

(More pictures to follow!)



Hello Families,

We had a blast at the Exploratorium, sensory overload and all! It was an ideal opportunity to combine science education, outdoor nature education, getting to know new friends and developing teamwork.

I saw the "old hat" children start the day tentative about who the new kids were and if they were going to be "annoying or fun." At first they weren't used to each other and by the end, there were touching moments including one where Nico drew a "K and an N" in the magnetic sand exhibit, even though Caitlin gently let him know that her name starts with a "C." :) and the boys all chased the seabirds together. Max's first foray into San Francisco was a happy one according to him, even though he had some tough moments, so we are all very proud of him for his intrepid courage!



On the drive up we learned the new concepts behind the exhibitory via silly trivia questions Nate and Lindsay put together and then explored the new terms like "sediment" and "cartography" in the various exhibits that the teachers chose for the kids to delve into.



We completely conquered a few of the coolest exhibits, exploring personal space distances that felt comfortable or uncomfortable, upside down images projected by a unique mirror and the cartography room where the children were fascinated by the multitude of epicenters of earthquakes in our area and how big the Loma Prieta earthquake rippled through as the circles got bigger and bigger and faster and faster over the 3-D map. We also covered a lot of territory, playing with the ingenious hands on activities on the way to our scavenger hunt destinations.

We saw the teamwork budding in unsuspected ways, from working together on a giant PacMan video game to drawing how they all observed their environment in different ways. Nate held the little one's attention when he told how he grew a passion for scientific investigation with his story about finding frogs where there seemed to be no water at all.





Our new friends were very interested in learning and a delight to have with us. Thank you to Svetlana for inviting Navin and Leilah and bringing her own two.

We enjoyed Caitlin and Grace and welcomed back Liz and family and Drew and Nico of course!

The kids who met us at the house loved making caramel apples and I can't say they loved sharing them but it all worked out and they all got to know that "sharing is caring" one way or another!

Nico said he had never seen a seagull up so close and Caitlin said she had never been to the outdoor areas, the Cartography room nor the big tree room so that was great to hear. All the kids expressed themselves very artistically as they seriously went at

decorating their t-shirts and/or drawing self-portraits or the entire United States with a flair!

We are playing with the name "Circuitree" to suggest how nature is the source of technology and Grace came up with a lovely visual concept of that on her shirt.

We adults were clearly challenged as to how to guide the children to our "agenda" while they were so enchanted with all the exhibits on their way to and from. We managed to squeeze in some quality discussion and the quieter areas allowed the children to interact and participate more than we had seen in past excursions so we were pleased. Of course the kids would rather we didn't talk at all and let them just be free so it was a dance of sorts to keep them engaged and go deeper into what was there.



Everyone got to meet Lindsay, our newest teacher who worked for the Tech Museum creating hands on technology kits. Liz said she was awesome! Having an artist there (she has a degree in Art) was inspiring to say the least. As part of our theme of observation, she took symbols and shapes and colors to show us how we could play with them to see them differently.

We thank Ashley for the fabulous Scavenger hunt booklets which I am attaching to this letter so you can see what our foci were. She put in over 20 hours preparing for this program, not including going to scout out the museum with Lindsay and Nate and learning more about design to prepare our booklets. She took great photos which I have included here as well. Nate and Lindsay also put in a huge amount of effort, time and enthusiasm to get the new year's programs ready, coming up with themes, linking them to the exhibits and designing hands on activities for the kids to get more tangible understanding of what they meant.

We so appreciate your entrusting your children to us. The green t-shirts worked magically so no one got lost. There was only a funny complication when we almost gathered in children a couple times who were wearing the same color but didn't belong to our group.

We would like to "focus" our next trip on building a microscope out of a webcam. Lindsay is leading this activity so it should be fascinating and fun. Caitlin and Nico were already planning what they wanted to do for the next time we met and we are hoping you will all return and invite friends as well!

Have a happy month and see you the "Second Sunday" in February!

Sincerely,
Chaia, Nate, Lindsay and Ashley