

"About the Artist" Session

This week has been all about the artist! Children have been discovering the artist within them. From finger painting for younger children to many ways of creating self-portraits for older groups, it has been fun to find different and unique ways to be expressive through art. "Messy magic" happened throughout this week as children discovered and explored interesting and unusual art mediums. This was a great chance to discover what we love about art...and ourselves!



Me In The Picture

This is me in the picture, I said: "I am not going to touch it! It will really hurt!" And Mrs. Murdae says: "It will not hurt." So I changed my mind. I want to take the plant home!

It's a "Masterpiece" of a Week at Dimensions

Summer Sessions kicked off with an explosion of color and self-expression this week at Dimensions...

Preschoolers

We have enjoyed our first week of summer together! We're exploring our Nature Explore Classroom™, being creative artists, and making new friends.



In Small Group, we read a great book called, *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler. We had mirrors to look at ourselves and we compared our skin to our friends. We found out about melanin. It is the substance in our skin that makes it the color it is. The children mixed brown and white paint and fingerpainted a "people rainbow." We talked about how all the shades of brown skin and all kinds of people in the world make it a beautiful place, just like a rainbow.

The afternoon session combined strips of different colored paper and tape to create designs based on something the children had just experienced. Cole made a Big Wheels picture from his memories of going to a monster truck show. Sawyer made a volcano that was based on the roller coaster he rode on vacation at Worlds of Fun.

Kindergarten – First Grade

The K-1 group studied the abstract methods of Henri Matisse and then fingerpainted silhouettes. Madeleine said the abstract method is "not perfect but that's what makes it perfect." She noted that details were added to their artwork to make them look more realistic but that they were still abstract. They were also creative in their use of materials to convey emotion... Madeleine used a little white bean to



signify a single tear falling from an eye.

The K-1 groups also read the book "Find a Face" by Francois and Jean Robert. Children began to notice abstract faces in their surroundings and found that faces could

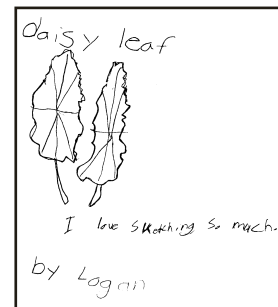
be created with a variety of materials, including recyclables. Carson B. made a lettuce salad face at lunch and Karson H. conveyed emotion on the face he



created by positioning the eyebrows at a slant. Preston made a geometrical shape styled like a house to look like a face.

Second – Fifth Grade

The older children have been learning how to become better observers of nature. They studied famous artists whose inspiration



came from nature (like Monet, Renoir and Georgia O'Keeffe).

They have been exploring texture, line, shape and color in the natural

world and how this influences their art, and, learning more about themselves in the process.

Their artistic endeavors have included drawing plants and looking closely to see details



they might otherwise have missed. Sheets of paper were filled with background. While one friend's shadow was cast on the wall another traced around it to create a

silhouette. Detail was continually added throughout the week.



In the afternoon the Nature Explore Classroom™ has been a busy site. Children have been helping deadhead flowers, repairing the fences around the garden areas, and planting. Bachelor Buttons and sage were planted. The website

organicgardening.com has been a helpful site to learn more about bringing beneficial insects to our Nature Explore Classroom™.

Summer Plan is for Infant/Toddlers to Follow Nature Explore™ Activities

By Theresa Frey and Denise Topil, Teachers

Summertime is great outdoors time so the Infant/Toddler focus this summer will be on ideas from the Nature Explore Club Classroom Kits (produced by Dimensions and the Arbor Day Foundation). Each week the focus in the classroom will change.

This week the focus is on "ROOTS." Books were explored about trees, plants and roots. Neighborhood walks revealed plant and tree roots all around! Infants were thrilled to explore the Nature Explore Classroom™ and experience textures like hard bark and soft feathers. Oh, and scratchy grass! Activities and experiences are also fitting very well with our Look-Move-Build-Sketch model.



Look: Children were encouraged to really look closely at the roots of trees in different outdoor settings. Many children noticed that you can see some roots but others are completely covered. Some children tried heartily to pull at the exposed roots of a large tree but decided that they were in too tight.

Move: Children were asked if they had roots? They responded "NO!!!" Teachers asked them to pretend their bodies were roots. Many of them began to stretch out their arms and legs as if they were roots. I, (Miss Theresa) wondered if their roots were really strong like a tree. As they were lying on their backs, I pretended to try to lift their roots out of the soil. The harder I pulled the more they resisted. It quickly became a very fun game of tug of war. When it was time to move on to the next part of the day, many of the children remained and wanted me to try to pull their roots over and over. We will also be making a tree out of our bodies, complete with roots when we are outside.



