



"Simon Says"

The Official Newsletter of the
Robert E. Simon, Jr. Children's Center, Inc.
December 2024

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Established 1990

simoncenter.org

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DIRECTOR

Director:

November is not necessarily a short month, but this year it flew by... fast!

Thank you for participating in our fall fun and fundraisers. In November, the children and teachers enjoyed a relaxing day in their PJs on the 11th; parents were busy ordering from Original Works; families enjoyed an evening at Chuck E. Cheese; and everyone helped us gobble-up pumpkin pie to end the month. 😊

Last month, we collected new or gently used coats to donate. This month, we will be collecting donations of new, unwrapped toys. The collection box to drop off the toys will be set up in the front hall.

Also in December, we will host our annual Winterfest for Simon Center families. There will be some holiday treats to enjoy in the front hall and a performer to help us celebrate in the gym. Our monthly dress-up "boots" day will be on FRI 12/20; our hours will be 8 AM to 5 PM (from 12/26-12/31); and our classes will end the year with another fun, *rockin'* New Year's Eve dance party!

I hope you have a wonderful "season of giving"... Happy Holidays!

- Leila





Assistant Director:

It's the most wonderful time of the year!

December is here. 😊 While I love the summer and fall weather, I am always excited for the magic that happens in December. Holiday music, decorating, singing, and family.

I love hearing the children talk about their visits during the holiday season. Some share about seeing Santa and traveling to see family members that they have not seen in a long time. It is a special time for all!


My children love it when their 'Elf on the Shelf' comes to play after Thanksgiving. Pure happiness!

As we near the end of the year and the first days of winter, the weather will be getting colder. Please remember to dress your children in warmer, weather-appropriate clothing. And please label everything, too!

I am happy to be spending the holiday season with my second family... ALL of you and your children! 😊

- Jessica

Did you know... ?

- Refer a child & get \$250 off a month's tuition. See Robin or Leila for more details. 😊
- We have an official (and private) Parent Group Facebook page. 
Please "join us" at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/902695849810695/>



Board of Directors:

This time of year, I'm thankful for many things... the usual responses of health, family, friends, apple pie, and Stove Top stuffing. However, the past few years the Simon Center has been near the top of that list. Our family is so grateful for the care and attention Nora receives from all the staff, not just her teachers. I'm sure many of you feel the same way. With that in mind, please think about contributing to the Simon Center Staff Holiday Gift collection. Thank you to everyone who purchased Simon Center t-shirts and ordered from the Original Works fundraiser. Also, thank you to all the families who came to our Chuck E. Cheese fundraiser earlier this month.

Our next restaurant fundraiser will be at Chipotle in January. Starting in December, we will be collecting for a Toy Drive for the Fairfax County Department of Family Services. Please see the flyers posted in the front hall for more information.

I hope you had a delicious, drama-free Thanksgiving with family and friends. For the coming winter holiday season, I wish you happy, merry, and joyful celebrations for the end of 2024! The Board of Directors is thankful for all your support throughout the year.

- Jessica F. (Mom of "Panda" Nora)



Nursery 1 Penguin class:

Our Penguins have made great progress in November. The babies all have been growing up so fast...they are all mobile, crawling, standing up using the furniture, and walking along the divider, too.

Isabelle is doing great! She is rolling over and loves to explore the room. Isabelle is a “fast roller” who loves to play with the rattles and to look at the soft books.

Ethan is standing up and walking while holding onto the furniture now. He enjoys eating all the purees and loves to try different flavors. Ethan even holds up his own bottle and he loves to play with the balls or pop-up toys.

Charlotte is working on pushing up her body. She is eating purees and holding her bottle. Charlie enjoys playing with spinning toys and ‘reading’ plastic books.

Livia sits up when she is crawling and loves to show off her crawling skills. She is trying different foods from home. Livia enjoys playing with the rings and little fishies.

Henry is walking around the furniture and along the divider. He eats the food from school. Henry loves to play with the cars and bouncing the balls on the floor.

