**Looking back on May into June newsletter………….**



**Dear families,**

**It is hard to believe that this is the last newsletter of the school year. Reflecting back on the past 10 months I am filled with such happiness thinking about all the growth your children have made. I hope you take a moment to reflect on this as well and remember that never again will your child be where they are today. Throughout the year we have worked a great deal on gaining independence, listening, taking turns, following directions and learning what it means to be a kind friend to others. These skills are invaluable for their growth and development as small people! My grandmother who was a tremendously talented preschool teacher would say, everything you need to learn in life you learn before you’re five. As a preschool teacher myself I couldn’t agree with her more. The skills that children learn in the setting of a preschool classroom are the skills they will one day need to be a successful adult.**

**I would add to this long list of your child’s accomplishments, that this year in our forest preschool your child was able to gain so many of these skills during time outdoors immersed in nature. While learning and growing they are also gaining a deep appreciation for the natural environment that I hope they will take with them for the rest of their lives. To me, helping children feel comfortable and confident in the outdoors is an amazing gift that I take very seriously. No matter where they are in their lives they will be able to find solace under a tree, or while on a hike, what a brilliant thing!**

**This past month and a half we immersed ourselves in a “vet hospital” unit. During this time we read many books about animals and gained knowledge by having visitors come to the class with their pets and talk to us about the kinds of things you need to do when caring for a pet. We were able to pet these animals if we chose to, so before any visitors came to the classroom we talked about our bodies and the responsibility we had if we were inviting animals into the classroom. Every child agreed that to help the animal feel safe and comfortable in the classroom we needed to keep a calm, quiet voice, we needed to stay in our spots with a still body and we needed to wait our turn to pet the animal. When it was our turn to pet the animal we used just two fingers to pet the smaller animals. We also all agreed that not everyone would want to pet each animal and that this was a choice. Among our visitors were Mr. Mooney with his small dog, Ms. Katy with her dog, and Emily’s husband Mark with their two chickens.**

**We took what information we learned through these visits and in books that we read and used it in the dramatic play area, which was set up as a veterinary hospital complete with all the doctor tools you would need. In addition there was a waiting area, table, clip boards with patient slips to fill out and bills for paying. The children thoroughly enjoyed acting out this play with the stuffed animals in the area. “Play” gives children the opportunity to act out what they see in the real world, this is how they learn best. It is crucial for children’s learning that they are given opportunities to do this; school provides many opportunities for this critical learning.**

**In preparation for our end of the year celebration we talked about birds and nests while also reading the book My Nest is Best by Dr. Suess. We had a few real nests in the classroom that teachers and children had brought in to share with their friends throughout the year. We looked closely at these nests and compared how they were the same or different, and took note of the materials that the birds used to make their nests. Jayden and Odin and Adrian’s families did some collecting of their own and made beautiful contributions to our nest building materials, thank you! After some research the children were able to make their own nests using materials that real birds would use. Next, we learned about how to work with clay, which is much firmer than play dough. This provided the children with a great opportunity to build strength in the small muscles in their fingers, which is a precursor to being able to write using a three-point grip.**

**The children had to carefully follow the steps of first rolling two circles, one for the body and one one for the head, then pinch the clay just right to form a beak and tail before using a tooth pick to make the small details on the bird body. The final step was to paint the bird with a special glaze before placing the birds in the kiln to be “fired”. It was a big surprise when we saw the birds for the first time after they had been fired, the colors had completely changed, how magical! We chose to create nests and birds as the children’s final project to signify them leaving the nest and flying off onto the next phase of their little lives. For some children that will mean a summer of growing before returning to the preschool classroom and for others it will be moving onto Kindergarten the following school year.**

**We were hoping for more swimming trips to the river this spring but the weather had other plans. We did get a few good days in when the weather was warm and sunny. The children had so much fun digging, building and playing in the water. Ask your child about the rules for throwing rocks in the water.**

**We wish you all a joyful, sunny summer!**

**Please look on the website for updated pictures of our spring adventures next week.**

**All the best,**

**Elaina, Emily, Dianne, Becca and Denise**