

Firefly Scientists' Garden

Environmental Education at The Lemberg Children's Center



JULY IN THE GARDEN

Summer has so many colors! There is the red of the cherries, yellow of the flowers, blue from the feathers of the blue jays, and green all around! The fruit trees in the garden are heavy with fruits - peaches, apples, and blackberries! July is truly a wonderful month to spend in the garden!

ACTIVITIES IN THE GARDEN

Windchime Crafts

Instead of using crayons and paper, how else can we capture the blooms and beauty of the summer? For our first activity this season, we constructed wind chimes to hang around the garden and playground areas. It was awesome to see the mixture of colors, textures, and patterns that friends used to make their strands!



Look! That's my string!



So many beads!

Dyeing the Flowers Red (White,) and Blue

In preparation for the Fourth of July, we had a flower-dyeing project as our second activity this summer. The Garden Team prepared containers of water mixed with drops of food coloring and friends were really excited to see all the different dyes. The students were each given white flowers to dye whatever color they wanted. Before finishing up, they all left their flowers in the containers with red or blue food coloring to soak up the dye overnight and make the white petals festive for the holiday!



Look at our pretty flowers!

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Helping to water our vegetables!

Repotting seeds

The Garden Team has prepared some germinated hibiscus and sunflower seeds for friends to put into pots! For the activity, the students put soil into their individual containers. They received either a hibiscus or sunflower seed, depending on their preference, and covered it with more soil. With a teacher's help, the students also watered their seedlings and decorated their pots, which will be put into our greenhouse. Although we could simply put the seeds into the garden beds, the greenhouse provides more protection for our seedlings from the weather and animals in the garden. We are so excited to see these little seeds grow!



I'm going to write my name on it!



The seeds need water, too!

Chia Beds

Ch-ch-ch-chia! Chia seeds are tiny seeds that are not only edible, but also easy to grow. In this activity, led by environmental intern Declan Tsuyuki, the students created tiny portable

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garden beds using recycled cardboard and garden screens that would've been thrown away. Students were grouped in pairs or trios and worked together to mix soil and chia seeds to put on their DIY garden bed. After completing their project, the students were in for a couple of surprises. The first surprise was a science experiment conducted by Declan to show what chia seeds look like when they absorb lots of water over three days. The second surprise was from Lang, who harvested the ripe tomatoes from the garden for the children to taste!



Look how tiny these seeds are!



Sprinkle the seeds on the soil like you are salting some pasta!

Bug Hotel!

Bugs can be found anywhere in the garden if you look hard enough, and the Garden Team took inspiration from an activity in the Lemberg Environmental Education book to build a bug hotel out of recyclable materials to provide shelter for the many bugs living in the garden.

A few days before the activity, the Navigators and Pathfinders collected recyclable materials such as paper towel rolls and plastic jugs to build our hotel. On the day of the activity, the Garden Team and the students went around the garden to collect small sticks, leaves, and other organic matter to put inside the collected recycled containers.



Doron and Declan explain the game plan!

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After the project was finished, the newly constructed hotels were placed in different spots in the garden for a variety of bugs and insects to occupy as shelter, thus promoting more biodiversity within the Firefly Scientist Garden space. As part of a celebration, the Garden Team invited all the students to help harvest some more tomatoes that have ripened over the past week, and observe other vegetables that are currently growing in the garden.



Our new hotel is now open!

One Final Celebration

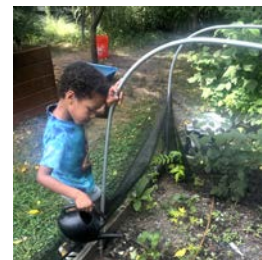
As July came to a close, the Garden Team planned out one last activity for the summer program. With the vegetables now harvested, the opportunity to make a delicious dish was now possible! Using the tomatoes, parsley, mint and other vegetables grown in the garden, Doron and Declan (with the help of Doron's mother) created stuffed grape leaves and mint lemonade. Stuffed grape leaves is a dish that comprises a filling that is wrapped in a boiled leaf. For the filling he Garden Team created a

mixture of rice, tomatoes, parsley, onion, lemon, and spices. The filling was then wrapped in boiled grape leaves harvested from the grape vines in the garden. For the mint lemonade, the Garden Team had lemonade that was then blended with mint leaves that were harvested from the garden.



