



THE DOGWOOD DIGEST

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

Winter Term: Week 8 – February 26 – March 3, 2024

Our final week of Winter term has come and gone, but not without very confusing weather. This week it was very cold AND very warm. It snowed, rained, gusted and we even got a small thunderstorm. But in true forest school spirit, we embraced it and it led to some amazing changes and discoveries in the forest.

Seeds (5-7 years)

- Created fire using only flint and steel!
- Collected sap twice in one day because the cold nights and warm days allowed the trees to flow
- Found a small animal skull on a commonly used trail in the berry patch - it made us wonder how long it's been there and how we haven't seen it before
- Explored a new trail, and made new friends
- Played a game where we captured different pokemon that fit with the different forest biomes
- Practiced our sewing skills, sewing bookmarks and animal stuffies using different types of stitches
- Climbed snow mountain and used tools to carve out caves, holes and slides
- Explored balance and center of gravity on a seesaw built by the forest schoolers
- Found colourful puzzle pieces hidden in our play space and flipped, rotated and shifted until all 4 puzzles were completed
- Became "clearing coyotes" as we cleared the trails of fallen branches and limbs after the windstorm, and made note of any trees that were too big to clear on our own

Sprouts (7-10 years)

- Created a bird buffet that included appetizers, lunch, dinner, dessert and a kids meal all served on a wooden plate
- Cleaned, gathered, and sorted building materials that have been appearing under the melting snow and from an old fort and then added walls, a door, and windows to the second level fort
- Cleared large branches on our path from the wind storm and cleared an ice patch near the pond to practice penguin walking/sliding
- Played Sardines, Ninja, Open Season, The Floor is Lava/Lava Monster, and Ice soccer/hockey
- Explored an inactive bald faced hornets nest brought in by one of our forest schoolers. We were able to distinguish different features of hornets inside the nest, leading us to determine they had different roles

- Created forest cafes and shops, trading useful items for "money" (cedar leaves). We made a canopy with cedar boughs, counters to display all our items and chairs to sit behind the counter

Forest Rangers (11-14 years)

- Used math skills to calculate how much sap we would need to boil to ensure a tablespoon of syrup per pancake, assuming we each ate 2
- Collaboratively planned out how to achieve our final meal for winter, volunteering for each job based on our preference and strengths
- Played the largest area Manhunt game to date, yet again challenging our tracking, fitness and strategies
- Discovered ice made of 3 layers with water in between each! We discussed how this could be possible and made independent decisions to use eye protection while cutting through with a hatchet
- Boiled and boiled and boiled sap into syrup
- Whittled and completed our charcoal art pieces
- Became master chefs, making the most delicious sourdough pancakes ever!
- Cleaned up the meal, washing dishes and all without Mosquito! (a surprisingly rare, but wonderful accomplishment)
- Threw around a football, shared stories and gave a farewell to winter term

More Dogwood Programs: School Outreach

- Provided professional development learning about outdoor play to YRDSB Kindergarten educators
- Wrapped up our winter sessions at YRDSB and DCDSB schools; this marked 2 of 3 visits in which students and educators have the opportunity over the course of the year for 2 school visits and 1 field trip to Dogwood throughout Fall, Winter, and Spring to support nature connection, outdoor play, and diverse teaching and learning strategies within an outdoor setting

By the end of the week, we had a thin layer of snow on the ground once again with many tracks all around; it reminded us that we are not alone in our quiet section of the woods. We share the space with so many different plants and animals that make Dogwood what it is. As we close off our winter term, we can't help but feel excited for what spring has in store. We hope you have a wonderful break and are excited to see you all back in the forest again very soon.



Golden beech leaves shining bright and rustling in the wind



Collecting sap has been a daily job this time of year



Rolling, tumbling, sitting, watching, sliding – so much to do on one snow hill!



Setting out a feast for the birds



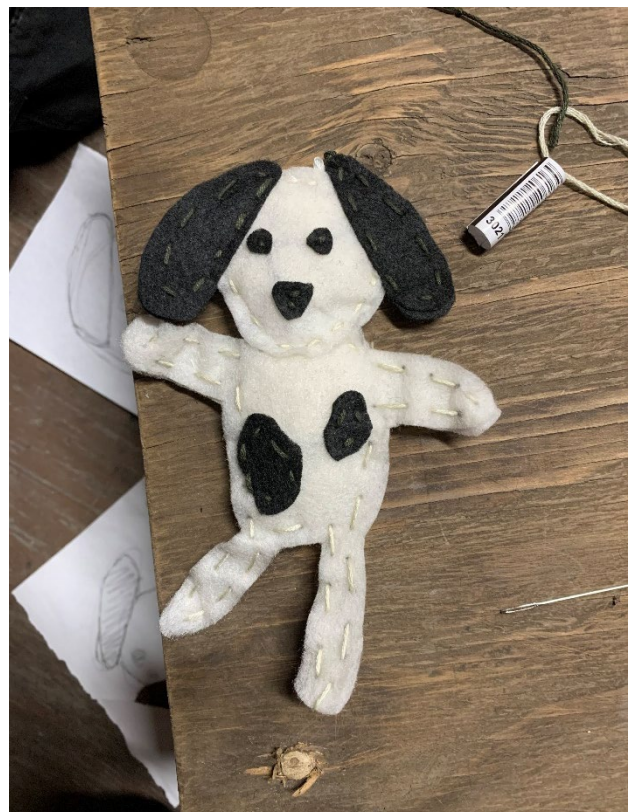
The kitchen is a place of creativity and imagination, with a dash of snow and a pinch of mud



This fort has been an ongoing project for the entire school year – so much commitment!



Ice is the perfect setting to learn about friction and other forces!



Sewing skills are really blossoming!



The mountain climbers made it to the top of Mount Dogwood!



Chisel skills at work!



The Cedar Shop Trading Post was a busy spot this week



A feast fit for growing pre-teen/teen Rangers! Sourdough pancakes and fresh from the tree maple syrup



Bald-Faced Hornet Nest – close up exploration



Using the charcoal pencils Rangers crafted to create art



Ice exploration will never get boring



Creating more "storefronts" for trading of resources



Flint and steel – not an easy feat to create fire from this method but with perserverance it can be done



Saw skills at work! So much improvement in skills with increasingly more complex projects



Kindergarten students working together to figure out how to cross the river to help coyote collect his clothes



Students helping squirrel collect "food" and sort into 10-frame plates for his friends, some even making patterns