

# Cornerstone Monthly Newsletter

April 2025

Dear Cornerstone Community,

I promised to ramble about Montessori in each of these newsletters, but I know that's a) not why you're here(!) and b) we are now well into May. So with that in mind, I hope you enjoy the photos and information from the classrooms. This is a busy, busy time of year! Please join us for our last Cornerstone Café on May 16, the CMES Board of Directors Annual Meeting on May 20, and the MCM Montessori All-Stars gala on May 31, among the other events that you will hear about in your weekly Stepping Stones!

Alyssa

## Toddler Community

Happy Spring, Toddler Community Families,

The weather is changing rapidly—sometimes unpredictably—with warm and cold days alternating. We're trying to be outside as much as possible, weather permitting.



Dandelions, lilacs, irises, and hydrangeas are beginning to show their little green leaves! Budding plants are sprouting everywhere, and chickadees have nested above the patio doors. The children are learning the names of plants and birds while also practicing new skills such as watering the plants, sweeping the patio, and learning not to throw sand at their friends!

Please send your child with appropriate clothing, such as raincoats and rain boots for muddy days, and sun hats for sunny days. And please remember to **label** every piece of clothing so it can be returned to the rightful owner.

We encourage you to explore nature with your child as much as possible. Walk barefoot on grass, sand, and water. Collect rocks, sticks, and flowers—and remember to return them to nature when you're done.

The Twin Cities offers many wonderful parks where children can climb, swing, spin, and play with sand and water—all for free. Take advantage of these spaces! They help your child develop balance and gross motor skills to their full potential.



We'll be planting in the garden beds soon, and we can't wait for the children to enjoy this beautiful experience.

Enjoy the sunshine and the green,

Warmly,  
*The Toddler Team*



## Children's House 1

Happy May,

April was a busy and joyful month in CH1, we love to work outside when the weather allows it, and the children have been enjoying puzzle maps and reading to friends.

The children were very excited to dig, plant seeds, and water them. We'll be caring for our plants daily and watching closely as they grow a great hands-on way to learn about nature, responsibility, and patience.

We have spent time talking about kindness and sharing, especially during group activities. We're encouraging gentle hands, using words when we need help, and taking turns with our friends.







## Children's House 2

We've been loving the coming of spring in Children's House 2. We have started going outside at the end of the day to check on the wildlife coming back to the pond, planting our garden, playing games, dancing, and finding the new buds on trees as they wake up from winter. We're even using "Walking with Spring," by the Okee Dokee brothers as our clean up song.







## Lower Elementary Garden

Children got right back to work this month after spring break! There have been some new discoveries in geometry like how to describe triangles by their angles and sides. Or exploring equivalence between different shapes with the iron materials. Bird watching has also been hugely popular as children have been identifying all the types of birds that frequent our schoolyards. There is now always a group of children with a set of binoculars scanning the area and excitedly sharing what they found. Even on rainy afternoons, children still have asked to take out the binoculars and continue their observation work at the windows!



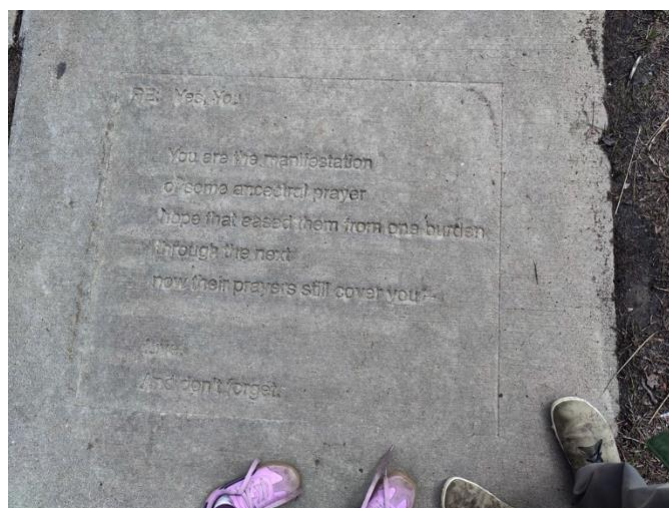


We have been enjoying the *Sideways Stories from Wayside School* series by Louis Sacher during read-aloud. Children cannot believe how absurd life is at Wayside School. The class on the thirtieth story go through a cycle of very strange teachers after their initial teacher, Mrs. Gorf, turned them all into apples. I'm sure we all appreciate that things are relatively calm and normal here at Cornerstone Montessori!



