

What's been happening?

This month's activities were centered on the Book Fair and Earth Day.

4/9/10

Mr. Cameron Brooks, Rachel's dad, came in to talk about and demonstrate electricity and alternative sources of energy. He explained how energy is made and how wind is a clean source of energy. He then led the children in a hands-on pinwheel-making project

We all learned a lot and had a great time.

Thank you!

4/12,13,14

The children sang Spanish songs to you and read the books they wrote.

They did a great job!

4/26/10

Ms. Kristin's father, Officer Rodger Guest, came in to share a story about a whale that swallowed a lot of litter and pollution, but was saved by the U.S. Coast Guard. He shared tips on keeping our waters clean.



Language Arts

Each group in the Sunshine Room conducted a study of the author of their choice.

The **Bald Eagles** studied Eric Carle. First we read a brief biography on him, and read a few of the books that he had written and illustrated, such as *Mister Seahorse*, *The Grouchy Ladybug*, *The Rabbit and the Turtle* and *Little Cloud*. After listening to the stories, the children discussed the characters, setting, predictions and responses to each one. After some of the readings, we had time to draw pictures and write about how we liked the book or how it made us feel. Finally, we wrote letters to Eric Carle about how much we enjoyed his books, and we drew pictures for him as well. We also wrote a group letter asking him questions about his interest in books and how he comes up with such creative stories.

The **Rainbow Butterflies** studied Tomie dePaola in the same way. We first read a brief biography and then read a few of his books: *Now One Foot, Now the Other*, *Strega Nona*, *Four Stories for Four Seasons*, and *The Legend of Bluebonnet*. The Rainbow Butterflies discussed the books in detail, talking about characters and setting, making predictions, and expressing their responses. In some cases, we drew pictures after reading the book, and wrote about how we liked it or how it made us feel. The culminating activity was writing letters and drawing pictures to send to Tomie dePaola, telling him how much we enjoyed his books. We included a group letter in which we asked him questions about his interest in books and how he comes up with such creative stories.

After the author studies were finished and the letters were sent out, we continued learning and reviewing phonics, punctuation, sentence structure and story writing. We combined science and literature, writing our own stories about the life of a seed.

The **Pre-K** children studied Laura Numeroff and read a brief biography about her. Then we read a few of her books, such as *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* and *If You Give a Cat a Cupcake*. After reading these we discussed what a circle story is, and how it works in a cycle. The books inspired us to write our own book titled *If You Give a Goose Bubblegum*, which we read at the Book Fair Show. After we had finished the author study, we wrote Laura Numeroff letters and drew her pictures about our favorite books of hers. We wrote her a group letter asking her questions and sent her a copy of our book. Hopefully she will write us back soon!

Once we had finished our author study, we began reviewing and adding on to the science curriculum.

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Announcements

Closings

The Seed will be
closed for

Spring Break

Monday, May 24
through

Friday, May 28

and

Memorial Day

May 31



March Birthdays

⊕ Anthony

⊕ Christopher



ART

Happy Earth Day, Everyone!

This month the Sunshine Roomers were very busy! We started off the month of April by creating posters for the Book Fair. The children were so excited to help with the fair that they created enough posters for all three buildings at The Seed!

The Rainbow Butterflies and Bald Eagles created original abstract geometric shape paintings using watercolor paint. They learned about overlapping and how you can create shapes within shapes if they are placed on top of one another. The Spotted Kittens created one-of-a-kind stained glass pieces using construction paper, scissors and tissue paper. Each student thought of and created their very own stained glass piece!

Our next big project in the Sunshine Room was drawing the human figure. One by one, each child sat with Ms. Erica and described what features and shapes they observed when looking into the mirror. Next, they learned the different parts that make up all our bodies (arms, shoulders, chest, belly, legs, feet, etc.). The final step in creating their "Mini Me's" was coloring in their figure with oil pastels. Come visit our room and see all our hard work! Can you figure out who is who?

Our bulletin board of the month is all about Earth Day. All throughout the month of April, we learned ways to keep our planet clean and healthy! What better way to share all our great ideas than to draw them! After deciding how we help keep our planet green, we decided to write and draw those very ideas! We are very proud not only of our AMAZING bulletin board, but all the fantastic ways we keep our earth clean and healthy at school!

Finally, there is always room for free painting and free drawing. Sometime we all just have to doodle and experiment. This month, one of their free paintings will be selected to be placed in their Kindergarten Art Portfolio! We have been working very hard on these throughout the year. We cannot wait to show you the final product at the end of June!

We have started a "new" project in honor of all our FANTASTIC, WONDERFUL, HARD WORKING, AMAZING and BEAUTIFUL mommies, but I do not want to spoil the surprise so I will keep this project as a secret!

Thanks for all the donations, once again! I appreciate all the wonderful supplies. I will not be needing any more at the present moment but will let you know once my supplies have run low again!

See you in May. . .

