



Llama Class

News for February, 2012

Class Pictures

We returned from winter break expecting a nice coating of deep snow to help us learn about animal tracks, but it was not to be! Regardless, the Llamas were very interested in this topic and so we scoured the grounds of Country Day looking for evidence of who has been here. We found many rabbit tracks and followed them to learn where they were going, what they were eating, where they could be living and so forth. Our imaginations got the best of us because apparently there were many moose, wolves, elephants and other various wild animals traipsing around here! We continue to investigate tracks each time we go outside and discover something exciting each time.

Nature News

Sign Language and Music

We studied the state symbols of Minnesota and how they came to be. The Llamas were enthralled listening to The Legend of Minnesota which told the tale of young Morning Fawn and how she befriended a boy from an opposing tribe. This friendship led to her being able to save her tribe from a devastating illness and she was highly respected forevermore. She was named *Mahnusatia*, the name of the balsam poplar that the life-saving medicine was made from, which through the years became *Minnesota*. We created Lake Mahnusatia filled with Minnesota fish, loons and surrounded by towering pines. It gives our classroom a nice, northwoods feel! The fish fry was a huge hit! We enjoyed pigging out on delicious walleye (the Minnesota state fish) and crappies (actually the most caught fish in Minnesota). We topped off our week with a Friday trip up to the cabin. Luckily it was a short trip as the temps were pretty chilly that day. We warmed up to a cozy bonfire and enjoyed yummy smores; the best part of any cabin trip!

We continued learning about legends with the St. Paul Winter Carnival. We learned of the 125 year history, King Boreas, Queen of the Snow and the rest of the royal family, the struggle of fire and ice, etc. We had fun dressing up in costumes pretending to be kings, queens, Vulcans and Klondike Kates! During this week of fire and ice talk, we tracked the temperature each day making a line graph titled, "How Cool is the Coolest Celebration on Earth?" We sampled another Minnesota delicacy, the classic Tator Tot Hot Dish. Yum! The great hunt for the Medallion and the .1K were big hits this week, as well!

January Nature News

Nature Pictures

January has been a water filled month at Children's Country Day School. Pre-2 and Pre-1 students began by learning about the different characteristics of water and how much water there is on earth. Students conducted their own freezing and melting experiments. All students, including toddlers, tested different objects' ability to float.

LAKES AND PONDS: From our study of water, we moved into water habitats. Pre-2 students constructed a mountain range and then sprayed the geographic feature with colored water to see where rivers and lakes would form in their habitat. We discussed the challenges of living in a river environment and examined river organisms for adaptations that would help them survive. We then began our exploration of lakes and ponds. Pre-2 and Pre-1 students learned about the different types of habitats that animals can live in within a lake or pond. Pre-2 students learned about the different zones in a lake caused by different amounts of sunlight that they receive. Pre-1 and Toddler students read the book *Scoot!* about 6 little turtles and their friends in a pond. Toddlers played with turtles in make believe ponds. Pre-2 students also learned about wetlands. We talked about what they are, where we can find them, and who lives in them. Students learned about the cleaning abilities of this habitat. We used a wetland model (made of sponges and aluminum foil) to test a wetlands ability to clean pollutants out of water.



OCEANS: Once we had studied the different water habitats of Minnesota, we began our exploration of the ocean. Each Pre-2 nature group got their own ocean habitat to focus on. The groups became experts on the kelp forest, coral reefs, sea shore, deep sea, and open ocean. After learning about the habitat and the animals that live there, they created the habitats on the walls of the nature room. We spent the whole week creating an underwater world in the nature room. From our exploration of underwater habitats, we started studying mammals of the sea, specifically whales and dolphins. We reviewed what mammals are and talked about the characteristics that make a whale or dolphin a mammal. Students learned about how some whales have teeth because of the big prey they eat and others have baleen to catch very tiny krill. Students had the opportunity to listen to a variety of whale and dolphin noises. We then learned about sharks and rays. We focused on the characteristics that make sharks great predators in the ocean. Students were able to see and feel real ray skin, eggs, and a shark jaw from the Bell Museum. We created sharks in our nature notebooks based on what we learned about their anatomy. Students also examined a real puffer fish, four different kinds of coral, a sea sponge, and a sea urchin from the museum.



To begin our unit on Minnesota and start to wrap up our unit on water, we learned about Minnesota fish. Students learned about the characteristics of prey and predator fish. Students then pretended to fish and we studied their catch. We began to learn how to identify the different types of Minnesota fish and learned about their place in the food chain.

-Emily

Sign Language and Music

In Music, we've learned some new chants, rhythms and echo songs and enjoyed singing with the autoharp as well as the piano. The children especially love the chant, Oliver Twist, where they feel the beat in the movement.

The all time favorite echo song is I am a Pizza by Charlotte Diamond. You can find the song online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2Zwvyhms8c and I'm sure your child would have fun singing it with you at home.



We've also been singing songs about the zoo to reinforce our sign language. A great one to sing and sign is Going to the Zoo Tomorrow, by Raffi.

It's been a fun month in **Sign Language**. We started out the month with a special guest. You may have heard from your child that my son Trent came in one week to help with Sign Language. He is deaf and was home from college over winter break. (Many of the children already know Trent as this past summer he helped with summer camp.) It was a great experience for the children to sign with him and learn about his hobbies and interests. Trent was amazed to see how so many of them could finger spell their names and felt so comfortable signing with him.

We've also have been learning the signs for a variety of zoo animals. We had fun singing songs, reading books and playing games using these signs along with the signs we've previously learned. They're looking forward to bringing home their own coloring book with zoo animal signs. I'm sure your child will enjoy teaching them to you.

-Sylvia



American Sign language for "hippo"