

Cornerstone Monthly Newsletter

April 2024

Toddler Community

Welcome Spring!

Dear families of the toddler community,

With spring's arrival, nature is sprouting everywhere – rain is here, showers and storms, green leaves and colorful flowers too. We started working on the yard and the garden bed. Last week, our toddlers dug a big hole and planted our first hostas. We filled the hole with rich soil and our plant is thriving.

As we spend time outdoors, please ensure your child has a raincoat, rain boots, and spare clothes. Check your daily notes for specific items your child needs, and please label their belongings. If you require assistance, don't hesitate to reach out via phone or email; we're here to support you.



Our toddlers are currently engaged in sensory exploration, playing and working with sand and playdough for art expression. These days, we have transportation puzzles, replicas of many kinds of vehicles, and books related to this topic on the book shelf. Additionally, we are learning about farms and farm animals, repeating the sounds they make. In our daily language development games, we are practicing the enunciation of names, both of familiar friends and new community members, we do it slowly trying to hear the individual sounds that make up a word.

Stay dry :)

Lourdes, Laurie, Janette and Angela

Children's House 1

Finding concentration! So much of your child's work in the Children's House is engaging with purposeful work that involves both their hands and their minds! When they do so, children can find profound levels of deep concentration. It doesn't matter if it's unbuckling and buckling the

Buckle Frame, washing sand toys, caring for plants, reading a book to a friend, or adding 4-digit numbers on the Small Bead Frame - the materials and activities in our environment are designed to inspire use and concentration. Melanie, Claudia, and I have loved watching your children continue to grow and explore this past month. They are finding so many new ways to care for one another and for our environment as well as express themselves creatively.



Children's House 2

Children's House 2 has been enjoying the patio season this spring. On pizza day, we ate our pizza slices on the patio before heading off to recess. The children declared it "the best day ever!". We also recently took out a new collection of world flags mid-morning and it was also declared to be the "best day ever!". We're glad to hear that "best days" aren't contingent on the rare pizza-for-lunch-day.

On one especially sunny and warm day, we extended recess into the afternoon work cycle. We moved tables and chairs onto the patio so that children could choose between things like the sandbox, jump rope, and play structure or reading books, building the trinomial cube, practicing numerals and preparing a snack for themselves. We love seeing children choose what would be truly regulating and interesting to them when presented with an array of freedoms.

Another afternoon highlight has been reading the sequel to *The Wild Robot*, *The Wild Robot Escapes*. We've also introduced individual boxes of legos for children to build with as they are listening. As I've mentioned, I love reading *The Wild Robot* series and was worried children wouldn't be as engaged with the presence of legos. Contrary to my worry, the children are equally, if not more, engaged. As I'm reading they sometimes add spontaneous, subtle sound effect (*The airship buzzed through the sky... "buzzz, buzzz"*), gasp at dramatic turn of events (*Roz boarded the airship*) and are quick to offer their speculations ("I think Brightbill will come find Roz).





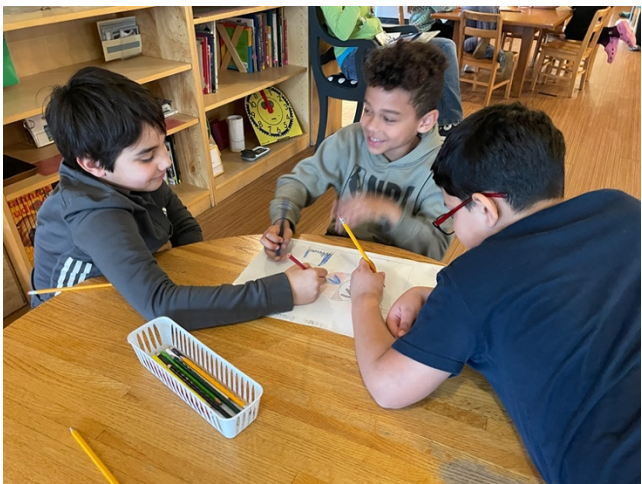
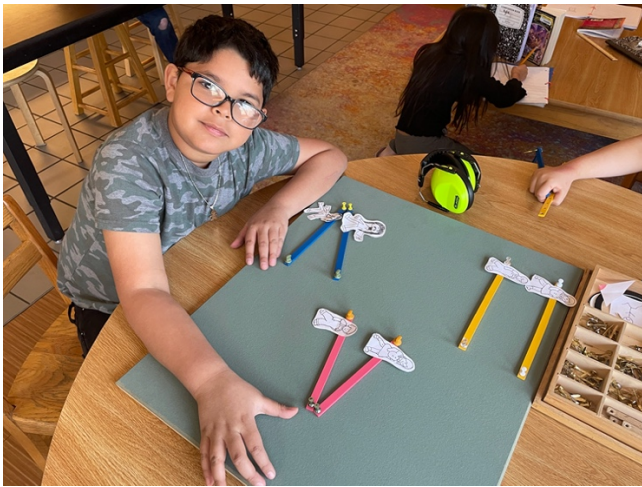
Lower Elementary Garden



It's beginning to feel like spring in the Garden classroom! Children have been working on many different projects over the past month including creating diagrams of ocean animals, illustrating food webs, bird watching around the school yard, and making some beautiful weavings on wooden looms. Children have also been diligently practicing different math and language materials to prepare for the Parent Partnership event at the end of the month.

