

Dear Parents,

The big excitement this week was preparing and cooking our own version of “Stone Soup” yesterday. We read four different versions of the story this past week, including one called *Cactus Soup*. A few students were concerned that we were going to put cactus needles in our soup and I assured them that we would not. We did, however, put in a large stone from our class collection that I took home and boiled for a very long time to make sure it was clean. We began our project first thing in the morning so that the soup could cook and would be ready for our snack time in the afternoon. The students who wanted to participate washed their hands and got to work cutting, chopping, measuring, and stirring. Even the few who did not want to try the soup were interested in helping prepare it.

As the soup continued cooking, we watched a DVD of one of the versions of *Stone Soup* and then shared what we believed the meaning of the story was and what lessons it could teach us. I had the students write their responses in their journals and here were some of the entries: to be kind, to share, to not keep our food or stuff just for ourselves, not to lie, and that everyone has something to contribute and that makes things better.

After gym, those of us who wanted to taste the soup did so along with some fresh bread and butter. Half of us liked or loved it, two of us tried it but didn’t like it, and three of us chose not to try it. Without me even suggesting it, one of the students who chose not to try the soup went to the board and wrote the headings: Didn’t Try, Didn’t Like, Like or Loved. They are so used to graphing and charting results in our class that they take the initiative and do it themselves! The question of the day today was: If $\frac{1}{2}$ of our class liked or loved the soup, how many is that? I drew ten stick figure people and let them work on it. They did a great job counting, circling every other stick figure, polling each other, etc. to come up with an answer.

This week to celebrate National School Choice Week, the students created posters to go up around the school. The posters have the words, “I love my school because...” and the children drew pictures and wrote their own responses. Some of their responses were: It’s fun, it’s awesome, it’s cool, the teachers are awesome, I learn math (with examples of addition equations), it has Despicable Me minion legos, and I learn stuff. If you’re in the building and want to check them out, ours

are by the bathrooms, on the door coming in from the foyer, and on the door to the Greek classroom.

In math this week we have been exploring place value with base ten blocks and constructing and identifying numbers in the hundreds. Today the students were working with partners taking turns creating a number using the base ten blocks and then their partner counted and wrote their answer on a whiteboard. It was a lot of fun and some of the students spent the rest of math time working together building with the blocks and creating amazing structures.

The Scholastic book order arrived today and it was super exciting. The children knew that their free books were in the box and when I opened it, I had a huddle of heads bending over the box trying to see the book titles. Once I passed them all out, it was so gratifying to see that each student was either looking at their books by themselves, or partner reading with a friend. They were so engrossed with their books that when I announced that it was time for recess, I got some responses of “Awww, can we have a few more minutes?” Regardless of their reading abilities, they are all excited about books and that is wonderful to see. I hope they will become lifelong readers who not only enjoy other people’s stories, but will realize that they have stories and thoughts of their own to share and that they are already authors just by writing in their journals, making cards for others, creating posters, etc.

Some notes: tomorrow is our National School Choice dance. Please send in your child’s yellow scarf if it’s not already at school. Tomorrow we are also going to the bank to make deposits.

Have a great weekend and thank you for sharing your amazing children with me.

Ms. Leslie