

Many Thanks at the End of a Good Year

By Nancy Rosenow, Executive Director

As this school year comes to a close, there are so many people to thank, and so little room in this newsletter! It won't be possible to mention all the wonderful ways parents support the Dimensions First-Plymouth Early Education Programs, but please know that all of your many gifts of time, talent, financial resources, and moral support are invaluable and most appreciated. We truly couldn't provide the quality program that we know children deserve without your help. It's great to be part of such a positive team.

Many, many thanks, also, to our wonderful group of teachers, support staff, and administrators for the amazing work they do all year. I see so many "behind-the-scenes" efforts they make above and beyond their paid time because they care so much about what they do. I feel very blessed to be able to work with such an amazing group.

Finally, we must thank our children... for the inspiration, laughter, sense of wonder, love for learning (and yes, even for the challenges at times) that they provide to us. How fortunate we all are to have these children in our lives. Let's remember to celebrate that fact!

Many good wishes for a wonderful summer... and beyond!

Infant/Toddlers Get Their Hands Dirty

During the past two weeks the children from the Infant/Toddler program have been a part of a "growing" process. Thank you to Outdoor Solutions (owned by Sam Hendricks' father and uncle) for donating a truckload of dirt to fill the new planters installed in both the Preschool and Infant/Toddler Nature Explore Classroom spaces!

From watching the truck dump the dirt to hauling buckets and wheelbarrows full of dirt to the planters to planting flowers and vegetables in the planters, the children were part of every step of the process.



Dimensions Nature Club Explores Tree Adventure

By Chris Kiewra, Teacher

Over 40 people spent the morning exploring the Tree Adventure at Arbor Day Farms last Saturday with Nature Club. We explored the path with all its' footprints, listened for interesting bird calls, climbed the gigantic tree house, and played the amazing marimba! The morning was spent enjoying our children's enthusiasm and getting to know each other better in a relaxed setting. We even celebrated Lazlo Woodhead's first birthday with treats for everyone!

'Home away from home' is how one parent described the Nature Explore Classroom at Arbor Day Farms. That makes sense



because the area in Nebraska City is modeled after ideas tested and developed right here at our school! We encourage everyone to find a time to visit Tree Adventure and explore the area yourselves.

Many participants continued the wonderful day by staying for sack lunches under the big oak tree and exploring the wood chip path during the afternoon. Some even reveled in the creek all afternoon!

The Nature Club will not meet during the summer but look for new and exciting plans for the group next fall! If you have questions or would like to be included on our email list so that you get information from us, please email Chris Kiewra at ckiewra@neb.rr.com.



Children Explore Variety of Art Experiences

by Ann Watt, Art Specialist

Once again, the arts have flourished this year at Dimensions programs. The following list represents some of the artistic experiences enjoyed by children during this school year:

≈ Small group experiences began with dots and lines and progressed through other elements of art and design: shape, form, color, pattern, and space.

≈ The afternoon kindergarten/preschool group choreographed their own original movement piece and performed it in October at the Working Forum on Nature Education For Young Children in Nebraska City. They created symbols representing the nature elements that they each portrayed and printed them on t-shirts that they wore in the performance. They also contributed nature-inspired drawings that were then made into a beautiful quilt.

≈ One afternoon in October M/W/F preschool classes enjoyed a live performance at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts featuring the Hubbard Street Dance Company from Chicago. This performance, sponsored by Arts Are Basic, subsequently inspired lots of dancing at school as well as large black and white paintings of the Hubbard Street performers.

≈ A selection of children's work that

included printmaking, painting, and nature collage was exhibited at the Lied Center during the month of November.



≈ We enjoyed activities inspired by the Sunflower Project (also in November), again courtesy

of Arts Are Basic; this traveling exhibit included six botanical and abstract prints that were winners of an annual contest sponsored by the Statewide Arboretum.

≈ In December children throughout the program worked to create memorable holiday gifts; even the infants helped to decorate pine cones.

≈ In February all the preschool classes visited North Star High School to experience first hand the sculptures that made up the "Stories of Home" public arts project.

≈ Toddlers created paper collages based on "the Snail", a work of art by Henri Matisse, and a painted paper sculpture wall hanging, and they told their own "Stories of Home".

