

Yes, indeed, there IS a Santa!

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Dates to Remember:

- * December 26-30: No School
- * Monday Jan 2: No School
- * Monday Jan 16: No School



We are entering into our fun week with the Polar Express and, with apologies to the author, I am modifying the story to leave out the parts where children and adults are questioning their belief in Santa. What a preposterous thought! Anyone questioning the true spirit of kindness and generosity epitomized in Santa Claus needs only to visit The Learning Cooperative, our Parenting & Play Groups and our Salem Family Resources Board and staff.

Let's start off with the "big man" himself, a wonderful dad who built our fabulous Polar Express Train and is dressing in his finest red suit every day for a week to visit with all of our program participants.

A grandmother who so generously jumped in at the last minute to "adopt" a family for the holidays and help to bring them a very merry Christmas.

The members of Salem Haven who gifted us with a

generous donation which just happened to arrive during our Christmas celebration on Monday.

All the parents and grandparents who have created this wonderful school and continue to sponsor, donate to and support all our fundraising efforts.

The members of the Salem Family Resources Board who work behind the scenes to make all of our programs happen. Our Board president, Beth Gagnon, Sheila Murray for attending and supporting all our events, the members in marketing and organizing, our very own Train Conductor, Dick O'Shaughnessy, Nancy D'Agostino and Mrs. Greenberg who bring their love of art and science respectively to our young friends.

The parents who give their time and talents to organize fundraisers, schedule co-op, jump in for extra co-op days, and create this fabulous newsletter!

The parents in Playgroups who contribute to the food pantry and support each other week after week.

Miss Julie and Miss Heather who welcome all our friends, often without notice.

Mrs. Fichera (and her family!) for donating so much of their time and talents.

Finally, our sweet, young students, who live what they learn and demonstrate kindness and love each and every day. They are fortunate to come from homes full of what is truly important. Long after toys and pajamas are outgrown, the warmth and love, attention and guidance will carry them throughout their lives.

Santa is so much more than "getting" toys. He is about generosity of spirit that lives in all of our families.

Santa will be there to hand out those magic bells that will ring for us all as proof of our unflinching belief in all that is kind and generous among us.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HOLIDAYS & A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR
 TO ALL OUR PRESCHOOL AND PLAYGROUP FAMILIES!**

What are we learning?

We have had a fun and busy month. Our classroom learning has been inspired by the holiday season and the children have been finishing up their "special project" family gift that represents a lot of hard work and love.

The "Early Learners" are working on letter recognition and pairing the sounds with symbols. Recently we have focused on the letter T incorporating trains, tangrams, T-shirts, tea parties, and toothpick towers. Gingerbread men have been used to help the children learn symmetry and visual discrimination charting as well as comparing and contrasting with our many gingerbread stories.

"First Years" are working on shapes and have continued work on number recognition, 1:1 correspondence, and A/B patterns. Nutcracker number match and making shapes pizza were just a couple the projects designed to help the children learn these math concepts.

Both classes continue to work on fine motor skills and use of school tools. Baseline assessments continue in all areas of development.

Thanksgiving Friendship Feast

After a month of learning about what it means to be thankful, the children celebrated Thanksgiving with their classmates by sharing a friendship feast. Each child brought a snack from home, mixed it with the other children's snacks and then shared a bowl of the combined treat.

After sharing a fun day with their friends, they went home with a thankful "tree" centerpiece to which their families could add their own thankful messages and acorn kisses.



Showing off fun turkey headbands!

Welcome Gianna!!

We are very happy to announce that the "Early Learners" welcomed a new friend to their class last month. Children being children, it didn't take long for them to make her feel right at home by including her in their play and showing that kindness that comes so naturally to them. Thanks to the children for being such wonderful friends!

Fundraising Thank You

A big thank you to everyone who has been working so hard on all our fundraisers! As a small school just getting off the ground, fundraising is an important part of making things work.

Thank you to Mrs. Kench who works diligently behind the scenes and has done an outstanding job coordinating all the fundraising events. Thanks too to all the parents who generously donated items for our "Winter's Here! Cheer!" calendar. Also, thank you to Santa who took time out of his busy schedule to take pictures and speak with the children at North Salem Elementary School raising money for TLC. Finally, thank you very much to Mrs. Delvecchio for her generosity. Her efforts and donations made the Tupperware event our biggest fundraiser of the fall!

There's still time to purchase more "Winter's Here! Cheer!" calendars. We will accept entries until the day before our first drawing which will take place on January 5th. Good Luck to everyone who purchased calendars and thank you for supporting our school!

Afternoon Enrichment

Science with Mrs. Greenberg

This month The Learning Cooperative offered two free Sensational Science with Mrs. Greenberg sessions to spread the word about this wonderful program offered in our afternoon enrichment classes and to announce that we are expanding the program with additional classes offered on Tuesdays.



Mrs. Greenberg's "spinning" lesson.



Afternoons with Ms. Jury

Ms. Jury's afternoon friends have been learning about different December holidays and recipes from around the world.

The children had great fun with the Sinterklaas, a winter holiday celebrated in the Netherlands and Belgium, putting hay in their shoes by the fireplace, only to discover that the hay was gone and replaced with candy that they used to make chocolate letters.

A messy but fun activity found the children collaborating on a piñata similar to those used by children at Christmas in Mexico. The children also enjoyed some tortillas.

The class also learned about Santa Lucia which is a December holiday celebrated in Sweden and Norway, during which Saint Lucia comes as a young woman with lights and sweets. The children made crowns of candles to celebrate this holiday.

If you are interested in signing your child up for the amazing afternoon of learning and fun please contact Ms. Jury.



Celebrating Santa Lucia

December At-Home Craft Idea

Peppermint Ornament (as seen on www.marthastewart.com)

Peppermints are the coolest holiday sweets especially when transformed into edible holiday ornaments with which your children can brighten up the Christmas tree.



Materials:

- Peppermint Candies
- White icing
- M&Ms
- Twine

Instructions:

- Lay 5 peppermint candies in a circle
- Bond sides together with icing
- Adorn front with M&M candies
- Let dry and hang with twine

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★ **Look Who** ★

★ **Celebrates a** ★

★ **Birthday this** ★

★ **Month!!!** ★

★ **Landon!** ★

★ **Happy Birthday!!** ★

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