

CROP NEWS

JUNE 2023

May and June were packed with many fun and interesting activities at CROP. Mrs. Valkavich and Mrs. Bacon kept students busy with activities that involve math, ELA, science, social studies and art.

In Mrs. Valkavich's K-4 group, May was a time to learn about celebrating Mother's Day by making seed bombs and designing a purse shaped box to put them in. Being kind and remembering others was the focus.

Our CROP partners from Roxbury Arts Group provided us opportunities to paint and create with artist Melissa Rodgers. Her four-part series of workshops had students painting with watercolors, cutting shapes from those paintings and then using the shapes to create a collage.

Encouraging others' activities had students thinking about what makes your words encouraging, and how you can fill someone else's bucket with kindness. Words came into practice when they had the chance to encourage the Girls on the Run Group as they ran a practice 5K in town.

Insects were another popular theme for the K-4 group. Students talked about what they know, and what they wanted to learn. They learned about the characteristics of insects and answered some insect riddles. Entomology was investigated and insect research was conducted over several days. Student presentations were displayed in the hallway.

The highlight for June was "the final countdown". Students had asked to revisit many of the topics covered in past months. Activity choices for the week were student-selected, including arts and crafts, games, gift making stations and beads. Makerspace was, of course, the favorite day with tons of creativity!

Mrs. Bacon, who works with the 5-8th grade group afterschool, completed several STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) themed projects in the months of May and June. Wooden pendants made from slices of wooden branches called "tree cookies" were a fun project. Examinations of the tree cookies revealed how old the tree was, the type of tree, and the rough and smooth characteristics of the grain. While sanding out the rough spots, conversations sparked about how life has rough spots and what you can do with some grit and perseverance. Stone pendants offered an opportunity for students to carve a picture into a stone that had some personal importance.

Eat like a bird...what? Well, that was the multi-day theme of another great set of activities. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology activities asked students to identify types of food birds eat, identify adaptations for survival, and look at types of beaks birds have. After discussing those things, students used common tools and utensils (slotted spoon, tweezers, tongs, straws, clothespins and toothpicks) to match different types of beaks. They then had to hold one of those beaks in their hand and try to gather as much food as possible in 15 seconds. Discussion followed the fun about which was the most successful.



Communication was one of the social emotional skills worked on with the 5-8th grade group in May and June. In a two-day set of activities students had to practice communicating with partners to learn about the art of sending and receiving information and listening carefully. Follow my voice gave them another opportunity to give verbal instructions to a blindfolded friend trying to successfully get them across the room filled with obstacles. Not as easy as it sounds!

Roxbury Arts Group also supplied an artist to our school for a multi-day art project. The project entitled “Hands” began with discussions about what our hands do for us and how we use them. Traced hands were used as a place to write about hands using watercolors, pencils, and collage materials. Background for their hands was created by using a variety of flowers and plants to “paint” on paper. The hands and their backgrounds were then made into hand books. Very creative projects were displayed!



Thank you to Megan Freeman and Cheryl Starcher-Cresna, from Cooperative Extension, for coming and doing nutrition and physical fitness activities with us. They will be back with us again this summer.



Theatre Thursday has been a recurring theme of our CROP Program since we started. Each Thursday instead of doing an activity, we watch a movie on the SMARTBOARD and have popcorn. Usually I make the popcorn in my college hot air popper. I get lots of spectators when the popcorn starts coming out of the shoot! Xzavier Fickeria decided that we should have some microwave popcorn as well. He and his parents donated several boxes of popcorn, pretzels, and juice to CROP that we have used the last few weeks. Thank you to Xzavier, Deidre, and Dennis for the donation.

To finish out the CROP program for the school year, we took a trip to Water Safari, an indoor waterpark. Students had a great time and have asked to go back next year. On the very last day, we had an ice cream sundae

party. The supplies all came from a donation from Stewarts Shop in Stamford. We thank them for their generous donation.



Our summer program is in place and will run July 10-28, from 8am-1pm. Thank you to the Andes United Methodist Church and Brad and Sarah Moore for their generous donations to the lunch program for the summer. Your support is greatly appreciated.

I am leaving the CROP Program in very capable hands. Mrs. Grace Bacon will be taking over for me as I retire after 33 years of teaching. I have enjoyed working with all of the children in CROP since the program started in 2003.

~Mrs. Jennifer Finkle