

2016 SUMMER EDITION

**Elmhurst Academy Introduces
"GROWING UP WILD"**

June 8, 2016 through August 26, 2016



The summer session at Elmhurst Academy engulfs children in a sense of wonder, excitement and adventure for all ages. Each day brings new explorations and activities that feed the senses and promotes inspired learning through all of the developmental domains. Daily camps and activities such as Morning Yoga, Sports and Fitness, Science and Technology, Cooking, Photography, and Water Play are just some of the exciting opportunities available to the students attending the Summer Session.



Research suggests that when children are engaged in authentic play in natural settings and with open-ended materials they are developing important skills -- skills that are foundational for early learning and will be important in helping children successfully navigate in the world across a variety of domains, all at the same time. This is referred to as whole-child learning. Through a series of thoughtfully planned explorations and open-ended experiences including: gardening, den building, water conservation, bird watching, collections and



shapes studies, geology and archeology and the ever popular Trading Post, the children will flourish in deep and meaningful ways. Elmhurst Academy is recognized as a certified Nature Explore School through the Arbor Day Foundation.

In addition to all of the wonderful educational and fun activities there are several academy wide celebrations and events over the summer session: The Great American Campout, Summer Solstice, Natural Tie-Dye Day, International Mud Day, Red-White-Blue Bike Parade, Summer Showcase and End of Summer Family Celebration; as well as various walking and traveling field work opportunities. Of course it wouldn't be summer at Elmhurst Academy without Aquatic Explorations, Summer Art on the Piazza and the Ulysses Summer Reading Club.



Growing Up Wild! ~ Connecting Children to Nature

A young child's connection with nature can be as simple as sitting under a tree, listening to the chirping of crickets, or planting a bean seed. Spending time in nature has many positive benefits. Children who have opportunities to play and learn in nature are more likely to:

- Handle challenges and problems more capably.
- Act responsibly toward the earth and each other.
- Be more physically active and aware of nutrition, and less likely to be obese.
- Have a greater appreciation of the arts, music, history, and literature.
- Choose science or a related field for careers.
- Become better-informed and environmentally-aware adults.



Growing Up WILD is a multi-award winning program having received the 2009 Family Choice Award and the 2011 Renewable Natural Resource Foundation Excellence in Journalism Award.



Growing Up WILD program, builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Through a wide range of activities and experiences, Growing Up Wild provides an early foundation for developing positive impressions about the natural world and lifelong social and academic skills.

Nature: Environmental Education

Inspirational and meaningful experiences in NATURE serve as a doorway to powerful life lessons.

~ Author unknown ~



Through in-depth experiences, students will leave Elmhurst Academy with an enhanced understanding of the environment in which they live, a heightened interest in learning, a deeper feeling of a connection with nature, and a greater willingness to act as good stewards of the environment.

Early environmental education experiences help shape children's values, perspectives and understanding of the environment and how to interact with it. Studies show that fostering environmental education in children is critical because it helps them develop into adults who understand and care about environmental stewardship; nurtures their sense of wonder imagination and creativity; provides them with a sense of beauty, calm and refuge in a sometime frightening world; enhances physical development as well as helps them understand the interrelationship of all life.

Children need to learn and understand from an early age that the environment has an impact on their lifestyle and quality of life; and that similarly, their lifestyle has an impact on the environment.

Today's children will be responsible for making decisions that will shape the health of the environment. To prepare them for such responsibilities, they need a sound environmental education as a foundation from which to make those decisions.



Summer Aquatic Explorations

Elmhurst Academy summer students will enjoy fun in the sun and water! Water play helps promote children's physical, cognitive and social-emotional growth. When children pour water, they are improving their physical dexterity and eye-hand coordination. By playing with others cooperatively by tunnels and dams, they develop social skills. At the same time, they use their minds as they explore why certain objects sink in water while others float. Concepts are learned and reinforced including empty/full, before/after, shallow/deep and heavy/light in a hands-on way.

All classrooms will have a designated day where they can explore, splash and sprinkle in the safety of the school grounds.

Additional information will be distributed at the beginning of the summer session. Aquatic explorations begin the week of June 13, 2016 (weather permitting)



Aquatic Exploration schedule:

Mondays - Nido Explorers

Tuesdays - River Explorers

Wednesdays - Prairie Explorers

Thursdays - Woodlands Explorers

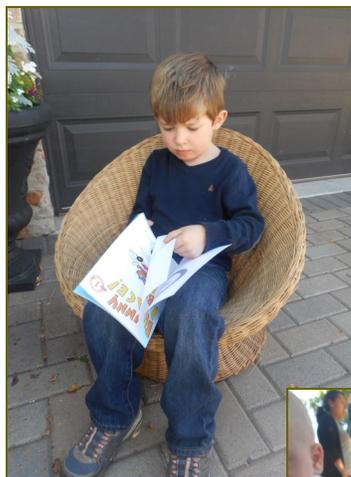
Fridays - Senior Explorers

Ulysses Summer Reading Club

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."

