

# handprints

MARCH  
2012

Winter friends,  
February 2012.



## Preschool/K News and Notes

Our reptile and amphibian studies had us talking about turtles, lizards of all sorts, alligators, crocodiles, and gavials. We discussed the likeness and differences of the reptiles and how they are part of the crocodylian family. We have moved onto the study of amphibians, starting with frogs and toads. We have discussed the life cycle of a frog and toad. We received our tadpoles in the mail. We have several bull frog tadpoles and a few African tadpoles too. I hope we will get to experience the back leg growth soon...only time will tell! We talked about the differences and similarities of frog and toads. We will finish up with our unit study of reptiles and amphibians in a week and move into our study of space until the end of the year.

Thanks to Mark (Noah and Jacob's dad) for coming in to speak with the

preschool/k children about turtles. Mark did a great job describing, answering questions, showed some wonderful slides and had real turtle skeleton specimens. Even the teachers learned some interesting information. Thank you, Mark!



Our Valentine's Day parties were filled with fun, love and games. Some children did art, we listened to music, ate cupcakes, cookies, fruit and veggies. At circle time the children received their valentine bags with cards and goodies from each other. Thank you very much to the parents who helped with the parties and to those that supplied the food. We appreciate your time and are grateful for the help.

Our field trip to see the musical Pinkalicious was very entertaining. The cast did a great job of sharing the message that it's fine for boys to like pink, too. The children enjoyed the costumes, silly antics and singing.

Thanks so much to all the parents who continue to help drive and chaperone on our field trips!



## Elementary News and Notes

We began the month with a very interesting visit from Mark (Jacob's dad). He shared a presentation on sea turtles with pictures and stories that gave us real insight into their lives. Thank you, Mark!

Our first February field trip was to Riverfront Park with Ranger Jay, where we studied Wetland Ecology using nets and microscopes. It was fun to find life crawling through the pores of old bricks, then study it using field microscopes. We watched in fascination as a grub's internal organs moved against its motion. We

are getting to know the river's edge very well through these trips.

The grades 2-4 had a guided tour of the Richland County Courthouse by Jack (John's dad). We saw mountains of books, files, and microfilm sheets of county records, which date back to 1865 and the burning of Columbia. We saw a court proceeding and met the judge, stenographer, clerk of courts, and other trial participants. We also met the Honorable Judge L. Casey Manning and Richland County Solicitor Daniel E. Johnson. We toured the holding cells and paddy wagon, then left for lunch at the

African American monument on the State House grounds. There we rubbed the rocks from Africa and then went across the street to Trinity Episcopal Church to explore the historic cemetery.

Later in February, we visited Granby Park, near the historic Olympia Mills on the Congaree River. The students gave Ranger Jay the thank you notes they prepared earlier. He was very impressed! Our trip guide this time was Ranger Ed, who led a long walk through the woods and along the river. Some of the neat things we saw were a duck weed covered slough, a spotted salamander egg mass, skating daphnia and wriggling insect larva in a puddle, and a luna moth emerging from its cocoon.

Our students are also working hard on schoolwork. We are enjoying a yearlong study of the states. We are painting and creating Natural History projects and using Montessori materials to advance growing math and language skills. When you add in PE and Spanish, each day of the week is full of learning and discovery.

We look forward to sharing our science fair research with everyone on March 14. See you then!



march	mischief	growing	spring
	<p><b>3/14</b> Science Fair, 7–8 pm All students can participate!</p> <p><b>3/25</b> Parent Teacher Workday, 1–4 pm  Please lend a hand!</p>	<p><b>3/16</b> No kindergarten — Early pickup at 12:15 pm</p> <p><b>3/28</b> Trike/Bike-a-Thon for American Heart Association</p>	<p><b>3/20-3/22</b> Challenger Space Museum Field Trips. leave at 9:15 am</p> <p>3/20 Debbie's Class 3/21 Carroll's Class 3/22 Ashley's Class</p> <p><b>4/2-4/6</b> Enjoy your spring break holiday- no school!</p>

### Science Fair

Our next big event is our school Science Fair on March 14 from 7-8pm. All children may participate. Required for kindergarteners! Please make sure they do a simple write up of the materials they used and the steps in their project. Go online to find a project, make one up, check out the library or ask your child's teacher for ideas.

