

# Cornerstone Monthly Newsletter

May 2024

## Toddler Community



Toddlers, past, present, and future!



## Children's House 1

Hello All,

We have been embracing this beautiful spring weather with open arms. We have found opportunities to work outside on the patio during both the morning and afternoon work cycles. It is quite a process to move tables and chairs and materials outside but so worth it! Eating lunch outside (or "picnic-ing" as the children call it) has also been a highlight of May.



Our enjoyment of the outdoors has driven our interest and delight in the natural world and its many creatures. Children often spend playtime digging for worms, following a beetle as it moves across the yard, and observing a colony of ants move about their day. Jumping rope is a favorite activity and one that requires so much strength, coordination, determination, and resilience! Molly and I even broke out TWO jump ropes (!) and children have been challenging themselves to learn double-dutch.



Our environment continues to be bustling with activity. We continue to explore our space through the sensorial materials, from hiding cubes of the Pink Tower throughout the room to watching shades of color from Color Tablet Box III. Some children have taken on leading our end of day restoration of the environment and eagerly jump at the chance to clean our kitchen sinks, sweep the locker room, or straighten shelves. Our kindergarteners got to visit Pond and Garden this month and came back full of excitement and new stories. They each presented the poster they had made and taught us about reptiles, birds, etc.







## Children's House 2

As the academic year draws to a close, Children's House 2 has been looking for ways to enjoy our time together and celebrate the community we've built over the last nine months. Last week we all had a great time mashing up watermelon, strawberries and blueberries to make popsicles and enjoyed them on the patio together before lunch. In the afternoons, we started practicing double dutch. It's been a great opportunity for children to practice trying something tricky and to cheer each other on.



As children begin to learn their plans for next year, and some friends have already moved to new schools, we are beginning to build daily opportunities for children to say goodbye to one another in small, but developmentally appropriate ways. We've practiced naming specific things they've liked doing together or thanking a friend for something kind that happened. We've been helping children make cards to say goodbye to each other and will continue this over the next two weeks of school.

Friendly reminder that the Kindergarten Fly-up is on Wednesday June 12th at 11:00. Parents, family members and caregivers of Kindergarten children please plan to arrive by 10:50 to be ready to celebrate your child. The celebration will last approximately 30 minutes.

## Lower Elementary Garden

Garden has been bustling with activity this month! Children built lattice planters on the patio and welcomed kindergarten visitors into the classroom. Third years were each invited to have a lesson and work with peers in the upper elementary environments. All children have been enjoying working on various year-end research projects that include





Ancient Mayan civilization, rocks and minerals, the water cycle, and clouds. Some children were able to go out and learn about birds with the DNR at the Carpenter Nature Center and discover the life of Ancient Mayans at the Science Museum of MN. Children will have the opportunity to present their learning with their groups to the class during the final weeks of school!



Our read-aloud book this month was the *Heart of a Samurai* by Marji Preus. It is a thrilling historical novel based on the true story of Manjiro Nakahama, who is believed to be one of the first Japanese immigrants to come to America in the 1840s. To finish off the school year, we were gifted Kate O'Shaughnessy's newest book, *The Wrong Way Home*. Children are eager to hear about the protagonist Fern's story involving her mysterious uprooting from the place where she grew up and her quest to discover the truth.

