

Plato Academy Room 9 Newsletter

Week of 9/25/2017

Circuit Boards, Prancing around, Decimals, Bridges, and Slimy days....

Dear Families,

This week the children began an exploration of circuit boards. They experimented each morning this week with different projects to create sound, vibration, and even flying saucers! Through this the children talked about teamwork and compromise in choosing which project to do each morning within their group. Together they all created a poster board of all the things that "circuits" mean to them. One child suggested, "circuit kind of looks like circle" so, they concluded that circuits do in fact make a circle. The children practiced problem solving, reading and following steps, paying close attention to detail, and collaboration with their peers. Please visit our "wall" to see our first circuit maps!



Through “Cricket in Times Square”, a new prefix in the context of the word “unwanted” arose. The children debated if it meant that it was “really” wanted or not wanted. The debate was resolved when Ms. Zoe suggested what “untying” shoe laces meant. The children quickly answered, not tying them, and with this they concluded that “unwanted” meant not wanted. Some children suggested that “un” was the opposite of the word it was in front of. They used the example of the word “undone”. Some other new vocabulary introduced this week from our book study were slyly, adverb, simile, heaved, frowned, prance, bail, foreshadowing, honorable and decimal.

An interesting ancient Chinese proverb was brought up in our book on how the first cricket came to be. Mario and Chester visit a Chinese novelty shop in Chinatown. Sai Fong, the man who had the shop, shared the proverb with Mario and suggested the importance of crickets in Chinese culture. He even gave Mario “a bell as small as a honeybee” for Chester’s cage. The children have already foreshadowed that they think Chester might be the first cricket and that we will see Sai Fong, again. Chapter 8 in “Cricket in Times Square” was titled “Tucker’s Life’s Savings”, the children discussed and predicted that it had to do with money Tucker had his whole life. This chapter was read over two days which allowed the children to foreshadow in their journals how Chester the cricket and Tucker the mouse were going to resolve the problem that Chester ate half of the Bellini’s two-dollar bill! Some predictions were:

“Chester is going to paint the rest of it”,

“Chester is going to tell the Bellini’s the truth because he is truthful because Tucker wanted to tell a lie and he said no no no”,

“He is going to glue it together and put it back”,

.....

After our predictions were in we continued to read and discovered that Chester had no time because, Mama Bellini caught him red handed and sent Chester to his cage. The consequence was that Chester had to remain in his cage until the boy Mario paid back the two dollars or “bailed” him out. Harry the cat spilled the beans that Tucker was the richest mouse in NYC! Tucker had two half dollars, five quarters, two dimes, six nickels, and eighteen pennies. If he gave Chester \$2 to bail him out how much money would Tucker have left in his life’s savings? The children worked independently and then were given time to collaborate. First, they had to figure out how much money Tucker had in total and then subtract the \$2 he had to give to Chester to “bail” him out of his cage. The children worked in their math and science journals to show how they got to their solution. Different solutions were put on the board allowing the children to debate and follow different methods to get to the answer. They practiced listening to different solutions and validating their own solution to their peers. Decimals were naturally introduced as a new way to write \$2 and 83 cents, \$2.83. The children were really interested in the place value and some continued to work on it the following day during the math game, “Buy it Right”. Math games are a crucial part of our day as children practice computational fluency, problem solving strategies, and discussion of strategies with fellow peers.



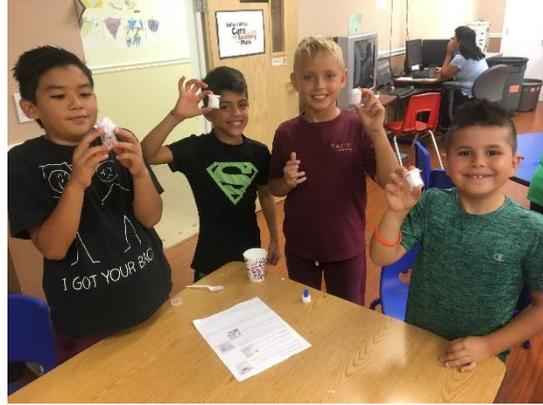
The children have 15 minutes every day to read independently and silently a book of their choice. This gives them the opportunity to spend time reading a book they individually choose based on their interests, enhancing and promoting the desire to read.





Every Friday, we buddy up with Ms. Dionysia's class and do a challenge or experiment. This Friday together they made slime. They practiced reading the recipe, measuring the correct amount, and taking turns stirring and pouring.





Last Friday we introduced our stem challenge to Ms. Alex's 6th-8th grade class. The challenge is to build a bridge with 50 craft sticks, a rectangular base, and 2 feet of tape. In continuum, the children worked hard in their groups to get the bridge to stand up. Next Friday the challenge will extend to adding weight.

