

Mindfulness

The holiday season brings on stress for the family with all the demands that it brings— shopping, cooking, baking, entertaining, unwanted guest. This year COVID-19 has multiplied the stress factor by adding virtual learning, job uncertainties, seeing or fearing of loved ones getting sick, and masks. Stress is very serious and can be very harmful to our health. It creates headaches, anxiety, insomnia, depression, heart problems and much more. So it is very **important** that you take care of yourself and your family by lowering the stress levels in your home. Being mindful is a good start to lower the stress this year. “Mindfulness is bringing your attention to the present moment with an element of nonjudgment and acceptance. It is noticing when we get caught up in thoughts about the past or the future, and returning our attention to the present — the only reality.” This can give us a perspective and decrease stress. Below are some ways to help decrease stress over the holidays.

-  **Don't lose sight of what really counts.** Try to find a way to make a small stressful situation more pleasant. How does this stressful situation fit into the grand scheme of things.
-  **Try to respond by kindness.** This can shift the mood of the situation. Kindness softens frustration and allows one to be more compassionate about the situation.
-  **Make Plans.** Planning in advance helps to prevent the last minute scrambling and allows you to work the things you want to do such as shopping, baking treats, or special outings.
-  **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. Plans can change so flexibility is important.

Parent Engagements



The LIL Cats had 2 parent engagements this fall: A Stuffed Animal Project and Christmas Ornament Painting from Pottery Place from Huntington, West Virginia. Since parents were not allowed in the buildings due to COVID and for the safety of the students, the supplies and directions were sent home for each engagement. For the Stuffed Animals Reading Engagement, parents received the animal, stuffing, and a list of ways to use a stuffed animal to reinforce Reading and Writing at home. After the animal project was completed, parents were asked to send a picture of the child reading to their animal to school to receive a gift. The second parent engagement was the Christmas Ornament. The ornament, paint, and a Winter Family Engagement Activity packet filled with ideas of ways the families could reinforce Reading and Math over the holidays. Included in the packet were some recipes for salt dough, slime, etc., game night and movie night ideas, and Math fun activities. Parents were asked to send a picture of their child showing off their newly decorated ornament.





Mission to Mars

This year the LIL Cats took part in the National 4-H STEM Challenge offered during the National 4-H week. This years STEM Challenge was called Mars Base Camp which had a collection of activities that centered around mechanical engineering, physics, computer science, and agriculture. Students could get insight of Mars by exploring some coding challenges using the Scratch program. This was available online through the OSU Mission to Mars project. The hands-on activity that was provided by the OSU Extension Office was building Mars Rovers.



LIL Cats Afterschool Program

Hannan Trace's Afterschool has a morning drop off for students that arrive early and are provided with help on homework and tutoring. The program after the day school provides homework help and tutoring and activity time. The activities for the first semester were art, music, and playground games. Next semester the new calendar offers STEM, Legos, Art, and games. Students get to decide which activity they participate in.



Letters to Santa

This year has been very difficult for children to be able to visit with Santa and confide in him what they wished for Christmas due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Being creative, the afterschool program had students to write a letter to Santa on special stationery during a writing activity and the letters were delivered to Santa with the intentions that he would read each letter and talk to the student during a scheduled Zoom meeting. Unfortunately the schools had to close before the Zoom meeting could happen due to COVID-19 increase. But Santa found a way to reach out to the children through Facebook. He read the children's letters live on Facebook during the time their Zoom meeting was scheduled. It was a big hit. LIL Cats had over 344 views when their letters were read. **A BIG THANKS to SANTA!**



PUMPKINS
The LIL Cats have a lot of activities centered around Fall. One big activity centers around pumpkins. They love picking out their pumpkin that was purchased from a local farmer and personalizing it with their creativity. Other Fall activities include coloring turkeys, leaves, jack-o-lanterns.



Going Virtual

On December 8, 2020, the LIL-Cats Afterschool program went virtual due to Covid. Students could logon for help with class assignments in reading and math that were challenging. For enrichment, the students participated in reading stories, scavenger hunts, guided drawings, and games of Kahoot are just a small sampling of interactive activities offered. Student snacks were delivered by bus to the student's home.



Remember that when day school goes virtual then the Afterschool program will be virtual. Christmas break ends on January 1, 2021. LIL Cats program will resume and be remote on January 4—15, 2021 as it will be for day school at this time, also.

Activities

