Calendar of Events

- December 14
  2nd Quarter Ends

- December 17 to January 4
  Winter Break
  School closed

- December 29
  Family Nature Hike:
  Kuliou‘ou Ridge, Hawaii Kai
  10 AM to 11:30 AM

- January 7
  Children Return

- January 9
  PATH Meeting
  12 PM to 1 PM

- January 14
  Field Trip:
  Lyons Arboretum
  8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

- January 22
  Field Trip:
  Manoa Falls
  8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Community Events

- December 15
  Festival of Lights Boat Parade
  Hawaii Kai Towne Center
  4:30 PM to 8 PM

Silkie Smooth

The Children’s Center is now the proud owner of two Silkie chickens named Bonzai and Lilikoi. Children and adults are learning to care for our new pets, including how to handle them safely and not scare them. Koa is now an expert in cleaning out their cage. Having school pets allows us to reinforce the responsibility we have to the plants and animals around us. Chickens require a lot more attention than fish.

The chickens appear to be very comfortable in their new environment because we became the proud recipients of two small eggs. We used these eggs on Friday to make rice pudding. The first reason was because even one of our aides did not know if these eggs were edible. The children were very interested in seeing if what was in this light brown egg was the same as what was in the white eggs in the store. Secondly, rice pudding is a traditional dish to serve on Bodhi Day. Buddha ate rice and milk to keep his mind strong while he contemplated the root of human suffering. We speak more about this on our third page.

King of Checkers

We began our week with a new strategy game. On one side of the board is tic-tac-toe. On the other is checkers. This allowed the children to select the level of difficulty in practicing strategy and spatial reasoning. There were several children who already knew how to play checkers, so after a little challenge to test their knowledge, we turned the game over to them as the experts to teach their peers. They did a fantastic job! The children do not yet have the patience and sustained concentration to finish a game properly, but they did figure out how to reach a mutually agreeable way to change partners or end the game. It will be interesting to see how long it will take them to develop into full games.

Next Semester

We have been working on plans for the next semester. It is looking like we will be going on two trips each month. Our focus will be on discovering the different types of gardens found along Manoa Stream. We will model each type using our mural system, then join the murals to see how the stream connects them. We will also use the information gathered to develop a classification system. Additionally, we will use our growing database in helping us understand the gardens on our campus. We continue to add specific plants as we prepare for this work.

This week we planted a vanilla orchid.
The Gift of Song

This week we went caroling to all the places we had gone trick-or-treating. This was our way of giving back to the very generous people, some of whom lavishly decorated their offices and had games for the children during our annual Halloween walking trip. We surprised our friends with two or three songs from our ‘playlist.’ Our songs ranged from “The Dreidel Song,” and “We are Thankful,” to “Must be Santa Claus,” “Here Comes Santa in a Red Canoe,” and “Mele Kalikimaka.” Even though the second hour of caroling was mostly the adults singing, the children truly charmed everyone and brought a great deal of joy to everyone they encountered.
Happy and Sad

Bodhi Day is usually recognized on the 8th of December, we celebrated it on Friday. We began the week by telling the story of Buddha sitting under a banyan tree thinking about happy and sad. He wanted to find a way to free people from suffering, and on this day he found the path to Nirvana. We used the terms happy and sad to reference a story popular with the children about a wise man who contemplates big and little while rescuing a little mouse from various predators.

We challenged the children to think about what is happy and sad in their lives, and then to look around to discover what is happy and sad in the world. It is always remarkable how many children are aware of local, national and international news. They really are paying attention!

Prayer Flags

After several days of small group discussion the children make prayer flags. On one side the children drew pictures of things that make the world a happy place, or things that they wish would happen, using fabric pens. We then wrote their responses with permanent marker. Responses ranged from deep like, “I wish to share the love,” and “I wish for clean water,” to things like “I wish I could play with tigers on a rainbow.” And wouldn’t the world be better with more tigers and rainbows?

On the other half they drew things they wish would not happen using watercolor pens. Responses ranged from “No fighting,” and “No more storms and tsunamis and earthquakes, to “No naps,” and “I wish the Grinch would stop stealing Christmas.” The watercolor pens blotched deeper colors on the flags; sometimes negative things can seem more intense and attract our attention easier.

Accentuate the Positive

On Friday morning we hung up the prayer flags so the children could share their flags with each other and with the other classes. They loved looking at all the flags, but really loved telling each other about their own flags. Some would even stop their play and run to the flags if they saw someone looking at their flag.

During nap time we had a little “rain” on the prayer flags. This had no effect on the positive side of the flag since the drawings were done in fabric paint. But the negative part of the flag was in watercolor and the colors disappeared leaving only the words that were done in permanent marker.

We explained how nature (the rain) and time can fade the negative so we can focus on the positive. It is important to recognize the negative. Maybe we are fighting too much. We can remember that and work to make things better, and maybe by focusing on sharing the love we can make that happen.

It is hard not to find a Christmas message in this activity, and the timing could not be better. We learned a Thanksgiving song, “We are Thankful,” shared this song as we went caroling, and reflected on this to create our prayer flags. I think we are entering our holiday break on strong footing.