Extended AM Newsletter

Carnegie Mellon University Children’s School

October 2014

Trees

Extended Morning has a weekly Focus Book that expands on the Preschool theme of the month. The teachers support the stories through related activities that include experiences in each of the Developmental Domains. The story is further enhanced by weekly Cooking Projects with Mrs. Loomis, Large Motor activities with Ms. McMichael, and daily music with Mrs. Bird. A brief description of the focus book is included in each Monday’s email, and a list of available activities is a part of each day’s email. The newsletter for each theme recaps the books and related activities through text and photographs.

October’s books were chosen to allow us to further explore trees. We watched the season change and we experienced the many various trees around our campus. Some of the songs we learned that enhanced our learning included: “I’m a Tree”, “Grey Squirrel”, and “Way Up High in the Apple Tree”.

Gwendolyn and Brylie explore the bark on a tree.

Tomer and Brylie observe the fallen leaves.

Ava, Ben, Leeza and Owen add to the nature collection with Sean, our Extended Day helper.
Have You Seen Trees? by Joanne Oppenheim

The trees of each season are celebrated through this book’s descriptive poetry and beautiful illustrations. During the week, discussions and learning about the 4 seasons, and the changes in our environment (including the trees), were the focus of our circle time together. The children were engaged in our focus by creating seasonal trees using various art materials to depict the tree during each season. Water color painting allowed us to experiment with the colors of each season. We gathered for a tree walk around campus which helped us observe and identify the many trees and to collect nature items. When we returned from our tree walk, we used our nature collection to make a collage. Mrs. Loomis and the children practiced chopping and following directions in the kitchen as they prepared Banana Smoothies. Ms. McMichael played bowling games with the children.
Red-Eyed Tree Frog by Joy Cowley

This non fiction book visits the rainforest and discovers various species that live in the trees, including a macaw, toucan, iguana, katydid, caterpillar, and boa snake. The amazing photographs allow us to see these creatures and introduce us to the red-eyed tree frog, who is looking for something to eat. During the week, we learned about various creatures that depend on a tree for their habitat. Our fine motor skills were strengthened as we experimented with jumping small plastic frogs into a matching colored ring. The children sorted various pictures of animals that live in trees vs animals that do not live in trees. The children took a closer look at the skin of a frog and snake and then used textured rollers and bubble wrap dipped in paint to imitate the skin. In the kitchen, the children created frogs using slices of apples for the body, grapes for the eyes and sun butter to hold them together! Ms. Michael practiced throwing and catching bean bags and tossing rings around cones.
This book and its colorful illustrations celebrate the gifts that trees give us (such as fruit and shade), and call us to thank the trees by recycling and replanting. Our focus this week was on learning about the many things trees give us, and then the children made a “thank you tree” listing the gifts the tree gives them. Each friend listed their words on a leaf and added the leaf to the thank you tree. The children said “thank you tree for….. shade, food, a place to play and climb, paper, wood and a place for a tree house”. Playing The Orchard Game reminded us of the many fruit trees that give us delicious food. The children mixed various ingredients to make pine cone bird feeders to give the birds and squirrels food from a tree hanging feeder. From the kitchen, we heard chopping sounds because the friends were busy chopping various fruit for a fruit salad. Ms. McMichael gathered the friends to practice rolling, throwing and catching balls.
The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

In this story, a man is sent into the Amazon Rain Forest to cut down a giant Kapok Tree. He gets very tired trying to chop into the very hard wood, so he sits down by the tree to rest and soon falls fast asleep. As he sleeps, the animals who live in and near the tree come one by one to whisper in his ear, and tell him about the important things that the tree offers for them, for the Rainforest and for the world. A child speaks to him, asking him to look at the tree with new eyes. When the man awakes he is surrounded by the child and the animals. He gazes at the diverse beauty before him, puts down the axe, and walks out of the rainforest. During the week, we discovered the various animals that live in the Rainforest and the importance of protecting the trees. The friends went on a hunt for hidden photographs of the animals from our story and when they found the photos, returned them to the Kapok tree. We built large, colorful snakes while playing the game “Hiss”. The friends worked together to complete a 48 piece Rainforest puzzle. We continued leaf explorations by creating art using various leaves. Pouring Plaster of Paris over a leaf allowed us to observe the leaf imprint. We added watercolor paint to the leaf imprint. Paint rollers were used to paint leaves and stamp the painted leaf onto a piece of fabric. In the kitchen, the friends followed a recipe to make guacamole. Ms. McMichael brought her colorful parachute to the Red Room and played parachute games during the week.

Elowyn, Ben, Tomer, Javier and Ava play parachute games.

Matti and Saatwik listen to the directions before making guacamole.

Elowyn uses a roller to paint a leaf.

Javier and Tomer work together to complete a Rainforest puzzle.