## Lower Elementary Pond

One of the key ideas in Montessori education is about making connections between what we learn in the classroom, and the wider world outside the classroom. Spring lends itself well to that idea: the students all want to go outside, changes are happening in the natural world, and even our snake Mango is feeling more active. It's been exciting to go outside and find poems on the sidewalk or discover that Ames Lake has "those plants with red woody stems," just like our pond does.



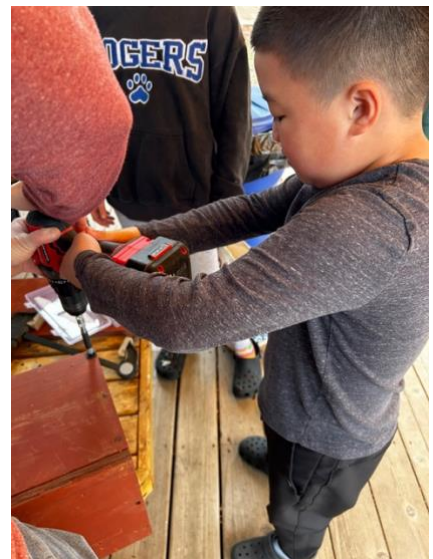




In the classroom, many students have been stepping up to take on new leadership roles. From helping other students figure out how to write something down, to teaching their friends a lesson they got, to reminding each other of classroom expectations, to organizing Big Work in the classroom, students have been flexing their leadership muscles. Best of all for all those first and second years growing into leadership at the end of the year, they get to keep building on their leadership capabilities next year as they continue their three-year cycle in Pond!

## Upper Elementary Marsh

Children in Marsh continue to be busy, both on lesson follow-on and on big projects. With volunteer parent support, a group built a wood duck nesting house! They observed wood ducks on our pond, but discovered that this species nests in trees. They hope to get the house mounted and that the wood ducks might find it to nest in in the future. Planning and building were important steps of the process and everyone learned some good tool handling and safety as well. Fourth years have been very excited about The Work of Air demonstrations - a series of small science demonstrations that show some fundamental principles about air. They have all eagerly







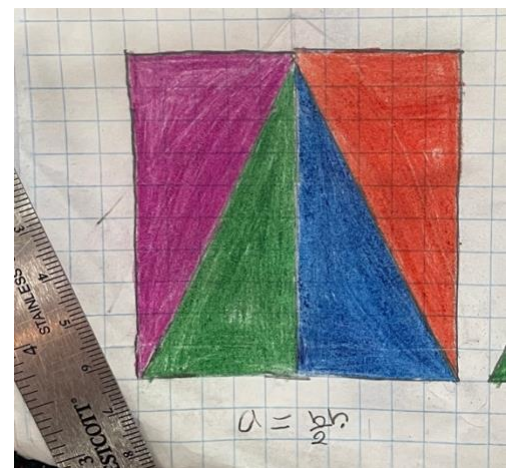
repeated the demonstrations and had many lessons on match-lighting. In math, children continue to work on fractions, decimals, and square roots. Our read-aloud book right now is *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson, which is historical fiction set in 1776 with a young female main character who is enslaved. Class discussions have led to much learning about the time period and U.S. history. We all look forward to presenting lessons to adults soon at our next Parent Partnership Event!



