

Dear Parents,

This week we discussed Earth Day and read a Dr. Seuss book called *How to Help the Earth by the Lorax*. One of the suggestions was to conserve water by taking four minute showers. Several students said that they wanted to try that and one student said that she was going to go home and ask her mom to give her a four minute bath! We discussed things we do at school such as recycling paper and turning off the lights in our room when we leave. We remembered how last year one of our students asked if we could clean up the litter outside Plato in the parking lot and surrounding sidewalks. We collected a lot of trash! This year the students wanted to do that again so we discussed “trash safety” such as what we could and could not pick up. Each student received a bag and disposable gloves and we spent some of our recess time cleaning up the parking lot and the route to the park. They were so enthusiastic they were practically sprinting to pieces of litter to get there before someone else! We filled up our bags and disposed of them in the garbage cans at the park. Today on our way to the library they were pointing out each piece of litter and asking when we can pick up more. I’m so impressed with their enthusiasm for this project and how they are becoming such good stewards of the earth.

On Monday I was not at school and there was a substitute. On Tuesday when I came in the students told me all about how it went and how I should have told the substitute teachers specific details because he did things differently than me. We discussed flexibility and being able to adjust to changes in our routine. When I walked in the door there was a big sign hanging on the wall that read: “How are you feeling?” At first I thought it was for me because perhaps they thought I was sick on Monday. When I asked about it, I was informed that four of the girls wrote it and posted it as a “Question of the day” for the rest of the students. When the students arrive each day I have a question of the day written on the board so I was happily surprised that they did their own. Under the sign was a chart they had made that listed all the options for answering the question. The options were: happy, silly, sad, surprised, brave, normal, mad, and scared. They also drew faces to match each feeling. Each child had to write their name under the heading they chose. The feelings with the most votes/names were happy, normal, and brave. Just another example of how I’m continuously impressed with the ingenuity of this class.

We combined art with science this week by experimenting with coffee filters, markers, water, and water color paints. I put out markers and water with the coffee filters one day and let the children explore and create. They colored the coffee filters and then added drops of water to see what happened. There were some neat tie dye designs as well as dominant colors that took over the entire filter. The next day I put out water color paint with the coffee filters. Some students created colorful designs, some did just one color, some tried to fill the filters with as much liquid as possible to see what happened. Eventually the filters soaked through or tore. I was grateful for the trays a parent had donated because each child had a tray to work on and it made for no worry, no stress, messy creativity.

We were excited this week because not only did Simone come back after being away since Spring Break, we also now have the addition of five caterpillars to our classroom. We are going to be observing them over the next few weeks and hopefully they will form chrysalises and become Painted Lady butterflies. One of the students insisted that we introduce them to Simone by bringing the cup of caterpillars over to her cage and letting her have a look. She was not impressed. The students also want to name them. One of the caterpillars seemed to have lots of energy and made it to the top of the cup before any of the other ones were really moving, so the names "Fasty" or "Spunky" were suggested. I told the students that we will not necessarily be able to tell them apart but that didn't discourage them so we will be voting on names soon.

Thank you for helping the students learn their lines for the end of year program. They are doing really well with our skit and the song. The dance is a real work in progress and I think learning the choreography will be our biggest challenge. When it comes to the program, just remember that even if they are not all "in sync," they are just dancing to the beat of their own drum and asserting their individuality. :) Have a great weekend and as always, thanks for sharing your amazing children with me!

Ms. Leslie