

### **Environmentally Friendly Birdhouses**

In fourth grade this week we constructed ecofriendly birdhouses! The birdhouses were constructed from regular half-gallon milk cartons and we used string attached to the top to hang them and skewers attached on the bottom for a perch. This lesson was perfect for fourth grade because they just finished learning all about vertebrates. After spending many days learning about different birds a hands on science lesson really made the material fun, applicable, and tangible. You could tell the students were excited, all day they were looking at their milk cartons just itching to get started.

The students all brought in their own milk cartons and were aware that by doing this they would be helping the environment by creating something new from recycled material. At one point, some students wanted to color their house with marker, but then Ms. Gramil explained to them that by doing so they would be putting toxins on their recycled house and it would not longer be environmentally friendly and safe. This lesson was not only great to incorporate the use of recycled materials but I also noticed that the students were using various process skills during the lesson, such as observing the various components of the house with their hands, eyes, and even their nose. The children were also using the process skill of investigation to inspect whether their door and house would be big enough for a bird. Another great aspect is that Ms. Gramil encouraged the children to make predictions on what types of birds would come to their house. She then ended the lesson by giving them the fun assignment to investigate in the coming days and

spring to see what types of birds would come to their house. So this one lesson was filled with many process skills that really help the students think constructively.

A lesson like this was so much fun and I know the students learned a lot because they were constantly making predictions, using their processing skills, and investigating different elements of their birdhouse. I believe that using these kinds of hands on activities are extremely efficacious because research has shown how constructive activities stimulate the students to think “outside the box”. I am positive that this pleasurable lesson got the students thinking of different ways they could help the environment by creating new things from recycled materials.