

March 3, 2011

Dear Families:

Today Mrs. Lisa Halberg and Mrs. Gina Patterson came to our class for an Art Docent presentation. We reviewed the artist Henri Matisse and discussed his print *Icarus*.

We talked about how Henri Matisse was one of the most important painters of the 20th Century. We also talked about how his art style changed dramatically over his long career of 60 years as an artist. When Matisse was very young he started out as a traditional painter but then became interested in what other artists of the day were doing – mainly the Impressionists. Matisse was very interested in and influenced by their style, but he took it a step farther and used colors in unexpected ways.

Matisse was a very productive artist until his death at nearly 85 years old. But in his older years, ill health forced him to stop painting since he was weak and unable to stand at an artist easel. So he started creating a different art form using scissors; he would cut out shapes and move them around until he found the perfect balance of color and shape.

The Matisse print we studied was *Icarus*. This is not a painting, but a collage of paper cut outs Matisse put together to represent the Greek story of Icarus, the boy who flew to close to the sun with wings made from feathers and wax. Ask your child what happened to Icarus and what the moral of the story was.

We made our own wings from paper and decorated them with the shapes Matisse used in *Icarus*. We tried to fly like Icarus.



Henri Matisse



Icarus