“Storytelling” describes the social and cultural activity of sharing stories, sometimes with improvisation, theatrics or embellishment. This month, the PM Preschool friends got a rich opportunity to tell stories in different ways and in many different spaces around the Children’s School. Stories were told with the use of overhead projectors in the Make Shop, on a shadow screen in the Green Room, with puppets, and in drawings with emergent writings. The PM friends had the opportunity to meet a real author where they gained experience looking closely at book illustrations to find faces and letters inside of photographs. During the Storytelling unit, the teachers worked with the PM friends to support perspective taking skills, increase oral language expression, and most of all, build empathy.

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:

- The Turnip, by Janina Domanska
- Abiyoyo, by Pete Seager
- The Jolly Postman, by Chris Van Allsberg.
- That is Not a Good Idea, by Mo Willems

Mango Monkey Says…

Our wise puppet friend visited the friends this month to talk about body awareness and friendship. We shared the book, That is Not a Good Idea, by Mo Willems. This engaging story encouraged the children and Mango Money to think about “good ideas” and ways to take care of their friends while at school. Mango Monkey and the PM friends worked together to give Angry Alligator ideas of how to stay in his own space or “bubble” with the group while at school. The friends showed Angry Alligator what a “body bubble” or personal space looks like. This helped Angry Alligator maintain his own space throughout his time at school.
Week 1

**Storytelling**

Stories have: Beginnings, Middles, and Ends

During the first week, the friends became familiar with what every story has… a beginning, a middle, and an end. The teachers emphasized this important quality of storytelling by reading nursery rhymes such as “The Itsy-Bitsy Spider”, “Humpty Dumpty”, and “Little Miss Muffet.” The teachers utilized a real egg as Humpty and the friends predicted how many blocks a wall needed to be stacked for Humpty to “have a great fall”. The teachers also read the fairy tale, “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” to highlight beginning, middle, and end. The PM Preschool friends assembled sequence cards in the correct order to show their understanding of beginning, middle, and end. Later in the week, the PM friends were asked to tell their own story that they would like to write. Then, they segmented their tale into the beginning, middle, and end. In the Green Room Block Area, the PM friends used their imaginations to tell stories inside and around a large box. The Dramatic Play Area was set up as a library where books were borrowed, read, and returned. It was fantastic to see the friends work as “librarians” recommending books to “patrons” and checking out books.

Week 2

**Storytelling**

Global Stories

During week two, the PM Teachers and friends dove deep into the theme of storytelling by exploring rich stories from all over the world. The teachers used a globe to highlight from where in the world the Circle time stories came. Pete Seager’s retelling of the South African tale, “Abiyoyo” was read twice throughout the week. The friends all agreed that South Africa is a very faraway place. They created magic wands in the Discovery Area to make things “disappear” with a “Zoop” just as in the story. In the Green Room Block area, the friends were given the opportunity to retell the story of “Abiyoyo” using an overhead projector and a shadow screen with character puppets. They experimented with playing many instruments, such as an accordion, a xylophone, and a ukulele, just as the “boy” in Abiyoyo. The teachers also read the Russian tale, “The Turnip” by Janina Domanska. The friends created an observational drawing of a real turnip and they were given the opportunity to taste a turnip during snack time. Through the use of a globe during Circle time, the children developed an awareness of the global diversity that exists within the PM Preschool group. The teachers worked with the friends to point out where in the world each friend and families have come from, including Pittsburgh, Ohio, Maryland, Pakistan, Korea, Germany and Japan.
Adventures in Storytelling

During week three, the PM Preschool friends met a real author, Mr. Benedikt Gross, Klemen’s and Albert’s Dad. Mr. Gross and his co-creator Joey Lee created, “ABC: The Alphabet from the Sky.” The alphabet book is a letter searching game. The reader finds letters inside of aerial photographs taken from around the country. Benedikt first worked with the friends to find faces inside of photographs of everyday items and then letters inside of images of his book. Mr. Gross discussed the main idea of “finding things” inside of what we see every day. Thanks for your visit and discussion, Mr. Gross! We will miss the Gross family as they travel back to Germany over the winter break. The friends also created snow friends onto poster boards by tracing three large circles of choice and then adding to their creation by gluing rhinestones, buttons, and fabric pieces. Each friend named their snow friend and told the teachers a little bit about them. During week three, the Green Room was equipped with a new sensory table! The friends enjoyed using their senses of touch and sight to scoop cold ice pieces into plastic cups. The Green Room sensory table will allow the friends to experience the monthly themes through their senses.

Center Spotlight:
The Playground

The Children’s School website notes that while playing on the Children's School Playground, “the children are provided with rich opportunities to grow, learn, and develop as an individual and in friendships”. On the Children's School Playground, children gain experience moving their bodies in a variety of different ways as they run, build, jump, climb, ride bikes, and bounce balls. Outdoor play supports the children in building key gross motor and social skills. The afternoon friends surely enjoy playground time together! As the weather gets colder and snowier, please remember that we journey outside each day unless the weather/wind chill is deemed unsafe for outdoor play. Please send proper snow gear with your child: boots, hats, and mittens, so your child is comfortable outside.
This month Pete the Metronome came to the Children’s school dressed as a gingerbread cookie! Mrs. Hraber sang songs and told the friends several versions of musical stories about the fairy tale, “The Gingerbread Man”. Mrs. Hraber used a flannel board to tell the PM Preschool the story. The friends sang songs and played different musical instruments such as woodblocks, a cowbell, and a shaky egg. The instruments represented the animals who try to eat the Gingerbread Man in the story. Mrs. Hraber led us in learning and singing counting songs such as, “Five Little Cookies” and “Five Little Gingerbread in the Pan”. Mrs. Hraber ended the session with a Gingerbread parachute game! The “Storytelling” themed Music class was a delicious way to end the year of music. Happy New Year, Mrs. Hraber!

Our Month in Photos

Claire and Ewan re-enact “Abiyoyo” using shadow screen puppets.

Seiichiro experiments with light and color with the use of an overhead projector in the Make Shop.
Our Month in Photos

Mary “takes a call” in the Dramatic Play Area.

Mrs. Cherin worked with friends to retell “Abiyoyo” behind a shadow screen in the Green Room.

Aria works to open the doors of a plastic castle on the Green Room carpet.

Satoshi, Seiichiro, and Klemens paint with daubers in the Discovery Area.

Klemens explores buoyancy with Miss Bing at the water table.

Araad, Klemens, and Seiichiro play xylophones with Erika, a student employee, in the Discovery Area.
Our Month in Photos

Mary learns to play “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” on a Xylophone in the Discovery Area.

The PM friends used a large box to support their imaginative storytelling and play during the month.

Ms. O’Neill tells a hands-on version of “Five Little Ducks”.

August builds “skyscrapers” with Unifix cubes in the Green Room.

Maddox plays an accordion in the Green Room.

The PM friends make music together at the tables in the Discovery Area.