

Instantaneous Experiments

What a great time we all had! We created “Oobleck”, made our very own Lava Lamps to take home, found out what happens when you mix dish soap with yeast, made bar soap expand with just a microwave, and made the coolest Dry Ice Globes! The best part is that all the experiments we did can be made with materials that can be found around the house 😊

Is There a Doctor in the House?

In the *Is There a Doctor in the House?* enrichment cluster, students had the opportunity to practice suturing procedures with medical tools. They also explored the anatomy of the heart by dissecting a pig heart under the guidance of Dr. Su, an internist and LME parent. Mrs. Gini Hand provided lessons on infant/child CPR and choking. After predicting what areas in the school were likely to have the most germs, students took samples around the campus and grew bacteria in Petri dishes. All of the participants expressed a desire to continue exploring opportunities in the medical field.

Claymation

The students learned how to create a stop-motion film. They first learned the steps of stop-motion film by making a flip book. To begin their project, they decided on a topic/service, used a graphic organizer to layout their process, used clay, cardboard, and other materials to design their set. Using a digital camera to capture snapshots, they then uploaded the shots into Window's Movie Maker on the computer. Once they finished organizing and editing their snapshots, they added finishing elements like music, transitions, title, and closing credits.

Landscapes, Portraits, Still Life, Oh My!

In the *Landscapes, Portraits, Still Life, Oh My!* Enrichment cluster, students avidly and prolifically created beautiful works of art that reflected many different styles, textures, and color palettes. Each week, the children eagerly planned out their pieces, tried new techniques, and experimented with color mixing. Ms. Monica Aaroz shared with students pointillism techniques. Their favorite mediums were tempera/acrylic on canvas and watercolor on

anything! Several students chose to donate their paintings to Meals on Wheels so that homebound adults may enjoy the artwork.

LME Crisis Response Team

The *LME Crisis Response Team* enrichment cluster began with a simulation of a potential, real-life situation: a fire in the nature preserve. Students were able to act out the scenario as fire, police, medical, school, and media responders, and were given the task to figure out how to best handle the emergency. We then had speakers from the Austin Fire Department and American Red Cross to teach us about their role in handling an emergency, and how we can be prepared for an emergency in our community. We spent time learning about personal safety plans, and students spoke to their parents about having a meeting place and evacuation plan for their homes. We spent the remainder of our cluster researching various types of emergencies, including hurricanes, house fires, flooding, and tornados. Students created products to share their new learning with others, and we left our cluster armed with helpful information about how we can prevent, be prepared for, and respond to many different types of crises.

Monsters and Myths

The *Monsters and Myths* enrichment cluster had lots of fun together. We began our cluster with Mr. Wheeler coming and talking to us about the history and mythology of monsters. This was a great interest starter. We then made tear art monsters. Mrs. Jackson did a mini lesson on ghost story writing. We all wrote ghost stories and then shared our spooky stories in the dark lit by flashlights. Then we learned about the art of applying make up to create a look. The students practiced on each other and then made their own monsters and wrote descriptions.

LME PHOTOGRAPHER'S SOCIETY

The *LME Photographer's Society* has had a very productive 8 weeks. We started out with the basics of digital cameras and photography, and learned how to unload our pictures to a computer. We then ventured out to the preserve and around the

school grounds to practice our outdoor photography skills. We learned some great lessons on composition and lighting. Next up was to visit the other clusters and learn the ropes of taking indoor pictures. Once we had enough photos, we began to think of a final product we could make using our fantastic images. The cluster learned about Microsoft Publisher, Photo Story, Picture Editor, and StudioWorks. StudioWorks is the program that Laurel Mountain uses to create our yearbook with the help of our wonderful volunteers! Each child selected which product or service they wanted to create, and we hope you enjoy the fruits of their labor at the Enrichment Showcase!

Rocks Beneath our Feet

We began our enrichment cluster by having the students develop a plan for what we would be doing over the eight weeks of enrichment clusters. While discussing our plans, it was important for the kids to decide on a particular product and service their cluster would focus on over the duration of the enrichment cluster. At the end of the first cluster, the students decided our product would be to conduct research on different kinds of rocks and minerals and create a new display for our preserve's outdoor display case. In addition, we looked at having a presenter from Mad Science conduct a presentation on rocks. Our final idea was to try and find expert volunteers to come into our enrichment cluster to help the kids with their research.

After having made contact with some volunteers from Austin Gem and Mineral Society, we were able to get two different sets of volunteers to come to our enrichment cluster for 3-4 weeks. The volunteers worked with the kids on each of the specific research topics the kids were working on. In addition, these volunteers brought in many samples and provided brief presentations of their own and even provided specimens the kids could use that related to their research topics. Each of the specimens were accompanied by an information card, created by the students, that will be placed in the display case with its' matching rock or mineral.

Once all of the information cards were developed for the different rocks and minerals, the cards were taken to Kinko's to be laminated so they could be placed in the display case for others to read and learn from. During our 6th cluster, the volunteers and the kids went into the preserve to set up the display case. During the cluster showcase, the students will be taking parents into the preserve to show the display of rocks and minerals.

Our last cluster involved one of our volunteers coming in with rough minerals along with a gemstone cutting machine to show the students the process a mineral goes through from when it is mined to when it becomes a piece of jewelry. Each of the students was given a sample box of Texas rocks that they could keep for their own rock collections.

