

Kite and Leaf...

The good news
email from TCS!

TCS Receives A Most Generous Donation



Part of the new donation will go to upgrade storage and materials in our outdoor space.

We're so happy to share that The Children's School recently received a most generous \$100,000 donation from alumni grandparents Robert and Fayette Engstrom.

While the funds are unrestricted, the Engstroms expressed interest in supporting an augmented middle-level science program (*see below*) as well as supporting teachers and their programmatic needs.

The Engstrom donation follows on the heels of an incredibly generous year of our community's giving this past year. TCS received \$50,000 from an anonymous donor in the spring of 2020 to launch our TCS Families Fund matching challenge. The fund addressed financial hardships for families in our school community during the Covid pandemic. In addition to raising \$22k from our families and friends, we also received an additional large gift of \$28,000 from another anonymous donor so that we could meet the matching goal.

The generosity of so many givers, both large and small, provided critical funds to keep our TCS community intact during Covid. Donations allowed increased financial aid awards, increased frequency in the cleaning of our facility, and both

raises and bonuses for our full-time teachers. We held the goal that no child who wanted to return to TCS would be turned away due to Covid's financial impact on their family. We also wanted to support our teachers during the new challenges they faced and met with such grace and adaptability.



"We are so sincerely and deeply grateful for the amazing and heartfelt support we've received from these families, who placed TCS at the center of their giving during such challenging times," says Pamela Freese, PhD, director of administration for TCS. "Through their gifts, we not only weathered a very rough year but thrived in many ways. We hope that as stewards of the Engstrom's gift, we can grow in new ways that keep our programs academically rich and our education challenging and relevant for the future."

New Expansion of TCS Middle-Level Science Education



5th graders have fun participating in an 8th grader's Capstone Project chemistry presentation on elephant toothpaste.

The Children's School is enhancing its middle school program with a 4th teacher devoted to outdoor experiences and environmental studies, as well as oversight of indoor science, math, and engineering exploration through work in enhanced tinker spaces.

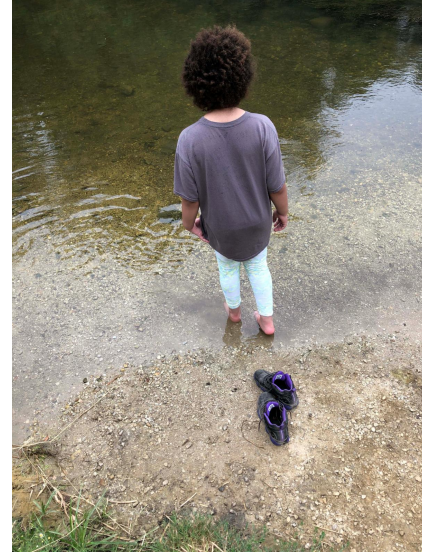
"We haven't settled on a name yet. but the program will combine scientific inquiry, play and exploration, and appreciation and care for the natural world," says Mr. Will Hudson, who has previously served as middle school coordinator and is helping to spearhead the new science program

While specifics for the program will be hammered out over the summer and throughout its first year, the proposal builds on feedback from students and parents. Both students and parents echoed a resounding appreciation for the increased time students

spent in the outdoors this past year, and wanted to see that trend continue. Parents also encouraged more focused time on STEM-related material, while students have continued to relish time to build, innovate and experiment in TCS tinker-spaces.

Ms. Christina Martin, director of curriculum and instruction says: "This is something truly unique that TCS can offer, building on our hands-on curriculum, learning by doing, and offering extended time in the outdoors. The model is totally different from a typical middle school science class that has students reading from a textbook and doing pre-fabricated 'experiments' by following a list of instructions which, if done correctly, will result in the exact same outcome for each student."

Deeper science immersion will also help students prepare for work in the advanced sciences in high school and beyond.



TCS Middle School students have worked with local Forest Preserves to identify and control invasive species.



Tinker spaces at TCS offer anything from duct tape to electric motors, for building and solving engineering problems or project work.

There are additional benefits to adding a fourth faculty member exclusively devoted to an emergent science curriculum and student inquiry. It will offer other faculty members the ability to refine and expand their own focus on other content areas such as literature, math, writing, history, as well as the time for deeper participation in their class project work.

"Once again, TCS is grateful to the recently received \$100k Engstrom donation, in addition to the gifts from our TCS community throughout the year, for making this investment for the ongoing growth of our middle school possible,"

says Christina Martin.