Clara is army-crawling. She enjoys checking on her friends during meals. Clara likes to play with telephones, scarves, and she enjoys covering her face to play ‘peek-a-boo’.

Jack is another resident army-crawler, and he is busy moving all around the room. His favorite place to play is in the small house. Jack likes to play with the stacking rings and farm animals.

Naomi loves to move--- quickly! She scoots around to move and pushes up her body.

Naomi has been enjoying eating the school food and she loves to play with the stacking cups and magic stars.

Nico is so brave and never gives up... he stands up and tries again & again. He is eating purees from the schools and enjoys trying new flavors. Nico loves playing with the small fishies and making noise with the bottle shakers.

James joined the Nursery the last week of November. He is working on adjusting to being in a group of Penguin babies and beginning to make friends. Welcome, James!

We hope all our families have lots of happiness and a wonderful holiday season!

- Luz, Arline, and Rosanete





Nursery 2 Monkey class:

Happy December!

With the early sunsets and warmer clothing, it is really starting to feel like winter.

In November, our themes were: Food, My Family, Turkeys, and Thanksgiving.

All our Monkeys painted turkeys and enjoyed sensory play with real vegetables and colorful feathers. They also had a great time during dramatic play times by pretending to be shopping and pretending to be cooking. Later they enjoyed doing the *turkey* “hokey pokey” dance.

Everyone liked the stories we read about food, family, Thanksgiving, and turkeys.

We wish Tessa and Pearl a wonderful time in JR 1 ... we miss you both already!

Our winter themes will be Snowflakes, Snowmen, Holidays, Christmas trees, and we will learn the song “Little Snowflake”.

Hoping everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and enjoys the coming winter holidays, too.

- Reena, Alicia, and Fettouma



UPCOMING EVENTS:



December 13	Winterfest, with a performance by Mr. Jon in the gym at 4 PM
December 17	New & unwrapped holiday toy donations due
December 20	Dress up “Boots” day
December 25	CLOSED for Christmas holiday
December 26 - 31	HOURS: 8 AM to 5 PM
December 31	Rockin’ New Year’s Eve dance party for classes in AM



Junior 1 Dolphin class:

In November, our Dolphins were having fun while enjoying the fall weather. First, we learned about **Pets**. We used grey paint to make our pet, and the children enjoyed gluing on ears & eyes. We read many books about pets and looked at pictures of our pets. The class loved playing with some stuffed dogs. We learned what a vet does and explored some animal doctor supplies.

Next, we discussed **Vegetables** and explored plastic vegetables on plates. We also painted with corn, an onion and green peppers. We read books about being healthy by eating fruits and vegetables.

Mid-month, the class was introduced to **Turkeys** while reading books. We also painted with feathers and with our hands to make a turkey. For sensory play, the children had fun with feathers in the sensory table.

Our next unit for November was **Families**. We explored our family photos and painted a “We Love Our Family” craft using our handprints. The children also had fun playing with family puppets.

During the last week in November, we learned about **Opposites**. We explored hard & soft objects and colored inside & outside of a box. For an indoor activity in the building, the class had fun climbing up the stairs & riding down in the elevator.

In December, Adeline, Rio, and Uma will be transitioning to the JR 2 Goldfish classroom. We will miss them! Also in December, we look forward to welcoming Franklin to JR 1, when he is ready to move up from the Monkey class. 😊

In December, our themes will be **Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, & Diwali**.

- Shirin, Fara, and Ellaine



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:



Alani

Uma

Rio

Elijah

Caroline

Ms. Shatara

Ms. Luz

Ms. Ellaine

Ms. Mary



Junior 2 Goldfish class:

We started November being “*Nuts* about Fall”. We brought nature inside to play with and paint. We taped leaves to cardboard and painted them with gentle strokes to make sure not to break the leaves. Later, we crushed some leaves and made a fall wreath. We started our Thanksgiving holiday early with a “Pilgrim” theme. During this week, we made pilgrim hats and talked about the upcoming holiday. Each child designed their hat to their liking and put the stripes on as a ‘finishing touch’.

