

## Celebrating Chinese New Year at HFCC

January 2025

At Holy Family Children's Center, we embrace and celebrate the diversity within our community. Since we have a few friends who celebrate Chinese New Year, we made it a teachable moment—an opportunity to explore culture through hands-on experiences that were meaningful to each group.

The Little Rascals learned about Chinese New Year during circle time, discovering that it is a big celebration, much like a birthday party, with delicious food, red decorations for good luck, dancing, and fireworks. We also introduced the concept that each year is represented by an animal, leading to a fun game of "Guess the Animal." With a few clues, the children eagerly called out, "Snake!" recognizing that 2025 is the Year of the Snake.

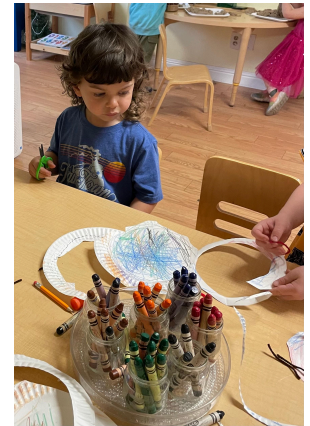
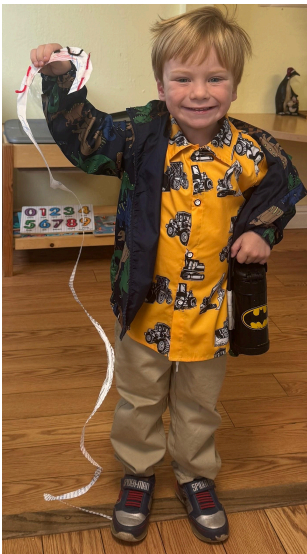
Building on this interest, we invited the children to create their own snakes using scissor skills (alligator chops) to cut out pieces for their artwork. As they worked, their creativity truly shined. Elio made small snips into his paper and excitedly declared, "Look, it's the snake's teeth!"—a detail that inspired others to do the same. This moment was a wonderful reminder that learning is often sparked by observing and building on each other's ideas.

Meanwhile, the Sea Otters took their own approach to the celebration. One child crafted a snake using the edging of a paper plate, a unique method that caught the attention of Weston, who watched with curiosity and inspiration. However, turning a paper plate and cutting the edge off can be a challenging fine motor task. Although some children might not yet have the same skills as others, we meet each child where they are to make the moment successful for them—these are what we call teachable moments.

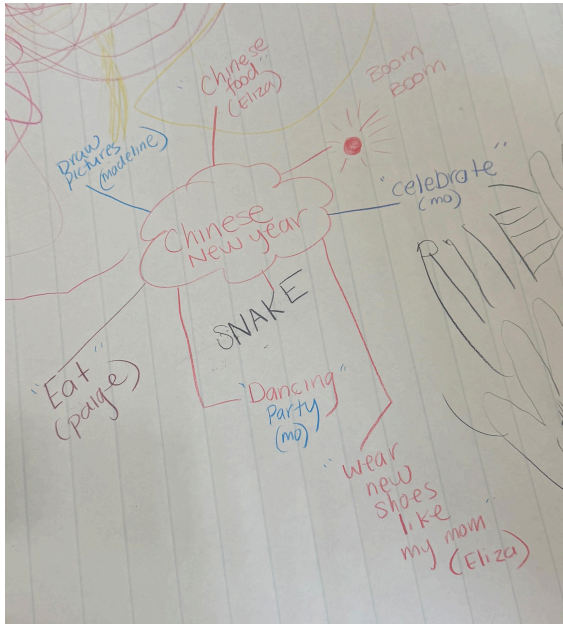
A prime example of this was Weston's experience. Cutting the plate's edge proved tricky, so to help make it a positive experience, I held the plate steady while he carefully cut it in half. With this small adjustment, Weston was able to complete the first step of his snake, and

when he finished, he beamed with pride and said, "I feel good now." I look forward to continuing this process with him.

The Sea Turtles took on a different method of exploring Chinese New Year by brainstorming their thoughts on what happens during the celebration



while their ideas were written down. It will be interesting to see, when our book from Amazon—Celebrate Chinese New Year (National Geographic Kids)—finally arrives, how they compare and contrast their brainstorming with what they learn from the book. This will be a great opportunity to reflect on their initial ideas, expand their understanding, and engage in meaningful discussions.



The Seahorses also participated in making snakes out of paper plates. What I found interesting was the initial hesitation some children had about whether they knew how to cut the edge of the plate. It reminded me of how, as we get older, we sometimes question our abilities—especially in a group where we don't want to be the only one who struggles. When you're younger, though, it's all about the experience. The excitement comes from simply getting to use scissors!

This activity became a lesson in persistence and self-belief for the Seahorses. We live in a product-driven world, and while we, as teachers, emphasize that it's about the process, children still create their own ideas of what something is "supposed" to look like. This was a great reminder that, at HFCC, we celebrate the journey rather than the outcome.

Through this exploration, children not only engaged in creative expression and fine motor development but also learned about traditions and the importance of celebrating different cultures. Chinese New Year became more than just a concept—it became a shared experience filled with excitement, collaboration, and discovery.

Happy Year of the Snake!

