

April 1, 2011

Hello everyone,

What a busy month we have had since the last class update! Spring has arrived and the children are enjoying the warmer weather and the other signs of spring. They have watched the progression of flowers from the earliest crocuses to the budding trees. Many have been amazed to see the transformation of the cherry tree outside our front windows; from the bare branches of winter, to the tiny buds, to the beautiful blossoms. This has sparked a new interest in the Botany Cabinet, learning the names of various leaf shapes and parts of flowers, trees and leaves.

The oldest group of children went of a field trip to Blandy Arboretum where they learned about the parts of flowers and how a seed sprouts. The teacher giving the course was very impressed by the level of knowledge our students already had. The previous week at school, we had been learning about the symbiotic relationship between plants and animals. When the instructor asked what plants needed to live (sun, water, food, air), some of our students remembered that the part of air needed was carbon dioxide, given off by animals. We also walked on their wetlands trail. The children particularly enjoyed hearing and seeing the spring peepers (frogs). The field trip has filtered down to classroom in various ways. Last week we sprouted some bean seeds in the classroom. The students have been fascinated with the changes they have noticed. First the soaked beans split open, then started to grow roots and now one of them has a stem and leaves! Today our tadpoles arrived, courtesy of Isaac Plaksin's family. We hope to be able to watch their complete metamorphosis into toads before the end of the school year.

Next week will be a busy week for our school. We have the PTO auction is this Saturday night, parent/teacher conferences on Monday, 4/11 (no school) and our annual VIP day on Wednesday, April 13th. There are still times available for conferences on Monday. Please call the office and or come in to schedule a time. For the special VIP day on Wednesday, The children are encouraged to bring a special VIP to visit their class. They love to give lessons on materials they have been working on. The children should arrive at their regular arrival times and their VIP should join them at 10:00. At 11:00 we will break for songs and then have a pot-luck lunch together. Please refer to the newsflash for more details on what to bring. Once finished with lunch your child may go home with their VIP or resume their regularly-scheduled school activities. Wendy Wilson is coordinating volunteers from both classes to set up, manage food and drinks, and clean up. Please volunteer to help if you can. Many hands make light work!

We have been busy creating some beautiful items for the auction this Saturday night. My assistant, Misty Brown, has worked with each student to create several colorful framed posters. She showed them some examples of modern art similar to what they each created. The posters are beautiful! She has also solicited a donation of a pottery bowl from a local pottery studio. Each child has helped create this beautiful bowl. I hope many of you will be able to attend the auction this weekend. It will be a fun time; good friends, delicious food and many fabulous items to bid on. Come and see what your children have created!

Many of you have been able to attend the Primary Conversations that Carrie Irre has been hosting. This is an informal forum, to learn about topics of interest to parents. So far the discussions have been ways to promote independence and freedom and discipline (limit setting). The next meeting is on Monday, April 25th, at 9:00. The scheduled topic is parenting tips related to freedom and discipline.

Life in the classroom continues to grow and change as the children continue to mature and learn. In math, some of the oldest children have now experienced the process of long division. The younger students love watching the lessons and enjoy counting various things. A few weeks ago several children became beginning readers; always an exciting discovery. The youngest students continue their exploration of spoken language with the vocabulary cards, sound games, poems, stories and songs. The colored pencils are in constant use, between tracing Puzzle Maps, Metal Inset work, Botany Cabinet drawings, and copying pictures of butterflies and flowers. The younger children are preparing their hands and intellect for this work with the Practical Life and Sensorial materials. The variety of work going at any given time is wonderful to see. Many parents have told me that they are amazed at the knowledge their child is bringing home.

Observers of our class are always amazed at how capable these children are! Come and see for yourself!

Sincerely,
Sandy Baumgart