

Branch Room News

What a 'Blast Off' month we had in July; The Solar System Study is always packed with fun and exciting activities, table stations, art, science and of course hands on learning! As each month passes with each fun study planned, we are able to observe how each child engages, interacts and learns with excitement and thrill. Whether playing with a partner during morning stations to one on one art activities, each and every Brancher shows great independence and concentration!

As we began our Space Adventure, we first discussed what Space and our Solar System are all about. Each Brancher was able to state their thought or theory about what was to be found in the sky high, high above us. We were rather impressed with the knowledge already set in their minds by the answers given. Our next step was to enhance the facts and information in a fun and exciting way....and by the conversations heard throughout the day, I think it is safe to say the Branchers have not only enjoyed their 'Far Out' month but they have also retained so many new facts that they can now take with them and share!

In the Branch classroom, mathematics has become quite the hit! Whether we are patterning with unifix cubes, adding multi connecting stars together...numbers and mathematics are everywhere, so our 'Moon Phases' art/math activity was a breeze! We discussed as a whole group how the moon always stays the same, but as we look up into the night sky, the phase (or the size/shape) of the moon changes throughout the month. We discovered the three basic phases of the moon: Crescent moon (or banana moon as the Branchers like to call it), half moon and of course the full moon. As a morning circle activity, we put our math skills to the test as we added the different phases of the moon together. The Branchers learned that two half moons create a full moon ("two halves make a whole" is the Brancher term) and four crescent moons create a full moon. With that mathematics set in place, our next mission was to put our information down on paper.... literally! Each Brancher was in charge of cutting out five moons: two crescent, two half and a full, we then glued the moons on to black paper provided. It is amazing to witness the scissor skill progress each Brancher has made! These beautiful moons can be admired as they have been placed on a bulletin board in the classroom.

The hands-on learning didn't stop there though. We try to incorporate food in each learning unit we participate in the classroom. Whether it is growing our own vegetables to cooking and baking, we always have our hands full and sometimes sticky! This month we merged marshmallows into our Space unit! We discussed and discovered constellations and what they were all about. As a circle time story, we read "Seeing Stars". In this particular book, we learned that a constellation is a picture or pictures created out of stars in the night sky. Each Brancher was asked to create his or her very own constellation.... using marshmallows! Once the beautiful constellations were created, naming them was the next step at hand, we had some pretty great constellation names! Of course, a marshmallow taste test was a must at the end of this very sweet art activity! Oh, and let's not forget our astronaut food tasting (MRE's)! Astronauts have to be quite creative with their food. Although there were many likes with the MRE tasting, we all agreed that we prefer Mr. Matt's cooking!

Did you know that stars in the sky explode causing a bright and beautiful show of colors before it slowly fades away? This is called a Supernova. As a class, we researched fun facts and interesting information about Supernovas as well as found many incredible photographs. The Branchers were so intrigued by the beautiful bursting wonders, that we decided to create our own very own! By using just liquid water colors and rock salt, we created some pretty super Supernovas! The children were very

Branch Room News

captivated as they watched the rock salt absorb the liquid paint and change the texture of the paper. This was hands down by far the most popular activity throughout the month! Science + art = happiness!

As each month passes, it seems as though time just flies by, and that goes for the month of July! And just like that, the month of August is here! We have many fun adventures and activities planned in the Branch classroom as we explore the "Big Ocean Blue". Although this month will be exciting, it is also going to be very bittersweet as our little group ends their time in the Branch classroom. Ms. Kenzie and I would just love to say how honored, privileged and grateful to have been able to spend an entire year with each and every one of the children. We have witnessed their growth in so many ways! Whether it was something as simple as zipping their own coat to matching up their shoes, the progress was relevant! We have witnessed wonderful friendships, enormous caring hearts, empathy and mindfulness for not only themselves, but for other peers and individuals in their lives. We have witnessed the excitement in their eyes as they discovered patterns, measuring, comparing, graphing, adding and subtracting! We have witnessed focus, concentration, eagerness and patience. We have witnessed PLAY! For all of these 'little' things we witnessed daily throughout the year adds up to very BIG, BIG things! Although we are teary-eyed to say good bye, we know that the next grand adventure awaits! As always, we will make each day count until they venture on into the Blossom classroom!

Again, thank you for allowing us to be such a big piece their little lives. Our hearts are full!

-Ms. Heather & Ms. Kenzie

