

Week three is coming to a close and now it's September! The students are settling into our class routines and are coming together to form a cohesive community. Regardless of the activity, whether it's ramps and pathways during open gym, partnering for bingo or math games with dice, building towers or putting together a puzzle, the children are working together, negotiating, sharing, and encouraging one another. As with any community, sometimes there are disagreements or misunderstandings, but it is rewarding to see how well the children communicate and problem solve.

We are continuing our ocean exploration and if you pass by our room, you will find our clay sea creatures on display. The students designed, built and labeled their masterpieces. They include a whale, fish, a crab, a duck, the characters from our read aloud chapter book *The Octopus*, and even seaweed, rocks and the ocean itself!

We have been learning about how the ocean contains saltwater and it is denser than freshwater so things may float more easily in the ocean. We created our own mini oceans for a science experiment to find out if certain objects would float. The children filled a cup with water and then chose whether to put salt, baking soda, or both in the water. We made predictions about what might happen and wrote them in our journals. Whereas I was thinking the result would be sink or float, a few of the students predicted that the baking soda would create an explosion. They added the ingredients, stirred the mixture and then placed either erasers or rubber monster finger puppets in their cups. We discovered that no matter what we put in the water, the erasers sank. The finger puppets however, would float if the water had enough salt and or baking soda in it. It was fun and messy; when we left our room later that day for recess, there was a trail of white baking soda and salt on the floor leading to the bathrooms where the students had gone to rinse their cups out after we had completed our experiment.

The most exciting news this week is that Simone the guinea pig is back! After spending the summer with her owner's family, she is back at Plato to rejoin our class. We are all so happy to see her and she seems happy to see us as well. At

lunch the tradition has resumed where students from our class as well as other classes donate pieces of fruit and vegetables for Simone. Simone has a vegetarian buffet each afternoon!

Speaking of Simone - another tradition I hope to continue is having families take her home for the weekend. She loves being around the children, is very entertaining and is easy to care for. She goes back to her original family for the longer breaks from school and I will take her home sometimes as well. Please let me know if your family is willing to take her and what weekend works best. Thanks so much for your help!

We completed reading *The Octopus* by Cynthia Rylant and now are deciding what chapter book to begin next. Some other books we've enjoyed this week include *Leonardo the Monster* by Mo Willems, *Secrets of the Seashore*, *Magic School Bus Gets Crabby* and *One Big Pair of Underwear*.

We had such a great response to our first Scholastic book order this month that I was able to purchase \$20 in books to add to our class library. Thank you for your orders! New books are always cause for excitement in our classroom. The books are on their way and the children look forward to helping me unpack the Scholastic box when it arrives.

On Monday, September 11 we will be going to the library for Tumblebooks. Please send in a pair of headphones, earbuds or \$1.25 to purchase earbuds at the library.

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

Ms. Leslie