Cooking with Zeek

The kids learned about many different dishes from different parts of the world! Zeek, the beagle, traveled the world and sent back recipes and people to teach us how to cook cultural dishes. For the last cluster we had a contest! Each team was given a choice of ingredients to make something. Everyone came up with something different and the judges had a hard time picking a winner! You can check out our blog at www.cookingwithzeek.blogspot.com

You've Got Me in Stitches!

The girls in *You've Got Me in Stitches!* enrichment cluster had a productive and enjoyable time creating cross stitch pieces of their choice. While some of them had done some stitching before, this was a first time experience for most. Each girl has finished or is in the process of finishing a simple project and arrangements have been made to get the pieces framed as they are completed. We had hoped to have enough time to create some things to share with those in Central Texas who were affected the fires that occurred in September. But, we ran out of time and weren't able to do that. However, many in our group commented that they might make something in the future to share with others who are facing hardship.

Draw Me a Story

In the *Draw Me a Story* enrichment cluster, we changed our name to *The Mini Leonardo De Vinci's of LME* and decided to sketch comics. We began our enrichment cluster with a visitor and LME mom, Monica Aaroz. She showed us some 3D drawing techniques and how to shade properly. As a group, we voted on drawing one large comic that would be displayed at the Enrichment Cluster Showcase. We had a blast drawing funny little creatures, adding in hilarious dialogue and learning from one another. Look for our creative display of art!!!

Fitness for Fun

The *Fitness for Fun* enrichment cluster 2011 focused on engaging students toward a lifetime of health and fitness. Students learned the ten foundations of fitness, essential principles for proper nutrition, and basic standards for functional movements such as the squat, dead lift, and press. Through a series of guest speakers ranging from U.S. Army Special Forces to industry leading video game designers, students were given an opportunity to hear the benefits of maintaining a healthy life outside of an athletic career.

Lights! Camera! Action! It's Movie Time

We had an awesome Movie Making enrichment cluster. Each student used the laptops, and later, the net books to create a movie on Movie Maker. Each student took pictures, downloaded pictures, created the movie, and the best part, added transitions and music to our own personalized movie. Later, we worked in small groups to create a LME movie...such as LME Pets, New Staff & Teachers @ LME, and LME Tour. We learned a lot and had great fun making movies. This is definitely a skill that each student will use long after this enrichment cluster.

Clay, Clay, Clay

What a blast we've had using our imaginations and skills to create unique works of art from clay. Our creations range from sculpture to potter's wheel pots to pieces made with clay slabs to coil creations. Many of our pieces have been glazed and fired and are

waiting to be seen by others. We have produced over 150 works of art in 8 weeks, or around 7 pieces of art per student. Not only have we been busy learning how to make different clay products, we have had a lot of fun creating and sharing with each other. We are also sharing with the community by donating several of our bowls to the Empty Bowl Project Auction, which provides financial support to the Round Rock Food Bank.

Cartoons and Comic Strips

In our cluster, we began by showing and discussing a variety of cartoons, from single-panel classics to four-panel current comics to graphic novels. We learned that a single-panel cartoon is often making a point and the others tell a story, though a very short story, while entertaining or teaching. We improvised some scenes, acting them out in front of the class, and then turned them into comic strips. Then, the kids created their own characters and put them into cartoon stories. We had a lot of fun creating, exploring, and discovering stories and characters.

Power Point Productions

Members of the *Power Point Productions* enrichment cluster learned to use animation both within the power point software program and through stop-action animation techniques. They then used their skills to produce animated short videos to send their message to the world. Over the eight weeks, students in the enrichment cluster produced a public service announcement and also created videos intended for entertainment. In the meantime, they increased their skills with this important presentation program.

Laurel Mountain Lionhearts Peer Mediation Team

Twenty-two 4th and 5th grade students completed the PAX UNITED training to become LME's first ever *Laurel Mountain Lionhearts Peer Mediation Team*. They played a lot of fun, active and engaging games to practice teamwork and cooperation, such as "People to People", "Team Juggling" and "Human Machines." They learned that conflict is a normal part of life and that a caring and supportive mediator can help people find solutions to conflict. The Peer Mediators practiced skills to help them be effective in

helping others such as: active listening, making "I statements", and gathering/re-stating information. Using the script provided by the PAX UNITED Program helped these students develop the confidence to launch the program when students return from Winter Break. The Peer Mediators are continuing to work on ways to publicize the service they will be providing, so that parents, teachers and other students will know when Peer Mediation can be used and how to request a session.

SEW; You Want To Save The World?

In our enrichment cluster, we explored plastic bag recycling and how it affects our environment. The first day we played "Recycling Jeopardy" and learned some interesting facts about recycling in the United States and its effect on our environment. We sorted through and catalogued a pile of plastic bags and made a graph of what companies use plastic bags and which bags were most frequent. We also discussed what we could do to reduce the use of plastic bags. We developed a plan to collect gently used t-shirts and turn them into washable, reusable bags, instead of using the bags that stores give out. We collected close to 100 T-shirts and turned them into bags. We delivered the bags to classroom teachers who thought they had a use for our bags. We also made a "How To" video to show people how simple it is to make reusable bags and reduce the use of plastic bags in Austin.