Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes-March 24, 2017

Dear Parents,

As part of our school district's partnership with the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the first graders enjoyed their visit to the lab this week where they participated in six exciting science activities. They examined their fingerprints and explored the properties of a mystery substance. They learned about the brain and even examined a sheep's brain! The children loved learning about magnets and about how DNA is a code for the proteins that make up the human body. It was a great scientific experience! We are so grateful that our students have the opportunity to learn from "real" scientists in our very own community.

In school, our students love science! They engage in exciting investigations on a regular basis. It is wonderful to witness their delight as they explore light as it reflects and refracts or test objects to see if they sink or float. Our first graders love learning about their turtles and the kindergarten students have just been introduced to their own class earthworms!

The goal of science in a primary school is to build students' understandings about how the world works and how science is practiced. Hands-on experiences help our students form theories to explain "how" and "why" things happen. In school, they use tools like magnifying glasses, eye droppers, measuring cups, rulers, and scales to gather information. They make predictions, record their ideas on charts, and "try things out." Our teachers help our students use language to **ask questions, describe what they see**, and **draw conclusions**.

Believe it or not, parents can set up science experiments at home pretty easily! Try this one using a carnation or celery stalk (with leaves at its top) and food coloring to observe and then answer the question: ***How does a plant drink water?***

Tip: This experiment works best with thirsty plants. Leave your carnation/celery out of water for a couple of hours and trim the stem before putting it into the colored water. Use plenty of food coloring for vivid color!

Tell your children that you they are going to color the water so they can actually observe where it goes. Partially fill a vase with water and add drops of food coloring until the color is strong. Put the thirsty plant in the water. Check in every few hours to see what is happening and talk about the changes. For young scientists, the discussion can be pretty simple: *Most plants "drink" water from the ground through their roots. The water travels up the stem of the plant into the leaves and flowers (where it makes food) and helps keep the plant strong.*

The most important thing you can do as a parent is encourage a sense of wonder in your child. Talk and read about interesting topics. Pose questions like the one above and look for answers together. Visit the library and take your own field trips to explore the natural world. Just remember…*science is all around us!*

Enjoy the weekend!

Mrs. Herschlein

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