

Dear Parents,

Even though it has been a short week, it has been busy and productive for us. We decided that we were done exploring the ocean and sea creatures and are ready to move on to something else. I asked the students to write in their journals about what they wanted to learn about and most of the students chose pumpkins. That is an appropriate and fun choice for October so we will spend the rest of the month exploring this symbolic squash.

Next week we will be taking a walking field trip to the neighborhood Shop and Save Market to learn more about pumpkins, investigate items that contain pumpkin and hopefully bring a pumpkin or two back to school with us. If weather permits, we will be walking there on Thursday, October 19 @ 12:15 and should be back at school by 1:30. I will need two or three parent helpers to join us if possible. Please let me know if you would like to accompany us on our pumpkin quest.

Last year our class made homemade applesauce and more than one student has requested that we make it again this year. I am a big fan of cooking projects because the students are using science and math skills as well as working together cooperatively, exploring with their senses and gaining a sense of achievement by doing it themselves. I also have found that even students who don't think they will like whatever we're making are willing to try it because they made it and also because everyone around them is encouraging them. If each child can bring in one apple on Monday, October 16, we will have enough to make crockpot applesauce. Any variety of apple will work. Thanks in advance for contributing to our applesauce project.

This week we met with Ms. Dionysia's class for STEM buddies and the children paired off with their buddies to try and create freestanding structures using only a certain number of pipe cleaners. They were very creative in designing and building their structures. Some of them drew their designs in advance and others jumped right in and started building. By trial and error they discovered that they needed a strong base in order for the pipe cleaners on top to remain upright. After they completed their towers, they measured how tall they were and at least one pair managed to build one almost two feet tall!

In math this week we have been continuing learning about money and have incorporated a few fun games. One is called "Who's got the quarter?" In this game, we sent one student out of the room while everyone else was given some coins. One person was given a quarter and they all hid their coins from view. The person in the hall came in and had three guesses to discover who

had the quarter. If he/she asked someone and the answer was “no”, the person they pointed to had to add the coins and announce how much money he/she had. The children loved this game and we spent over an hour totally engaged in this activity! They wanted to make sure that each student had a chance to have the quarter as well as be the one to guess. By the end we were getting creative with it so that no one had the quarter, everyone had a quarter, etc.

Another math game we played this week was called “Math Wizard”. I had the children work in groups and one person would roll two dice and add up the total. He/she would announce the total and then each student would have to guess what combinations of numbers (addends) were on the dice to make that total. For example I might say, “My total is 10.” One person in my group would say, “Are your numbers 6 and 4?” Another might guess 7 and 3, and so on. Whoever guessed the correct combination was the “Math Wizard” and took a turn rolling the dice. These games not only are fun but help the children gain number sense skills and improve mathematical reasoning.

Finally, thanks again for those who ordered from the Scholastic book order this month. We were able to receive ten more books for our class library and four books with CDs. The students love listening to books on CD. Listening to books being read aloud by different narrators exposes the students to how storytellers bring books to life using voice inflection, expressiveness, humor, and unique voices for different characters. I find that when I listen to the students reading to each other, they are modeling this and creating their own unique voices for each character.

On that note - we are going to the library on Monday, October 16 for Tumblebooks. Please make sure your student brings in headphones or earbuds that day if they don't keep them at school.

Thanks for sharing your amazing children with me. Have a great weekend!

Ms. Leslie