

The Sunshine Room Newsletter

April



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What's Been Happening

April has been a month full of changes and special events.

The dramatic variations in weather gave us the opportunity to compare the weather graphs we filled out every day for the months of March and April. The spring season inspired us to observe the changes in nature, especially in plants, exploring them in science and art. The children have been demonstrating how much they learned in all areas. Their efforts since the beginning of the year are now showing results. They are reading more complex books and writing wonderful stories. They are also taking their knowledge of math to higher levels.

The special events began with the Book Fair and the shows each group prepared; continued with Passover and Easter; and ended with Earth Day, when we learned ways to take care of our home planet.



Language Arts



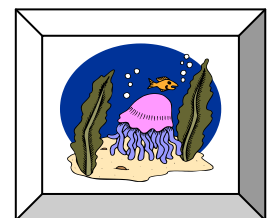
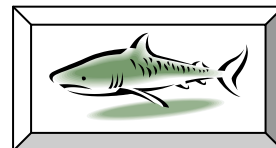
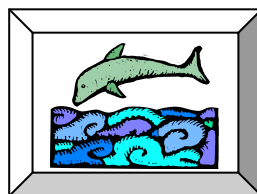
This month has been the true beginning of our little authors' blossoming. While we have been doing "Author's Chair" for a few months now, the kindergarteners have just started writing their own books in class and in Writer's Workshop. I'm sure that in another 20 years or so you'll be seeing some of our very own Sunshine Roomers' names on the book shelves in Barnes and Noble. They began this month writing legends for the Book Fair show and have continued writing more and more books!

While continuing their writing at class time, the Speedy Dolphins and Tiger Sharks have also been reviewing sight words a lot with "Sight Words Challenges" and other concepts we have learned this year. We have been reading many books related to gardening and plants, as well, thus increasing our knowledge in science and continuing to practice reading.

The Jellyfish have been writing a lot as well. They, too, created a class book for the show: a legend they thought up together. They really worked well as a team! The Jellyfish also continued to review letter sounds and practiced applying them in words, on their drawings and on worksheets.

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Announcements



The Seed will be

CLOSED

Monday, May 30



Memorial Day

Happy Birthday!

Frederic Auguste
Bartholdi, sculptor of the
Statue of Liberty

Beverly Cleary,
Children's author

Art



April brought us not only showers, but opportunities to do a variety of art. Much of this month's art was related to current topics being learned in math and also to strengthen handwriting skills. The children completed their homemade April calendars to conclude a unit on time, and created a "Whose Name is the Longest?" bulletin board to connect to the month's unit on measurement. It has been wonderful to see the children identifying whose name is the longest, second longest, shortest, second shortest, etc.

For the second time this year, the Sunshine Roomers began creating original self-portraits using pencils and crayons. The purpose of repeating this project is to see the personal artistic progress of the children. They are blossoming as artist, as well as authors!

In the beginning of April we learned about Native Americans and one type of art they created: sand painting. We connected what we were learning about the desert habitat in science to art. The kindergartners created their own original sand paintings, drawing their own designs and covering them with different colored sand. The pre-Ks made sand footprints by putting their feet in paste, making a footprint on cardboard and covering it with sand. This was a great sensory activity that got them squealing happily.

For Earth Day, the children learned different ways in which they can help the earth by Reducing-Reusing-Recycling. After learning about garbage and pollution, especially the pollution created by paper factories, the children constructed a big earth collage using scrap paper. They also traced their hands on wallpaper samples, cut them out and wrote the ways they help the earth. Lastly, they attached the hands to the earth collage and hung it up. Another way of celebrating Earth Day was reusing egg shells to plant flowers and grass. The children had a lot of fun playing in the soil! Now they are watering their egg shells every day and patiently waiting for the seeds to grow.

For the last project of the month, the children learned which colors are considered warm and which are called cool. Warm colors are red, orange, and yellow and cool colors are blue, purple, and green. Then they painted one hand with warm colors and the other in cool colors and made hand prints on paper. The children really loved getting their hands dirty and showing them off to their friends!

Throughout the month, the children continued developing their skills by tracing, cutting and free drawing with pastels, crayons and pencils. They continue to use moon sand and play dough as sensory experiences and to help develop their small muscles.

