



December Chronicle

Update from Andrea, Director

The joy of the season cannot be squelched by any new covid surprise. Our special annual holiday event of Hershel and The Hanukkah Goblins hit the stage again. Many thanks to Spencer for once again giving the performance a new direction...improv! The number of actors was astonishing and each brought his/her/their special creative twist to the character they played. It was fresh and new each time. We are so sorry we could not invite parents, but be sure to look at the pics on Instagram.

I have had the pleasure of introducing three visiting teachers this fall. My friend who taught a class on creative movement, my sister who taught a class on recognizing emotions and calming the body, and my cousin who taught two classes on making graham cracker Christmas trees, Stars of David and presents with frosting and candy decorations...just in time for the holidays.

On the last Tuesday before our vacation week, we honored Charlotte and wished her well. We made cards and had some fun pics taken. We will gladly welcome her back in whatever capacity she can manage once she completes her surgery and recovery.

As of the middle of the month, Adriana DeLuca has joined us. She is currently an assistant teacher at Bishop. We are glad to have her on board. Please welcome her.

I sincerely hope your holiday season was joyous, relaxing, and stress-free.

Happy New Year Everyone! Let's all work together to keep Omicron out of our midst! May all of us stay healthy! May all of us keep our sense of humor during these upcoming winter months and laugh and celebrate something good every day.



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Here's What's Been Happening At Bright Start this December:

In **Spencer's** groups, this December brought the return of the winter classic "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins!" The story finds a village unable to celebrate Hanukkah because goblins have taken over the synagogue...only it takes the daring friendliness of Hershel (and a cute cat) to find that the goblins only want the friendship and safety we all desire and deserve. This year's show focused on performers acting out and improvising in response to narration, and managed to showcase over fifty 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders on the stage over our five shows. Many thanks to students, families, and staff for their help and flexibility in making this our most inclusive and flexible Hershel to date!



Valerie's groups learned all about mixed media art and were excited to combine a variety of materials to make a unique piece of art. Children used craypas and collage papers created by Bright Starters last year to make 'birds on a branch' pictures. These brightly colored sheets of paper were splattered, printed, and stamped on using a variety of objects. The children were very happy to be recycling these papers into new works of art. You can view some of these beautiful pictures on the [Bright Start Instagram](#) page.

Olly's groups spent a lot of time outside this December as they participated in a Winter Fun Run and some great games of soccer.

The Bright Start Winter Fun Run group started with children planning the course and creating their own runners bib by choosing a number and setting a goal for how many laps

they aimed to run. They discussed what a foot and a yard looked like and using google maps how many feet made up the whole course. After some good runners' stretches, the runners walked, ran, and sometimes skipped as many laps as they could. Once finished, they discussed the importance of hydrating and eating a healthy meal (second-snack) after completing some exercise.



Group soccer matches aimed to give everyone a chance at playing 'the beautiful game!' and trying their skills! While discussing the rules of the game, each group also talked about what it means to be a fair sports person and a leader when it comes to sports. Older students learned the importance of passing to younger and less experienced players and looking for ways to encourage them.

As the Holidays approached some Bright Starters worked together to make a holiday banner that was displayed in the hallway outside the cafeteria!

Laura's group has been involved in a charity effort this month, making hats for children in need. Her group will collaborate with Liz's to do this ongoing project, in addition to other activities, throughout the winter months. The focus of Laura's group in December has been on discussions about the topic and meaning of this charity, teamwork, and a lot of fine motor coordination practice. They have been learning techniques and making pom poms for the top of the hats that will be donated.

