The Sunshine Room Newsletter

March

What's Been Happening

It is wonderful to see how well the children have adapted to the Sunshine Room environment, following the routine and the rules easily and demonstrating how much they have learned so far. They continue to learn in all areas, and the teachers work to provide a "culture rich" curriculum. Our recent inclusion of *Mardi Gras (or "Carnaval"*, as it is known in some countries), St. Patrick's Day and the Irish tradition are some examples.

One highlight this month was celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday by reading some of his books and learning more about him.

Thus month also we began the program "Songs for Peacemakers." This is a conflict resolution program that helps the children learn strategies to solve relationship problems through songs, writing activities and so forth.

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Language Arts

March seems to have flown by. Maybe it is because of all of the learning we have been doing. This month, the Tiger Sharks and Speedy Dolphins have devoted their time to learning about long vowel sounds. We began with silent e and moved on to other ways of creating long vowel sounds. We also looked into patterns that we saw for each sound. The groups read books with repetitive long vowel patterns, such as *Pete's Sheep* and *Sky Ride*. They also worked on sight words and story writing. We played more games incorporating sight words, even at sports time. With the book fair coming up next month, the children have also been learning about story writing and practicing writing together as a class.

The Jellyfish have started reviewing the letters and their sounds more thoroughly in alphabetical order. Each day they learn a letter, its sound, and words that contain that letter. Then they get to draw a picture of something containing that letter. After a couple of letters they work on beginning sounds worksheets to reinforce what they have learned.

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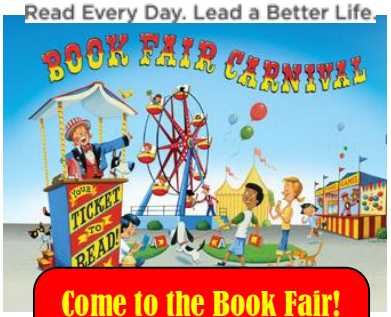
Announcements

The Seed will be
CLOSED
for Spring Break
Thursday and Friday
April 21 and 22

SCHOLASTIC
Read Every Day. Lead a Better Life.



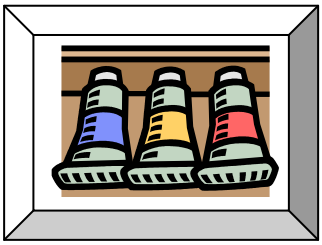
Come to the Book Fair!
April 11, 12, 13
4 to 6 p.m.

See page 3 for show times

Happy Birthday!

Roman
Nicholas F.
Clare

Art



This month we learned about the Brazilian *Carnaval* by watching parts of a documentary that shows how it is celebrated with all of the beautiful colors, lights, music and dance. We then created our very own masks with paint, glitter, feathers and sequins.

We created our own rainbow using glue, torn paper, and glitter glue. This project became an Irish scene, with the children adding a pot of gold, a leprechaun's hat, a shamrock and/or leprechaun footprints.

This month, we set a record for the number of bulletin boards created in a single month's time: three! We began by creating a St. Patrick's Day bulletin board, complete with a leprechaun, pot of gold, a rainbow made out of each child's handprints, and pretend $100 bills with each child's picture glued on. The board reads, "We are as Good as Gold." It was a whimsical, colorful board enjoyed by all! The week after St. Patrick's Day the children created the "April Showers Bring May Flowers" bulletin board, which was split down the middle. The April side showed dreary, rainy weather and the hints of new life: shoots, crocuses and a bird nest filled with eggs. The May side depicted beautiful spring weather complete with plants in bloom and a young bird family. And on our small bulletin board—after counting by twos in math—the children drew a picture of objects that come in twos, including various body parts of humans , fish, and flies, articles of clothing, water faucets, and—Ms. Randi's favorite—lovebirds!

Integrating science with art, the Jellyfish read the book Swimmy and created their own ocean scene by using a paper plate, watercolors, tissue paper pastels and pre-cut fish. The Tiger Sharks and the Speedy Dolphins looked at different books about ocean animals to get an idea of different animals that live in the ocean and the two groups worked together to create an ocean diorama using a shoe box paint, pre-cut sea animals that they colored and other various materials. The children also drew and cut out their own sea animals to add to the diorama. Since they really enjoyed learning all about the sea animals, the teacher extended the subject by reading *The Rainbow Fish* and engaging the children in creating their own rainbow fish using coffee filters that the children dipped in water colors. They then added fins, tail, an eye and a piece of foil for the shinny scale. All the fish are displayed in an ocean scene that the children painted together.

