

Hello Sun Bear Parents!

Your children have settled so nicely into the afternoon Sun Bear room, and we are enjoying each of them so much! This group consistently engages so happily with one another, and during free choice they have started the school year with a particular interest in dramatic play in the housekeeping area as well as creating substantial structures with just about every block on the shelf, both big and small! They have worked together to run a restaurant (the teachers have been very well fed in the past couple weeks) and blast off to the moon buckled up in their wooden block spaceship- don't worry, they had "cell phones" with them so we could keep track of what planets they were visiting, and let them know when it was time to return to earth for clean up :)

We have also had some beautiful weather and enjoyed playing outside. We have been able to use the main center part of the playground while the sod and soft surface work is finishing up, so the kids have scootered, dug in the sand, climbed and made many neat discoveries with the flowing water in the trough. We will soon have swings, a new climber and a lovely grassy patch available for outdoor play as well! One day, we explored campus beyond the nursery school by taking a nature walk into the open quad. The Sun Bears loved this adventure and made many exciting discoveries in nature- we saw a lovely monarch butterfly, leaves changing colors, magnolia pods and much more. You might have noticed a little nature bag come home in your child's bag- they were quite proud of their collections!

Week 1, our theme was All About Me. The Sun Bears had fun learning more about their own characteristics as well as their friends. They enjoyed the story When I Was Little and then thinking of things they did when they were "little" that are different from things they get to do and can do now that they are bigger. They drew pictures of their thoughts and the teachers helped write their words to create a class book. All Sun Bears shared very creative thoughts, and they really liked getting to be authors and illustrators!

The Sun Bears also counted how many letters and syllables are in each of their names and used mirrors to look more closely at their hair color and

eye color. For the hair color, the kids selected a color of yarn that closely matched their own hair color and snipped it to the right length to then glue onto a little face. For eye color, they learned how to draw the shape of an eye and included details such as eyelashes and pupils. They created graphs for each of these discoveries about themselves, and then gathered as a group to compare their own characteristics to those of their friends. Graphing is a wonderful skill for children to learn how to collect data such as how many all together compared to how many within each column, fewest, greatest, same etc. They were very enthusiastic about determining things such as what hair color most Sun Bears have and how many letters the longest name is!

The end of the first week, the Sun Bears enjoyed the book A House is A House for Me. They had fun creating 3D houses with folded paper and decorating them with windows, doors and lovely house colors. They also thought about various things that provide a “house” for other things to create another class book. We were so impressed with their very clever ideas such as an ocean is a house for a shark. This group has a wonderful imagination!

Week 2, our theme was I Am Healthy. In the beginning of the week we discussed the food pyramid and the importance of eating healthy, well-balanced meals. We worked as a whole group to sort through the many pictures of different kinds of foods to place them in the correct food group on our pyramid. The kids got this figured out very quickly- they went from “what’s a grain?” to finding crackers, bread, cereal, pasta, rice etc. to fill that section. We also talked about the importance of drinking plenty of water as well and set up an experiment with celery stalks in colored water to show water absorption- at the end of the week they were excited to observe the celery had “drank” the water and saw the various colors at the tip tops of each of the stalks.

We enjoyed reading It Looked Like Spilt Milk and then the Sun Bears made globs of white paint look like a particular shape, sort of like puffy clouds sometimes do! We also read The Very Hungry Caterpillar and then created another class book called The Very Hungry Sun Bears. They each thought of a healthy food and counted how many to draw (__ ate one apple, __ ate

two bananas etc). On Wednesday, we read The Little Red Hen and then measured, poured, stirred and mixed as a group to make delicious banana bread for all to enjoy for snack- thanks to the Straits for the tasty recipe! Thursday we enjoyed the classic Blueberries for Sal and we ended the food themed week with Stone Soup. Thanks to all of our Sun Bear families for sharing broth or a vegetables to make a wonderful, healthy vegetable soup. It was a special way to cook together and the kids were excited to pour in their individual ingredients brought from home :)

Other activities this week included making painted food prints with fruits and veggies, discovering various foods that sink and those that float, weighing foods on a scale, painting with celery stalks, making I Am Healthy books including ways to exercise, take care of your teeth, eat healthy food, get rest and have good hygiene. The kids also used dull knives to cut a variety of fruits and vegetables and explore their insides with a magnifying glass, had a fruit and veggie taste test and then graphed their favorites, made placemats by cutting healthy foods out of magazines/newspapers and gluing them onto a plate shape, and finally we did an egg experiment observing the shell of the egg disintegrating. They had fun exploring food in many different ways and learned a lot about keeping themselves healthy!

Thank you for sharing your dear children with us and look forward to a wonderful year ahead with them. We invite you to ask questions, visit our classroom or share your thoughts any time!

Katie & Lisa