## Upper Elementary Forest

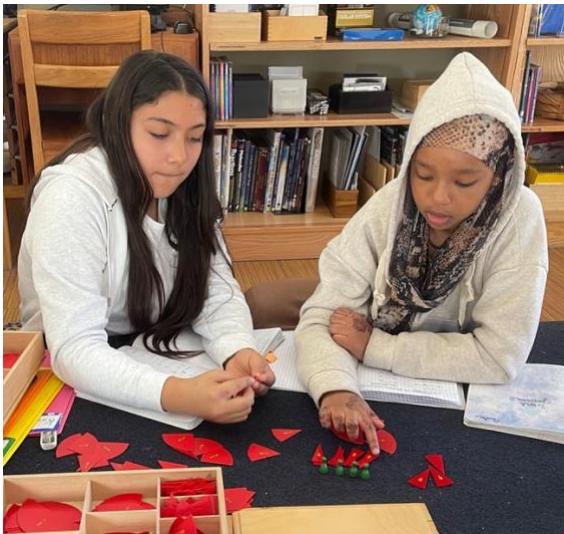
When I first sat down to write this reflection, I was thinking that April seemed so short, because of Spring Break and MCAs, so we really hadn't done that much. Then, I looked back at the photos I'd taken of the children at work and realized that there was actually a huge variety of learning this month!

Areas of math focus this month have included: arithmetic, fraction and decimal concepts and operations, area of plane figures, squaring and square root, graphing, and more. Language lessons and learning this month include: poetry, commas & apostrophes, sentence analysis, and summarizing. Science learning and lessons this month have included: the Scientific Method, Earth Science,



Geology, magnetism, Bird by Bird, and Nature Observations. Social Studies learning and lessons have focused on the Colonial Era, Native America, and MN History.

Perhaps the main highlight this month has been the return of spring! Forest children have been keen observers of all the animal activity from our beautiful picture window that overlooks the pond. Many of the Forest students have been developing bird identification skills, observing mating habits, and other seasonal animal behaviors.



As April transitions into May, 6th Years are starting their final “big work,” the Cosmic Capstone project; 5th Years have begun their MN history learning; and many 4th Years are ready to delve into bigger work yet this spring.



Our current “Read Aloud” Book is Forge by Laurie Halse Anderson, which is the second book in the ‘*Seeds of America*’ trilogy, set in Colonial America during the Revolutionary War period. The first book in this historical fiction series, Chains, is told in the first-person voice of Isobel, an enslaved 12-year-old girl who escapes to freedom. The sequel, Forge, is told in the first-person voice of Curzon, Isobel’s friend, whom she rescued from imprisonment at the end of Chains. So far, in Forge, we know that Isobel and Curzon had a falling out and have parted ways, and that Curzon has enlisted as a soldier in the Continental Army. The final book in this series is Ashes.





## 1611 Ames Ave Spotlight – Lindsay Ruble

I still remember interviewing Lindsay, our Elementary Program Manager, over the summer of 2019. She had applied for the front desk job but I knew instinctively that she should be in Upper Elementary working directly with our special education program. (I also accidentally swore on her first day at CMES, which hopefully she doesn't remember!) Who would have guessed that six years later, she would spend a ton of time at the front desk anyway. Over the past six years, Lindsay has been a paraprofessional, the Upper Elementary shared assistant, the Forest assistant, and now my trusty elementary sidekick. It's been very fun to see her Montessori knowledge and understanding grow, and to experience her passion for equity, vegan food, dogs, and what's best for children.



*You could say that my AMI training is coming in handy with all the time I've been spending in classrooms this year! I'm finishing up my 6<sup>th</sup>(!) year at CMES, I live in the area and foster with [The Bond Between](#), and I love spending time outside in my gardens, hiking, and cooking.*

## From the CMES Board of Directors

The Annual Meeting of the CMES Board of Directors is open to all, as all of our meetings are, and takes place May 20 at 5:30pm. Please join us to learn what we've been up to this past year and what work we're excited for in the year to come! You will also want to make sure to vote in the board elections in the days leading up to the annual meeting. We still have spaces open on the board for CMES parents and community members at-large. If you would like to share your expertise, or know someone who is interested in giving back to a small, active board, please reach out to me or to [Julaine Roffers-Agarwal](#), Board Chair.