

Field Notes

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

October 20, 2023 | Year 10, Issue 7

From the Office:

Dear TCS families,

Looking up into trees is one of my favorite activities, especially in fall and spring. I love teaching students how to sit under trees, look up, and draw and paint what they see. I've been spending a bit of time each day under the maple just across from the office doorway, watching it change. A few weeks ago, its leaves were a riot of red, yellow, green; flamelike, the colors looked painted onto the leaves. Lately, they have been bright red, as if the leaves are lit from inside. It is a true joy of mine to take time each day to notice our surroundings, and one of my favorite activities since coming to home to Maine.

This week, I stand in appreciation of our students for doing such great work in making Apple Fest a success and being daily stewards of each other and their school. I appreciate all the creative work that our teachers do to engage each of our students and help them find success each day. I hope you are all well and happy while watching the leaves drop off the trees as we transition into the heart of autumn.

Sincerely,
Patience

Thank You

Kate Tompkins of Chickadee Compost and **Jeff Kelly-Lokocz** of 86 This! for hosting the Alpine Outing; **Davis Taylor** for visiting the Intertidals; **Amilie Blackman** and **Ian Campbell** of the **MD Fire Department** for visiting the school; **Molly Friedland** of the Little Red Flower Truck and **Betsey Holtzmann** for donating flowers; **Matt Blackman** for sawyering; **Brightfield School for Place-based Education** for hosting TCS teachers for WFA; and **COA, Sweet Pea's Cafe, The Cup, the Lompoc, Side Street Cafe, and McKay's Restaurant** for their fundraising and event support.

Reminders

No School Monday, 10/23 for Teacher Professional Development; **Parent-Teacher Conferences** on **11/8, 4:00-6:30** and **11/9, 1:00-6:00 (Half-day: 12:30pm Pick-up)**; and **No School Friday, 11/10** in observance of Veterans Day. As it gets chilly, please ensure that children have extra layers at school.

From the Sweet Fern Class

Dear Sweet Fern families,

What a beautiful week we just had! The leaves continue to change colors and fall to the ground, cool mornings accompanied by the warmth of a fire, sunshine warming our afternoons, and just enough mud to keep the Sweet Ferns happy and busy.



While all of our pickled products have been put to rest and we wait (Sweet

Lumen dries acorns by the fire

Ferns pickled everything under the sun...pickles, cranberries, carrots) the Sweet Ferns have transitioned our focus to the study of a new plant friend the oak, more specifically the acorn, asahqaha in Passamaquoddy and Quercas rubra in Latin. We have discussed the importance of the acorn as a food source for animals and humans alike. Through these acorn discussions, lessons and learning we have begun the processing of acorns to produce acorn flour. This is quite the undertaking and involves many steps.

We have been collecting, de-shelling (using our "smashers"), inspecting/selecting, soaking, and eventually grinding the acorns. We are excited about the possibilities as to what we will make with our acorn flour. Sweet Ferns have also had the opportunity to make art with acorns as well. We have meticulously made miniature acorn shell vases and have engaged in the felting process to create our very own acorns.



Fireside stories

Our literacy time in the yurt has been filled with new learning. With our literacy rhythms and routines well established, we have begun our study of the letters and their corresponding sounds (most recently focusing on the letter F) and using our handwriting tools to learn and practice proper letter formation. We have also continued to follow the adventures of our gnome friends in our read aloud series *The Way of Gnome*. We have learned so much from these kind and gentle gnome friends!

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

From the Woodland Class

Hello Woodland Families,

For a short week, it has certainly been busy! The Woodlands have started their new Expedition theme of Maine Arts and Artists. Our original plan was to explore this topic in the spring, but we moved it up upon learning about some special guest artists who plan to visit the school in the next few weeks.

On Tuesday morning, we visited a blustery Thompson Island to learn about the color wheel as an introduction to this new Expedition theme. We discussed primary, secondary, and tertiary colors as we painted our own color wheels.

After lunch, we returned to campus for a special event in remembrance of the Fire of '47. There was even a reenactment of the call to the fire department received from Mrs. Gilbert, reporting smoke from the cranberry bog near Doliver's Dump. We had a special visit from the Mount Desert Fire Department and learned all about the job of being a firefighter and fire safety.

With much excitement, the whole school then climbed into the ambulance and fire truck and got a tour of the equipment onboard these vehicles. It was such a fun experience for all!



A special ambulance tour from Amilie



Making color wheels at Thompson Island

The rest of the week, we focused on four Maine authors and illustrators: Dahlov Ipcar, Lucky Platt, Melissa Sweet, and Barbara Cooney.

These women were the touchpoint for our station work as we moved through our days. We focused on a piece of work from each of these artists to learn about nouns and adjectives as we observed their different styles.



Art Journal introduction

We will continue to use these artists and others to inspire us as we begin to expand our written work. Each Woodland also received a new artist journal (inspired by Melissa Sweet) to fill with their artwork. After much discussion about what art is and who is an artist, they were excited to discover that they, too, are artists and dove right into their journals.

