12/1/15

Dear Julia Green K-2 Encore Parents,

Happy Holidays! What an eye-opener this unit has been learning about our ever growing space. We did a Smithsonian activity where we sorted celestial bodies by size, distance from earth, and age. We were astounded to learn there are over 200 billion stars in our Milky Way Galaxy alone….enough for every man, woman and child to name about 28 stars. We learned that the “coolest“ stars are actually reddish, the medium stars are yellow (like our sun), next are the white dwarf, and the hottest are the blue stars. We saw some incredible deep space photos we’ve gotten from the Hubble telescope which rotates around the earth 350 ft. above us. The Hubble celebrated its 25th anniversary in April 2015.

We became scientists as we did our astronaut stations doing experiments with gloves & robotic arms. We had to give clear directions to our partners as we built Legos behind a screen for our partners to replicate. We had to figure out how to use mirror image (upside down and backwards) for writing and putting puzzle pieces in the correct places. Teams tried to make 5 square puzzles out of 17 pieces using each piece only one time.

We had a good time on our 11/18/15 Dyer Observatory field trip. We had an astronomy lesson from the patient Dr. Billy who shared the history of Vanderbilt’s Dyer Observatory. It was built in 1953 and named after the financier Arthur Dyer. We saw a huge cassegrain reflector telescope base as we entered the dome building on a lovely mountain top on Oman Drive in Brentwood. This cassegrain reflector telescope is named after Dr. Carl Seyfert, the Vanderbilt astronomer with the vision to move here. It is similar to the Hubble telescope but not the school bus size of the Hubble. In the observation room where we saw the dome roof move on wheels around the 24ft room. There was a door in the dome roof that could be opened to let the telescope extend out. The weather didn’t allow us to do our telescope viewing or park picnic so we ate lunches under the covered tent where kids enjoyed playing in the leaves.

We learned asteroids are typically in orbit in the asteroid belt, meteoroids are pieces of rock in space, meteors are burning rocks in our atmosphere, and meteorites are what is left of the burning rock when it falls to earth. Comets are dirty snowballs that follow an elliptical orbit from the Kuiper Belt to the sun and back. Comets have a tail that points away from the sun. We’ll soon be applying Newton’s Laws of Motion as we make and launch antacid rockets.

JG Encore 2nd – 4th grades hope to do the Hour of Code the week of 12/14- 12/17. This is normally when we do a little holiday party. If you would like to bring a treat to share with your classmates, we’ll be doing it the week before in the Encore room on 12/7 – 12/10. Thank you for sharing your children with me.

I am so blessed to love what I do and your children are the reason! Nancy Sneed M.Ed K-4 Encore Teacher <http://juliagreenencore.weebly.com/>