



THE DOGWOOD DIGEST

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

Winter Term: Week 4 - January 29 – February 4, 2024

Forest school was full of discovery and creativity this week! Not only did we learn new concepts, but we used our 5 senses in a way that allowed us to further our connection to and appreciation for the forest. Each week we are improving our ability to use tools like hatchets, saws, and sewing needles safely and successfully, and thus completing more complicated projects. Giving time, space, and opportunity for repetition of these skills has allowed them to become more confident in their knowledge and skills and supports their overall well-being.

Seeds (5-7 years)

- Explore sounds and music in the forest by shaking frozen maple branches, and running sticks along the bark of different trees to see how their textures and densities change the sound
- Hitting logs from different species of trees with sticks to see how they sound, then placing them in order of sound from lowest to highest notes - this helped us to identify and recognize different types of trees in the forest, work on patterning, sorting, and develop an appreciation for sounds in nature
- Practiced (and became good at) identifying trees by the way their wood and bark smells
- Created wooden swords and whittled wooden beads for making necklaces
- Practiced sewing stars and trees in the Den
- Built an attic/2nd floor on our fort
- Melted water over the fire, while recognizing how the handles can conduct heat, demonstrating why we have fire safety procedures in place

Sprouts (7-10 years)

- Explored how to identify different tree species based on the texture of bark, foliage, branches, location, colour, and smell of their wood and bark
- Hiked through different forests and explored all the different species of trees we have
- Followed raccoon tracks through the forest, crossing rivers and weaving through trees
- Made book covers and stuffies by sewing felt and fleece pieces - practiced embroidery techniques such as the running stitch and split stitch
- Created a short, wooden table perfect for snacks or board games - we drilled 4 holes in the table top and whittled pegs for the legs. We used knives, clamps and a hand drills
- Began other woodworking projects like a stick display and a wooden mug with a handle
- Played Capture the flag in keyhole - Team Maple vs. Team Birch, using maple and birch trees as our "safe zones"

- Discussed invasive species (emerald ash boring beetle) after noticing another ash tree had fallen - investigated beetle galleries under the bark
- Played Open Season - focusing on teamwork, communication, strategizing, patience and decision making

Forest Rangers (11-14 years)

- Started a fire through trial and error
- Practiced using a hand drill, and whittled accurate dowel sizes for our backpack rack
- Utilized the remainder of the green wood harvest this fall, feeling pride in making the most of the gift we foraged
- Discussed challenges with peers and questioned how a sense of kindness can be created in communities - where does it all begin?
- Had a blast smashing icy surfaces with hatchets and safety goggles
- Practiced blanket stitching on our mug snugs
- Enjoyed a cup of "Forest Air Tea" from Foggy River Farms
- Created gnomes and a village for them to live in, discussing services and needs of communities

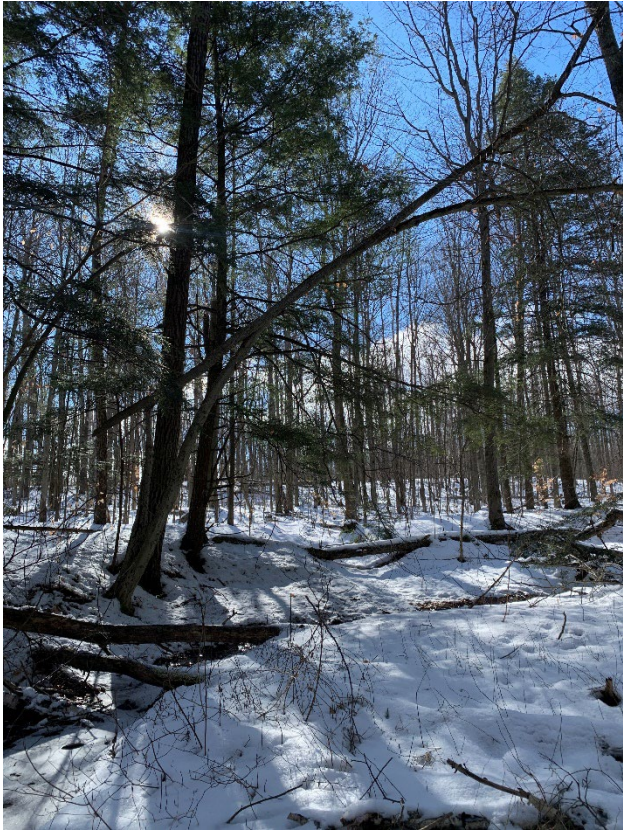
More Dogwood Visitors:

School Field Trip

- Kindergarten students from Good Shepherd school visited us for a day in the forest
- Learned about winter animal adaptations in the winter
- Listened to a story about Bear, Tiptoe the Squirrel, Coyote, and Clover and followed them on all their forest adventures in the snow
- Played games involving hiding and freezing - 2 behaviours animals use to help survive in the winter
- Played with loose parts to create animal homes, collect and sort wooden "food" points in 10-frames, and cross a river without falling into the "water", all while practicing communication, teamwork, sharing, and kindness

To adults, the repetition of activities might feel boring or pointless, but what we have learned is that children LOVE repeating activities, songs, stories, and games AND this is where we see the most growth and confidence emerge. We can come back to the same space, follow what we are interested in and passionate about, practice hard skills with the intention of mastery, and build relationships with each other, ourselves, and the land - all while learning new things! It truly is a magical place to be!

Share our adventures with others – **word of mouth works!** Thanks for your support!



Grateful for blue skies and a snow-covered forest!



Saw skills at work



Exploring sounds of wood based on density and texture



Making a table – the students were blown away by the idea that they could create “furniture” with a few tools and some wood and loved the project – way to go!



Sometimes you just need to find a spot to rest in the forest for a bit



Counting practice using a tape measure for a wood-working project



Even Gnomes enjoy the warmth of a fire!



So much creativity and imagination comes out with loose parts – the students had fun making mugs!



Can you guess who made these tracks? Ask your forest schooler!



Exploring ice and tracks at the creek



Practicing sewing skills to create felt stars – working with your hands brings a lot of joy we often forget about in the presence of technology



Exploring different types of trees and their bark features with trunk rubbings (crayons and paper)



The Rangers helped make wooden dowel backpack hooks



Gathering around for a lesson before heading off into the forest to explore



Collecting snow and ice for kitchen creations



Practicing firebuilding skills with flint and steel



Gnome Village – created by the Rangers



Learning how to use a hand-drill for wood-working projects



Exploring the damaging effects of the Emerald Ash Boring Beetle and the gallery of networks under the bark



We had a fun time exploring the winter forest with students on a field trip!