

Dear Parents,

What a fun week we've had getting acquainted and reacquainted! We are in a new amazing room and it felt appropriate to move to a bigger space to go along with our new grade levels. We started the week exploring our new space and sharing all of the neat things we did over the summer.

Monday the big excitement was the solar eclipse and we were fortunate enough to experience it right outside our doors. We discussed what it was and watched a brief video explaining it. We found out that the last solar eclipse to cross the continental US was in 1918 and the next one will be in 2045. We discussed the importance of our glasses and how it was essential to keep them on at all times while we were outside. We went outside when the sun was partially covered and the children were super excited when they looked up with their glasses. There was a lot of shrieking and screaming and jumping around. :) We came out again with the rest of the school later and watched the sun go dark.

To commemorate the occasion in a special way, we made our own frosting and decorated eclipse cookies. I brought in sugar cookies and ingredients to make frosting. The children could choose to make either chocolate (for the moon's shadow) or lemon (for the sun) using powdered sugar, lemon juice, cocoa powder and water. I was going to provide the students with a recipe but when I had trouble converting my original recipe for two dozen cookies into a recipe for just one cookie, I decided to let them explore and experiment with the ingredients to create their own concoctions. I put out all the ingredients and told them to put in as little or as much as they wanted into their bowls. They incorporated science and math skills as they measured ingredients and mixed them all together to create something new. They also cooperated and negotiated with each other, deciding who would make chocolate and who would make lemon/yellow frosting so they could share. Some frostings were liquidy puddles that dissolved the cookies, and some were thick and goopy. They were all enjoyed and eaten or brought home to share with mom and dad. Besides eating our results, we wrote our individual recipes in our journals along with a sketch of the eclipse.

This week we also began our exploration of the ocean. We brainstormed things we knew about the ocean and things we wanted to know. Some of the things we wanted to know: Why is the ocean salty? What color are sea horses? Do hermit crabs live in the ocean? Are mermaids real? If so, do they live in the ocean? We have been exploring sea life in our sensory table with sharks, whales, dolphins, crabs, turtles, blowfish, etc. Tomorrow we will be making ocean slime out of glue, borax and water. This is fun sensory activity that promotes math skills, encourages exploration and encourages the children to use scientific processes to create and investigate.

Some of the books we have been reading together: *Tide Pool Secrets*, *Commotion in the Ocean*, *Bedhead*, *Fox in Socks*, *Beachy and Me*, and a book written by one of our students called *I Love the Zoo*. She read it to the class and now many of the students are interested in writing and illustrating their own books. This is a wonderful way for the children to develop writing and reading skills as well as promote self-esteem and provide a way to express themselves. We will have these available in our writing center along with our journals. Also, I sent home Scholastic book order forms today. The children love looking through them and highlighting their favorites. If you are interested in ordering books, the deadline is Friday, September 1.

It has been a busy and fun first week! We are getting used to our new schedule, our new room, and our new routines. Everyday is a new adventure and I am excited to be able to experience it with your amazing children!

Have a great weekend!

Ms. Leslie