

Be my Valentine

Kids Stuff



Pint-sized post office delivers lots of lessons

By ANGELA COOPER-MCCORKLE

It's just a short trip from their tables to their handmade post office, but those few steps are full of learning for Val Stensland's kindergarten class at Dutch Hill Elementary school.

The 5- and 6-year-olds are learning how to read and write by sending each other letters.

The post office began as a "wild idea" when it was time to take down a cardboard gingerbread house the kids had used in December, Stensland said. The children were so sad to lose the house, their teacher came up with the idea to convert the refrigerator boxes into a working post office.

The playhouse-sized post office is a hands-on lesson in an important job.

Each day, two kindergarteners get to serve as postmaster.

During a recent mail time, the pint-sized postal officers were 5-year-old Brennan

Pugh and 6-year-old Tatum Moen. They suited up in blue U.S. Mail caps and jackets. Then they showed off their letter reading, sorting and delivery skills. They even dealt with some real world postal problem solving.

"Someone's lost a beautiful silver letter with hearts and sparkles," Stensland said. Tatum and Brennan explained that if letters don't have the right address, they are placed in a special slot and it's up to the postmaster to do a little detective work to get the wayward letter delivered.

Finn Otte, age 5, has already learned that delivering the mail doesn't just happen in his neighborhood. He explained that the mail has to be delivered on trucks, planes and even boats to make it all around the world quickly.

Brennan said putting mail in boxes was his favorite part of the exercise, but he also put a sweet spin on letter writing.

"I like to write thank you

notes, happy notes to share happiness with each other," Brennan said.

The kids knew their mail needed an address, a stamp and to be securely sealed in order to be delivered.

"You can lick it, but I don't like licking it," said Ingrid Simonson, 5, as she liberally applied a glue stick to a card from a bin of unique choices. Another little boy showed off a birthday card with a frog on it before sealing it and applying a hand-decorated pretend postage stamp.

The children showed they were learning not only academic skills but social ones as they sent each other notes with stick pictures of friends playing and letters to take home for family.

"I love you," was a favorite message said Vael Wolcott, 6. "Smiley faces" were 5-year-old Jaden Larson's first choice.

Even children who did not get a letter learned something. "If you didn't get any, how many did you send," Stensland asked them. Once the kids started sending mail,



Photo by Angela Cooper-McCorkle

Junior postmasters Brennan Pugh, 5, and Tatum Moen, 6, take care sorting the mail at the playhouse-sized post office at Dutch Hill Elementary.

they were sure to get some back she said.

After two weeks, Stensland was surprised at how interested her students still were in the post office. She plans to continue mail

service through February when it will be time for the children to go on to their next careers, this time as meteorologists learning about the weather.

Maybe they will remember

the mail carrier's credo as they study storms: Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.

Daddy-Daughter Dance



From the two-step to The Twist, there's no dance style quite so special as on tiptoes with dad. Plan for a sweet evening of twirling around a fancy wooden dance floor, giggling and spending quality time together at this Valentine-themed dance. All ages of children are invited plus their beloved father figures.

Music by DJ PJ Parsons. Enjoy light refreshments and receive a free commemorative photo!

Dances will be Friday, Feb. 9 or Saturday, Feb. 10 from 6:30-8 p.m. at Forest Park at Floral Hall, 802 E. Mukilteo Blvd. in Everett. Admission is \$29, additional daughter is \$6.

Register now by calling

Everett Parks and Recreation, 425-257-8300 ext. 2. Please register under the father's name.

Try hockey for free!

Hockey develops skills on the ice that build a foundation for a lifetime. In addition to athletic prowess, hockey promotes confidence, pride, focus and responsibility with an emphasis on fun.

Everett Youth Hockey invites kids to come try out hockey for free March 3 from 2:15 to 3:15 p.m. at the Xfinity Community Ice Rink located at 2000 Hewitt Ave. In Everett. Hockey gear is provided at no charge by the Everett Youth Hockey Booster Club (please arrive 60-90 minutes early).

To sign up or for more information, visit www.everetyouthhockey.com and click on the Try Hockey For Free tab.



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Young hockey players work out during an Everett Youth Hockey session.