

Cornerstone Monthly Newsletter

January 2024

Toddler Community

January was another busy month for the toddler community. It was wonderful to see so many of you at Stone Soup. Toddlers continue to enjoy the outdoor environment, even in this strange snowless weather.



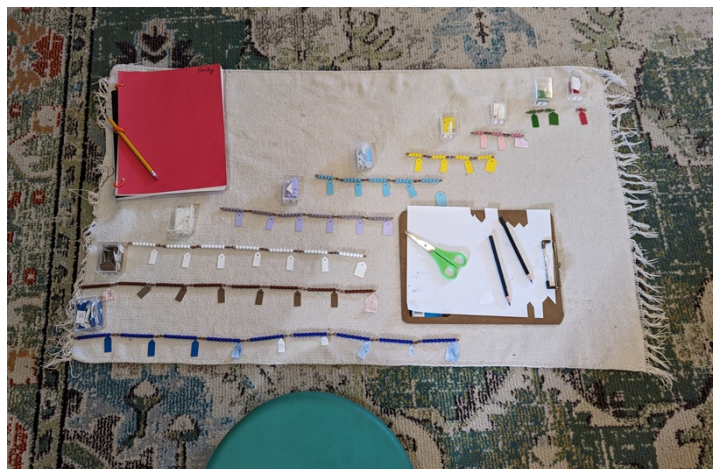
Children's House 1 and 2

It's hard to think about the past few weeks in Children's House this month without thinking about mud. What an unusual January we are experiencing! Mud brings so many new opportunities. Every time we find ways to support mud and water play we see so many lovely qualities emerge in the children: cooperation, collaboration, creativity, patience. We see children bonding with others they don't usually play with. We see children trading ideas and accepting new play possibilities. There are fewer arguments. Mud play comes with the added challenge of mud clean-up. The warmer weather has allowed us to involve the children in a lot of this clean-up work at school. With the assistance of upper elementary helpers, we've been hauling buckets of warm water to scrub mittens, snow pants and boots outside. It's hard to make time for this level of clean-up each day, but whenever possible, we see the value in letting the children get a little muddy.



Lower Elementary Garden

January has shown a lot of big math work in the Garden environment! The children are enjoying taking on greater challenges and working with very large numbers. We also had a lot of fun preparing for and participating in the Stone Soup event. The children heard many different versions of the Stone Soup story and a group has been working on a reader's theater version to perform for the class. We noticed how every version of the story shared the same theme of community and sharing. Our read aloud book this month is called *Lasagna Means I*



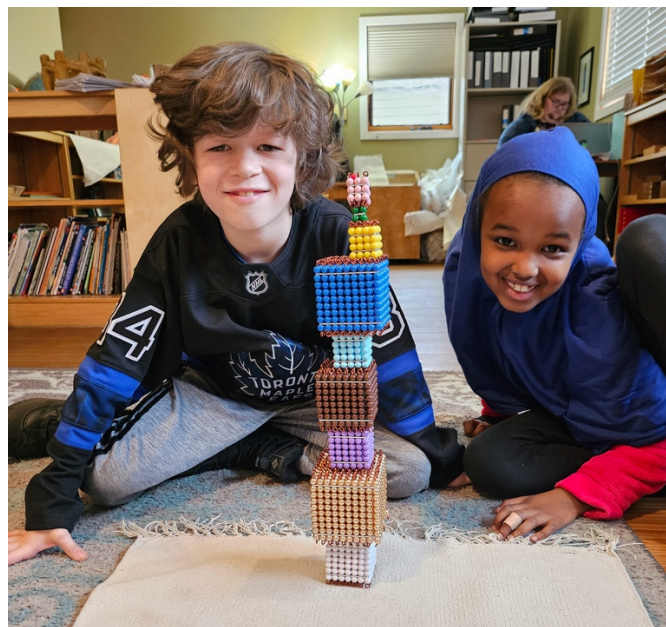
Love You by Kate O'Shaughnessy. The story is about a young girl in foster care who learns about cooking and family recipes. She is on a mission to find a long lost relative and have a family recipe of her own. The children have been so engaged in the story and are particularly interested in all the delicious recipes that are shared throughout the story. It has been a great tie-in to the Stone Soup event and how food can bring us together as families and communities.



