Extended PM 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: “Apples and Bananas” and “These Are My Glasses”, which allowed us to imagine picking apples from an apple tree.

Avery uses a spray bottle to water her root view forest.

The children enjoy some quiet relaxation in the library.

Beach balls in the school hallway are a great alternative when the weather permits no outdoor play.
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 time together. The children were engaged in our focus by creating a nature display using various natural items that were collected during our nature walk around campus. Using paints and sponges, we were able to create various kinds of trees. Mrs. Loomis and the children practiced chopping and following directions in the kitchen as they prepared Banana Smoothies. Ms. McMichael planted seeds with the children in a box with a window. We check on them regularly!

When we stretch, we are as tall as trees!

Ms. McMichael found the perfect spot to share her love of gardening.

Many vegetables can be rooted to start new plants.

Herbs are very fragrant!

We have evidence of autumn through our nature collection.

We are grateful for the many green spaces on our campus!
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 a sticky tree frog “tongue” and caught moths. The children sorted various pictures of animals that live in trees vs animals that do not live in trees. 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! Using our fine motor skills, we embellished our very own red-eyed tree frogs.
Thank You Trees! by Gail Langer Karwoski and Marilyn E. Gootman

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 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”. The children mixed various ingredients to make pine cone bird feeders to give the birds and squirrels food from a tree hanging feeder. Ms. McMichael gathered the friends to plant bean sprouts. We enjoyed the fall leaves by raking them and jumping in them.
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 continued leaf explorations by creating art using various leaves. Paint rollers were used to paint leaves and stamp the painted leaf onto a piece of paper. In the kitchen, the friends followed a recipe to make guacamole. We also spent some time painting pumpkins!

Making a plan…

This pumpkin is happy!

The insides are gooey and slippery!