

Second Sunday with Nate in Pescadero and Moss Beach February 10th

We had perfect weather for our group on this last Sunday with a sun dappled ocean view all day long and the perfect temperature and breeze for eating lunch out by the marsh, visiting the town of Pescadero and rock hopping at the Fitzgerald Marine tide pools.

Nate was as resourceful as always, a bottomless pit of information on fascinating topics such as the kinds of fish that live and travel to and from the marshes and tide pools. Elijah was our official reporter, taking notes for his family's newspaper and promising he would send us a copy.



As always I learned as much from the children as from the teachers. Elijah and Annie proceeded to define the precise meaning of the word "jiffy" in terms of fractions of a minute and when the original pre-fixes such as kilo, micro, etc were invented that define both time, weight and more.



Our first set of plans seemed to morph with the emergent events of the day rather than go as planned, as Nate found nature that was fascinating in the most hidden and surprising of places including a rose bush growing in front of the Pescadero

church with the sweetest rose hips we'd ever tasted. Jasper couldn't get enough of them it seemed and will surely be inoculated if he is exposed to cold germs with all that vitamin C in him!



We skipped sitting inside a restaurant for a snack of whole little fish (smelt) for educational purposes and instead bought and tried local wild horseradish (the brave ones at least) from two local children and bought blueberry honey from a Watsonville farm that we served later on delicious buttermilk bread for a snack that was a big hit with the whole group at the end of the day. We also saw wild strawberries multiple times, learned about the filtration system of certain salt-water plants that grow near or salt water marshes and about the succulents that grow on sand dunes.



Nate told us the sad story of how the Stellar's Sea Cow, a 25 foot peaceful water animal and a relative of the Manatee, became extinct. The story depicted how critical it is that we respect the planet's life cycle so we don't deplete the food source or predator of one animal and let another get overly abundant or disappear. We respected the request of the State protected Fitzgerald Marine Tide Pool area and

emptied Alyssa's boots where she was hiding at least 12 adorable hermit crabs, which she had hoped to adopt.



At Fitzgerald Marine Reserve in Moss Beach, Donald took some striking photographs that contrasted the compacted mud that comprised the stones we traipsed with the brilliant blue water capturing the sky as it was purely reflected by the deep black pigment in the rocks.



The children were so engaged by the tide pools that they were crouched in the same ten square foot area for a straight hour, testing what the sea anemones would do if we tickled them, or if we picked up the crabs out of the water and then put them back in, or luckily returned the rockfish to the tide pools if they had jumped out of the water somehow and had gotten trapped in the rocks.



Jasper and Nate followed the creek up to where they could and Donald pointed out the seals that were resting on the rocks out at sea and went closer to photograph them for us.



We didn't catch sight of any whales this time but we did see wonderful hawks over golden fields of mustard plants and even a funny line up of birds on the way there who "stopped" at the red light.



We also said hi to the goats and llamas at Harley's farm in Pescadero.



What struck me this trip was a pronounced contrast in the children's behavior between when they were uncomfortably seated on the crowded seats in Duarte's restaurant and a table wasn't quite ready to when they were completely comfortable and willing to confidently explore the nuances of the rocks, tide pools big and small and even the little outdoor corners in the town where there were interesting fruits and vegetables to try.



Their natural curiosity rose to the surface immediately and learning took place constantly when there was open space, a natural flow and pace and a sense that the environment was meant for them to be in without question. This is the magic of the seashore and the coastal small scale towns.

I have to say the kids we have going on the trips are real troopers: keeping themselves entertained with books and games in the car: Elijah swallowed a book on the Civil War and Annie educated us on the native and non-native parakeets and

budgies as well as watched over Alyssa very sweetly. Not to mention, they mostly kept themselves busy by inventing a myriad of games to play with a multi-piece plastic interconnected Frisbee disk that I took along.



We hope you can join us on our next excursion! It will either be a visit to Pinnacles (depending on when the ideal combination occurs of good weather conditions and the most wildflowers we can find in bloom) or postpone that one for another month and consider going to the magical hill where the tropical birds have found a home in San Francisco's Coit Tower area. There is a movie about the charming story of how the birds from all over the country came to live there and now that we are all experts in parakeets we may continue to broaden our education to parrots and other tropical beauties!

Happy Trails!
Chaia