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Sesame Family Newsletter

February 11, 2009

My Funny Valentine... and Yours!

by Jordan D. Brown

A 4-year-old basks in the warmth of Valentine's Day.

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Featuring:

Random Acts of Affection
My Grandma Eleanor's Heart
Heart Hunt and Other Games



Games & More

Getting to the heart of fun

- [CHICKEN LOVE](#)
What if chickens were the symbol of love?
- [HEARTS OF LOVE](#)
Animation about the word "love."
- [THE LOVE HUG](#)
A pair of arms in this classic video hugs the word "love".
- [VALENTINE COLORING PAGES](#)
Print and color Valentine-themed pages
- [Weekly Trivia](#)

Meet Pinky Dinky Doo

[Watch Pinky on Noggin!](#) Weekdays at 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., Sundays at 7:00 p.m.

Valentine's Tribute E-Card

Honor a loved one with a [Valentine's Tribute E-Card](#).

It's Valentine's Day

Feel the love with these [games, videos, and printable cards](#).



RANDOM ACTS OF AFFECTION

My bubbly 4-year-old daughter Olivia and I were recently chatting



about Valentine's Day. I could practically see the joy percolating within her. How could she not love a holiday devoted to love, hearts, and best of all, chocolate? In her view, it's a dream come true! Experiencing Valentine's Day through Olivia's eyes is a delightful experience.

Ever since she was a toddler, Olivia has gotten a big kick out of sharing her affection for others. I tend to be somewhat reserved in social situations, so I marvel at her uncanny ability to connect with people she barely knows. From the moment she befriends someone -- whether it's a classmate, neighbor, or the guy who works in the produce section of the supermarket -- Olivia becomes a font of hugs, kisses, and chatty conversation. Sure, like all children, she has her cranky moments. But more often than not, Olivia shares with others her irrepressible zest for life. She perceives any encounter as a precious chance to connect with another person in a fun and meaningful way. As the theme song from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* says about Mary, Olivia is great at "taking a nothing day" and suddenly "making it all seem worthwhile."

Though I am used to her effervescent ways, Olivia's outgoing personality sometimes surprises even me. Last week, Olivia joined me on an errand to the bank. Normally, we go inside so she can socialize with the tellers and other customers, but I was in a rush, so we used the drive-through window instead. When it was my turn, I drove up, pressed the button to lower my window, and handed the teller my paperwork. "Who is it?" Olivia called out to me, wanting to know which of her "bank friends" was helping us today. I told her it was Sandy. "Oh, goody," she replied. When the teller returned with my cash, Olivia lowered her window, and shouted, "Hi, Sandy! I LOVE you!" Sandy laughed and waved. Once again, Olivia had turned a potentially boring business transaction into a giggly love fest. (On Valentine's Day, I'm tempted to return to the drive-through and let Olivia put a homemade Valentine card through the pneumatic tube to her buddies in the bank.)

[GROVER AND JESSE TALK ABOUT LOVE](#)

Jesse tells Grover how he expresses love.

[ELMO AND A WHALE](#)

A whale shows Elmo what love is.

[FIFTEEN SECONDS OF LOVE](#)

Grover and Rosita explain what "love" means.

MY GRANDMA ELEANOR'S HEART

Every Valentine's Day, I remember a simple present I made for my Grandma Eleanor when I was about Olivia's age. All the children in my kindergarten created little clay hearts for our loved ones. My grandmother cherished this memento. Every time I visited her for years afterward, she'd say, "Do you know what I still have?" Of course, I knew the answer. Then she'd open a box of memorabilia, and there, inside a ragged plastic bag, was my little clay heart.

This year, help your children make homemade Valentine's Day cards and gifts. Each year, Olivia and her big brother Finn help me bake heart-shaped brownies to send to our loved ones. Objects that the kids make with clay, paint, pipe cleaners, and other inexpensive art supplies are also a hit with relatives. Whenever I draw a blank about possibilities for homemade gifts, I consult my pal the Internet, or visit the local library's crafts section. In minutes, I'm overwhelmed with possibilities.

This year, Olivia is learning how to write her name, so she's very excited about showing off this talent on each card we send. She also enjoys including riddles in her cards. (Example: What did the farmer give his wife for Valentine's Day? Answer: Hogs and kisses.) To help Olivia develop her literacy skills, we might include a silly poem on our cards, which she will make up and I will write. And a last tip on homemade cards -- you can never go wrong with a photograph of your child.



[VALENTINE - I LOVE YOU](#)

A girl writes, "I love you" in a heart.

[DRAWING THINGS ME LOVE](#)

Cookie Monster sings about drawing a cookie.

HEART HUNT AND OTHER GAMES

A parent of one of Olivia's preschool friends told me about a clever game called Heart Hunt. To set up, each family member cuts out ten hearts of a particular color construction paper. Then, each person hides the hearts throughout the house. After setting a timer



for five minutes, everyone runs around trying to find as many hearts as they can before the buzzer goes off. (No points for finding their own hearts.)

Part of the fun of holidays is developing traditions that your family can look forward to each year. In our house, for example, we enjoy a Valentine-themed brunch. Making heart-shaped chocolate chip pancakes and bright red berry smoothies together is always a thrill for our family.

Wishing you and your family a vivacious Valentine's Day!

Jordan D. Brown
Sesame Workshop

WEEKLY TRIVIA

Did You Know?

Gordon and Susan were already married when the show first aired in 1969, but one episode featured a re-enactment of the couple's wedding.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP



Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit educational organization making a meaningful difference in children's lives around the world. Founded in 1968, the Workshop changed television forever with the legendary *Sesame Street*. Today, the Workshop continues to innovate on behalf of children in 120 countries, using its proprietary research methodology to ensure its programs and products are engaging and enriching. Sesame Workshop is behind award-winning programs like *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat*, *Pinky Dinky Doo* and ground breaking multimedia productions in South Africa, Egypt and Russia. As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from sales of *Sesame Street*, *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa* products right back into its educational projects for children around the world. Find the Workshop online at www.sesameworkshop.org.

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