~Margaret Fuller

At Elmhurst Academy we provide a nurturing environment for our growing readers. We encourage taking literature outside as they read about the things that they explore. Our reading program, Wild About Reading, works hand in hand with the award winning program, Growing Up Wild! Throughout the course of the summer our explorers, as they discover different elements of nature, will have the opportunity to pair their learning with related books recommended by the program. The collection of books provides a variety of fiction, non-fiction, picture, and chapter books in hopes to engage the preferences of all children. As statistics show, the importance of keeping reading a part of your everyday summer routine is vital to maintaining and/or improving ones literacy skills. Our goal at Elmhurst Academy is to model and provide a world of adventure through the action of reading. ~ Elmhurst Academy Literacy Committee



Elmhurst Academy Summer Enrichment Programs

**Welcome to the 2016 Elmhurst Academy Summer Session.
The teachers have planned exciting and exploratory activities for your child.**

Children who spend time in nature are more likely to be strong advocates for the environment when they reach adulthood which is critical for the long-term protection of our natural heritage. Elmhurst Academy's summer program gives your child an opportunity to deepen his or her connection to nature—while getting messy and having fun!

Through the Growing Up Wild program students will enjoy hands-on investigations in the natural world around them that incorporate math, science, art, literacy as well as music & movement activities. Students will be immersed in all forms of nature that reside in the ground, trees and waterways.

Each classroom will also have weekly opportunities to participate in the Discoveries of Roots & Shoots, Language of Food series with Chef Sigy and "Gimme Five" Project Health Initiative.



JUNE HIGHLIGHTS

- * A Wild Start To Summer - June 8, 2016, First day of summer session
- * Greet the day with Morning Yoga
- * Weekly Physical Fitness & "Gimme Five" Challenges.
- * Weekly Environmental Studies / Discoveries of Roots & Shoots
- * Afternoon Art Studio on the Piazza
- * World Wind Day - June 15, 2016
- * Summer Solstice & Great American Backyard Campout Celebration - June 24, 2016
- * International Mud Day Celebration - June 29, 2016



Great American Backyard Campout Celebration

Students will participate in the GREAT AMERICAN BACKYARD CAMP OUT CELEBRATION on Friday, June 24, 2016 in conjunction with the Summer Solstice Celebration.

Elmhurst Academy students will enjoy fun filled outdoor camping activities throughout the day!

The Great American Backyard Campout provides an opportunity for the first time - how much fun it is to spend a night sleeping under the stars and enjoying the sounds of nature. Held each June, the GABC is a national event that encourages individuals, youths, friends and families to camp out together for one night.

The GABC supports Great Outdoors Month (June), celebrating the diverse and valuable recreational opportunities across the nation - especially those linked to America's public lands and waters, which cover more than a third of the nation's surface and attract billions of visitors annually.



National Wildlife Federation is dedicated to connecting people to nature. Today's children, are increasingly disconnected from nature and to counteract this growing trend, we encourage parents to help children spend one hour each day outdoors, engaged in unconstructed play and discovery.

For more information visit;
www.nwf.org/backyardcampout/about.cfm

JULY HIGHLIGHTS

- * Greet the day with Morning Yoga
- * Red, White & Blue Bike Parade - July 1, 2016
- * Weekly Physical Fitness & "Gimme Five" challenges; and Creative Movement Enrichment classes
- * National Dance Day - July 29, 2016
- * Tie-Dye Creations - week of July 18-22, 2016
- * Weekly Environmental Studies / Discoveries of Roots & Shoots
- * Afternoon Art Studio on the Piazza



AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

- * Greet the day with Morning Yoga
- * Weekly Environmental Studies / Discoveries of Roots & Shoots
- * Weekly Physical Fitness & "Gimme Five" challenges; and Creative Movement Enrichment classes
- * Afternoon Art Studio on the Piazza (August is American Art Appreciation Month)
- * Exercise with Your Child Week - August 4-10, 2016
- * Summer Showcase & End of Summer Family Celebration- Friday, August 26, 2016 - 4:00-5:30 p.m.

International Mud Day ~ June 29, 2016

Students at Elmhurst Academy will participate in International Mud Day on Wednesday, June 29, 2016. International Mud Day is children and early childhood professionals all over the world celebrating nature, outdoors, and mess by getting really muddy.

Our outdoor campus will be transformed into a "Muddy Mess" with various mud-themed centers;

- Mud Kitchen / Stone Soup
- Mud Buckets / Mud Painting
- Take a Walk on the "muddy" Wild Side—animal mud prints



The benefits of getting dirty;

When we let our kids play in dirt we're not only allowing them to explore the wonders around them, we are also exposing them to healthy bacteria, parasites, and viruses that will inevitably create a much stronger immune system!