We combined our “Fall Harvest” theme with our “Gobble, Gobble, Gobble” theme and went a bit “turkey crazy!” to end the month. We made turkeys by using paper plates or coffee filter designs, and the Goldfish were challenged to use their imaginations. We added in some corn designs using bubble wrap, too. We fed our handmade bottle turkey with some rice and corn and even fed them some pom-pom balls as food. We fluffed their feathers and stuffed them very well. We wanted big, fat turkeys for Thanksgiving! The most memorable November activity was making ornaments for the “Enchanted Forest” display at Brown’s Chapel in Reston. It took us all month to make salt dough ornaments into different holiday-themed shapes. We painted them and added glitter for some extra *sparkle*. We are excited that after the Reston Winterfest the tree and our ornaments will go to someone’s home for the holidays.

We said “see you later” to Wren, Marlowe, Dylan, and Tess as they moved to the Pandas in November. Now in December, we will welcome Adeline, Rio, and Uma to the Goldfish room from the Dolphin class.

With the season and weather changing, we would like to ask our parents to go through their children's extra clothes bins in the classroom to do a quick *switcharoo* of clothes to more appropriate clothing for the colder weather, please.

Our upcoming themes for the month of December will be **Secret Pals** and then we will take on the holidays with **Hanukkah**, **Christmas**, and **Kwanzaa**. Happy Holidays!!

- Mayi, Anjali, and Warda



Did you know... ?

- As a non-profit, we have an Amazon “wish list” for various classroom wants & needs, as well as for much needed Center supplies. <https://a.co/4WoEviD>
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Junior 3 Panda class:

Wow, it's the last newsletter in 2024. We hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving 🍁.

In November, we learned about **Sports** 🏀. We discussed different types of sports and what requirements or equipment are needed to play them.

The next week on **Pets** was exciting. 😊 The class loved seeing pictures of our different family pets, and we got to meet Ms. Mary's dog, Kookie 🐶. He was cute and friendly! During **Healthy foods** week, we learned what types of food are healthy for our bodies and what types are not so healthy for us to eat.

For **Thanksgiving**, we enjoyed making a very special placemat. The children colored it and used their handprint to make a turkey.

In November from the Goldfish class, we welcomed our friends Wren, Marlowe, Tess, and Dylan M. Also in November, the Pandas had a great time painting a gumdrop ornament to decorate a holiday tree for the Reston Winterfest.

After seeing a wintry mix a couple weeks ago, everyone is hopeful for a nice snowy winter this year. Please remember to label all your child's belongings (coats, hats, mittens, etc.).

In December, we will say a fond "farewell" to Jenny and her family. Have fun in Texas!

Our December themes will be ❄️ **Winter & Winter Clothing, Winter Holidays** 🎄, **Winter Animals**, and **Happy New Year**.

Happy Holidays from all of us in the Panda 🐼 room, and we wish you a Happy New Year in 2025!

- Sarai and Mary



Did you know... ?

- Our telephone number when we call you will look a bit different. To call us, please use 703-834-5880. To be sure you know when we are calling you, please also save the following numbers to your phone: 571-375-7671 and 571-375-7673.



Senior 1 Bear class:

In November, the Bears explored the theme: **People Around the World**. The children enjoyed learning about different cultures, traditions, languages, foods, and ways of life. We really enjoyed dancing to traditional music from various cultures, and reading books about America, Japan, Australia, and Mexico.

Next, we studied: **Animals in Fall**. The class observed how animals prepare for colder weather and discussed hibernation, migration, and other fascinating wild animal behaviors. Our favorite activity was making a bear cave inside our Bear classroom. The children were interested in learning what animals eat and where they live in fall.

We also learned about the **3 States of Matter**. The students participated in fun, hands-on experiments to learn about solids, liquids, and gases. They loved observing how ice melts from a solid into liquid water and heating the water to make gas bubbles.

Finally, we reflected on **Thankfulness** as we discussed the importance of gratitude and the things we are thankful for in our lives during the Thanksgiving holiday week.

