

Dear Parents,

We have spent the past week focused on STEM activities and featured a guest speaker who told us all about how farming and the importance of the water cycle and agriculture. Ms. Heather reviewed the water cycle with us and most of the students remembered the terminology from our exploration earlier in the year: precipitation, evaporation, condensation, and transpiration (which the kids mostly pronounced as “transportation”). Ms. Heather had the students try to keep a hula hoop going while trying to say all four stages before the hula hoop fell. It was a lot of fun and also a good way to get all the students involved and excited. Another activity we did involved using straws and cups of water to demonstrate the stage of transpiration. Luckily the water was clean because many of the students ended up drinking it.

Ms. Heather talked about what crops grew in Illinois and the midwest versus out west and also mentioned how the soil on one side of their property is vastly different than soil on another side because of glaciers that moved through the area thousands of years ago. She also brought soil samples for the students to explore and there was even a worm in one of the samples that became a temporary class pet for Ms. Teresa’s room.

Speaking of temporary class pets, our caterpillars became huge over the weekend and now are all chrysalises. The students have been observing them each day with magnifying glasses and we have been discussing metamorphosis and the four stages of the butterfly life cycle. We identified the two we have witnessed so far and discussed how we received our caterpillars after they’d already progressed from the egg stage. Tomorrow we will move our chrysalises to their new home, “the butterfly garden,” and watch and wait for them to turn into butterflies. In our journals this week, the students sketched the caterpillars and in honor of National Poetry Month, wrote poems about them. Some of the poetry written: “You’re so furry and fat, you look like a cat!” and “They are fuzzy and cool and live at our school.”

Tomorrow we will be celebrating Cinco de Mayo with our buddies in Ms. Dionysia’s class and making quesadillas and our own version of maracas. I predict we will have a lot of fun and make a lot of noise!

Today we finished our novel study of *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*. I love how enthusiastic and engaged the students are with our novel. Each day they have asked me to either read another chapter or at least a few more pages and they remind me or ask me each day when we will be reading from our book. They wrote predictions in their journals about how the story

would end and there was debate going on at one table about whether a book has to have a “happily ever after” ending. One student said that there had to be a happy ending while another student was predicting that there would be an explosion and the main character would die. They were respectful and passionate about their opinions and it led to a discussion about how authors can use their imaginations to write any kind of endings they want, just as we can use our imaginations to predict authors’ endings.

Thank you for continuing to work with your child on practicing lines for our end of the year program. We have been practicing most days and they are becoming more and more confident. We have been making modifications to our dance and I now have many (12) choreographers who want to put their two cents in and change our movements. :) By the end of the month it may just end up as freestyle!

I sent home our last Scholastic book order of the year today. It will be due next Friday, April 11 in order to make sure that the books will be delivered before school ends.

We also are going to the library Monday, April 7 for Tumblebooks. The students have loved this program and look forward to it each time we go. I believe it has contributed to better reading skills, exposure to even more great kids’ literature, and helping to build a love of reading and books.

Hopefully you all received your copy of a new best seller hot off the presses: *The Adventures of Simone*. The students were so excited to see the finished copies, listen to the completed book, read it to each other, and take them home to share with you. It was the most comprehensive, extensive writing assignment they had to do all year and they all rose to the challenge . I am so proud of their effort and commitment.

Have a great weekend and as always, thanks for sharing your amazing children with me!

Ms. Leslie