



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:

6th -- Miss Molly
10th -- Olivia E.
12th -- Evelyn N.
14th -- Wesley D.
20th -- Ava D.
24th -- Claire K.
28th -- Miss Fran

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

Miss Emily



Silver Circle Again!

Kid Country Childcare has once again earned the **Silver Circle of Quality** designation from the State of Illinois! What a great way to start 2019!

The ExceleRate Illinois program was put into place to recognize childcare centers that have gone above and beyond DCFS licensing standards to provide high quality childcare. This program not only assesses our classroom practices, but also reviews our interactions with children, our business practices, and the education of our teachers.

The first part of the review was submitting our paperwork and ExceleRate personnel verifying that we have adequate teachers with the correct level of education and credentials. Once we passed that hurdle, an independent assessor came to Kid Country to interview me and review our business practices. The last step (and the most stressful) was when three separate assessors made an unannounced visit and monitored our classrooms for three hours.

After the assessors completed their reports, we were notified that we once again passed their rigorous process and earned the Silver Circle of Quality! Kid Country first earned this designation in 2015. I could not be prouder of our teachers and staff for once again earning this designation. **Please join me in**

congratulating them for their continued commitment to quality early childhood education and care!

I am also super excited about our fundraiser that is planned for February 23! I am so grateful for the Robbins, Boseo, and Deaville families for spearheading this event and for starting a Parent Group for Kid Country!

The inaugural event of this group will be a Bowling Fundraiser held at Country Lanes in New Lenox on Saturday, February 23. This is an adult only event to raise money for our playground equipment. The goal of this fundraiser is to get support from outside of our Kid Country family to take the burden off of you! So please start rounding up your bowling teams by inviting your friends, neighbors, co-workers and relatives to join us! Make sure the date is marked on your calendars and start spreading the news! Watch for updates from the Parent Group throughout the month!

I wish each and every one of you a happy and healthy new year!

Danna

GREEN FROGS

Christmas cheer filled the air in the Green Frogs room as we began to prepare for Christmas day! To help deck our bare walls, the Frogs used a bristle brush and green paint to stamp beautiful wreaths and a cotton ball to dot our boughs of holly. Using different types of brushes and stamping techniques during painting encourages the children to think more creatively and strengthens different muscles in their hands and arms.

Once our wreaths were complete, we decided to make Christmas trees to hang in our Green Frogs tree farm. To complete this project, the Green Frogs had to identify each letter of their first names. Once they had done so, a color was assigned to each letter and the Frogs were tasked with matching each colored ornament with its' corresponding letter on the tree. This project reinforced letter recognition while also working their fine motor coordination as they peeled apart each piece of tissue paper and placed it in the correct spot.

Christmas cannot take place without Santa and his reindeer and the Green Frogs worked diligently to create enough reindeer to fly Santa's large sleigh! We worked on our cutting skills as we cut out rectangles and squares to create our reindeer bodies. We also counted the number of eyes, noses, and tails that we wanted on our reindeers. The Frogs enjoyed some gross motor fun with this activity as we participated in Christmas yoga.

The Frogs had a blast pretending to fly Santa's sleigh, standing tall like Christmas trees, and twinkling like stars. Last, but certainly not least, the Green Frogs made holly jolly Santa faces. In this activity, each strip of Santa's beard contains



one letter of the child's name. The Green Frogs identified each letter and put them in the correct order before gluing them to Santa's smiling face!

Once we felt that our room contained enough Christmas spirit, we worked together to create reindeer food for the big night! Several ingredients including sunflower seeds, Cheerios, oats, and glitter were placed on the table for the Frogs to utilize. Each ingredient was given a specific measurement such as "1 scoop" or "3 scoops." The Frogs each received

a bag and worked to identify each numerical measurement as they created their yummy reindeer mix!

It's been an exciting month in the Green Frogs classroom, and we are excited to see what January has in store for us! Miss Fran, Miss Wendy and Miss Jessica



YELLOW DUCKS

December was "bright" in the Yellow Ducks classroom as the teachers hung colored lights throughout the room. One of the strands of lights that the teachers displayed was hung above the diaper changing station. These provided visual stimulation for the children during a routine practice of the day, and they also became a conversation piece between the teachers and the babies.

There are many opportunities for teachers to spend one on one bonding times with the babies in the classroom. Diaper changing is one of the many opportunities for bonding. This engagement can be as simple as talking about the diapering process. It can also be as complex as a back and forth conversation about anything the child is interested in. The beginning stages of communication are brief eye contact, simple back and forth conversation and pausing for the other person to talk.

The month of December also brought holiday spirits and a classroom celebration. The Yellow Ducks had a wonderful time dancing and playing around in the whipped cream. After their fun snack, the babies practiced unwrapping presents, which were toys from around the classroom that were wrapped up. The children giggled with excitement as they opened the toys. The party was very successful and a restful naptime proved it.

Overall, it was a wonderful month in the baby room as we keep welcoming new babies and saying goodbye to transitioning babies. We are excited to see what events and new faces 2019 will bring the Yellow Duck pond.

Miss Krista, Miss Hailey and Miss Leslie

Blue Gills

It is the most wonderful time of the year! Just ask any of our very excited Blue Gills. The gleam in their eyes and the thrill in their voices when they talk about Santa Claus' arrival is nothing but magical.

We have been counting the days until Christmas by counting backwards on the bulletin board. Every day we took a number off and then counted how many days we had left. It was a great pathway to learning new number vocabulary.