Build: Using loose materials (paper and yarn) the children were able to build a small scale tree on paper. Tree blocks, twigs, green leaves from outside and yarn will be added to the block area as an extension of the tree parts/roots idea.

Sketch: Children had the opportunity to sketch trees & roots while they were outside.

Teachers Laurie Flynn and Amy Jensen engaged the children by reading a story called "A Tree is Nice" by Janice May Udry. The children were invited to the table for a small group activity where they were given a green circle, a brown rectangle and various sizes of tan yarn.

A wonderful dialogue took place as teachers asked the children what they knew about trees and roots. At first the children stumbled a bit in their responses so teachers reminded them of the book they had read. With that simple prompt, the information from the children began to flow freely. During the rich conversation, the children were arranging and gluing their shapes and yarn on paper to resemble trees, all the while sharing what they knew about roots and trees.

Quotes from children as they worked on their "roots" project:

Miss Amy: *Why are trees nice?*

Sam: Because it has leaves on it.

Sophia: Because they help things grow.

Zack: They fill up the sky. (direct quote from "A Tree is Nice")

Tommy: Because they grow apples, cherries and pears.

Sophia: AND bananas, Tommy!!!

Caden: You can climb on them and swing on them, too, like at the park.

Miss Theresa: *Who has information about the roots?*

Tommy: The roots are a tree part.

Sophia: The roots are on the bottom.

Zack: They help the tree stand up.

Caden: You can see some and some you can't see.

Henry: I put my roots at the bottom of my trunk. (referring to the picture he made)

Miss Theresa added that trees drink water from the ground with their roots. The children responded with a resounding "NO!!!" I spread my fingers out like roots and wiggled them and said "like this, under the ground, they drink the water."

Wednesday, a rain shower passed through. The windows were open wide and the children were drawn to them to hear and see the rain. Laurie Flynn joined Henry at the window. Again, Henry shared his knowledge of trees and rain...

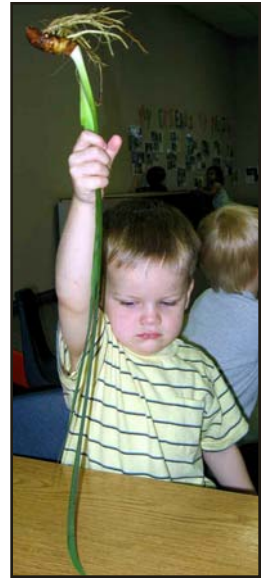
Henry: The rain gives trees water.

Miss Laurie: *How does the tree drink it?*

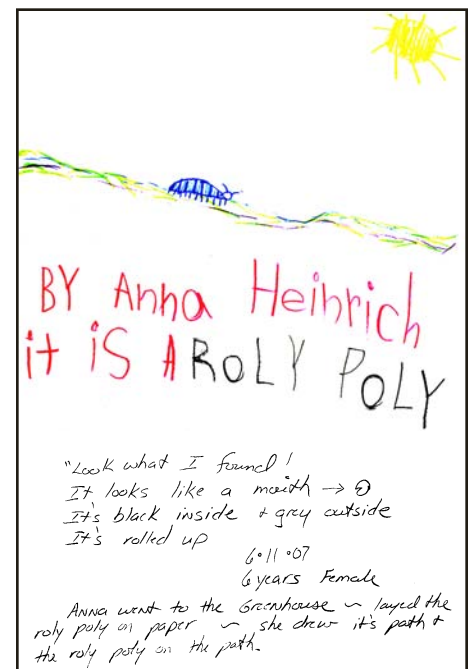
Henry: In his roots.

Miss Laurie: *I wonder where rain comes from?*

Henry: The clouds, see?



Andrew (Preschooler on his first day back when he went outside to the Nature Explore Classroom™): "I've been waiting to come back, because this is my favorite place."



Staff Birthdays:

Nancy Rosenow.....July 1
Cami BurchettJuly 7
Barb Jensen.....July 15
Denise Topil.....July 21
Kathy TichotaJuly 22
Tara HildAugust 7
Kristi ReitzAugust 13
Chris DickhautAugust 16
Sue ErdkampAugust 17
Ann WattAugust 19

Summer Sessions Bookshelf

Find a Face by Francois and Jean Robert

The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler

A Tree is Nice by Janice May Udry

Taking Root by Allan Fowler