



*A weekly highlight of what our forest schoolers explored, learned, played, created, & so much more!*

### **Spring Term: Week 6 – April 22 – 28, 2024**

This week we felt a new kind of energy - a Spring energy - that we can only attribute to the sun. It warmed our bodies, inspired us to explore and create, and helped us to see the forest in a new light - literally! Earth Day also inspired our week, bringing in different activities and projects.

#### **Seeds (5-7 years)**

- Brainstormed what we can do to help the earth and show our appreciation while discussing Earth Day
- Learned the letters E and D (for Earth Day) and discovered what other words in our forest start with the same letters
- Went on a bird walk with the goal to help the chickadees feel comfortable coming closer into our space
- Created a bug Snug at the berry patch to give our pollinators a place to live
- Hiked the Marsh and boardwalk trails where we stopped to explore what lives under the leaves and created a heart-shaped mandala with foraged Colt's Foot (yellow flower)
- Made "Grassy Friends" with soil, grass seed and nylons - we're excited to watch them grow over the next couple of weeks!
- Inspired by the sun to craft and play
- Explored and played around the fire, experimenting with different material to understand smoke, flammability and energy amounts
- Played baseball and set community goals and standards together for playing this game

#### **Sprouts (7-10 years)**

- Discussed Earth Day, Stewardship, and the importance of acknowledging how we can give back to nature; brainstormed projects that could help the earth and our immediate space
- Collected litter along the property line on the marsh trail, and was surprised at how much there was!
- Created borders to identify the edges of our trails, using fallen branches and sticks - focused on protecting the trilliums that are about to bloom
- Focused our morning jobs on stewardship - peeled birch bark, chopped kindling, and helped the Rangers source wood for their garden posts
- Collected and washed rocks to reset the fire circle, and looked at them under a microscope to reveal that they are made up of tiny sand-like particles and layers
- Explored wood burning using the sun's rays, magnifying glasses and safety glasses
- Hiked to Mushroom Valley on a mission to find a snail, took a keen interest in how big the Trout Lilies have been growing, and saw 3 Red-Tailed Hawks high in the sky
- Played Wolf Pack at the berry patch and at the Nest

#### **Forest Rangers (11-14 years)**

- Discovered the Shepherd's sling and experimented with length of rope, swinging patterns, and worked towards accuracy and power - emphasizing the importance of using only in a safe place
- Set SMART goals to accomplish larger tasks
- Foraged yellow birch, mint, pine, horse tail for teas and snacking
- Planned and broke ground for a new community garden, with emphasis on completing our task and creating something that was high quality and would last
- Planned a meal for next week, and a large monthly program feast - focusing on ingredients, and mixing and cooking methods
- Learned how to swing a full axe and worked towards stance, handwork and accuracy
- Used magnifying glasses to burn our names into wood, enjoying the power of the sun and practicing a steady hand

#### **Roots & Shoots (0-6 years)**

- Hiked to Keyhole, where we enjoyed a snack
- Said hello to a new forest horse and sang "riding on a pony" song
- Created roads, cities, towers, ovens, cookies and more with loose parts and wooden boards
- Explored the creek, watching how things float and move down the creek
- Played in the sandbox, building, pouring, burying and more!

#### **Wilderness Wolves (9 - 12 years)**

- Convinced some Wolves that Clover had a serious burn, with a clever introduction to wilderness first aid
- Had the opportunity to learn, practice and demonstrate how to treat a broken arm, sprained ankle and head laceration.
- Hiked the Boardwalk trail, where mud was our friend
- Worked on individual projects, foraged, cooked, created bowls, tracked rabbits and learned about snares
- Put our first aid skills to use in the afternoon by having a first aid relay - transporting our victim back to safety on tarp stretchers learned the importance of communication.
- Learned and practiced throwing a shepherd's sling



### Other Dogwood Visitors: Homeschool Group

- Learned about and created our very own water filters using a variety of natural items found in the forest - including crushed charcoal, sand and cedar leaves
- Hiked to mushroom valley to play Capture the Flag
- Cooked our lunches over the fire, and learned the difference between cooking with coals versus cooking with flames - some also enjoyed hot dogs, marshmallows and s'mores!
- Challenged ourselves with a guided pastel drawing/painting - we worked towards not comparing our work to others, embracing our own unique style and seeing a project through even when it becomes difficult
- Experienced problem-solving first-hand, when a student's cell phone fell down between our stump step "Grapes" structure...Mosquito created a long stick wedge with rope and successfully retrieved the phone

### Other Dogwood Activities: Community Connections

- Participated in the Durham Catholic Kindergarten Resource Night for new families
- Engaged with children, parents, and community partners, sharing with them what we do at Dogwood!
- Set up a seed exploration bin for children, complete with play bugs and magnifying glasses and challenged parents and kids alike with some nature trivia guessing games

Although Earth Day was on Monday and we took a particular interest in stewardship projects this week, we try to weave the same appreciation and nurturing for our earth into every day at forest school. This week we began many projects to help our space and we are excited to watch them continue! Stay tuned for more updates on how our projects are progressing. Have you started any Spring projects?



