Extended Day traveled to the Desert to discover the plants, animals and fun!

Our first book, *The Three Little Javelinas* by Susan Lowell, reminded us of the fairy tale classic, *The Three Little Pigs*. As in the traditional story, the javelinas go out to make their way in the world. The first two build houses of tumbleweeds and dried saguaro cactus sticks that are both blown down by a hungry coyote. All three of the Javelinas end up in the third house made of adobe bricks. When the coyote cannot blow that house down, he tries to climb down the stove pipe and of course, hurts himself in the lit stove. He runs away as a coyote-shaped puff of smoke, howling bitterly as coyotes do! The three javelinas lived happily ever after.

After listening to the story, we built an adobe style house out of cardboard bricks and tried to knock them down. Painting desert sunsets, creating sand art and sketching cacti reminded us of the illustrations in the story. We practiced identifying the beginning, middle and end of a story by sequencing pictures from the story. In the kitchen, we made salsa using various fruits and vegetables.

In *There Was a Coyote That Swallowed a Flea* by Jennifer Ward, the animals and items that get swallowed are things from the desert. Some of the items the coyote swallows include: a flea, a cactus, a snake, chilies, a boot, a cowboy hat, a bull, a bird and the moon! At the end, the coyote lets out a big burp and asks, “Is breakfast soon?”

The children spent the week preparing props to use when re-telling the story. We worked together to paint a brown boot, collage cowboy hats, cut out coyote ears and create a bird using dot markers. We painted chilies and a flea using watercolors, colored a bull with oil pastels and added tissue paper to a moon. In the kitchen, we made cheese and salsa quesadillas and a southwest pasta salad. At the end of the week, we rehearsed the story with our props and invited our Kindergarten friends to watch our performance of the story.

In *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* by Jennifer Ward, we learned how the cactus grows and the animals that surround the cactus in the desert. The story also reminds us of the food chain: a pack rat who collects cactus fruit; a rattlesnake who chases the pack rat; a roadrunner who chases the rattlesnake; and a coyote who chases the roadrunner.

Our activities planned around the story included making rattlesnakes (using nylon stocking, stuffing and wooden beads for the rattle on the tail), easel painting desert scenes from the story, and forming cactus sculptures out of play dough.
The children also planted cactus seeds. We used strips of newspaper and a pot maker to form our temporary pots, explored the cactus seeds, and planted them in soil. A scavenger hunt using illustrations from the story and re-telling the story using the shadow screen and puppets ended our week. In the kitchen, we made guacamole and chimichangas.

Our Extended Day books allowed us to extend our desert exploration. Enjoy the photos from our activities and adventures!

Mrs. Bird, Miss Furman, Ms. McMichael
Mrs. Opferman, and Mrs. Tomer