Lower Elementary Pond

First of all, Pond wants to thank all of you who came to Stone Soup. It was a beautiful time to eat and converse together! Pond has had a busy January since returning to school. Everyone has been really into lessons and a lot of research is going on. We welcomed two new class pets into the room - Spotsy and Frank Elizabeth, our Fantail goldfish, have adjusted nicely!

There has been lots of interesting work going on these last few weeks. A group of children are learning cubing, and we found the value of all the cubes on our bead cabinet! We also have some checkerboard multiplication problems going on, learning about AM and PM and lots of research! We even had a small group that learned to play DnD and many more that are interested in learning next!





Upper Elementary Marsh

January was a month to get back into the swing of things. We started book club work, prepared two soups for Stone Soup, and continued to learn more about, well, everything! Math lessons abounded - square root, decimals, fractions, and algebra are especially popular. Children have been folding up an origami storm as well as enjoying thinking challenges and puzzles. There are several plays and books being written and sixth years are learning a lot about Minnesota history. You can expect to see more continent study work in February. Thanks to all who attended and supported Stone Soup - such a lovely evening!





Upper Elementary Forest

We asked 5th year students to tell us about their favorite work or material from this month!

From Freya B:

Lately, I have been enjoying science work, but my favorite one has been Layers of Earth's Atmosphere. I really love this work because I have no boundaries for how much follow-on work I can do. A few examples of this are brought up when researching. For example, when I was finding information to include in my poster, each question that I answered led to yet another question and more things to include.

Another reason I like Layers of Earth's Atmosphere is that everyone's work is significant even though we are doing the same work. Of course they are similar because it is the same work, but each person has a different way of showing the information that they gathered. For example, when doing mine, I included other layers that others didn't, combined some of the art and writing to make it more efficient, and I did a completely different format than almost everyone else who made a whole big picture, and instead I made little pictures and added writing next to them. One last thing that made me choose Layers of Earth's Atmosphere to write about is that you never really repeat yourself when working on it, at least from my perspective. I guess you could say that this isn't always true, but when I'm doing it, the only time I repeated myself was by using the same format for each layer. Anyway, each time you start a new layer of Layers of Earth's Atmosphere, there is never the same information twice and the new layer looks different from the one above or below.

Overall, I think that Layers of Earth's Atmosphere might be my favorite work from this school year, and I'm so glad that I'm not quite done with it so that I can cherish the moments I have left.

From Fatima F:

One big project that I'm proud of this month is Story of My Name. It is a lot of work but really fun to do. I learned about myself and my family history too. It taught me what it feels like to be an author, and it also taught me why it takes such a long time to write a book.

First, you need to do background research on your topic. When I did Story of My Name I had to interview my parents and ask them a lot of questions about my full name. After that, you have to do bubble mapping, planning the topics you're going to write for each body paragraph. Once you have all the ideas, you need to put them into paragraphs. Imagine it like a hamburger: you're writing the lettuce, tomato, and meat. The next step is to do Writer's Workshop and then Self- and Peer-Edit. Last, but not least, is the "bread". You have to write an introduction and conclusion to start and end your essay.

It was a big work, but it was fun to do. It taught me all the different steps in writing an essay. My writing skills have grown a lot since Lower Elementary. Story of My Name is one of the projects that I'm most proud of. I encourage you to write your own story of your name.



From Donovan V:

One of the works that I've enjoyed the most over the past month is Story Of My Name. The reason I enjoy it so much is because I enjoy the writing work a lot, and it gives me a lot of insight about where my name comes from. Story Of My Name lets me research about my first, middle, and my last name. A lot of the reason why I enjoy this work so much is because I love writing - it's a very fun subject. The artwork that comes with the work isn't even the best part for me (personally). It takes a lot of stamina and mind power to work through but when you finish it, it's like you just graduated from your last year of high school. The best part about doing this is, well, the writing. You can get a lot of info about every part of your name like, the origin, meaning, etc. Story Of My Name is one of my favorite works I've done in the past month.

