

Dear Parents,

We have had an eventful week incorporating fall activities into our exploration. On Monday we made applesauce in a crock pot first thing in the morning. The children brought in a variety of apples and each took a turn peeling and coring them using an old fashioned apple peeler corer device. After the apples were peeled and cored, we had fun demonstrating how the apple is like a slinky in one long piece. The students measured our ingredients, added the apples, stirred everything together and then we turned on the crock pot and waited. Soon the entire school smelled delicious and we enjoyed our warm applesauce for snack in the afternoon. We graphed how much we liked it and one student pointed out that I did not have “did not try” on the graph so he added it. The results were: 3 liked, 5 loved, and 3 did not try.

We did some painting this week using a variety of mini pumpkins and gourds. The textures made for some interesting patterns and designs. At a student’s request, we cut out, painted and put up a tree on our door as we did last year and the children painted watercolor leaves to decorate it. Make sure to check it out when you’re at Plato for curriculum night.

Other exciting news this week was that our long awaited new student finally joined our class! The students had talked about her and asked about her almost daily since school started in August. As we prepared for the big day, we decorated a poster to hang outside the room to greet her when she arrived. The students kept peeking outside our door to look down the hall to hopefully spot her. We had expected her on Monday originally and the students were beyond excited and then disappointed that we had to wait one more day. It was like meeting a celebrity when she arrived Tuesday. I heard comments such as “I just want to see her so I know she’s real” and “We’re glad she’s a girl because we have too many boys!” We are glad she’s here and now our class is complete.

The weather was perfect this week for our walking field trip to the Shop & Save Market to learn more about pumpkins. The students each wrote a question on a notecard to ask the manager. Some of the questions they asked: Are there black pumpkins? How many pumpkins do you have? Where do you get them? How do you carve them? Do you sell Jack-O-Lanterns? How many pumpkins do you need to make a pie? The nice gentlemen at the store did their best to answer their questions and offered the children cookies and also allowed us to choose three pumpkins to bring back to school for our exploration.

Thank you to our parent helpers for going with us, and for being good sports accompanying the students through the store as we did a pumpkin treasure hunt to look for items that contained pumpkin as an ingredient. We split into four groups and each group had a clipboard, paper and pencil for the children to write down the items they found. Some of the more interesting things the students found were pumpkin yogurt, pumpkin baby food and pumpkin beer!

This week Ms. Steph visited us from the Des Plaines Library and her visit is always met with excitement. Along with some music and movement, she read two books that had the students laughing along: *Polar Bear's Underwear*, and *Creepy Pair of Underwear* written by Aaron Reynolds. We had received one of his other books, *Creepy Carrots*, free from Scholastic with our book order and when Ms. Steph left, we immediately read it. The students made connections and comparisons between the two books. Often the children gravitate to books written by the same author and become attached to certain authors or styles of books. This helps them anticipate what will happen next and gives them a sense of control and familiarity. Reading books by the same author also helps build critical thinking skills and creates excitement about the author, the series, the genre, and ultimately helps develop lifelong book lovers.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone tomorrow at 6:30 for Curriculum Night. You will get to experience a little bit of what goes on each day in our class and have a better understanding of how your children are learning enthusiastically and purposefully at Plato.

Thank you for sharing your amazing children with me.

Ms. Leslie