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Drama



We began April by reading Mrs. Wishy Washy, an easy reader and one of children's all-time favorites. The children had a great time dressing up as farm animals, pretending to jump in the mud, get all dirty and let themselves be washed by Mrs. or Mr. Wishy Washy, only to jump in the mud once more.

The children also practiced for the Book Fair show. Ms. Dora had been teaching the children many interesting Spanish songs to reinforce the learning in different subject areas. The children had to simply practice where to stand when singing and what movements to make. They also needed to learn to use the microphone, since they would use it to help project their voices when reading their own books. They all did a great job in their shows.

To accompany the change of season, the teacher read the book *Daughter of Earth, a Roman Myth*. The children learned that a myth was a story people believed in a long time ago, and that it was used to explain natural phenomena such as season changes. The children had a great time dramatizing the myth of Proserpina and Ceres.

Math



In the beginning of the month, the children finished a unit on time, including reading an analog clock by the hour and the half-hour. We read the book *What Time is it, Mr. Crocodile?*, in which the hour changes on each page. The children quickly began recognizing that the big hand was on the 12 and the little hand on the name of the hour. Throughout the days that followed, the children could be heard reading the clock and announcing the time to their peers. Very exciting and a proud moment for the teachers!

What a busy and fun time the children have had learning about measurement. We focused on measuring length (in standard and nonstandard units), capacity and weight. To learn measuring length in standard units we experimented by measuring various objects/our peers' heights using rulers, measuring tapes and yardsticks. Estimation came into play when we used Unifix cubes and paperclips as nonstandard units: How many cubes are the same lengths as the chalkboard eraser? The marker?

Estimation continued once we began discussing capacity. The children used measuring cups, measuring spoons and various-sized containers to estimate how many tablespoons or cups of moon sand were needed to fill different-sized containers. They also got to estimate how many baby lima beans (to connect to science) were inside a mason jar. Several of the children guessed 1,000, which was VERY close to the actual number: 1,124!

Lastly, the children used scales to determine which of 2 objects was the heaviest. They got to experiment adding additional weight to each side of a scale to try and make equal weight on both sides. They loved it!

Upcoming Events

The last library day will be Friday, May 13.

Family Day and Open House will be Sunday, June 13.

The End of Year celebration will be Friday, June 24 at 4:00, the last day of the school year. We will put on a show and have a special moment at the end.

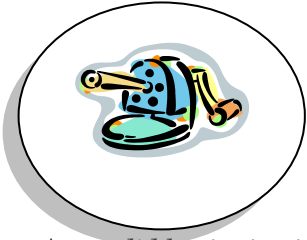
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Handwriting



As we did beginning in mid-March, the children have continued completing a weekly worksheet consisting of a group of words belonging to a specific category. Each week, each child gets to choose a word they want to learn to write in lowercase letters on lined paper. This month, the categories were animals, plants and foods. By comparing the children's work from just a month before, progress and growth is obvious (don't worry; you'll get to see their compiled work at the end of the school year!). Not only is their handwriting becoming more sophisticated, so are some of the words they have chosen – our friend Sam wanted to learn to write “lo mein” during the week we wrote food words. Maybe the next time you order Chinese food, your child will ask for lo mein! ☺

The children will continue to do weekly worksheets, and we will continue to introduce timely subjects into their handwriting activities, including those that are of special interest to them. They are all truly learning to love to write – the motivation comes from within when they write what they want to write!

Science



The children finished learning about animal habitats with a camouflage hide-and-seek game. Each child colored in their own butterfly and reviewed how butterflies camouflage themselves and adapt to the environment. They hid their butterfly somewhere in the classroom so that it would blend in well and had a friend look for it.

We also compared two different ocean habitats and what animals lived in them, showing the results with a bar graph.

The children also started gardening and learning about plants this month. So far we have learned about the life cycle of plants in general. We also are in the midst of watching our lima beans grow and have been recording their status weekly. We will continue to learn about different parts of plants, planting flowers in our own terrariums and gardening vegetables that we will (hopefully!!) be able to eat at lunch.