Gingerbread men are always fun to study. We read all types of stories about gingerbread men, boys, girls, babies and pirates. We also compared their similarities and differences. Each story was unique but had some similarities. Circle time brought some gingerbread fun as we patterned them and played the missing gingerbread game. In this game, we closed our eyes and had to guess which color house the Gingerbread Man was hiding under. Sometimes we would correctly guess right away and other times we had to look under almost every house. What a great game to review colors and numbers! Some of the other gingerbread activities we engaged in were counting them, creating our own gingerbread men out of paper and drawing them.

We also had fun making our own homemade gingerbread play dough. After the kids measured and mixed the ingredients in a large bowl, Ms. Rhonda kneaded it for us. When the play dough was ready, we were able to play with it and make gingerbread men using gingerbread cookie cutters, buttons, and beads. Boy did it make our room smell so good!

We are looking forward to January and our new study of Winter Clothes!
Ms. Rhonda and Ms. Pam

Blue Dolphins

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Happy New Year! The Blue Dolphins are excited to be jumping into the New Year. With the weather being cold, the Blue Dolphins are going to be getting crafty with what they can do inside. We will be starting science experiments that will be ongoing throughout the week.

They will get to learn science terms such as a hypothesis. These experiments will get the children to think about how, when, why, and because along with forming educated guesses about what they think will happen during the experiment. We will also be working on thinking things through before shouting out answers. We are excited to do these experiments and see if they can guess what is going to happen before they see it with their eyes!

Miss Pam, Miss Rhonda and Miss Julie

Please make sure your child has appropriate outdoor wear at Kid Country! Hats, gloves, boots and a heavy coat are needed every day!

PURPLE PARROTS

During the month of December, the toddlers spent some time getting into the holiday spirit by exploring all things CHRISTMAS! Music filled the air as the toddlers explored many different books and created several different pieces of art work. Some of their favorite songs to hear were "His Name is Santa Clause" and "Must be Santa." After learning these songs, the toddlers were able to make strong connections to the idea of Santa Clause and set to work in the art area. They used both their fine and gross motor skills to create Santa's beard, a colorful mural made of Christmas bows, and their very own Christmas Wish Lists. These projects led into some meaningful conversations and new vocabulary. The toddlers engaged in several back and forth conversations about the different colors that they saw, and the different toys that Santa was going to bring.

The teachers also led conversations about the different textures that were used while painting and coloring with different art materials.

What better way to end the month while enhancing social skills than by enjoying cookies and stories with Ms. Donna! They listened closely as she read us some of her favorite Christmas Stories. When she finished she enjoyed a glass of cold chocolate milk with us! How fun!

The toddlers had a great December and are looking forward to an even more fun January as they learn more about winter!

Miss Kim, Miss Stacy and Miss Kathy



ORANGE OWLS

The Orange Owls were using their bodies from head to toe as we explored our 5 senses. We began our journey through the senses with the sense of touch. The highlight of this sense was when the Owls were able to use various textured items to create a winter scene. We discussed descriptive words such as rough, smooth, soft, fluffy, and rigid. With these words, the Owls were encouraged to describe their scene and the various textures used.

Next we focused on the sense of smell. The Orange Owls sure put their noses to the test as they were asked to identify familiar smells, match them up, and use their past experiences as to where they may have smelled these particular smells before. As our senses study was being wrapped up, we combined the sense of hearing and seeing. We tested the Owls with different sounds as we made noises both in and out of sight while having them tell us why it made a difference when they saw the object making the noise versus not. This brought on a great discussion of why each sense is crucial and how our everyday life could not exist as we know it without each of our senses.

The month was filled with songs, cheer,



and high energy with great anticipation for the holidays! As the weather continuously changed there were many opportunities for us to get all our energy out both inside and out. On the sun filled, warmer days we were able to take walks, do relay races, and draw our Christmas wishes on the sidewalk. On the gloomier, bitter cold days we made full room obstacle courses with various full body challenges. There were many days

RED ROBINS

Our Red Robins had a holly jolly month of December. We ignited our holiday cheer by creating a classroom string of lights. Each child used a sponge and a variety of stamp pads to individualize the light. The high light of this activity was not only the physical engagement of their fine motor skills but the social engagement between the teacher and the child. The teacher asked several simple questions about the actions occurring as well as their experiences with Christmas lights. Many of the children spoke of the many lights they see while riding in the car and going to the zoo. It is very important for the teachers to hear and be able to share experiences with the children that occur at home.

The colder days approached which caused the Red Robins to stay inside for much needed gross motor play. To engage each child's entire body during gross motor play, Ms. Emily set up three stations of different methods of coloring. One station was group coloring with markers around the table, the second station was a large piece of paper on the tile with crayons, and the final station was a large paper taped to the wall with colored pencils. The children were divided into three groups and switched from

where the Owls needed more of a calming and relaxing day where we incorporated uplifting yoga and relaxing stretches.

We hope each and every one of you had a joyous holiday surrounded by family and friends! We are looking forward to January with our Orange Owl friends! Miss Bailey, Miss Melissa, Miss Donna K., Miss Krynn and Miss Molly

each station when the holiday song ended. This activity had many objectives and incorporated a variety of gross and fine motor skills including core strength, different



hand mechanics, and social skills with others. It was a very successful activity as the children really enjoyed switching activities with the music. We will definitely be repeating this activity and alternating new skills to keep the interest of the children. Overall, this month was a great way to end the year 2018. The Red Robins have been working hard and will

continue to work at their many milestones occurring in the second and third year of life. As teachers we are beyond excited to continue to learn about each child and explore the world around them. The new year brings many hopes and goals and the Red Robins are ready to achieve theirs.

Ms. Emily, Ms. Holly, and Ms. Jenna

Kid Calendar

Tuesday, 1/1	CLOSED Happy New Year
Monday, 1/7	School Resumes
	Blue Gills Program Resumes
Saturday, 2/23	Bowling Fundraiser