

Kite and Leaf...

The good news
email from TCS!

Aquariums Connect Older and Younger Students Through Wonder and Science

One valued component of our progressive education tradition that we struggled with during the initial months of Covid-19 was the opportunity for mixed-age interaction, learning, and play. Our cohorting demands kept Pond, Lake, and Ocean age groups separate for the most part.

However, thanks to our new Middle-Level Science Program, we're finding new points of safe, rich interaction both outdoors and in our facility. Nothing illustrates this more than the aquariums and vivarium that middle-level students are setting up for their trout nursery and other projects.

Instead of keeping the aquariums in the middle school classrooms, middle-level science teacher Mr. Will Hudson and his students had a great idea: Why not house them in the K-2 Pond area so that the youngest of our children could enjoy watching the fish and learning about the project too?



So they went to work finding appropriate spaces near outlets, building the

aquarium stands and housing, and populating them with plants and fish, while working on their own academic components of the project, including:

- Planning and construction of the aquariums' support frames - bringing in geometry, physics, drawing, project planning, and problem-solving.
- Installing and monitoring the measurements of flow meters and temperature gauges, testing water quality, and balancing chemicals - tapping into physics, chemistry, and math.
- Working with the trout hatchery project and aquariums with other plant and fish species - incorporating biology, environmental studies, especially the life-cycle of fish, plants, aquatic ecosystems, and their impact on the local and global environment.



Meanwhile, over in the Pond, the K-2 classrooms are not only enjoying watching the colorful fish, but the project has also spurred a rich spectrum of play and learning opportunities. Here's an account from the 1st/2nd grade Kitty Bees from their teachers Ms. Lucy Coria, Mr. Julio Resendiz, and Ms. Lizbeth Marquez:



Middle-Level science project aquariums housed here and there near Pond classrooms.



Children pretending to set up their own aquarium on the Bluff

"The Kitty Bees daily gather around the aquarium, talking excitedly about their observations - the colors, shapes, textures, movement, hidden and emerging creatures - then run to their basket of reference books to search for clues to the names, habits, and habitats of what they've just seen. There is a buzz of energetic research and learning fueled by curiosity and excitement.

"This excitement has led to opportunities for play in the outdoor space where the Kitty Bees have worked collaboratively to build their own aquarium using loose materials in the Bluff. During play one of the children realized the need for a filter and a pump in their play aquarium. With a length of plastic tubing, the Kitty Bees began to play and explore with siphons, which besides being fun and interesting in their own right, provide all sorts of early opportunities for tinkering with physics."

This is the magic of multi-age interactions! The older students see the value of sharing what they know and practicing leadership, and the younger students see that science projects are cool enough for the big kids whom they aspire to be like!

It's only natural that a school that designates age groups as "Pond, Lake, and Ocean" would find community around an aquarium. We'll keep our noses pressed to the glass on this one!



Follow our Science Teacher Mr. Will Hudson in "Forest News"

[Check out our website's new Nature Play and Learning page](#), where you can also access Mr. Will Hudson's "Forest News." Each article shares his insight into science and nature learning, and our students' experience of wonder and curiosity in action.

Self-Portraits a la Eric Carle

Self-portraiture is a fun and important part of each classroom's creative activity. Each year, we're amazed at the new ideas teachers and students come up with, producing fun and interesting new collections. Here are self-portraits from the Sugar Gliders (4th/5th Grade) done in the style of beloved children's

book author Eric Carle. The author of favorites like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?* sadly passed away this spring at the age of 91. Thanks to teachers Ms. Lisa Friedman and Ms. Danielle Cruz for sharing the class project photos.





[Click here](#) to enjoy a read-aloud by author Eric Carle of his book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar."

Why I #Support TCS

It's been an amazing year at The Children's School. Not only are we thriving through the pandemic, but we're also learning and finding ways to strengthen learning and play opportunities while we grow:



Our learning opportunities are expanding with the enrichment of our Middle-Level science program and the addition of a dedicated faculty position to support it.

We've added new features for outdoor play and nature learning, including a pocket prairie, a new skiff, and a swing to our outdoor space.





We've welcomed one new part-time staff member, two new teachers, two student teachers as well teaching interns into our community.

We've continued afterschool workshops, and special events that keep school fun like our recent weekend game day with Mr. H-P, or our Middle Level Thanksgiving breakfast in the forest preserve.



We couldn't do any of this without your support and the generous contributions from the families, alumni, and friends of TCS. Please consider giving your most generous contribution this year during our 2021 Year-End Appeal Season.

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