Finally, the children learned about Georgia O'Keefe and looked at some pictures of her flower paintings. They then painted their own flowers.

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Drama

We celebrated *Carnaval* (Mardi Gras) the way the children celebrate in other places. We learned that this festival takes place in summer in the Southern Hemisphere, while for us it is winter in the north. The children in South America dress up in happy costumes, so the children chose their costumes, put on the mask that they made in art, and played a percussion instrument while dancing the samba and marching in a parade.

In remembrance of Dr. Seuss, we read the story *The Sneeches* and dramatized it, using stickers as the famous stars of the Star-Belly Sneeches. This story sparked great discussions about the importance of feeling good about who you are.

We read the Irish folktale *Clever Tom and the Leprechaun*, and dramatized it by turns. The children enjoyed playing the tricky leprechaun.

Following our study of the ocean, we read *The Rainbow Fish* and dramatized it. The children asked to dramatize it several times, to have a chance to play the different parts in the story. Finally, we talked about the meaning and importance of friendship.

Math

In March, the children strengthened their skills of skip-counting by tens, fives, and twos. They learned that tens include numbers ending in zero, fives are numbers ending in five and zero, and that to count by twos we skip a number. The children completed connect-the-dots worksheets to reinforce the concepts for all three number patterns. All of the children grouped objects together by fives and tens and practiced pointing and counting to memorize the order and rhythm.

Counting by twos was more challenging in some ways. Ms. Randi wrote the numbers 1-30 on the board, alternating the colors in a black and red pattern (odd = black, evens = red). The children were instructed to whisper the black numbers and say the red numbers aloud. The next time around we only read the red numbers.

Even and odd numbers were learned by reading the story *Even Steven and Odd Todd* and in the practice of pairing objects until no more pairs could be made – if there is an extra object left at the end, the number is odd!

Finally, the children learned to recognize pennies, nickels and dimes, (including their value), and heads and tails. We read the book *Jelly Beans for Sale* to learn various ways of combining coins to get the same amount of money. The children also really enjoyed playing toy store, in which they got to "buy" toys by counting out the appropriate amount of money. During the lesson we also got into the subject of saving, allowance, and means of earning money (such as chores). We have some very responsible children here in the Sunshine Room! They know what they want (mainly toys) and are working hard to earn money to buy them!

Upcoming Events

SCHOLASTIC
Read Every Day. Lead a Better Life.

Book Fair

Show Times

4:30 pm

Monday, April 11: Speedy Dolphins
Tuesday, April 12: *Tiger Sharks*
Wednesday, April 13: *Jellyfish*

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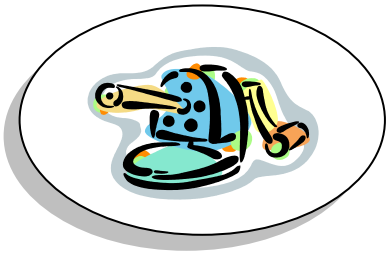
Handwriting



We did it! This month the children finished learning the remaining lowercase letters they had not yet been taught: m, h, b, f, q, x and z. After new letters were learned, previously learned letters were reviewed on the slates. The children all know the lowercase alphabet! They will continue to practice it in the weeks to come.

The children have begun writing lowercase words on lined paper. Each week there will be a new worksheet to complete, filled with words belonging to a certain category, which the children themselves decide they want to write. Pictures are also included on the worksheet that they can color in to continue to develop their hand muscles. This month, the children practiced writing springtime words (just in time to welcome the season, despite the weather!) and their classmates' names (to learn to properly size upper and lowercases letters simultaneously).

These worksheets will be bound together at the end of the year into a book for you to keep. You'll be able to witness your child's weekly progress.

Science

The Sunshine Roomers have been learning about animal habitats. They've learned about what a habitat is and what all animals' (including people's) basic needs are – food, water, shelter and space. The habitats we have been learning about are arctic, ocean, rainforest, freshwater, desert and forest. For each habitat we have done an activity or learned a game.

On the windows near the lunch tables you can see the rainforest trees with our poison dart frogs and various other tree frogs. Many children brought home "jello aquariums" after learning about the ocean. We got to experience how "blubber" (we used Crisco) can keep animals warm in the arctic. We also compared how much freshwater (drinkable water) there is on earth compared to salt water.

We will continue with more activities for the desert and forest and wrap up with games about how animals protect themselves in their habitats. Then we will move on to gardening and learning about how plants grow.