We are surrounded by structures. Every day we encounter manmade structures such as houses, hospitals, schools, skyscrapers, walls, fences, and bridges. Other structures are natural such as trees, mountains and cliffs. Often, children desire to recreate a structure they have seen. During this unit, we offered the children an opportunity to explore and further understand the science behind how a structure is built, experiment with a focused building of a tower and a bridge, and consider the building process from start (architect) to finish (construction site and builder), as well as appreciate the aesthetic value in structures.

Our Favorite Theme Books

Circle time is a great time to hear stories that help friends learn more about our theme. This month our favorite books were:

- **Too Tall Houses** by Gianna Marino
- **This House, Once** by Deborah Freedman
- **Construction Workers Help** by Tami Deedrick
- **Look at that Building A First Book of Structures”** by Scot Ritchie
- **Construction Zone** by Richard Sobol
- **21 Elephants and Still Standing** by April Jones Prince

Mango Monkey Says…

Our wise puppet friend visited the friends this month to talk about Manners. We shared the book, **Mind Your Manners B.B. Wolf** by Judy Sierra to give the friends a gentle reminder about using their manners. In the story, B.B. Wolf practices using his manners at a tea party with his friends, Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs and the Gingerbread Boy. The friends helped Mango Monkey teach his puppet pals when and how to use their manners during the day.
We began our theme by introducing the importance of a strong **foundation** when building to assure that the structure is stable. We used the classic story, *The Three Little Pigs*, to help us illustrate the concept of **stability**. The friends then tinkered with the concept of stability when they created structures inside of bins of sand and worked with a teacher to pour a pitcher of water over the structure. Friends were so excited when their stable structures held strong! Experiments with the balance scale and balance games helped the friends discover the concept of **balance**.

Next, we practiced building up. We remembered that a strong foundation is important, especially with tall towers. We built towers with foam blocks, wooden cubes, magnetic tiles, buttons, rocks, puzzle pieces, unifix cubes and we even built a tower out of bubbles! We practiced counting skills when we asked, “How many blocks tall are you?” Building a tower using the alphabet blocks allowed the friends the opportunity to practice letter recognition and challenged them to order the blocks from A-Z.
Next, we turned our focus to bridges. After reading The Three Billy Goats Gruff, we worked together to build a bridge for the billy goats to cross. Looking at photographs of the many bridges in Pittsburgh helped us discover the parts of the bridge. Working together as a group, the friends were challenged to build a bridge using loose part objects such as tongue depressors and paper towel rolls. When finished, they tested the stability of their bridge by driving a toy vehicle over their bridge. If the bridge collapsed, they problem solved to strengthen it.

Practicing the building process from start to finish offered us opportunities to role play the various jobs involved when building new strictures. We learned about the job of an architect and visited the Green Room architect studio to draw plans for structures. Once the plans were complete, the architect delivered them to the builders at the construction site (block area) and the builders worked together to complete the plan. We looked at photos of building features such as arches, columns and domes. We worked with a friend to create these building features with our bodies.
Make Shop Experiences

This month in the Make Shop, we introduced some of the woodworking tools. We began by learning our safety rules when using the tools: always wear safety glasses and follow the instructions to properly handle each tool. After practicing with the drill, the friends drilled holes into wood planks and fastened them together with a nut and bolt to create an airplane. Hammering practice lead to the creation of a Geoboard.

Music Experiences
with Mrs. Hraber

Mrs. Hraber integrated music into our Building theme this month. Pete the Metronome returned dressed up like a builder! We learned songs about The Three Little Pigs, construction vehicles and tools. Instruments, including maracas, drums, rhythm sticks and sand blocks, were introduced to mimic the sound of different tools. In addition, Mrs. Hraber used the instruments to teach the friends how to keep the beat to the songs. We enjoyed using the parachute to illustrate how a crane moves up and down while digging and dumping the dirt.

Center Spotlight:
The Art & Writing Center

The Art and Writing Center offers the friends opportunities to strengthen their fine motor skills, as well as practice their creativity. The Art and Writing Center is stocked with paper supplies, various writing utensils (markers, crayons, pencils), scissors, hole punchers, and stencils. Letter and name guides are available for friends interested in writing their name or words. This month, we began practicing recognizing the letters in our name and writing our name.
We enjoyed Ms. Debbie from the Carnegie Library Outreach Program. She read us books and taught us fun active movement songs. Ms. Debbie is scheduled to visit us every month.

On Friday, the four-year-old friends visited with Louise Sturgess from Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. She shared the history of Pittsburgh, its buildings and changing landscape throughout the years. She described the features of a structure, including arches, columns, windows, doors etc.

PM Preschool friends posing on “Chalk the Walk” day to raise awareness for campus children’s schools.

Mango Monkey visited our circle to talk about the importance of using our manners.


Happy 4th Birthday Luke!
Our Month in Photos

Sylas and Henry sharing with building materials.

The PM Preschool friends observing the supporting pillars of the Pausch Bridge.


Satoshi crosses the mushroom off of his scavenger hunt list.

Lucy Jo creates a natural building with various shapes and sizes of rocks.

Evelyn gets creative with glue and buttons.

Friends interlocking letter picture puzzles.

Mrs. Myers working with friends to find which items are heavier or lighter.