



## THE DOGWOOD DIGEST

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

### **Winter Term: Week 6 – February 12 – February 18, 2024**

Just as we were beginning to get used to the warmer weather, it's a winter wonderland once again! It feels just as exciting as the first snowfall of winter and the snow is well past our ankles! We are so excited to be able to play in the snow once again and for all the opportunities for exploring, learning, and creating that are possible because of it.

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

- Helped Mosquito clean, assemble and organize all the tools - a great opportunity to learn about new tools, their uses and how to take care of them so that they last us a long time
- Explored rust - what it is, how it forms, and how we get rid of it safely
- Discussed and practiced listening and responding kindly and respectfully - especially during moments of conflict or frustration
- Created a sheep keychain using cut out felt, a sewing needle and embroidery thread
- Played games such as; Clover Clover, Camouflage and Moo
- Developed our "Winter Legs" - our ability to walk without falling on the icy ground
- Found perfect icy slides along forest trails and the "snow volcano" where we found an abandoned coyote den with 2 doors
- Climbed Big Stump, taking turns getting to the top and giving each other time and space to explore it
- Stopped for a mindfulness moment/sit spot during our hike, looking up at the bare trees, feeling the snowflakes fall on our noses, listening to the birds chirping from afar and the wind blowing through the branches

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

- Climbed "Snow Mountain" and used wooden tools to break apart big pieces of snow and ice
- Explored the Nest and went "roping" - tying a rope harness and using it to help climb
- Continued building onto a fort that was started earlier in the week
- Spent time sawing through large logs to gather materials for woodworking projects - this allowed us to practice patience, resilience, and physical strength
- Joined by the Rangers to play soccer-baseball and build a catapult
- Had the opportunity to try a new game that was different and unfamiliar, and tackled this challenge with courage and resilience - it felt good to accomplish something new
- Played capture the flag in Keyhole Forest, practicing recognition of Maple and Birch trees, teamwork, communication, and cooperation
- Explored concepts of friction, ice safety, safe falls and group trust while playing on the ice slide

- Visited the new trail that connects the Den to the Berry Patch
- Played Sardines as a whole group with the Rangers in the snowy forest, introducing larger boundaries, building trust and practicing our tracking skills in the snow

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

- Joined the Sprouts for a full day of fun, as an opportunity to demonstrate the leadership and mentorship skills we have been working towards building all year
- Built relationships with the younger students, played games, and helped to build forts
- Took part in, and led the Sprouts in a game of soccer-baseball down by the pond
- Collected sap from the trees that we had tapped
- Searched for Otter and friends in a large boundary game of Sardines - practiced our awareness for space and sound while trying to hide ourselves completely from each other, and used our knowledge of tracking to locate where they were

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

- Began our day by collecting sap, chopping wood and helping Mama Bear start a fire for boiling sap
- Learned how to identify different types of trees using their bark, foliage, branches, and location
- Explored wood with sound/music - noticing the difference between the "music" of softwood and hardwood
- Created our own drum sets out of logs/stumps/sticks to explore the range of sound we can make with nature
- Used our imaginations to create at the mud/snow kitchen and built log launchers
- Created and played a game called "T-Rex Touch Football" and "Dice Soccer"
- Played a group game of Winter Freeze Tag, and Hide and Seek Manhunt in the Berry Patch



### Monthly Saplings (9-12 years)

- Held a planning meeting to begin building a new fort - we discussed how it will look, how it can be built and what roles will need to be filled in order to be successful
- Reflected organization and communication skills being needed for a successful project
- Used a talking stick to make sure everyone had a chance to share their ideas and be heard
- Voted democratically
- Sorted materials by size and shape to easily see what is available and for easy access
- Hiked the full loop trail, leaving drawings and symbols in the snow to help others find us easily
- Explored the frozen creek and the concept of friction on ice
- Played games like Mancala in the tipi during lunch and to warm up
- Discovered a mouse nest under the fire bowl - a smart place to stay warm during cold winter nights

### More Dogwood Visitors: DMC Travel Tots

- Welcomed the Travel tots back to the forest for fun in the snow
- Pretended to be animals getting around in the winter - balancing on logs, crawling through caves and climbing giant mountains
- Used our Owl Eyes to look for interesting things in the forest
- Hiked through trails, stopped to listen to the birds and even fed them from our hands
- Played in the snow kitchen and warmed up by the fire

### More Dogwood Programs: School Outreach

- Provided outdoor lessons for Kindergarten students on their schoolyard about winter adaptations and what animals do to survive winter
- Played games, worked collaboratively through obstacles, created animal homes, explored natural features in the schoolyard, listened to a story, practiced counting and sorting with squirrel's food collection, and shared in reflection and gratitude

Another week of forest school has come and gone and we are nearing the end of the term - only 2 more weeks left. Although, we have had to put a pause on sap collection and maple syrup, we are grateful for the snow and all that it provides. We hope you can get outside this Family Day long weekend to enjoy it too!



