

Dear Parents,

After a week of waiting and watching, our chrysalises all became butterflies. On Tuesday we came in and one butterfly was sitting on top of the cup lid where other four chrysalises were still hanging. I felt like a new parent and went up and down the hall announcing it to everyone. Ms. Noel advised us to put a cotton ball soaked in sugar water in the enclosure to feed our guest. After waiting and watching all day, we noticed how dark some of the chrysalises were becoming. We read about them and learned that they become very dark hours before they emerge. Nothing happened while we were at school, but Wednesday morning we came in to find three more butterflies! The last chrysalis kept us waiting until Thursday morning when we arrived to find all five butterflies flying around and displaying their beautiful orange, brown and black wings.

After checking the weather and our schedule, I decided that we should release our butterflies today. We took a nature hike to Central Park and stopped along the way to pick up rocks and lots and lots of dandelions. We discussed not picking flowers that were “still attached” but as a student pointed out, “dandelions are weeds so they’re o.k. to pick.” We found a perfect place to let our butterflies go by a bed of tulips. The first one flew out as soon as I unzipped the container and landed on a nearby flower. The second left a minute later. The last three were not as eager to leave and needed a gentle nudge. Eventually they all flew off and we waved goodbye. This was a wonderful experience for our class. We learned all about the life cycle of butterflies and also got to watch the miraculous transformation day by day from small caterpillars all the way through the metamorphosis to butterflies. The students even came up with prospective names for the butterflies before realizing that we couldn’t tell them apart. Some of the names suggested: Luigi, Bo, Gift, Plato, Teeny, and Butter.

After finishing our novel study of Beverly Cleary’s *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*, we watched the only movie version I could find. It was a made for tv version from 1986, complete with commercials that we could not fast forward past! Each time a commercial came on, the students either groaned or laughed. One

commercial showed a couple hugging and the room erupted with shrieks and outbursts of “Ewwww, gross!” After watching the movie, we discussed all of the differences between the movie and the novel and filled in a Venn Diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences. The students wrote in their journals about which version they liked best and why. One student described how the mouse looked like a stuffed animal in the movie and sounded like Alvin from “Alvin and the Chipmunks.” It was fairly obvious that the special effects from 1986 were not as impressive as what we are used to seeing today.

This week we have also been doing some “top secret” Mother’s Day projects. More than one mom has been ushered out of our room this week or told not to look as the students tried to hide the evidence. Hopefully the moms will enjoy the effort, thought, and love that went into creating and preparing your gifts. During Morning Meeting one day this week I shared a Mother’s Day card my son made for me when he was seven. It included his handprints and when I passed it around, all of the students wanted to put their hands on his traced hands to compare. Most of their hands were just about the same size that his were when he made it for me thirteen years ago in 2005. I told them that we parents love the things our children make for us and tend to keep them forever.

A few notes: Plato’s awesome mailman John is collecting non-perishable food items as a service project for a local food bank. If you can spare an item or two, there is a collection bag below the office mailbox. Donations should be brought in tomorrow (Friday) morning.

I will be placing our final Scholastic book order this weekend if you would like to purchase books. Thank you for all of the orders you have placed this year. The points we accumulated enabled us to purchase Magna-Tiles for the classroom, phonics and math games, books and cds for our listening center and lots of good books for our classroom library!

Have a great weekend and Happy Mother’s Day!

Ms. Leslie