*A fiddlehead - Young fern frond that can be harvested to eat*



*Creating a mandala heart with Colt's Foot flowers*



*Earth Day literacy*



*Creek play! Roots & Shoots having fun splashing in the water and watching things float*



*Wilderness Wolves practicing tarp stretchers*



*Friends from our home school group working on a guided painting with Otter*



*Painting and adding new rocks to the fire circle*



*Rough and tumble kind of play – a favourite of the Thursday Sprouts and has included conversations around how to do this in a safe & positive way for all involved*



*A couple of Seeds practicing their mallet and hatchet skills*



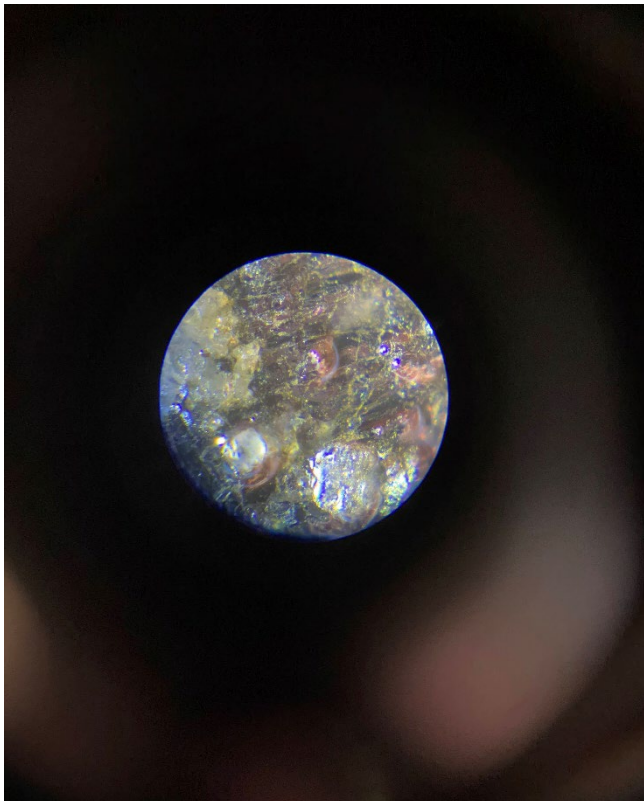
*How many Roots & Scooter can fit on a log (aka the Forest Horse)?! The answer is...10!*



*Using wooden boards to and loose parts create roads and cities*



*Wood burning is becoming a new favourite activity with all of this sun!*



*Exploring rocks under a microscope*



*Take me out to the ball game!*



*At last...the Roots & Shoots can play in the sandbox!*



*Rock towers – exploring size and shape differences and balance!*



*This little bat got lost and needed some help finding his way home*



*Practicing wilderness first aid situations*

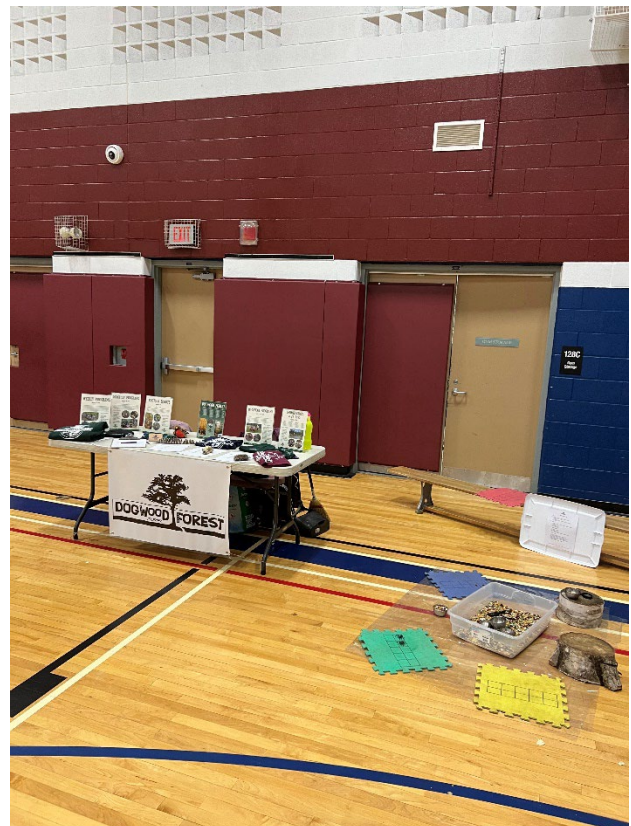


*Hello little seed buddies!*

*Sometimes students choose to run and play, while others prefer to watch – vicarious play – both children are getting what they need and learning new skills*



*Working on burning wood bowls with coals*



*We had a great night chatting with families and community partners at the DCDSB Kindergarten Resource night!*