### Cookie Money

The children decided to send their February cookie money to Amman Imman. Amman Imman helps the world's most underserved and vulnerable indigenous populations by addressing their most essential needs. Learn more about them at [www.ammanimman.org/](http://www.ammanimman.org/)

### TerraCycle Electronics Recycling

We sent our first batch of electronics for recycling. Inside the box was four laptops and 26 cell phones which translated into \$46 for the school! Please keep bringing in old cell phones, laptops, digital cameras, iPods/mp3 players, graphing calculators and GPS devices.

### Check out Harmony's library!

Please visit the school library and check out a book or two. Our books are lonely and would like to be read!

## Happy Birthday to You!

Asaiah Mathis 3/5

### South Carolina Produce Cooperative

For as little as \$10, the co-op will deliver a bag of fresh fruits and veggies every other week. Place your order online, pick up your goodies at school, and Harmony gets a donation. Participate when you wish. There is no commitment required. Visit [www.sccoop.info](http://www.sccoop.info) to review the menu and prices then place your order if you want to be included in the next delivery.

### Saving with TD Bank

TD Bank came in to meet with the students and sign up any families who wanted a savings account. Even better, Harmony School donated \$5 per student and TD Bank donated \$10! And, parents, TD Bank has free coin sorting and regular contests for kids. We are also grateful to TD Bank for their very generous office furniture donation last year. Thank you, TD Bank!

Like Harmony on Facebook yet? We'd like you to!

<http://www.facebook.com/harmonyschoolsc>

**Why organic?**

Organic isn't exotic, it's simply food grown without pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and other harmful chemicals. Scientists now have a better understanding of how disease and environmental toxins are linked and have proven that exposure to chemical fertilizers and pesticides does impact health. Some pesticides have been shown to disrupt the human endocrine system (which regulates our hormones), while others have been linked to breast cancer, uterine cancer and asthma. Recent research is also showing young children are more susceptible to the effects of these chemicals, and so it's important to minimize exposure by eating organic whenever possible. Additionally, organic foods are much higher in nutritional value, and have more flavonoids which are an important antioxidant that helps us fight disease.

**How do you eat organic on a budget?**

- 1 - Invest in organic meat, cheese and milk** (over produce and grains) if your grocery budget is tight. Conventional meat and dairy products often contain hormones and show the highest concentration of pesticides.
- 2 - Find local organic growers and ranchers and buy directly** to save money. Farmers markets often offer organically grown items. Take advantage of coupons or discount days at your local health food store (sign up to receive their emails so you know when these are happening). Join a CSA with a local grower (for example City Roots in town offers a CSA, and there are many others in the Columbia Area). Local Ranchers also sell their products at the farmers markets and health food stores on certain days.
- 3 - Select seasonal produce as much as possible.** If you want strawberries in winter, for example, buy frozen (or else your pocketbook will suffer). Frozen organic produce is often available at big warehouse stores as well.
- 4 - Prioritize your produce.** Certain produce items tend to be highly contaminated with pesticides (try to buy these organic), while others tend to be relatively low in pesticide residue (save money and buy these conventional).

The Dirty Dozen (listed in descending order, starting with greatest levels pesticide contamination):

1 - Apples	2 - Celery	3 - Strawberries	4 - Peaches
5 - Spinach	6 - Nectarines	7 - Grapes	8 - Sweet Bell Peppers
9 - Potatoes	10 - Blueberries	11 - Lettuce	12 - Kale/Collard Greens

The Clean 15: Save Your Money & Buy Conventional (listed in ascending order, starting with of lowest levels of pesticide contamination):

1 - Onions	2 - Sweet Corn (make sure not GMO)	3 - Pineapple	4 - Avocado
5 - Asparagus	6 - Sweet Peas	7 - Mangoes	8 - Eggplant
9 - Cantaloupe	10 - Kiwi	11 - Cabbage	12 - Watermelon
13 - Sweet Potatoes	14 - Grapefruit	15 - Mushrooms	

When eating conventional foods, be certain to peel away edible skins and outer leaves (such as those on lettuce) as pesticides are often concentrated there. Remember to wash all produce (conventional and organic) thoroughly with a natural fruit and vegetable cleanser. Peeling and washing can help reduce (not eliminate) pesticide exposure, but also results in the loss of valuable vitamins and nutrients (like fiber). When you have the choice between an organic item and one that's conventionally grown, choose organic as much as possible.