

The sky's the limit

Third- and fourth-grade science fieldtrips

"LOOK AT THE MORPHO on my shoulder!"

"Hold still, a butterfly has landed on your head!"

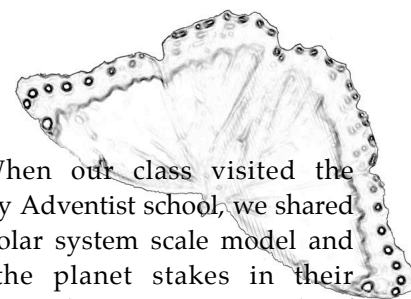
The butterflies seemed undisturbed by the cheery calls of the two-footed visitors to their greenhouse. The students discovered that some butterflies would land on their red, pink, orange, and purple T-shirts. Standing still, or moving slowly, gave butterflies an improved landing zone.

The third- and fourth-grade class began taking science-focused fieldtrips in the beginning of the school year. While studying different categories of the animal kingdom, we visited wonderful places in the community to experience creatures close-up. At El Jardín de las Mariposas, we listened to bees, beetles, held mantids, and watched an owl butterfly emerge from its chrysalis. As we learned about reptiles, we passed two lovely boa constrictors around the circle of

laps. A mother sloth and her young one came to browse and doze in branches near the meeting house just as we began our unit on mammals.

Parents helped in numerous ways. One parent was our bird guide in the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. Another parent, a herpetologist, was our contact at the Ranario for our visit with amphibians. Some parents were our drivers and chaperones.

Our class continued going outside this semester to make a scale model of the solar system. With a 30 cm "sun" posted at the far corner of the cemetery, we staked out the relative distances for the orbits of Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars as we measured meters toward the school driveway. A 3 cm Jupiter was staked farther north along the footpath and Saturn was down the hill, between the school and the river. Uranus would have been beyond the cheese factory!



When our class visited the nearby Adventist school, we shared our solar system scale model and put the planet stakes in their playground. We sang a couple of songs, including "This Pretty Planet," and our host students sang songs for us as well.

As we learn more about stars, planets, and nebulae, the third- and fourth-graders plan stargazing evenings on the soccer field. Saturn is directly overhead in the early evening, the rings clearly visible with a telescope—they will not be this easy to see again until 2010. We made sextants and are learning to locate stars with azimuth and compass directions.

"This telescope is focused on Betelgeuse."

"We're trying to find the nebula below Orion's belt."

"Can you find Mars? It's just northwest from Saturn and Regulus."

"I see it!"

Betsy Bartels, 3-4 teacher at MFS.



Informes sobre el clima

Los estudiantes de primero y segundo en su clase de ciencias han estado divirtiéndose en explorar el clima y las diferentes condiciones que lo crean. Cada día ellos tomaron la temperatura e hicieron un gráfico en el que mostraron la temperatura registrada y el clima de afuera. También los estudiantes tuvieron diarios sobre las nubes y es divertido leer su aprendizaje nuevo sobre los diferentes tipos de nubes, utilizando los nombres como los expertos.

Juanita Leiton, maestra de primero y segundo. Traducido por Lucía Neander, undécimo grado.

Weather reports

The first- and second-graders in their science class have been having fun exploring the weather and all of the different conditions that create it. Each day they take the temperature and record it, along with other aspects of the weather, on a classroom graph. The students are also keeping cloud journals and it is fun to hear them use their new learned knowledge as they talk about the different types of clouds by their names, just like old pros.

Juanita Leiton, 1-2 teacher at MFS.