Green Room Newsletter

Planet Earth

For our whole school unit, we studied the planet we call home with our inquisitive friends. We viewed the Earth from many different perspectives. First, we donned our astronaut suits and blasted off in a rocket ship to think about our planet from outer space. After we touched down on land, we explored the rocks, minerals, and crystals we find all around the Earth. The next week we focused on the inside of the planet, from the layers of rock and magma beneath us to powerful volcanos and earthquakes. During this adventure, we stumbled on dinosaur fossils and learned about the history of our Earth and the creatures that used to roam the land. To conclude, we thought about ways we can protect our planet and the steps we can take to make the world a better place. Our friends have learned to respect and care for the Earth, as well as take advantage of the many opportunities our planet affords us.

Our Favorite Theme Books

We read so many interesting books this month about planets, dinosaurs, volcanos, recycling, and more!

- *Me on the Map* by John Sweeney
- *Earthquack* by Margie Palatini
- *How Mountains are Made* by Kathleen Weidner
- *Milo and the Magical Stones* by Marcus Pfister
- *Michael Recycle and Litterbug Doug* by Ellie Bethel
- *Compost Stew A-Z Recipe* by Mary McKenna Siddals

Mango Monkey Says...

This month, our wise puppet friends came to class to discuss strategies for joining play in a calm manner. We read the story *Katie Loves the Kittens* by John Himmelman. In the book, Katie the dog is really excited to play with her owner’s new kittens. But despite Katie’s best intentions, the kittens feel afraid with the rough way she wants to play with them. Katie feels terrible that every time she goes to be with the kittens, her owner has to stop her play before someone gets hurt. One day, Katie wakes up to see the kittens snuggled up next to her! She realizes that if she wants to play with the kittens, she should start calmly so that her friends can join as they feel comfortable. Then, after everyone is playing together, she can be a little sillier and more active with the kittens. It can be difficult to play collaboratively when everyone wants to play in a different way. By starting calmly, our play is longer, smoother, and can involve many more friends!
Planet Earth

Week 1

Outer Space

We began our exploration of our planet from a thousand miles over the atmosphere in outer space. On the first day, friends made their own spacesuits and pretended to soar through the galaxy in our spaceship-themed Dramatic Play area. We made planet earths on paper plates and created our own made-up planets by painting on styrofoam balls. Friends also practiced their scissor skills as they cut out their own rockets. We then attached the rockets to an inflated balloon and marveled as they blasted off around the room when we released the air. In circle time, friends learned about the shape of our planet and how it spins both on its axis and around the sun. We also said goodbye to Miss Lee, our wonderful student teacher visiting from Duksung Women’s University in Seoul, South Korea. We used a globe to show the long journey around the world for Miss Lee to go back home from Pittsburgh.

Planet Earth

Week 2

Rocks, Minerals, and Crystals

When we landed back on Earth, we pulled out our magnifying glasses and took a much closer look at what actually makes up our planet. Friends made diagrams of rocks they observed in the Science area. We predicted and tested whether or not certain rocks would float, and sorted them into categories based on size, shape, and texture. We pretended to be miners searching for minerals and gems that are important to our livelihood. In the Make Shop, friends used clay to make all sorts of creations. This week, we also celebrated two important special events! On our 100th day of school, we enjoyed making headbands with the number 100 proudly displayed and counting 100 pieces of snack to munch on as a treat. We also celebrated Valentine’s Day by giving Valentine’s cards to all our friends in the Green Room.
Our study continued deep down through the mantle and into the core of the Earth. Here we learned about the heat inside our planet that melts rock into molten lava. Friends were excited to take part in science experiments all throughout the week. We combined Diet Coke and Mentos to understand why geyser eruptions fly so high into the air, and we melted crayons to see how lava flows down a mountain. As the crayon wax solidified, we made connections to the rock cycle from metamorphic to magma to igneous rock. Another popular activity was creating our own pet rocks. They were adorned with glitter and googly eyes and then were given their own unique name by their creators. We were also lucky that Ada’s father had a real moon rock that he was able to share with the class!

We jumped back in time to hundreds of thousands of years ago and learned about the dinosaurs that roamed our planet. Friends pretended to be scientists searching for fossils in the paleontology lab set up in the Dramatic Play area. They dusted pretend stegosaurus bones and looked at samples under a microscope. We also created our own fossils by putting rubber dinosaur figures inside of a salt dough, then cooking them until they hardened. The next day, we used scrapers and picks to break them open and clean off the bones inside. We stomped around with big dinosaur figures, then used them to make footprints in Model Magic, which hardened to look like real fossils. We also had two special presenters visit us this week. Mrs. Myers brought her collection of Petoskey stones, fossilized coral that create a beautiful polka dot pattern, for us to explore. And at the end of the week, gemologists from Henne Jewelers in Shadyside taught about the jewel-making process.
We used our final week of the Planet Earth unit to learn about how we should take care of our planet. In our circle time, we read stories teaching us about the importance of conservation and recycling. During activity time, we learned about proper separation of waste by sorting various items into garbage, recycling, and compost bins. We upcycled a box full of vinyl records about to be thrown away by putting them on a turntable and painting them as they spun around. In the Discovery Area, we used PVC pipes to think about how to collect, move, and recycle rainwater. We also used this week to prepare for our family festival! Teachers helped friends write stories about the pet rocks they made earlier in the week. We created a giant Planet Earth using paint and our handprints. We then said our goodbyes as we prepared for Spring Break to begin.

Kiley tries transporting rainwater in her PVC pipe creation; Cornelia stacks rocks on the playground; Betty Lou makes recycled art using paint, a vinyl record, and a turntable.

Mrs. Hraber and all her instruments visited our class twice during our Planet Earth unit. First, Mrs. Hraber came on our 100th day of school! Pete the Metronome dressed up in a 100th day crown and sang songs with us counting by tens all the way up to 100. Later in the unit, Mrs. Hraber came to the Green Room during our dinosaur and fossil study. We stomped around the room and made silly dinosaur sounds using clapper and scraper instruments as Mrs. Hraber played along on the piano. And of course, we always like to end our music class with parachute games!
Make Shop: Clay & Ramps

In the Make Shop this month, we watched balls, rocks, and cars tumble down ramps we constructed using a variety of materials. Friends were challenged to make ramps that moved various objects from one place to another. The task became more and more difficult as we added obstacles, making friends choose if they wanted to try going over the obstruction or around. We tested to see if certain objects would roll faster than other objects, and we experimented with different materials to build our ramps.

We also enjoyed exploring and playing with clay. We learned that clay comes from our Earth, and we used it to mold all sorts of interesting creations. It was interesting to notice how difficult the clay was to mold! To make the clay more pliable, friends learned to poke a small well into the clay and add a bit of water, before kneading it all together.

Birthdays & Welcomes

Happy birthday to Nolan, and happy half-birthdays to Jacob, Madelyn, and Melodie! We also want to welcome Lila, our newest friend joining our Green Room class.
Our Month in Photos
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