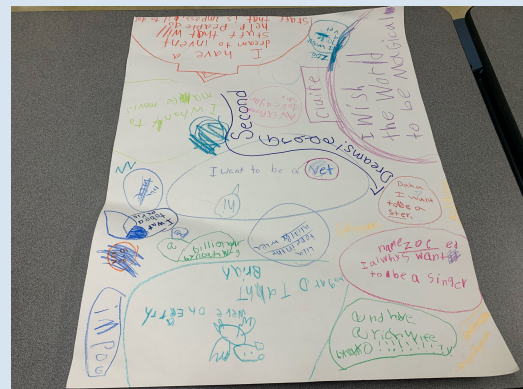
Laura's group also had fun playing a special version of charades which involved making nature shapes with their bodies, such as shells, waves, and seagulls. A few lined up together at a time and the others made original sentences from the words they represented, such as, "The seagull flew over the wave that pulled the shell out to sea."

In **Ms. Wall's** groups, the month of December started with a Math theme. Grades 3 through 5 graders were involved in exercises on probability. We predicted how many times a coin would land on heads or tails. Then we used a different coin to see if our predictions changed. K-2 students were excited to observe patterns. We shared a book called, Pattern Bugs, by Trudy Harris. Patterns in bugs, patterns on the borders, and even patterns in the words in the book made us realize that patterns can be found everywhere.. The children had fun making bookmarks with their own bead pattern tassel.

At the end of the month, 3-5th grade students did an exploration with Muffles Truffles. In this investigation, various flavors of truffles had to be divided into boxes of 10. The questions were, "how many boxes could be made, how many were left over to make variety boxes, and how much would be made selling them for \$10.00 a box?" Each student then got to sample a truffle. Quite a treat!

Liz has been working with students on understanding song lyrics and relating them to their lives.

After listening to Thunder and understanding that it's about the band wanting to achieve their dreams of being big stars, students got to share some of their own dreams as well. Students were given the opportunity to be creative in drawing about their goals and contributing to a group project. There have been several singalongs with seasonal music and some wonderfully passionate dancing as they learned about feeling the music.



In **Carol's** groups, K-2 students built on the story of "Where the Wild Things Are" to talk about how Max and the Wild Things felt, to name different emotions, and to talk about what made them feel those emotions – like happy, sad, scared, excited, etc. We then moved around the room, acting out each emotion. Finally, students got to draw a picture of one thing that made them happy and on the other side, one thing that made them sad.



The older students played some drama games which helped to show them that acting is more than memorizing lines. It is movement, tone of voice, facial expressions, and vocal expressions. We played the game Gibberish Interpreter, in which some students were called aliens or zombies and couldn't speak English. They spoke Gibberish and other students had to "translate" what they said.

"Homework excuses" is a wildly funny acting game where one student is the teacher, one student is the bewildered student who has lost his/her homework, and the remaining friend group has to come up with an improbable excuse for him/her... The friend group tries to communicate the excuse through pantomime. It is the job of the bewildered student to figure out "the excuse". Some wild excuses were posited. Don't be surprised if your child tells you they did their homework, but an army of penguins snatched it away and dropped it in a volcano!!

Finally for the week before the Holiday, Yvie and Carol teamed up to do a Dance Party in the gym with the younger grades. We got funky, stomped like dinosaurs, did the hokey pokey and the chicken dance!

This month **Yvie** and the children had a blast before the new year! She set up scavenger hunts that tested the limits of mental and physical problem-solving. Students worked together as a team to compete for prizes. She taught the younger students about the Dala horses from Sweden as the kids made symmetrical ornaments for the holidays. Lastly, Yvie teamed up with Carol to get the kids up and moving on their feet to learn and participate in dances in the gymnasium. We can't wait to see what the next year brings.

This month, **Angelique** had the students learn about the trees that remain green throughout the winter months, i.e. evergreens or conifers...The children learned why some trees keep their green color. They also discovered how to identify specific types of pine trees. Did you know that tribes in the Great Basin area used to survive off of pine trees on their long journeys? You can also make pine needle tea which has more vitamin C than a whole glass of orange juice! The students had a great time taking the pine needles that Angelique foraged off the forest floor and making paintbrushes out of them. They were surprised to see the cool effects that the pine needle brushes created when they painted with them. The older students were able to make lovely pine needle wreaths.

Some more December photos:



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