

## Nature with Emily

## Nature Pictures

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year!

We are already off to a great start in Nature class, exploring Children's Country Day, learning to make scientific observations, and caring for the gardens. I have enjoyed seeing so many familiar faces and meeting so many new friends during the first month of school.

### Maps and Exploration

In our first week of school, we learned about maps, and what they are used for. Students drew their favorite parts of Country Day on their own map as we explored. We continued getting familiar and comfortable with the school grounds later in the week by going on a digital scavenger hunt where we took pictures of our finds to display in the Nature room. Students also learned what makes something a part of nature and participated in a mystery bag game. Pre-1 students spent some time exploring the garden and also learned what makes something a part of nature. The toddlers spent time getting comfortable being with me and had the opportunity to feel and smell a variety of nature objects including a 7 foot tall corn stalk.



### Observation and Harvest

In our second week of nature we became scientists and learned how to make observations. We used a frame to focus on a small portion of the garden and the woods. Students made drawings of their finds in a notebook. Later in the week we harvested basil from the garden and made our own yummy pesto pasta (see recipe below). In pre-1 we learned how to use magnifying glasses and tape measures to explore the garden. In the toddler class, we also spent time harvesting in the garden and looking for worms.

### Apples



We also explored apples. We learned about different kinds of apples and spent time sorting them. We tasted different types of apples to determine what their favorites are. We did an apple dissection to learn about the different parts of the apple. Later in the week we made apple breakfast cookies.

### A New Snake at School

In other news, we got a new nature class pet! A Kenyan Sand Boa just joined the Country Day family! Students are beginning to meet our young male snake and will help with the naming process.

Here are a couple recipes we enjoyed this month:

#### Pesto

3 cups basil                      1 cup olive oil  
2 cloves garlic                1 cup Parmesan cheese

Put basil in a food processor and blend well with 1 tbsp. olive oil. Blend in garlic. Blend in cheese and then olive oil. Enjoy!

#### Breakfast Cookies

1/4 cup softened butter    3/4 cup brown sugar  
2 eggs                            1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce  
1 cup wheat flour            1/2 tsp salt  
1 tsp cinnamon                1 tsp baking soda  
1 cup uncooked oats        1/2 cup dried cranberries  
1/2 cup chopped apples

Combine butter and sugar, and then eggs and applesauce. Add dry ingredients. Fold in apples and cranberries. Spray cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 13-15 minutes.

*-Emily*

## Sign Language and Music with Sylvia

It's great to be back teaching Sign Language on Tuesdays and Music on Thursdays. I'd like to share some of the areas we'll cover throughout the year.

### Sign Language

In **Sign Language** the children will learn a variety of signs during group time. One of my main goals is that they develop an understanding of what it means to be deaf and that they realize that being deaf makes you no different other than you communicate with the visual language of Sign Language. They'll experience the beauty of the language as we read stories in sign, play games and sing songs in sign. Each month we practice the signs for a different topic as well as review the signs that we've already learned.



*Sign for Pig*

The main areas I cover will be: Animals, colors, numbers, the alphabet, family, foods, signs related with the seasons, basic phrases and deaf awareness. In September the children had fun learning the signs for farm animals as well as some signs for fall. They'll be bringing home some hand-outs soon that show some of the signs we've covered. For those children who are returning students, it's been fun to see how they have remembered a lot of signs from last year and are becoming more comfortable in signing simple sentences.

Your child may also tell you about my 2 puppets named Anna & Robby that come quite frequently to Sign Language. They always love it when I bring them as they are puppets that can "sign".

### Music

In **Music** we'll be exploring music through a variety of activities. Each week the children will learn new songs and sing with string instruments such as the piano, guitar, autoharp and violin. We'll also do a lot of movement and dance and occasionally use the percussion instruments. Quite often the sign language we learn on Tuesday is reinforced with songs on Thursday. In September we sang about apple trees and farm animals. The children especially enjoyed singing "2 Little Apples Hanging on a Tree". We also sang & signed the animals in the song "I went to Visit a Farm One Day". Two other favorite songs with a lot of movement were "See the Ponies Galloping" and "Sammy".



Feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions about the Music and Sign Language programs.

***-Sylvia***

## Llama Class October News

### Class Pictures

We're off to a great start in the Llamas class! We all love the deck off our classroom and spend as much time as possible out there. We eat our snacks and lunches, bring water and sand buckets, read and do art, and find familiar buildings in St. Paul while out there. The best view in the whole school!

### Trees

With the abundance of trees on our property, we had the perfect environment for learning the difference between coniferous and deciduous trees. These were great vocabulary words for the Llamas to learn and we heard the children use them often throughout the week (correctly!)

Each child got to get up close and personal with their favorite tree and make a book about it, using their measuring, drawing and reading skills to do so.



### Apples



Learning about trees was a natural transition into a unit on apples, because of course, without trees there would be no apples! We also learned that without bees there would be no apples. We had a great time role playing we were bees pollinating apple blossoms that then turn into delicious apples. The week was filled with LOTS of apple treats including: apple sauce (homemade with Leah's parents, June and Kurt), apple pie, apple crisp, apple dippers, dried apples and just fresh apples from our very own orchard.

Applepalooza was another big success this year! Always so fun to see the kids here "after hours"!

The month was wrapped up with another tree topic, leaves. Photosynthesis/ chlorophyll/why leaves change colors was discussed at length. We gathered quite a collection of beautiful leaves while out exploring!

### Looking ahead. . .

We look forward to the month of October learning about bats and owls, pumpkins, spiders, our very own Greek tortoise Zeus and of course, celebrating Halloween.

We welcome all our parents to come in at any time to cook, do activities or just hang out!

**-Lora and Claire**