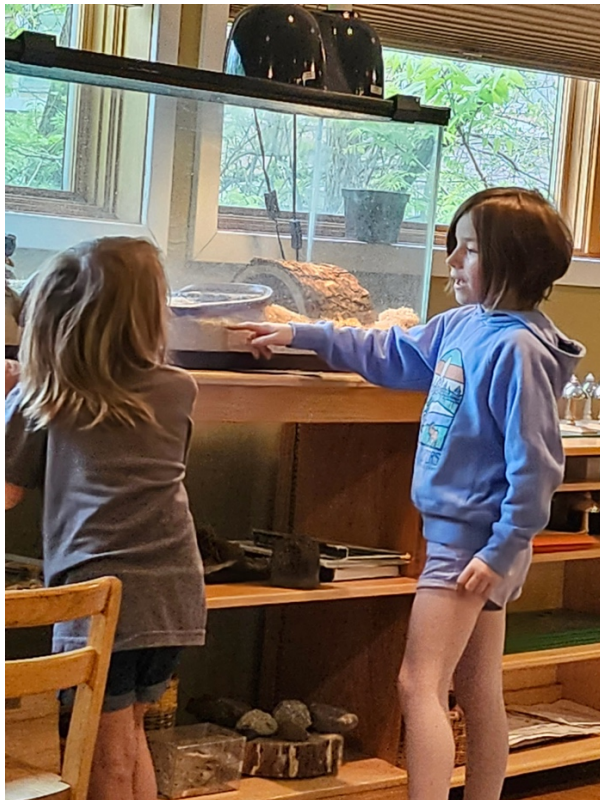
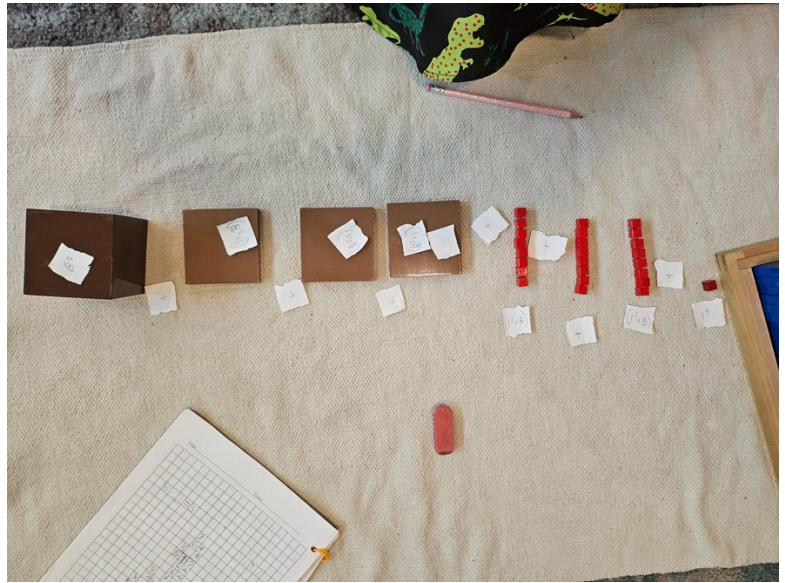
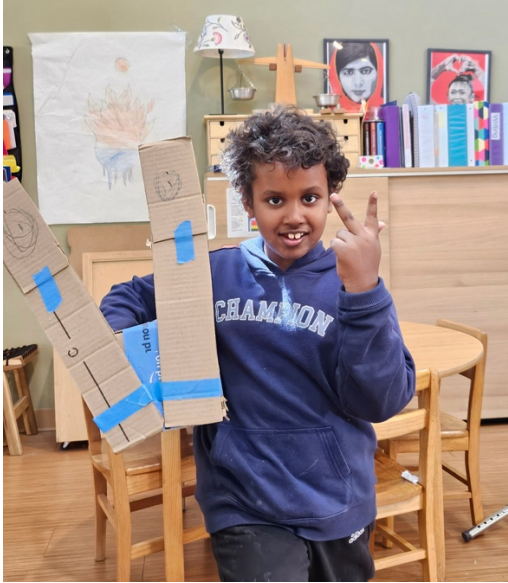




## Lower Elementary Pond

Happy rainy spring everyone!

In Pond we have been very excited about the wet weather, as it provided opportunities to observe different animals like earthworms and snails, sparking an interest in creating a cardboard version of a snail and learning a little bit about them! We have also had some visits from the Kindergartners who are going to be joining next year and the current children got to be leaders and mentors which was great to see. There has been quite a bit of math going on these last few weeks too, some of the 3rd years are learning about cubing and they are very excited about it!





## Upper Elementary Marsh

As we approach the end of the year, it's amazing to think about all the things we did in May! Some activities included finishing our read-aloud book (*Anything But Typical* by Nora Raleigh Baskin) and hosting mentoring visits with third year children who will be moving into our community next year. In addition, the Girls on the Run group finished training for their 5k, and we all continued to work on book clubs - a favorite activity. May also included two big field trips for Upper Elementary - to Camp Ihduhapi for the day for all of us and to Osprey Wilds overnight with sixth years. Both trips went well and allowed us to connect and enjoy our community in new and different ways. We look forward to seeing many of you at the sixth year graduation ceremony on June 12th!





## Upper Elementary Forest

One of the highlights for Upper Elementary in May was Camp Ihduhapi. On May 21st we went to Camp Ihduhapi, we did many activities. One activity we did was Arts and Crafts. There were three things that we could do there. One of them was Bracelet Making. This activity was very fun and we enjoyed it a lot. Then there was coloring which was a little basic but super fun, and last but not least was the Paper Spiral making. The guides we had at Camp helped us make these really interesting spiral things that were really cool. After that we did fire starting with flint and steel. This activity was probably the funnest for most people because of the fire but of course it is a very useful survival skill and taught us how to start a fire and what a fire needs to start. Materials like leaves and sticks are needed to be able to start a fire. There are formations you can set the sticks in like a teepee and many other shapes. We also used cotton balls and leaves to keep the fire alive and make it bigger. That was what we did during the fire starting, but also at the end we got Smores and got to heat the marshmallows up ourselves. Being warm and toasty on a rainy camp day was awesome. The last thing we did was Team Building. This activity was very challenging because of the mind boggling experience we had with each other during the activity. The reason why it was so “Mind Boggling” was the rapid thinking and communication with each other. It was nice because we were building strong relationships with our peers and even adult chaperones. It was an awesome exercise and it helped to calm our minds at the end of the field trip.

*Written by Sofia and Donovan.*