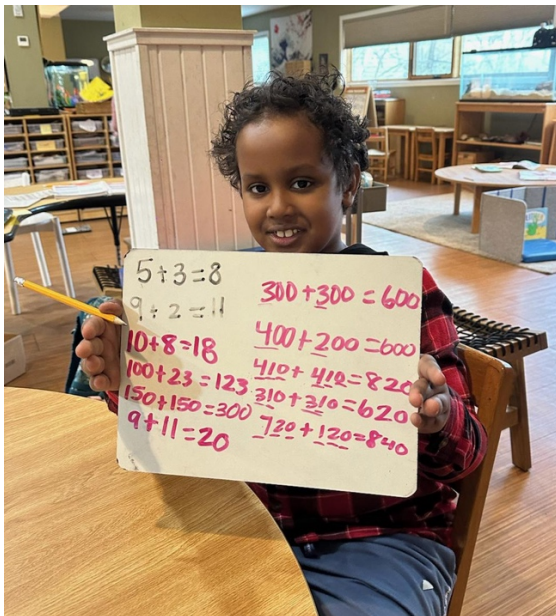
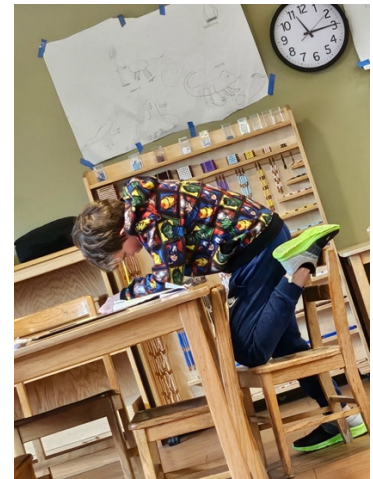
We finished reading the wonderful adventure of *The Enchantress Returns* by

Chris Colfer. Some children have already begun continuing the next book in *Land of Stories* series on their own. As a class, we are now enjoying the classic book *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume, a story about 9-year-old Peter Hatcher and his frustrating younger brother, Fudge. There are laughs every time Fudge gets into trouble, such as when he pretends he's a bird and loses his front two teeth and when he cuts his own hair over Peter's pet turtle's bowl!



Lower Elementary Pond

The children in Pond were very excited about practicing the lessons they wanted to show to their adults at Children teach Adults! They are very nervous and excited! We read a picture book last week about Draco the Dragon constellation and got a lot of really cool questions and new interest in space and the constellations. We also talked a lot about legends and what that means, and some of the older children remembered how last year we had read some legends from another country and that they were very different! We are currently reading, almost finished with, a Magic Tree House book called *Dragon of the Red Dawn*, and Jack and Annie just rode on the back of the Cloud Dragon to rain on a large fire!



Upper Elementary Marsh

With conferences, spring break, and MCA testing all falling into April for us, we have had some stops and starts this month for sure! We are also lucky to have had several special opportunities for various children that include Girls on the Run, Drumming Circles, Toddler Service, and even a field trip to CKC headquarters to see how our lunches get made - and do some taste testing! We started our second and final round of book clubs, concentrating on taking different roles as we discuss our reading. Children are invested in their book choices and eager to talk about them. Sixth years finished up their history research, MN to the World, and presented to each other. They are eager to get back to other interests and balance their work differently now that that is over, but all agree they learned a lot about their varied topics: Mexican immigration, women's suffrage, labor strikes, female scientists, protests, the Great Depression, the Industrial Revolution, economies, farm tools, and Palestinian immigration. We all are enjoying the great sights and sounds of nature as we move into spring!



Upper Elementary Forest

One of the best parts of this month has been witnessing new social connections and friendships forming. The Forest students enjoy each other's company; it's been a really peaceful year. Early this month 6th Years wrapped up and presented their MN to the World projects. Children brought their Positive Mental Attitudes to their MCA Reading & Math assessments. The Girls on the Run club started meeting and training for their 5K run on June 1st. Antje led drumming circles for interested students. These are some of our April highlights!

