

# Montessori Pathways Summer Camp news

*June (weeks 3 & 4)*



## Notes from Ms. Alena

Summer Camp is well underway as we travel **from the familiar grasslands to the rich rainforests.**

The weather has finally improved and the kids have taken advantage of it, **exercising their bodies**, becoming stronger and a bit tanner. A lot of time is spent in the water to cool off on the hot summer days, as well as the sandbox, which serves as a nice alternative for the cooler times.



Each hot morning concludes with water play. We've opened up our "Slip 'n' Slide," which led to a lot of creative, new sliding methods. The kids enjoyed cheering for each other and thinking of new ways to reach the end of the long tarp. This creativity spilled over to the new obstacle course that the children have enjoyed building for the past week. They've built the course close to the sprinkler for a refreshing splash of water and created their own "water slide." The older students enjoy taking charge and making sure everyone waits their turn while the younger ones eagerly try out their peers' creation!

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In these two weeks of camp we've had two quite different in-school field trips.

First was "*Magic Show*" of *Tim Glander*, a hilarious magician.



Having been a teacher for 30 years, his magic show was created for children and was not only interesting but funny and captivating.

The children were very excited throughout the show but also paid attention and participated when needed.

They earnestly emerged themselves into the magic, believing the wonders happening before them and even arguing with the magician who was saying one thing but doing another: "*Look at your wand! It's really escaping! Look at it!*" Not a single face, young or old, was left without a smile. The "magically" painted picture and silly wand are still the talk of the school!



The following week the *Crystal Lake Fire Department* visited with their fire truck. Many of our friends remembered the previous year's visit with the fire engine and enjoyed comparing the two types of vehicles.

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As the kids were learning about the different types of hoses and water sources that the firemen have, some of them had to leave for a call—all the more exciting to see the firemen get inside the fire rescue car, turn on the lights and drive off to a real emergency! Of course, many questions followed from our young “reporters”: “*Where are they going? Who was hurt? How? Why aren’t the other firemen leaving?*”

The children also had the chance to see and touch the clothes that the firemen wear when on call. It looked very hot and the kids noted that such an outfit would be better for the winter! Everyone also had a chance to lift the air tank (with the firemen’s help) and experience just how heavy the equipment is. And the firemen have to be able to rescue people while wearing it!

The trip ended on a high note—a tour inside the fire truck cabin. The kids made many interesting discoveries about the truck and firemen during the trip. They were surprised to learn that firemen work a full 24 hours and even sleep at the station!



As the heat of the summer picks up, **we’re heading to the deserts in our Biome Travels!**

Next week, *Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>*, we will be having *a field trip to Color Me Mine in downtown Crystal Lake,* where the kids will have a chance to create a one of a kind project to take home.

*Warmly,*

*Ms. Alena*

### *Notes from the morning class*

Welcome to the Rain Forest! We explored this biome which is home to the most number of species in the world. Plants, animals, insects, are found from the "canapé" to the "floor" of this environment. Rain forests are located close to the equator, which divides the northern and southern hemispheres of the world.

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This proved to be a somewhat challenging concept to explain because there is no "line" when you are actually there (like there is on the globe!).

The children made a Welcome to the Rain Forest banner and we **made individual rain forests of our own**. We created paper trees, vines, snakes, animals, bugs, flowers, ponds, butterflies as well as many other creatures/features we might imagine.



We learned about crocodilian snouts and the fact that the wider the snout, the bigger the prey they can eat. During line time, we passed around a "once real" Dwarf Caiman head, which is a nocturnal animal found in the rain forest. The children asked millions of questions and enjoyed touching its tiny, but sharp teeth!

Our class enjoyed so many items sent in for our Sharing Basket. We **sampled delicious and juicy pineapple**, which is a tropical fruit but couldn't grow in the rain forest due to lack of sun.

We also celebrated *Treyson's* 4th birthday which included making a special canvass bag craft, led by his mom, Tammy. *Carson* turned 5 and his mom, Kelly, sent in delicious rice crispy treats and goody bags for all to enjoy. Another birthday celebration was for *Shawn* who shared strawberries and whipped cream and sprinkles - not a sound to be heard in the classroom while the children relished this treat (thank you, Sally!!!).

*Thank you to all our parents for your contributions to our classroom. Your children are the beneficiaries of this activity because they experience sharing and contributing to our classroom biome!*



Even though summer camp has a more relaxed atmosphere, we continue to present group and individual presentations. **Word building, addition equations, multiplication, and sensorial activities** are given each day.

