

Dear Parents,

This week has been all about Valentine's Day. We managed to cover all subjects in a valentine related way. For art we used water colors to paint hearts and put them on the classroom tree on our door. We also used stamps and ink as well as stickers to decorate valentines for each other and also decorate paper lunch bags to use to collect our valentines. Another teacher warned me that the lunch bags wouldn't be big enough to fit all of the valentines and goody bags of treats and treasures that would be passed out. She was right! Most of the students ended up asking for plastic bags for all of their "loot" or put it into their backpacks.

We did valentine word searches and valentine crossword puzzles with our STEM buddies from Ms. Alexandra's class. In our journals we wrote valentine poems with the beginning "Roses are red, violets are blue..." Some of the lines the students wrote to complete the poem: "and I love valentines," "Valentine's Day is the best holiday and so are you," "I love my friend and he loves me too," and "Valentine's stinks and so do you." That last quote was probably influenced by a book we read called *Valentine Cat* which is about a cranky cat writing poetry to the dog next door before they become friends at the end of the book. We also played valentine bingo with conversation heart phrases. I was impressed with how well the students did reading the game cards. Even if not everyone could read every word, they all could figure out the beginning sounds well enough to identify the phrases.

In math we have been continuing our exploration of fractions and this week we did some valentine fractions, coloring half a heart, putting "sprinkles" on  $\frac{3}{4}$  of cupcakes drawn on the whiteboard, dividing a valentine card into fourths, etc. We also did some valentine fun mazes that had the students coloring only the even or odd numbers to get through the maze. Tomorrow we will be joining Ms. Teresa's class and partnering up to play place value games using the base ten blocks. We are hoping this will lead to future collaborative exploration activities combining our two classes.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month and to go along with our discussion of how to take good care of our teeth, we have begun an experiment using teeth. We passed around and examined two primary (baby) teeth that were graciously donated by the tooth fairy. We made predictions and wrote in our journals about what would happen when we placed one tooth in a jar of water and the other tooth in a jar of Sprite. I found it interesting that almost all of the children's predictions were about whether the teeth would float or sink. Only one student predicted that the tooth in water would "get clean" and the tooth in soda would "get dirty." We have observed the teeth in the jars each day and tomorrow we will take them out, touch them and observe them with a magnifying glass to see what changes, if any, have occurred. We were fortunate enough to have some dog teeth donated as well and will extend our experiment, soaking teeth in energy drinks, juice, regular milk, and chocolate milk.

Finally, next week will be the conclusion of our service project collecting items for Orphans of the Storm Animal Shelter. Thank you so much to all who have donated items so far. The shelter uses 100 newspapers each day so if you have access to any, please pass them on to us this next week. We are trying to meet our goal of exceeding the 75 lbs of newspaper we collected last year. If you would like to donate other items, there is a list attached to the weekly Parent Notes, or let me know if you'd like a list and I will email it. Next week we will categorize everything, weigh the newspaper, and count how many rolls of paper towels, cans of pet food, cleaning supplies, etc. we have received. A volunteer from the shelter will visit us next Friday to collect our donations and give a presentation about what the shelter does and describe some of the dogs and cats who are waiting to be adopted. The children are so excited that we have filled over three boxes with items to donate!

Have a wonderful weekend and Presidents' Day and as always, thanks for sharing your amazing children with me.

Ms. Leslie