

As April approaches, the Lower Division is gearing up for big adventures! We are so excited about the personal and academic opportunities our students are embracing this month! We believe that children thrive when given the opportunity to create, play, and move while learning.

First graders began April with a trip to the Tulsa Zoo and Jenks Aquarium as they researched desert, ocean, rainforest, and polar region biomes. The Tulsa Zoo features exhibits such as “Life in the Desert”, “Life in the Cold”, “Rainforests”, and “Oceans and Islands.” These exhibits allowed children to experience the biomes they are studying in the most realistic way possible. Students will use the information gleaned from this experience, as well as the books they read, to create a unique project representing a chosen animal or biome. This field trip was a great adventure for our curious researchers!

Second graders created something brand new last week: the Westminster Lower School Silverware Initiative! They worked in small groups to create promotional posters and suggested procedures. These small groups then presented the initiative to each grade level. The goal is to politely persuade everyone to stop using plastic silverware, just as second graders have tried to consciously choose to use Westminster silverware or silverware from home. We hope to reuse silverware that is washed daily in our building’s dishwasher instead of using plasticware that is thrown away in the trash. Please take a moment to praise your child for working to protect our environment.

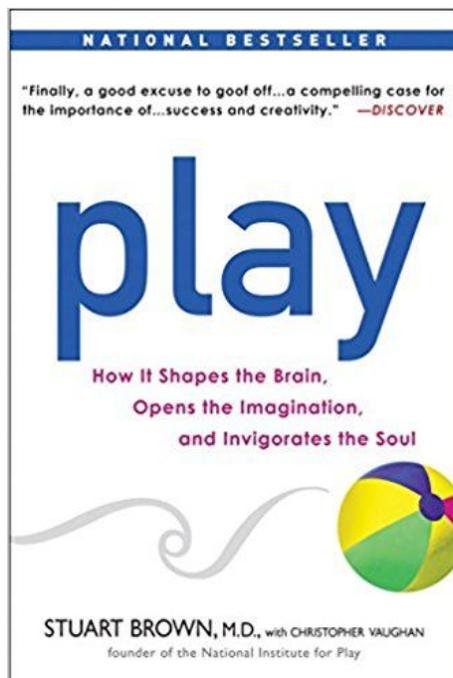
Third graders have been waiting all year for their biggest adventure yet! Camp Classen, our outdoor school camping experience, is right around the corner. We will take our 58 third graders on a three day, two-night camping trip at beautiful Camp Classen in Davis, Oklahoma. Students will be expected to work hard together and problem solve as they face new challenges and experiences such as fishing, orienteering, archery, and Atlatl or spear throwing, as well as a team challenge course. The fun that our students experience at Camp Classen will be shared in stories for years to come!

Our fourth graders “like to move it, move it” this month as they prepare for their debut of Madagascar Jr. in a few weeks. The endearing silliness of this musical is providing much laughter as students work hard to learn play lines, sing songs, prepare movements, and create a truly memorable show. Along with preparing for a musical, our fourth graders recently planted their spring garden and hope to harvest potatoes by the end of the school year. They were thrilled to use the compost they have worked hard to prepare this year while planting their garden. To further understand gardening and how gardening can help reduce food insecurity in Oklahoma, students will take a trip to the Chesapeake Community Gardens this month where they will tour the facility and participate in the work. To further assist in reducing food insecurity in our community, our fourth graders have adopted a Pine Pantry location in the Plaza District. We will stock the pantry this month with easy to eat food items and encouraging notes from our students.

Fifth Graders have had many spring adventures. With the help of guest speakers from deadCenter Film Festival, they kicked their creativity into gear, writing scripts, revising scripts, and voting on which scripts to film. They learned that filmmaking takes a lot of hard work, but it is lots of fun. Rodeo Cinema in Stockyard City offered to be the “real movie theater” where fifth graders could have a film festival of their own. Kids and parents were thrilled to see their creativity and hard work come to life. Fifth graders also recently went on a field trip to the Science Museum of Oklahoma. With two hours to play and explore, they never got tired. In the afternoon, they packed Early Bird bags for Smart Start of Central Oklahoma, and although that was work, it didn't feel like it! They packed close to 1,000 games, 1,000 poster packs, and almost 1,200 educational bags! These bags will be used to educate parents, who will then read to and play with their children in an enriched way. Our CSL study of illiteracy has taught us how important early education is.

Recently the OU Children's Hospital in conjunction with the Oklahoma Society of Psychoanalytic Studies hosted Dr. Norka T. Malberg. Her talk on the importance of play and playfulness for the development of children's relationships provided further research to support an idea that our school has championed for many years. Malberg stated, “Through play children discover what they feel, what they know, and what they want...play allows children to practice new skills in non-threatening ways...play promotes flexible problem solving and persistence when learning new things.” We see this in action each and every day at Westminster School as children learn, play, and grow.

#### Parenting Book of the Month:



#### Parenting Tip of the Month:

It's that time of year! Sports, recitals, and end of the year activities have begun. During this time of year, we are reminded of the importance of healthy sleep habits. The National Sleep Foundation recommends that school age children (6-13 years) should have 9-11 hours of sleep. Thank you for partnering with us to help your children make the most of the learning and play time at school!

Technology Tip of the Month:

Do you really know about the technology your kids use?

If your children are using technology at home, take time this month to learn more about your child's favorite app or game.

- 1) Sit down and play the game or explore the app with your child or with the entire family.
- 2) Ask questions. Find out from your child why the game or app is interesting for your child. Children love to be tech experts!
- 3) Set a timer for everyone's tech use in your house! Even for an adult, time spent on technology can spiral out of control.
- 4) Write down your child's username and password. You should know all of these! Don't allow your child to have any tech secrets!