Handwriting



April has been a month full of learning as well as review in handwriting class. Every class begins the same: the children perform a sequence of movements to warm up their hands, get the wiggles out, and adjust their posture for comfortable writing.

Next, the children are guided through a model of how to write a word appearing on their worksheets. They review the difference between tall and low lowercase letters at this time (to create awareness about a letter's height and/or directionality). Next, each child gets a worksheet containing a group of themed words (this month's words were animals, plants, foods and water animals). They complete the sheet by coloring in pictures on the bottom to continue learning hand control.

The kindergartners conclude by completing a portion of their handwriting workbooks and the Spotted Kittens review groups of letters on the whiteboard, be it upper or lowercase.

In just a month's time, all of the children's writing has improved dramatically. Learning to write on lined paper with a model to follow has combined all of the year's learning into one sitting. It is clear they have accumulated so much knowledge because their work continues to progress every week!



Science

Now that the weather is beginning to warm up, what is more appropriate than learning about plants and gardening! The children have really taken to the subject and express much enthusiasm with their eagerness to participate and the questions they ask.

We began with a study of lima beans. First, the children predicted what they might find inside of a lima bean. Some of their predictions included, "a tiny seed," "a flower" and "yellow stuff." Their guesses were extremely close: After opening lima beans soaked overnight in water, the children discovered (using magnifying glasses) tiny plants inside, complete with a stem and leaves! What an interesting lesson this turned out to be!

Next, the children "planted" their own lima beans. Instead of using soil, they put a bean swathed in a wet paper towel inside a baggy, securing the bean in the middle of the bag with a row of staples. The children each predicted which would be the first to grow, the root or the shoot. The prediction results were almost 50:50 – 13 children guessed the root and 11 guessed the shoot. So more than half of the Sunshine Roomers guessed correctly, that the root would grow first! Their predictions were confirmed just a week after their beans were "planted." Several of the beans began to grow! The children observed and reported that, prior to sprouting, the lima bean itself got large, or expanded. Then the root began appearing! You can see the lima beans displayed on a bulletin board in the room. The children have been checking up on them on a daily basis. Their questions have been pouring forth. It is wonderful to see the children developing such a positive interest in science as well as the ability to perform scientific inquiry.

Towards the end of the month each group was able to plant seeds in pots with soil (now that they are experts on planting in plastic baggies). The Rainbow Butterflies planted marigolds and lettuce, the Bald Eagles planted marigolds (another variety) and garden beans, and the Spotted Kittens planted zinnias and radishes. By the time you see this newsletter, chances are the plants will have sprouted! Not only was the lesson educational scientifically, but it offered the children an opportunity to wait their turn and try something they may not have experienced previously. We can't wait to see how our plants turn out!

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Drama

The first part of the month was centered on the show for the Book Fair. The children had been making great strides in their book writing, so the teachers decided that they should read their wonderful books at the fair. In order for them to be heard, they would need a microphone. So they spent a few sessions practicing reading their books using a microphone. Showing the picture of their book demanded coordination as well.

The Spotted Kittens created a story together and they practiced reading it together, as well.

The kindergartners went on to learn that stories have three main parts: the introduction, the body, and the ending. They learned this by looking at different literature and analyzing it. They then discussed how they could write stories in this way.

Finally, the children read and dramatized *Daughter of Earth*, based on a Roman Myth. This is the myth of Proserpina and the seasons. It is quite a powerful story.



Math

What can we measure? How do we measure? As the children used language such as big, long, tall, heavy, light, and so on, they became familiar with the world of measurement. They first used nonstandard ways of measuring, such as pieces of yarn, small cubes, and paper clips, comparing the lengths of different objects in the classroom. Then they became familiar with rulers, measuring tapes and growth charts.

The Spotted Kittens had a great time measuring different parts of their bodies. They also used their knowledge of measurement when playing with blocks: a unit block equals two half unit blocks and so forth.

The kindergartners went on to learn what estimation is, to make educated guesses and then find out how close they were in their prediction. Literature such as *Measure It* and *Inch by Inch* complemented the theme.

The subject expanded when we used containers in the sensory table to measure water. We guessed and found out how many cups of water fit in a quart container; how many quart containers we need if we want to divide up a gallon; and answers to many more questions that required us to explore and find out. It was a great way to investigate capacity and review fractions as well.

But the subject did not end there. We then went on to weigh objects, yet a different way of measuring. After finding different objects in the room, the children were asked to hold one object in one hand and another in the other hand and feel which one was heavier. We then introduced a balance scale to give a more accurate report.

We also learned that temperature is measured with a thermometer and time is measured with a clock.

The children had a great time exploring the world of measurement, using different measuring tools, making predictions, finding answers, and using previous knowledge to come up with new knowledge.

The next subject will be data, graphing and probability. The children will be finding out data by sorting objects or making surveys, making graphs with the data, and finding out what the graphs tell them.