Stuffed Grape Leaves!

On the day of the activity, all the preschool students visited the garden to help out with basic gardening tasks such as watering our many plants. After the students helped out, Doron and Declan then surprised everyone with the stuffed grape leaves and mint lemonade.



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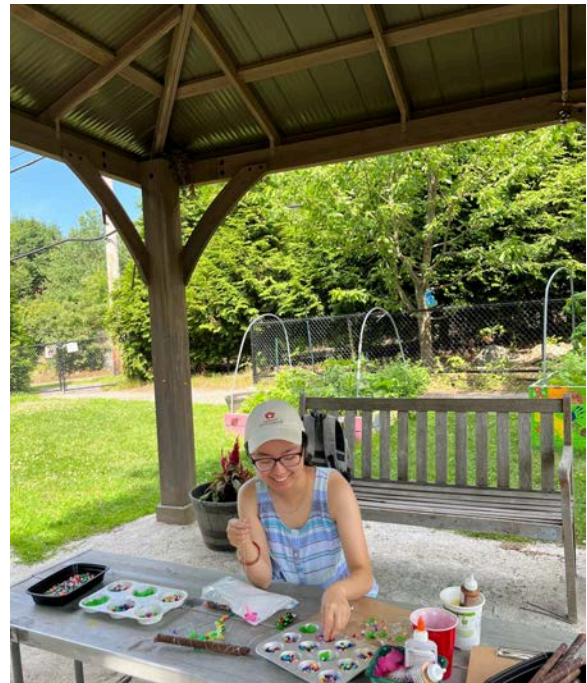
Everyone is helping water our plants!

The students and teachers enjoyed everything the Garden Team served. With the garden activities coming to a close for the summer, it was only natural to end it off by tasting food that the team and students had worked so hard to grow and create.

A Farewell

After two and half years at Lemberg, it's time for me (Lang) to say farewell. I started working here as a teaching assistant in the Hummingbird classroom, where I stayed for two years. Upon finishing my undergraduate coursework in December, I began to spend more time in other toddler classrooms as well as in the garden with the preschoolers as an Environmental Education Intern. In May, I took on the Environmental Coordinator role upon Sarah's departure. Although my time here was relatively brief, these experiences allowed me to get to know and reconnect with every child in this center. It also gave me the opportunity to learn and grow along with the children.

I appreciate all the love I have received from the children and the trust the parents have given me. As someone without an academic background in education, I am also grateful for the teachers that I worked with, who gave me the time and freedom to find my own way of interacting with the kiddos. Although not without challenges, my time at Lemberg has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had at Brandeis, and I am grateful to have witnessed so much love and beauty here with all of you.



After Lemberg, I will be traveling to southern China for a month to visit some relatives and eat some yummy food. Following that, I will return to Boston to pursue a Master's degree in Climate Science and Engineering at Northeastern University. Despite the

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unpredictability and often hectic atmosphere with the children, I have found moments of tranquility —reading to a toddler in my lap or blowing on a dandelion with a preschooler—that I will continue to cherish. Thanks for everything.

LOOKING AHEAD

This summer has been a joyful time of growth for the students and staff at Lemberg. We look forward to creating more opportunities for our community to learn, plant, and be in nature together. As we say farewell until our September newsletter, we wish you a peaceful and happy summer and smooth transition into the new school year.

Feel free to contact us by email:

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All the best!

The Environmental Team

Thank you to our many wonderful alumni donors and friends!