Throughout November, we studied the letters K, L, M, & N, and the numbers 11, 12, 13, & 14. The children practiced writing and forming these symbols on construction paper using their finger. The Bears enjoyed the different activities to strengthen their letter and number recognition skills. Then, we all enjoyed sharing a Thanksgiving dessert of pumpkin pie with family members joining us in the classroom.

In December, we are excited to dive into new themes on **Opposites; Outer Space; Hello, Winter; and Holidays Around the World**. For our letter study, we will practice the letters O, P, Q, & R. For our review of numbers in December, we will focus on the numbers 15, 16, 17, & 18. We wish everyone a joyful holiday season.

- Rozita and Maryam



Do you like the Simon Center?
Please spread the word on Yelp, Nextdoor, Bing, and Google.
You are our best advertisement!



Senior 2 Giraffe class:

The month of November just flew by while the Giraffes kept themselves busy learning new things and building closer bonds with one another, every day. 😊

During the week of “Music Makes the World Go Round”, the Giraffes had fun singing songs while playing rhythm instruments, and painting with watercolors on sheet music while listening to their favorite songs. The class learned names of different notes and loved guessing the sounds of different instruments.

During our “Fall Harvest & Pumpkins” week, the students read books with beautiful illustrations of fall harvests and made a pumpkin mosaic using torn pieces of orange construction paper. They also had a blast with free art while creatively using our box full of scraps of all sizes and colors.

Our next theme was on “Pilgrims & Native Americans”. We read books with stories of the Pilgrims’ journey to the new land and about how they had their first Thanksgiving feast with the Native Americans who taught them to grow corn, catch fish, and hunt wild turkeys. The children loved working on different pages of their very own “Thanksgiving Book”, which included pages with handprint turkeys, pilgrims, and the Mayflower.

During the short “Thanksgiving” week, the children loved hosting parents for the “Thanksgiving dessert” event in our room. Thank you for coming, Moms & Dads! The children were excited to finish and take home their “Thanksgiving Book” in time for the holiday.

In November, the class had fun working on the tree ornaments for the special Simon Center-sponsored tree for the Reston Winterfest.

Our December themes will be “Festival of Lights,” “Holiday Customs,” “It’s Winter,” and “Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!”

In December, we will welcome Eddie to SR 2. He is moving to join us from next door in the Bear class. We hope Eddie finds our room fun and exciting as he settles in as a new Giraffe... Welcome, Eddie!!

Have a wonderful holiday season, and stay warm, happy, and healthy for 2025!

- Julia





Senior 3 Star class:

During November, we were busy learning and having fun!

Our first unit was about the different **Food Groups** and the properties of each food. We finished the week by making chocolate chip cookies, and the children harvested the carrots in our garden for our meals. We all enjoy learning basic cooking skills in our class *kitchen*.

Next, we talked about our **Families**. Each child helped us in making a graph with some topics, like how many people live in your family, how many live in your house (including pets), and figuring out who's the oldest, youngest, and middle child. We also talked about our families' favorite meals. Then, we enjoyed Mrs. Roselle's favorite family food... fried rice. Yum!

Also in November, we talked about the many different types of **Birds**. We looked at each bird's different looks, migration patterns, and how we interact with them today.

The children enjoyed making bird feeders and their own birds during our free art.

Our last unit was our most exciting one yet... **Thanksgiving!** We discussed many traditions and some of what our friends do to celebrate Thanksgiving with their parents and family. We made turkey cookies (made up of Oreo cookies, blueberries, and carrots). Thank you for joining us for the Thanksgiving dessert. We hope you enjoyed the pumpkin pie with all our friends. 😊

Looking ahead to December, our themes will include:

- **Weather Conditions**, like Rain, Snow, and Hail. For the discussion about a Tornado, the Stars will get to make their very own model tornadoes.
- **Manners**, how to practice them in social situations.
- **Hanukkah**, why it is celebrated, understand its practices, and music and books that describe this beautiful holiday.
- **Christmas & New Years**, with each friend sharing how they celebrate these holidays.
- December "Letters of the Week" will be: Ww, Mm, Rr, & Nn.

We hope that you all have an amazing holiday!

- Roselle, Shatara, and Sameey

