

## "Earth and Green"

"Earth and Green" was the theme at the Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center during the month of May with an emphasis on recycling, living seas, and into the wild!

Center Youth Services Coordinator, Teresa Allen tells us it was a great learning experience for the children.

"We learned that recycling reduced the amount of waste that filled our Landfills. Reducing the amount of paper waste helped to save our trees, and reusing certain items help to curb consumer spending which also leads to greater landfill waste. We emphasized," Teresa continued, "how important recycling is, by making a poster that required us, to separate recycling items from non-recyclable items. This exercise showed how individually we can help to leave a smaller imprint on Mother Earth."



For "Living Seas," Teresa says the children learned about sea creatures. "We studied the Crab, Sea Turtle, Starfish, Stingray, and the great White Shark. We learned how many species of Crabs there are (4,500), where Sea Turtles like to lay their eggs, that starfish really aren't fish at all, Stingray are related to sharks and do not have bones, and Great White Sharks can jump out of the water while chasing prey." Then, "each student chose what sea creature they wanted to do a poster on and highlighted different facts about the sea creature they chose on their poster."

Finally, Teresa explained that the kids learned about the wild! "We learned there is a difference between a Rainforest and a Jungle. Not only are the animals different in a Rainforest and a Jungle, but the atmosphere is different: the rainforest is wet and humid while the Jungle is dry and humid. Youth participated in cooking activities like "s'more pops" and 'dirt cups.' Youth were excited to eat their culinary creations."



With the end of the school year fast-approaching, May was also a time for celebration and recognition. Center Deputy Director, Brandon Furrowh, says it all started "with Staff



Appreciation Week, a week-long series of snacks, gifts, and meals to thank our teachers for all of their hard work and dedication to the organization. Following, we celebrated our Hilltop mothers for Mother's Day with Muffins with Moms. This event engaged mothers, grandmothers, and aunts in a light breakfast and quality time with their Hilltop student in a fun activity."

The end of the school year also means advancement for our preschoolers. Center Executive Director, Michelle Williams tells us "the preschoolers visited kindergarten classrooms at Lewis Elementary on May 10<sup>th</sup>. They were so excited! They sang a song in the music wellness class and saw some of the students in the music, gym, art rooms. They also toured the cafeteria and were able to see how the lunch line works.

Here's to a great summer!

*Eric F. Mease*

*Member, Board of Directors*

*Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center*