We look forward to continuing to discover the connections art has to our academic work!

With Gratitude,
Ms. Alisa and Ms. Autumn



Adjective and noun work

From the Intertidal Class

Dear Intertidal families,

Intertidals are taking what we learned about systems from Economics and transitioning towards Ecology. We have ventured out into the forest to begin exploring our local ecosystem and the animals and plants that inhabit it.



Jonah takes the lead on apple pressing



Davis and Dani demonstrate distributive justice

Retired economics professor and Sweet Fern parent, Davis Taylor, was a perfect guest for this 'ecotone' between units. He came to speak to our class about his former projects as an economist working on environmental efforts.

Thank you, Davis!

We will also be collaborating with a COA student over the coming weeks to integrate more Wabanaki culture studies into our Ecology unit. Next week, we will peer down from the top of Cadillac Mountain and explore the transition from forest to alpine ecosystems.

Fire management is a big part of stewarding Ecosystems which we learned about with Fire Captain, Amilie Blackman. The kids loved exploring the firetruck and asking poignant questions about being a first responder. Please watch your emails as we head into Harvest Fest preparation season.

- Teacher Dani and Mr. Jon



Amilie demystifies life as an EMT/Fire Captain

From the Alpine Class

Dear Alpine families,

Our week has been copacetic and full of poignant moments. With the falling temperatures, we have been wishing that we were more hirsute, but there's no need to mollycoddle these Alpines when they are so unfazed by weather. Yes, these are all recent words-of-the-day for the Alpines, who are getting into the rhythm of leading morning meetings.



Post-nacho bliss at 86 This!

Our prodigious vocabularies come in handy for our Reading Logs, which have been focused on creating Claim-Evidence-Reasoning statements about characters. Please check in with your Alpine about their independent reading book to remind them to continue reading at home. Our goal is 100 minutes of home reading per week, or 20 minutes each day.

On Wednesday, we traveled to Surry to visit Chickadee Compost and interview its owner, Kate Tompkins, about how she got into the 'compost biz'. We were impressed to learn that the internal temperature of compost piles reaches 160°, almost enough to boil water, and that they stay that temperature for at least three weeks!



Kate shows her excellent compost to the Alpines

After a beachside lunch on Newberry Neck, we piled into 86 This! for a tour of the commercial kitchen and a talk with Jeff about the restaurant business. Jeff taught us how to make burritos and treated the group to nachos – and a swell time was had by all! Alpines learned the difference between fixed and variable expenses, the basics of budgeting, and that in order to be successful it helps to be very, very, very, very, very passionate about what you're doing.

For our Outing next week, we will return to the Blue Hill peninsula to visit Tinderhearth and the Magic Food Bus. We've been feeling so grateful for the many incredible food purveyors, redistributors, and recyclers here in our community.

warmly,
Eloise, Kelsi, and Emily



Rye and Jeff teach the class how to fold a burrito

News and Upcoming Events

Parent Craft Night: Wednesday, October 25th, 6-8pm

Join Patience for the second Parent Craft Night, featuring the art of sashiko, traditional Japanese embroidery. Please RSVP if you are able, but also feel to drop by if you find yourself available.

Guest Artist Nathan Allard: Thursday, October 26th

Maine egg tempera artist, Nathan Allard, will work with all TCS classes next week, foraging for pigments in the natural world, creating the paint, and creating their own works of art inspired by his process. Take a peek at Nathan's work at www.nathanallardartist.com.

All Hallow's Eve in the Babson Creek Learning Forest: Saturday, October 28th, 5-7pm

Please join us for our first ever All Hallow's Eve in the Babson Creek Learning Forest! This evening walk will take you through the field and past the wolfpine, complete with forest installations, lessons on nocturnal creatures, music, stories, and a shadow puppet show. Pathways lined with jack-o-lanterns will lead you back to the timber frames and fire pit along Babson Creek to enjoy music and pumpkin treats around the full moon fire. Students will be carving pumpkins in preparations for this event, so please bring a pumpkin to school by Friday, October 27th. This event is open to the public, so please help spread the word! We are still seeking volunteers for this special evening, so please sign up on the spreadsheet linked in the body of the email.

TCS Community Barn Update, Fundraising Advisory Committee Meeting and Annual Appeal Letter Stuffing Party: Thursday, November 2nd, 3:30-5:30pm

We have some exciting news! The design process is complete for the barn renovation and a contractor has committed to begin next spring. We will share the barn plans and 3D renditions with the community, along with our fundraising needs and goals this fall/winter to complete this project. Come for just the update, or stay to help brainstorm fundraising ideas, and prepare our annual appeal letter for mailing to the greater community.

Fall Parent Teacher Conferences: Wednesday, November 8th, 4:00-6:30 and Thursday, November 9th, 1:00-6:00 (Half-day: 12:30 Pick-up)

Teachers look forward to connecting with parents during Fall conferences, following written fall updates going home. Stay tuned for a sign-up document next week.



Cultivating a Sense of Self, Place, and Community