

CULTURAL NEWSLETTER

October 2017

Dear Parents,

We have completed our initial botany studies which focused on basic structures and functions of the plant. They make their own food! How great is that? No meal planning, shopping or cooking! Well, that works fine for the plant because all their meals are the same. Even though it takes us humans time and energy (to say nothing of cash), I think that you'll agree this extra effort is worth our while. In the spring we will return to Botany by looking into one of the characteristics of all living things: Reproduction.

We spent the remainder of the month studying non-living things; specifically, Land and Water Forms. The children created models in the classroom using clay formations and sparkling blue water. We included the basic "partners" of land and water forms: Island/Lake; Cape/Bay; Peninsula/Gulf; Isthmus/Strait; and Archipelago/Chain of Lakes. The children made paper models of each land and water form "partner." After this concrete experience, the children were rewarded with inflatable globes which they immediately used to identify the real land and water forms all over the globes. With this project as the basis for geography, the children will easily transition to more abstract learning by identifying these land and water forms on maps. (btw... ask your children how we flatten our globe to make two dimensional maps...)

In October we will return to our study of living things. This time we will be looking at animals for our studies in Zoology. We will begin with the Porifera (sponge), one of the most primitive animals on earth. They can live up to 200 years which is not as unusual as you may think. They are poisonous to nearly every predator in the ocean, with the exception of the hawksbill sea turtle, angelfish, sea slugs, and some sea stars. So, while they are permanently attached to rocks and the ocean floor, they tend to be quite safe from any oceanic foes.

The children will have an up-close experience of what it is like to be a hungry animal that cannot move to find a meal, which is the porifera's daily challenge. (Ask your child for details.) We will also investigate how all seven characteristics of living things manifest in this simple animal. As with all living things we study, there will be opportunities for the children to learn about the names and functions of the

animal's body that keep it alive. Be sure to ask you child about the goldfish crackers and why I put pepper and water in a bowl with the porifera.

We will move on to studying a slightly more complex phyla and one that many people would agree is much more beautiful: Cnidaria. Haven't heard of this animal? This family of animals has stinging tentacles and the most popular one is the jelly(fish.) In class we refer to this animal as a "Jelly" for two good reasons. Should you ever feel its body (which we truly hope you do not because they can deliver quite a sting with those tentacles), you would discover that its body feels very much like a bag of jelly. Another reason for eliminating the "fish" from jellyfish is that it is not a fish! We will discuss this more in class so your child will be able to explain everything to you.

I hope you and your family are enjoying our first full month autumn.

With best regards,

Toni Tomacci

“The six or seven year old is a strong being, a being who is entering into a new world, the world of the abstract. She has reached a new level, he starts to express judgments. Before, he was interested in things (changing the water for flowers, caring for the little fish, etc.) Now he is interested mainly in the how and the why. All that used to attract her sensorially now interests her from a different point of view. He is looking for what needs to be done. That is, she is becoming aware of the problem of cause and effect.”

~ Maria Montessori