From Na'Shawn D:

I have been working on Story of My Name for the past month, and I really enjoy it because I get to learn about my name and some of my classmates get to learn about it with me. I like doing art, too, and I got to draw my last name's coat of arms. That's part of the reason I'm so into Story of My Name is because the coat of arms for my last name is just so good. I also got to draw an illuminated letter for my final copy. I really had fun asking my dad and my mom questions about my name, and doing follow-up research for my name. It was also exciting to see the different stories from people who have similar names, like my friend Jasper who has the same last name as me.

From Aisha M:

The work that I have been enjoying in Forest lately is Cloud Types. Everyone who did Cloud Types got a partner, and my partner was Freya. To make the poster we needed the cloud types material, the material consists of a pouch that has pictures, word cards and title headings, it also has a key booklet. After you match the loose cards and pictures and have checked it within the key you start on your poster. How you make the poster is quite simple, as said earlier you do the cards after you have used the cards and pictures you get a big poster paper and you draw the pictures and after you have drawn the pictures you write the definitions to the pictures and you write the title headings on top of the pictures. What I did is I put felt on my clouds so it would be fuzzy and you could feel the clouds. I enjoyed this work because it was fun, easy and when I was feeling distracted this was a nice work to do.



From Cooper K:

I'm Cooper and I'm going to talk about my favorite work this month. It is sudoku. Some may think it's not 'fun' because it's just a lot of numbers but to me it is fun because it has an approach that other types of math don't have because it starts hard but gets easier. It's a game when you're trying to fill a whole square with numbers. Within the puzzle, which is shaped like a big square. There are three things that will help you: smaller squares, rows, and, last but not least, columns. There cannot be two of the same number in any of the rows, columns or little squares. For example, if there are two nines in a row, you can't do that. The goal is to have one of every number in each row, column, and little square. To make sure that you get it right, just look at all the numbers above it, below it, next to it, on the right, and on the left, and then check the small square. Usually, if the number you checked is right, the whole sudoku puzzle is right.

From Connor V:

My favorite work that I'm currently working on is Cloud Types. Cloud Types is a work where you get a big sheet of poster paper, and then you get the Cloud Types card sort and you organize the pictures and descriptions of the different types of clouds, and after you're done with that, you write the name and description below the drawing. And you just do that for every Cloud Types card in the sort. The progress I've made on it so far is I have completed Stratus and Altostratus and I'm about to start on Nimbostratus. What I like about Cloud Types is that you get to draw and why drawing this what I like about it is because I'm not that great at drawing, so Cloud Types gives me a chance to practice.

From Riley T:

I have been working on a few bigger works lately. My favorite one that I've done in the past month is the Story of my Name. I loved doing that work most because I feel like it helped me learn how to use more of my researching skills. I love writing, and I love all of the other writing works that parents may know: Story of my Life, Rate of Cooling, etc., etc. This work was really cool because it not only lets others know more facts about my name, but, if I'm being honest, doing this work helped me learn just as much about myself and my name as anyone else. Also, Story of my Life helped inspire me to work hard on Story of my Name. This work also helped me with summarizing and revising skills, especially after writer's workshop and self and peer editing. For me, researching is an everyday school hobby. The Story of my Name also encouraged me to be curious about any information I can get, which is another researching skill. Writing works are always so fun. Especially when you're writing about yourself. The Story of my Name was very inspiring for me, and maybe it will be for you too!

Another one of my favorite works is Cloud Types. I am doing this work with Teagan, a fellow classmate, and it is still a work in progress. This work is very challenging, and that's why I like it. This work is also one of my favorites because it is a mix of science, and writing. In the follow-on part of the work, you get to draw pictures of different cloud types on a poster, and then you get to write about them. Teagan and I both like drawing and writing, so this is a very fun adventure for us. We are almost done with the drawing part, and then we will move on to the writing part. I also just really like science follow-on, especially in Cornerstone Montessori. Cloud Types is a very fun combo of two subjects, especially for Teagan and I. Teagan and I also have to keep restarting because it is a challenge. Man, I love how science projects give you information, and then it sticks in your head so well. I can't wait to finish Cloud Types. Both of these works have inspired me, and I hope this newsletter will inspire you too.