

# Field Notes

The Weekly Newsletter of the Community School for Place-Based Education

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## Director's Note

It is always a joy to have everyone back on campus, finding rhythms in their outdoor and indoor classroom spaces and venturing across the field and the Babson Creek Learning Forest. Amidst morning circle with the Sweet Ferns today, I could hear the bustle of the Intertidals on the Blueberry Knoll and the lingering voices of the Alpines around the fire pit on the banks of Babson Creek. On my way to lunch, the Woodlands were circled up for a lesson in the afternoon sun on the screened porch. On the way to the Whalesback, I listened as Sweet Fern students marveled at the texture of the lush moss. I too, was struck by the wonder of these organisms' beauty and paused to notice their intricacies and their role in the forest community. As we crossed the bog bridge, the students excitedly noted each passing species indicated by the signs installed along the wetland



by the Woodlands last spring. Soon, we sat in a moment of silence at the Whalesback, and we engaged our five senses. As we shared our observations, a snowy egret swooped into the rust-colored rushes, as if to close our meditation. "I see a heron camouflaged." "I smell the salt marsh." "I taste the water droplets on the white pine needles." "I hear the crickets." "I feel the mist on my face." This is school, I reflected.

This is a momentous year at TCS. It is a year to celebrate our collective accomplishments – to reflect on our adventurous past, relish in the beauty of the present, and make plans (and dream a little bit!) for the future. May we not forget to hold the small moments and simple wonders that our days afford us here at TCS, whether it be the trill of an osprey, having class around a fire, or experiencing the whalesback with all five senses. Thank you for being part of it all.

In celebration,  
Jasmine

## Thank You

**Tyler Frank** for helping with chainsawing in the forest; **Steve Haynes** from the Maine Granite Museum for hosting the Intertidal Outing.

## Reminders

The Grades 1-8 trip to the **Common Ground Fair** is on **9/22**.

# From the Sweet Fern Class

September Greetings!

Our first full week of school has been full of rain and joy as the Sweet Ferns continue to learn about campus and each other. This week has been focused on using our five senses to explore the late summer world. We started with our namesake plant, the sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*). Students looked at, smelled, touched, tasted and listened to the plant before mindfully harvesting three leaves to create rubbings for our boundary flags.

We then took our newfound observation skills further afield, travelling out to the Whalesback for the first time this year to do a five senses meditation led by Ms. Jasmine. We noticed many species of birds on the banks of Babson creek, tasted reindeer lichen, heard crickets hiding in the tall grass, and felt the soft pincushion moss along the trail's edge. The Sweet Ferns clearly take delight in using their full selves to take in their world, which will serve them well beyond their time here at TCS.



Quinn and Georgia climbing the pine tree in the Old Pasture



Starting our day with a colorful Morning Meeting





Math stations with Ronan, Leo, and Hazel

Our observation work has also led us on an inward journey as Sweet Ferns began to explore Non-Violent Communication (NVC). This process involves making an observation ("When you..."), identifying feelings ("I feel...") and making a mindful request for the future ("My request is..."). This week, Sweet Ferns will create a visual representation of these three steps to bring with us into the field as one of our mindfulness tools.

At the end of last week we took our first trip to the Wolf Pine to share gratitudes. We will leave you with some of the gratitudes the Sweet Ferns shared in the hopes that it may inspire your own gratitudes this week:

I am grateful for:  
The living animals  
The big tall trees  
My family  
My new friends

With gratitude,

Mr. Kreg, Ms. Jasmine, and Mr. Jesse



Corinna explores her sense of sight



# From the Woodland Class



A glorious day at the Stone Barn!

While Island Immersion Week was full of fun adventures, it has felt grounding to be back on campus starting our weekly routines. The Woodlands were excited to discover the theme of our first Expedition block, Agriculture on MDI. We have been discussing what agriculture means and where our food comes from.

The Woodlands enjoyed creating a farm web to illustrate the links between the plants and animals found on farms and the foods and products we consume every day. They loved making this web, keeping in mind a particular spider (can you guess who?) they have been hearing about in our read-aloud, *Charlotte's Web*. We visited the Stone Barn to learn about who has lived on and used the land in the past and all about how Conservation easements protect the land.



