

Hello Caterpillar (and Dragonfly) Parents!

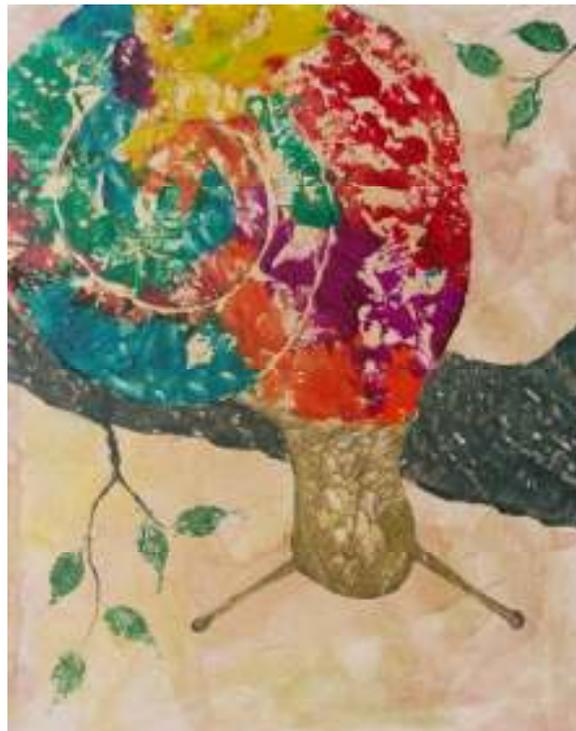
Wow...what a wonderful year it's been exploring our interests, our friendships, and the celebrations that make DLC a fun place to be! We ended the school year in May observing the snails that live in our yard. Snail shell like swirls frequented our artwork, our conversations, and our classroom! Because snails were such a captivating subject for this group, we decided to use them for inspiration for our silent auction project! We used our skills on a HUGE canvas...with a little bit of combined creativity for the children and the teachers with our favorite end of the year project!



Starting with a huge snail puzzle made from poster board, we put the pieces together on a large canvas and taped off some areas to apply more layers. The head, the branch, and leaves from our favorite tree started to form the scene that we would reveal at the silent auction. Nothing was more exciting than the huge spiral shell that could stretch really long and come back together in a small compact form. Did it grow when we stretched it? Did it shrink when we compressed it? Did it change size at all? Such great questions to explore with a growing love of building and play dough sculpting from this group! One we will practice in the coming year.



Adding the color to this spiral proved to be a very wet and sloppy process. It was a miracle that we got the beautiful mix of color onto our canvas to give our snail its home.



With our last project as Honeybees, we danced to the commencement ceremony to become Dragonflies...or something else?



As you all know, we were going to be the Dragonflies, but for these former Honeybees it just did not fit. Searching for a new name, we had to compile a list of possible names that would fit who we were and what we love. With such a large group, this meant a huge amount of choices as each child gave their personal input. Were we a pack of lions with loud roars? It does fit. How about Chickens? We are in Fair Oaks after all and have a great sense of humor! Frogs? Pigs? Cows? We could find similarities to all these animals in our lives.

Caterpillars though...Caterpillars love to eat and this group loves to cook! Play dough making is always a full group activity. Everyone wants to help. Mud cooking is an every day occurrence in the yard. We had also found a few caterpillars in May that were very interesting to watch. A favorite book "The Hungry Caterpillar" became a story we didn't have to read to them...they remembered the WHOLE thing. With our large group, we resembled a Caterpillar wherever we went. Caterpillars fit us best!

We worked so hard all year, and it was time for some summer fun! Cooking for our fathers, yoga, long walks to the nature area, and field trips to venture away from our stomping grounds. Some of these days were spent with our older school-aged friends too.

We also had some really fun visitors! The Bubble lady came from the World of Wonders museum in Lodi. She showed us a few new bubble tricks to try. Our Caterpillar friends were absolutely amazed at the huge bubbles they could create, but nothing was better than blowing a bubble inside a bubble. We even tried to do a third bubble inside of the second bubble and it worked! We learned the hard way that bubbles pop if our hands are dry, but they also seemed to last forever if our hands were coated in the bubble solution. What about tools? Will a bubble work on a wet table or a dry table? Will a bubble stay on the top of another one or will it fall to the side. Why does it fall? Do it again! This is the work of the young child.



These early science experiments are so important for young children. What seems like magic can start a lifetime of wonder and learning. Volcano eruptions, observing bugs, magnetic tools, water play, and even the weather. Science is all around us waiting to be explored. Currently, we have our eyes set on rainbows and spiders. This will get interesting!

With all the fun activities we did this summer, we also had some time to meet in small group. This summer, we explored teaching. Whoa, watch out! Role reversal! This was a great time to see just what the children pick up from us teachers. Circle games and story time could go on all morning long...a lot longer than we would hold a circle at DLC. With their full attention on the child who was the teacher in that moment, they raised their hands, asked questions, and followed their directions. Even if it was halfway through a story, a sudden obstacle course would be introduced before they would all sit down to hear the second half of the book. Go up to the loft, go down and get a scarf, now put it away and sit down. These Caterpillars imaginative games have gotten so much more complex. It was also a great way to practice turn taking, allowing our friends to have the spot light, and being respectful within their relationships. All things we have worked hard on all year. It may not be the actions that we show when emotions are high, but at our core, we have soaked in these very important concepts.



Through this play, we also saw our quieter friends blossom with a little responsibility of leading a class on their terms with their peers. If only for a minute, they asked their friends to do a task and saw that they were heard. For some, this brought their talkative side out and they started to share their unique ideas and stories in our teacher led circles. This is the beauty of pretend play; flexing that confidence muscle and showing the world just who we are.

We are so excited to start a new year! With the new school year come some changes. Teacher Kim and Teacher Bonnie have split the Caterpillar group in half. The group that stays with me will remain the Caterpillars (Allison, Axel, Beatrice, Devin, Dean, Gavin, James, Liam, Naruth), and to cut down on confusion, Bonnie's group will be called the Dragonflies (Eric, Emma, Delilah, Lincoln, Hunter, Mia, Payton, Relie). Sharing will also start back up in September. In the Caterpillar group, if your child attends MWF or full time – Wednesday is their share day. If your child is a T/Th friend, Thursday is their share day. Bonnie's Dragonfly group share days are listed below in the group break down. Also, watch out for Halloween songs. Our favorite time of year is on its way!



Teacher Kim and Teacher Rainie