

Dear Parents,

What a wild weather week we have had! We had to stay in for recess three days due to the bitter cold temperatures. One day this week it warmed up enough for us to go outside and play in the giant snow piles by the parking lot. (The kids had so much fun!) We are ending the week with school being closed Friday due to the extreme amount of snow expected. I sent the children home with their boots and snow pants so that they can go outside and enjoy playing in the 5 - 8 inches of snow that's expected. Stay safe and warm and enjoy the Snow Day!

This week we have continued enjoying our new listening center. Almost all of the children checked out books on CD today at the library. They take turns holding the books and showing the pictures while listening to the CD. This week we added more books and today half the class was gathered around the listening center singing along to *Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons*. Too cute!

We originally had four pair of headphones but a parent generously donated two more to be used for our library visits to listen to Tumblebooks in case students forgot theirs. We bought adapters for them so now six students can listen at one time. If anyone has extra CD cases, we could use some to protect our CDs.

Surprisingly, most of the CDs that come with the books are not in cases but are just sealed in plastic along with the book.

This week for our rock exploration we examined several fossils. My friend the rock expert lent me some from his collection and I shared them with the students. I had them pick two to draw and then write about in their rock journals. They made observations and speculated what they might be. Before revealing what they were, we extended our exploration with our STEM buddies from Ms. Dionysia's class. We met in the lunchroom and set up stations with different fossils at each table. The students rotated from station to station, examined the fossils, came up with observation questions (questions that can be answered through observation), and hypothesized what the fossils were. After the buddies examined all the fossils, we revealed what they were and some information about them. The fact that some were over 300 million years old was hard for most of us to wrap our brains around. Some of the students had correctly identified some of the fossils such as plants, fish, and even a jellyfish. The one fossil nobody identified correctly was coprolite,

otherwise known as fossilized poop! After finding that out, everyone wanted to go wash their hands!

Next week we will further extend our fossil exploration with our buddies by creating our own version of fossils using clay and small items we can find around school. Once they are complete, we will set up stations and have them work together to try and determine what the fossils are made from. My students are so excited to work with their buddies and I know they get so much out of the interactions. They are receiving one-on-one attention and forming bonds and friendships with the older students. They are also engaging in cooperative learning such as listening, sharing knowledge, completing tasks, giving and receiving encouragement, and helping one another. It is a win-win situation as it builds confidence and community for our younger and older students.

Some additional notes: Valentine's Day is Wednesday, February 14, and it's also pajama day. We will be having a special lunch that day provided by the PTO. If your child would like to participate in handing out valentines, please send them in Wednesday, and have your child address and sign them. Our class consists of: Paige, Hawk, Elena, Christina, Petro, John, Barry, Maximos, Tempess, Gabriel, Jessica, and Niko.

Please send gym shoes for your child to wear at school. They need them for gym and we don't want them wearing muddy/wet/snowy boots into our classroom. Also please make sure to send in appropriate outerwear for the weather. If the "feels like" temperature is above 10 degrees, we will be going outside for abbreviated recess. Feel free to leave extra hats, gloves, etc. at school to keep in their cubbies.

Our Scholastic book order is due tomorrow, Friday, Feb. 9.

Lastly, our service project collecting items for Orphans of the Storm Animal Shelter is going wonderfully! We have filled up two large boxes already and each day more items are donated. We will continue collecting items until February 22. Thank you all for your support and donations!

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

Ms. Leslie