the folder each evening. The folder will include notes home, weekly lesson plans, homework, art work and lesson activities that the child completes. Homework will be sent home on Monday and returned each Friday. This is an opportunity for your child to show you what he/she has been working on and is meant to be just a short reinforcement of important skills. It should not be a stressful time for your child or you the parent. You should work at a pace your child is comfortable with. Please feel free to give me feedback on how homework is working for your family. Also, please continue to check the behavior logs next to the door and initial daily.

In order to help the students to learn responsibility and self-reliance, we are asking that each morning your child takes his/her folder from his/her backpack and places it on the shelf where the cubbies are located. We are also asking that he/she places his/her jacket on the back of his/her chair. These will become routine if reinforced daily and we appreciate your help teaching the children these changes.



Corral Kids



Dear Corral Kids Parents,

As many of you already know, my name is Ranell Ellermann, and I have been supervising the Corral Kids program since August 2008. The teachers and I are delighted with how well everything has been going and are excited about the New Year. We are having a wonderful time working with and getting to know all of your children!

The teachers have really teamed together and are working hard to ensure that the Corral Kids Program is the best that it can possibly be for each and every child involved. One key factor to the program's success is open communication between parents and teachers. I want to strongly encourage parents to talk with your child's teacher on a daily basis and express any concerns you may have. This will provide an opportunity for the teachers to share any important information concerning scheduling and upcoming events, as well. The teachers for each group are as follows:

Kindergarten- Ms. Courtney and Ms. Lauren
First Grade- Ms. Jessica and Ms. Erica
Second Grade A- Ms. Amy and Mr. Jared
Second Grade B- Mr. Chris and Ms. Andrea
Third, Fourth, & Fifth Grade- Ms. Jacki and Mr. Chris

In the upcoming weeks, the theme will be "Healthy Habits," in which we will discuss nutrition and exercise. Our activities will teach children about the food pyramid, five food groups, and staying active. The focus will be on keeping our minds and bodies strong. The children will be creating their own nutritious snacks and learning how to make healthy choices. They will also participate in a variety of games that promote physical fitness. At the close of



our "Healthy Habits" unit, we will have a field day competition where the children will compete in various events that will test their strength, endurance, and flexibility.

Another theme that we will explore is "Fairies, Genies, and Wizards! Oh My!" The activities during this unit will be science based and involve the use of imagination with a touch of magic! The children will have the opportunity to become little scientists when they perform experiments and create mystical concoctions. They will also complete an arts and crafts project in which they design their own make-believe characters who hold special powers.

We will also have an "Outer Space" theme where we look at the Milky Way Galaxy and investigate other planets. During this time, the children will use paper mache to construct a model of our solar system. We will also learn the names of the major constellations in order to map them out, and the children will entertain the possibility of life on other planets. During "Martian Mania," we will create our own space creatures out of salt dough and build unique space craft designs out of aluminum foil and cardboard boxes.

As you can see the next few months are full of many fun and exciting activities for the children to look forward to. We thank you for your continuous support and look forward to what the upcoming year holds in store.

Thank you,

Ms. Ranell & the Corral Kids Teachers