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We created a pyramid using the red/blue and red rods, and extended this by creating an even trickier task by adding an inverted pyramid on top of the original one! *This activity allowed children to discriminate the length of each rod, movement to retrieve each one and then balance them without toppling the pyramid.* They had to borrow rods from another classroom in order to successfully complete this task!



## *Working with Montessori materials*

### *Practical Life area*



*Cookie baking*



*Cleaning after painting*



*Enjoying snack together*

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*Sensorimotor area*



Pink Tower and Brown Stairs: extension  
(Visual discrimination of dimensions)



Baric Cylinders  
(Refinement of the baric sense)

*Language area*



Reading to the younger friend  
(Reading and listening skills)



Three-part cards  
(Vocabulary development;  
the ability to abstract and symbolize)

*Math area*



Multiplication Board  
(From abstract to concrete;  
Preparation for the memorization of the  
multiplication)

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The weather has been a little tricky to navigate these past two weeks. Rain has kept us inside for our usual outdoor time and prevented our swimming on some mornings. We've set up lunch outside only to undo it and reset up inside! On one rainy morning, we **created a thunderstorm** in the class by using rain sticks, drums, maracas, and flashing the lights off and on. This required *listening skills and cooperation, as well as taking turns with the instruments; stopping and starting "on cue" revealed wonderful listening skills!*

Heading into this Fourth of July weekend, we **made a cake for our country's 235th birthday**. We used whipped cream, blueberries for the stars, and strawberries for the stripes. Yum!  
Some children made their own **firework crafts**.

Happy July and again, thank you for sharing and supporting our classroom "Biome"!

*Most sincerely,*

*Ms. Christine, Ms. Katy, Ms. Masha & Ms. Alena*

### *Notes from the afternoon class*



It has been a busy 2 weeks of sunshine, fun, and learning! The children are building new friendships and strengthening old ones. They are working and playing together, as well as, gaining independence and learning leadership skills.



We were able to enjoy outside water play time most days. One afternoon we even brought out the slip and slide which was a blast! However, the Thursday that was predicted to be 100 degrees only turned out to be 78 and windy, so we had an opportunity for time in the sandbox and some organized group games. After water play each day, we water the plants and the gardens in an effort to care for our environment. The hibiscus flowers are in full bloom and we are starting to see strawberries, tiny peppers, and tomatoes. Nature is very exciting!

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For two weeks we have been sharing about the tropical rainforests. We **added green leaves to our giant biome map** to indicate where these rainforests are located on our planet. The children noticed the proximity to the equator and the absence of these warm wet places in Europe and Antarctica. We talked about how the rainforest supplies us with medications, coffee, and chocolate and how we need to help preserve it for future generations.

Rainforests are home to some of the most exotic and unusual animals and plants of the world. *Giant blue morpho butterflies* feed off of fruit in the rainforest. They can have an 8 inch wingspan that appears to glow and change color as it flies.



*Red-eyed tree frogs* are carnivores and eat mainly insects. Being green helps the tree frog blend in with tree leaves. This keeps it hidden from both the insects it eats and the predators that want to eat it. When it is startled, it shows its brightly colored legs and opens its eyes to surprise animals that would harm it. These amphibians also have sticky feet to help them climb trees.



Many of the tropical fish that are kept in freshwater aquariums are originally from the rainforest. Gorgeous fish like *angel fish*, *neon tetras*, *piranha* and *discus* are from the tropical rainforests of South America. *Danios*, *betta*, and *clown loach*

are from Asia.

We enjoyed making some of these **incredibly colorful creatures out of construction paper, oil pastels, feathers and glitter, and watercolors.**

We marbled painted geckoes and used stencils to **create an underwater world beneath mangrove trees** that live on the edge where rainforests meet the oceans.

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We read Jan Brett's beautifully illustrated book *The Umbrella* about an unlikely group of rainforest animals that go on an adventure in a young boy's forgotten umbrella. We also sang along with **Sally Roger's Earth song** and learned about animal families that live in the rainforest and other biomes of the world.

Each afternoon we **prepare snack together** and **work with some of the Montessori materials** in the classroom. We make sure everything is in its place and tidy for the next camp day. We feed Canary our bird, straighten shelves, roll up rugs and clean all tables and chairs. We take great pride in leaving our classroom as beautiful as it was when we first arrived.

It was a great week and we are looking forward to exploring next week's biome- the desert!



*Sincerely,*

*Ms.Becky and Ms. Masha*