Studies have also shown that simply having contact with dirt, whether it's through gardening, digging holes, or making pies out of mud, can significantly improve a child's mood and reduce their anxiety and stress. Who knew, right? Dirt can even improve classroom performance. It's easy to see the effect when you watch children play outside.





Summer Fitness

Healthy, physical active children are more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful. Making physical activity a priority and encouraging good habits in children from an early age is important and can help them develop the skills they need to continue being active throughout their lives. Physical competence builds self-esteem at every age.

All Summer Explorers will participate in the Summer Fitness Club, focusing on different types of physical activities, such as fun & fitness including gym games, tumbling and calisthenics. They will also study creative movement, including Zumba, and team building activities including obstacle courses and relay races. Students will also greet each day with morning yoga on the East Discovery Play Garden.

"GIMME FIVE" Wellness Initiative



Let's Move! is a comprehensive initiative, launched by First Lady Michelle Obama, dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up into healthier and happier individuals.

Inspired by this mission, the children at Elmhurst Academy will again be actively participating this summer in

fun and interactive challenges to promote healthy nutrition, increase physical activity and positive relationships in their daily lives. The challenges are categorized in several different areas;

- * Smart Brain Challenges
- * Strong Bodies Challenges
- * Healthy Eating Challenges
- * Polite Manner Challenges
- * Peaceful Heart Challenges
- * Positive Relationship Challenges
- * Responsible Citizenship Challenges
- * Good Sportsmanship Challenges
- * Home & School Challenges

The faculty and students will challenge each other to "Gimme Five" healthy choices as classroom communities.



A Wild Start to Summer!

Welcome to the first day of the
2016 Summer Session

Wednesday ~ June 8, 2016

- * Nature themed Moon Bounce on the Discovery Play Gardens
- * Picnic themed lunch on the piazza
 - * Seedling/pod planting
 - * Building Pinecone bird feeders
 - * Nature Inspired Scavenger Hunt

First Day of Summer ~ June 8, 2016



“The Language of Food” with Chef Sigy



“The Language of Food” focuses on how the Reggio Emilia approach has influenced school kitchens to become a symbolic, functional, and celebrated statement of diversity. It may sound strange to encourage your children to literally play with their food, but feeling, touching, cutting, tasting, preparing, and dealing with these various foods grows their understanding and acceptance of them. This will lead to greater acceptance of “new” foods and improved fine motor skills. Allowing children to explore things that they will come in contact with for the rest of their lives introduces a sense of harmony and connection between the classroom, learning, and the natural world. We have to respect children, their capacities and their curiosity in order for us to let them freely explore and make sense of the world the way they see it.

The students will have the opportunity to learn more about food in its whole form. For example, how many children have the opportunity to see and handle a pineapple in its whole form and contribute to the process of cutting and preparing it to eat? The children learn what parts we can eat, what parts we throw away, what we can use to grow more food, and what the different parts feel, smell, taste, and look like.

The Language of Food series provides an educational, nutritional experience, allowing the children to make sense of the world by experience and opens the door for children to understand food, where it comes from, and be willing to taste and increase their palate.



Discoveries of Roots & Shoots

Children are natural gardeners. They're curious, like to learn by doing, and love to play in the dirt. Working in a garden, a child can experience the satisfaction that comes from caring for something over time, while observing the cycle of life firsthand.

Gardening gives children a chance to learn an important life skill, one that is overlooked in standard school curriculums. Gardening is also a great way to teach environmental awareness by exploring the workings of nature.

During the months of June through August students will participate in the Discoveries of Roots & Shoots with Chef Sigy and nature curriculum specialists, Mrs. Berger. Students will experience the farm-to-table concept first hand. They will collaboratively cultivate, water and grow the gardens throughout the summer.

“Garden-side” foodtivities will be participated in, where students will be able to taste vegetables and herbs fresh from the garden.



Summer Art on the Piazza

“Children need only step outside to find the most unique and colorful art materials.”

“Because the natural world is filled with beautiful sights, sounds, and textures, it's the perfect resource for the development of aesthetics in young children. “

Throughout the summer months, our outdoor classroom and piazza become our open art studio! Each day, a variety of art activities and mediums are available for children to explore. Many of these projects will mirror the *Growing Up Wild* themes. Students will be encouraged to explore these concepts through creating group, collaborative art installations as well as individual exploration with different art mediums such as; digital photography, collages, clay, weaving, painting, found art, nature sculptures and recycled art. While becoming involved with our gardening and natural surroundings, many art projects and explorations will be used to beautify our gardens. Students will take art from the studio into their Discovery Play Gardens where Plein Air Painting and nature art interactions will be encouraged. (**Plein Air painting**, translates to "in the open air," and is particularly used to describe the act of painting outdoors as well as other activities where a person partakes in outdoor environment exploration.)



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