



Full Circle Newsletter



Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of the Full Circle Newsletter! While the pandemic is still unfolding, we are grateful for the winter fun, growing friendships, and active learning here at Full Circle School. Thank you to all our families for your commitment to the health and well being of our students and community. You make this possible!

Special Guests & Teachers



Evergreen the Owl has been a surprise guest teacher at Full Circle School this winter. This barred owl comes to school on overcast days and gives students (and some lucky parents) the rare opportunity to observe a wild owl in nature. It flies around the playground, perches on the birdhouse, eats rodents in Tiny Town, leaves owl pellets to be discovered, and patiently sits in the trees while children watch in hushed awe.

In fact, with the doors open for fresh air there have been multiple visitors from nature. A nuthatch perched up by the dragon and a chickadee toured the Spooner Library.

The presence of these feathered friends has inspired a number of bird-focused goals that students have chosen to study. It is wonderful to see children's research being fueled by their own curiosity and first hand observations. This is the beauty of student-led learning.

So when you come for drop-off in the morning on a cloudy day, be sure to look up in the tree tops and keep your eyes open for Evergreen the Owl.



Outdoor Exploration

Snow Fort Engineering Reaches New Heights



What a snowy winter! This year snow fort construction has reached a whole new level. With snow just right for packing, John gave the tip that kids could fill a bin, tamp down the snow, and then flip it as if making a sandcastle. With that hint, students were off and running to find the old milk crate out in the woods.

The milk crate technique turned out to be a huge success! Students made dozens of snow blocks and stacked them up to build fortress walls reaching new heights. More forts are sprouting up all over campus as the children experiment, plan, design, and engineer. The creativity and ingenuity is endless!

Winter FUN: Skating & Skiing

Winter is a special time of year for Full Circle students. The vernal pool is checked daily until the time comes when teachers determine that the ice is thick enough. Then out come the tubs of skates in all sizes and the skating season begins! Whether children are learning the basics, working on balance tricks, or developing speed, there is fun for all.

When snow falls, out come the bins of cross-country ski gear. Trails get packed out all around the school grounds as students enhance their sense of coordination, kick, and glide.

We also are pleased to offer a Ski & Snowboard Program on Fridays in January and February. In this optional program students and parent chaperones head to Berkshire East for the thrill of downhill skiing and snowboarding. With John and Heather's years of experience teaching on the slopes, students have access to great mentoring for improving and honing their skills.



Discovery & Learning

Jacob's Art Goal: Hokusai's Wood Prints



"For my art goal, I chose to study about Hokusai. I did wood prints. First, we had to draw it out on the wood. I drew a J. Then I carved it out. One technique was to hit the carving tool on the end to dig into the wood. Another technique was to push it in and twist it. The other way was just pushing it.

Next, we rolled the paint on it. My first color was red. Then we put paper on the painted wood block. We pushed the paper on using a roller to roll it. Then we pulled the paper off.



Hokusai had to do probably three or four different carvings for the different colors. I think I learned a lot and I liked it because I really like doing wood carving"



Reading & Writing Highlights

Inspired by reading the book *The Quiltmaker's Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau, Kathleen's Reading & Writing Group made their very own Kindness Quilt. In the book, a quiltmaker teaches a greedy king that kindness is the key to true happiness. Students reflected on how acts of kindness can make a difference in people's lives. Each of the quilt squares is uniquely beautiful and together they create a thought provoking work of art.

Meanwhile, the Walden students are enjoying a literature highlight of the year — the Group Read of *The Pushcart War* by Jean Merrill. Students are having lively discussions as they examine the power dynamics between the pushcart vendors vs. the big trucking companies. They are making connections with the real world. Esme says, "It's really funny and has a lot of things like actual life that happen." Quentin reflects, "The Pushcart War is kind of like a spoof on real war." While most of the Walden Program focuses on supporting individual interests, the Group Read provides the opportunity for collaborative critical reading and analysis. Everyone makes the solemn promise: no peeking ahead!

Kindergarten Corner

Learning Through Play: Skiing & Penguins

Heather has taught skiing since she was 14 years old. So when the snow conditions were just right, the Kindergarten classroom turned into a ski shop. Children played shoe store by matching up all the different ski boots and arranging them by size. They learned how bindings work and which ski boots

connect to which type of bindings. Next, the children headed out into the snow to give it a try. They loved it!



Kindergarteners have also been studying cold environments. The penguins of Antarctica have been a favorite topic. In fact, penguins inhabited the tub table— it was filled with water, penguin figurines, and foam trays as pack-ice. Children learn so much through hands-on play and here they were able to enact penguin behavior while also learning about balance and flotation. It was animal biology and physics all rolled up in a tub full of fun!

Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 11: History Fair. This year students will be presenting on US History. The fair itself will be in a new format due to Covid safety precautions. Details to come!

Friday, March 12 - 28: Spring Break. Enjoy and stay safe!

Monday, March 29: Classes resume. Welcome back!

Thursday, April 15 & 16: Parent Conferences. Keep an eye on the bulletin board for sign-ups.

Monday, April 19: Patriot's Day. No school. Enjoy a long weekend.