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SUMMER ECOLOGY PROGRAM NEWSLETTER
BY RITA CALANDRESA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

JULY 6 - JULY 10, 2009

Greetings!

Welcome to our weekly newsletter. I'm happy to be returning as Director of the Summer Ecology Program. We have a great staff this year who share responsibility for our two groups of children. Frank Aiello and Stephanie Tunic have the younger group. Veronica Venezia and Andrea Plate have the older group.

We had such a busy week getting to know each other that we have yet to name our groups--traditionally we pick a name of an animal that can be found at Sheldrake. Stay tuned!

ASK ME ABOUT...

What is a Nature Detective? Where do we look for clues that animals live here even if we don't always see them? On our trail trek we saw many small holes dug into the ground that could be just the right size for a chipmunk! We found nuts and leaves that had been chewed.



Animal Homes What do you need to live? (and NO, the answer is not a computer!!!) People, like all animals, need water, food, shelter and space. Baby animals also need their parents' care. We talked about how Sheldrake is home to many different animals in its habitats - the pond, meadow and woods - and who might choose to live there. One of the animals we see almost every day is a beautiful black-crowned night heron who stands in the stream looking for fish. Liesl found a swallow sitting on her nest. There is a small bunny, who chomps grass nearby, and woodchucks ambling around.





Seeds and Plants We planted a bean and radish seeds in a peat pot and sent them home. Any sprouting? What do all plants need so they can grow? We talked about how plants can't move and spread their seeds by being carried by the wind, being pollinated by bees and other insects, getting dropped by birds (in their droppings too!), and... some seeds hitch a ride on animals' fur or even on our clothes!

Growing and Changing We covered how seeds grow into many different kinds of plants. We looked at seeds in various vegetables and fruits from the market.

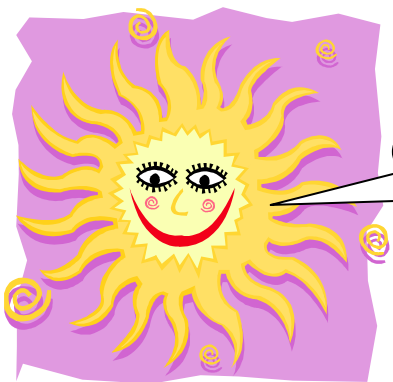
Trees On our trek we got to know trees up close, and gave them a hug. We felt bark and did some bark rubbings with crayon. We looked up and saw the beautiful canopy of leaves. We learned the parts of a tree. Besides being beautiful, trees give us so much....see if your child can remember a few of these things!



I highly recommend visiting Sheldrake with your family so the children can show you around. Also, for some great ideas on exploring and enjoying nature with your children, you may wish to visit the National Wildlife Federation's excellent site www.greenhour.org.

Please take a look at Summer Ecology Program calendar you will also be receiving. I am finalizing dates for a number of special guests and will update you in upcoming newsletters!

Topics for week #2: forest food chain, water, ponding, fish and the sun!!!



See you next week!