Proudly displaying our Farm Web



Apples have been the focus of the start of school. We have learned all about the parts of the apple, the apple lifecycle, and measured and sketched apples from the campus trees. The Woodlands even built number bonds by imagining apples cut into halves and full of pips to determine the number of seeds in the apple. We ended up with some magical apples with over 1,000 pips!

A highlight from the week so far is the introduction of Baking Thursdays. This week, we carried our apple theme into the kitchen. Together, we learned how to double a recipe with the help of fraction knowledge. Fractions are so much more fun when there is something tasty to look forward to at the end. The Apple Brown Betty was both delicious and a great teaching tool!

With Gratitude,  
Ms. Alisa and Ms. Autumn



Processing apples and practicing math



Finding creative ways to stay dry at the Stone Barn



# From the Intertidal Class

The Intertidals have been having a blast settling into our routines and rhythms on campus this week! Our social-emotional focus in morning meetings and closing circles has been all about setting intentions and discussing our values as a group. We have some beautiful ideas established for how we hope to treat one another and learn this year.

In math, our Younger-tidals have been diving into multiplication and division with a splash. Our Elder-tidals have been reaching toward exponents and refreshing their place value work. We are thrilled to be offering more multi-age integration in our math classroom this year with whole-group puzzles, games, and challenges.



Intertidals clear granite holes of dust and place pins



Fiona and Mr. Jon crunch numbers



Sienna splits a granite slab!



Our Expedition unit, "Economics: Self, Place, and Community" is off to a great start. We spent the week exploring currency, asking questions about where it comes from and how we use it, and learning about the resources that have been extracted from MDI. We ended our week with an incredible outing to the Maine Granite Museum. 10/10 Intertidals agree, if you haven't gone, you must go! We'll be bringing our ELA study of songs, lyrics, and poetry into our economics studies, thinking about how music has been impactful in labor movements and how cultural goods like music ended up costing money.

Please ensure that your child has everything on our gear list for our second week on campus. We are happy to field questions about gear, and are here to support you in getting your Intertidal ready for the year!

- Teacher Dani and Mr. Jon



Intertidals enjoy the view from Dorr Mountain during Island Immersion Week

# From the Alpine Class

Dear Alpine families,

With wet-on-wet watercolors, field sketches, and chocolate zucchini bread, so begins our new era. Perhaps you will get a sense of how our Alpine year began from our words of the week: Bellwether, Fallible, Abstain, Malaise, and Demure. Or, perhaps these photos will suffice?

Our Alpine year is off to a bold start with a new schedule and new routines, but we are rising to the challenge! We began our academic week by organizing our classroom and decorating our composition notebooks with the finest of collages. Sixth and seventh graders launched into a hands-on review of ratios with Ms. Kelsi, while eighth graders have entered a brave new world of exponents with Ms. Eloise. Meanwhile, our language arts exploration has delved into an overview of word morphology and Greek and Latin roots. We've enjoyed feeling ancient and erudite!



Kaleb, Tobias, and Eli bust out their sketching skills



Ms. Kelsi teaches the Alpines about echinacea (purple coneflower)



Our fall Expedition theme is food systems. We got our hands messy on Monday with a study of *Curcubita pepo*, the fabulous zucchini. Ms. Emily began with a review of taxonomic classification, and put the Alpines' creativity to the test with a no-recipe baking challenge. Later in the week, we added the Rosaceae family to our compendiums with a study of apples and exploration of the family tree, which includes strawberry, rose, quince, and almond. Next week, we are excited to dig into soil chemistry with an outing to College of the Atlantic, where we will be treated to a tour of the the composting toilets!

warmly,  
Ms. Eloise, Ms. Emily, and Ms. Kelsi



Tobias enjoys a slice of improvised  
chocolate zucchini bread

PS: We are seeking a few more furnishings for our upgraded Alpine classroom. Can you help us out? Specifically, we need a **monitor screen** for viewing slideshows and digital resources. We are also looking for two more **straight-backed chairs** and a **cushy beanbag**. We're asking around in our community before buying new, so if you would like to donate any of these objects to our class, please email Ms. Eloise. Thank you!



**Cultivating a Sense of Self, Place, and Community**