≈ March brought a community-wide children's concert and Arts Festival cosponsored by Dimensions and Lincoln Action Program. It featured "Jazz-a-ma-Tazz", an interactive jazz performance by

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Process of "Stories of Home" Project Shared with Preschool Groups

by Ann Watt, Art Specialist

On May 3, "Stories of Home" artist Santiago Cal visited Dimensions. His blue coyote sculpture was wildly popular with the children who visited the exhibit in February. Santiago brought several sculptures and showed slides of places he has visited, people he has met, pictures of relatives and of himself as a child. He told stories with each slide. He talked about his childhood in Belize where he and his cousins would build forts in the rain forest and then have to send someone in the next morning to beat on the walls to scare away the iguanas and snakes! He told about trying to make boats out of large seed pods and about the street dogs that inspired many of his sculptures.

The children were enthusiastic to tell their own stories: about fishing expeditions, their own dogs, sculptures they had made. It was interesting to witness learning taking place as children took in new information and applied it to what they already knew in order to create understanding. For example, Santiago showed a slide of a blacksmith and said that a blacksmith was someone who pounded on hot metal to make a new shape. A child spoke up, "I have a Rock-'em Sock-'em Robot." Then he added, "He pounds."

When asked where he gets his ideas for his art he said, from "looking at things and listening" as well as "from my dreams". I couldn't help thinking about our Look-Move-Build-Sketch™ approach to learning



and how he uses this same approach in his art making. I wonder how many children today were inspired through his colorful images and stories to dream big dreams.

Native Music and Stories Shared with Children

by Barbie Jensen, Teacher

My brother, William Eaton, a musician and composer from Sedona, Arizona, stopped by for a visit at Dimensions May 16. William gave an impromptu concert for the children and teachers gathered outdoors from the preschool and infant/toddler



programs. Children and teachers alike delighted to the sounds of the musical instrument, the banjo,

and stories about nature that William was weaving throughout his presentation.

Under the canopy of the large shaded tree and pine trees the group seated themselves on the ledges of the comfortable and smooth-to-the-touch brick wall and logs to

listen to and interact with the music and sounds from nature.

William is a recording artist and also designs and builds innovative stringed instruments. He has been interested in music since he was given a ukulele as a little boy and a guitar at age seven.

William was in Lincoln to see family and friends and I was very happy to share with him the wonderful experiences available for children of music, art and education in nature through the Nature Explore Classrooms at Dimensions.



Summer Openings:

There are a few spots still available (especially in the 2-5 group). Contact Linda Maack at 476-8304 or lindam@dimensionsfoundation.org for specifics on the week you would like to attend. We're looking forward to a great summer session!

Art Experiences (cont.)

New York City jazz musician Hayes Greenfield. He also held a session for children in M/W/F afternoon classes that included scatting, dancing, and playing their own handmade instruments.

≈ The morning groups had a special visit by Santiago Cal, one of the "Stories of Home" artists, this month.

Throughout the year, teachers have continued to support artistic experiences daily during small group time, work time, music and movement activities, and in our Nature Explore Classroom. And they're not finished yet! In preparation for the jazz concert at the end of March, our entire program explored pattern, color, and interpretation in terms of how these elements can be found throughout the arts especially focusing on jazz music. For example, improv or "scatting" in jazz music means "making something up" or giving it your own personal touch. This personal interpretation, of course, is also found in theater, dance, and the visual arts as are the elements of color and pattern.

Several groups are finishing up projects that they have worked on over a period of time, based on the "Stories of Home" and "Jazz-a-ma-Tazz". Children in these groups combined a variety of their own artistic creations to create storytelling works of art (a la Robert Rauschenberg's "combines").

The end products are vibrant and intriguing conglomerations of their own original patterns, color mixing experiments, and personal touches such as names, hand prints, pictures of the Hayes Greenfield concert, and in some cases, items sent from home.

Please be sure to visit the children's art gallery as well as your child's classroom to see these original and unique examples of "painting music"!

Would you please consider saving items from summer garage sales for our pancake breakfast/garage sale in September?

Donation Requests:

Preschool/Kindergarten

- ⊙ Finger Paints
- ⊙ Sidewalk Chalk
- ⊙ Shaving Cream

Infant & Toddler

- ⊙ Finger Paints
- ⊙ Sidewalk Chalk
- ⊙ Shaving Cream

Staff Birthdays:

Beth Pauley.....June 4
Val CuppensJune 14
Theresa Frey.....June 30

Tree Planting Completed by Many

Teamwork between children from many of the preschool classes helped complete the process of planting a 10' red maple tree in the parkway along the E street side of our



Nature Explore Classroom May 16th. We hope it will grow strong and tall and provide shade for many years to come!

Mark Your Calendars...

May 31...Last day of Infant/Toddler and Preschool Sessions

June 4-8...Limited Summer Session Infant/Toddler ONLY

June 6...Last Day of Kindergarten Discovery Days Sessions

June 11...First Day of Summer Sessions