*Freshly fallen snow at Dogwood Forest – snap a photo here and tag us next time you visit!*



*Visible: child sliding down a hill “playing”  
Invisible: patience, sharing, risk assessment, balance/core strength, critical thinking*



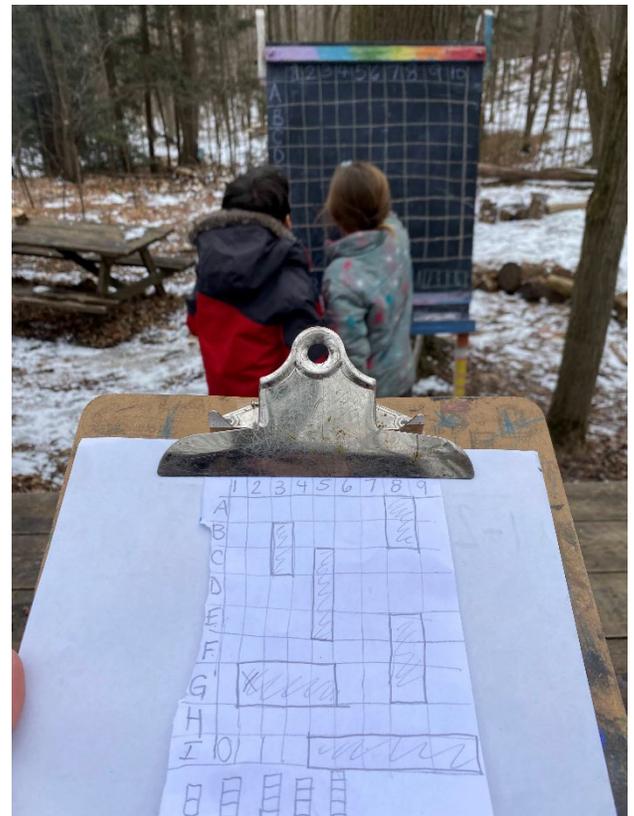
*Music time! Listening to different sounds of wood*



*Working with Mosquito to clean the tools and keep them in safe and good working condition*



*Exploring the trails at Berry Patch*



*Understanding coordinates and grid maps in a game of Battle Ship*



*Working together to build puzzles of leaf shapes*

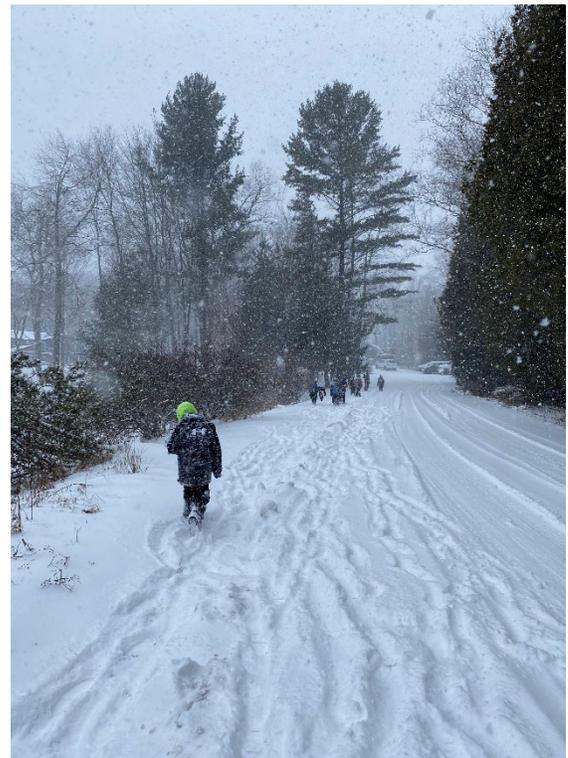


*Exploring ice and making ice angels*



*"Otter wasn't here" – leaving clues for the other group  
(This is Otter)*

*We love our team of playful mentors!*



*The snowy forest is magical...*



*"Working together to learn how to braid"*



*Made a drumkit with different wood, playing the drums!*



*Helping to shovel the snow off the tipi deck to keep it working efficiently – thanks friends!*



*Our friends, the chickadees – time, frequency, patience, and kindness has led to this trusting relationship*



*A sunny magical forest moment – slow down, breathe in the fresh air, be present*



*Playing music on the new wood chime Mosquito created at the Den site*



*Working together to cross the icy trail*



*Creating felt sheep*



*Continuing our sewing skills in the warmth of the tipi*



*Learning about friction first-hand – ice slides!*



*Exploring the snowy forest with the Travel Tots of Durham Mommy Connections*



*The tots loved playing in the snow kitchen, climbing over tires, and singing around the warm fire*