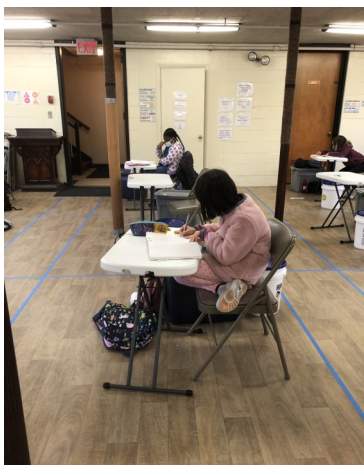


NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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Learning Fair 2021!

by: Drew Curtis



Last year's NS biennial play was performed just before the oncoming pandemic quarantine changed our lives, and this year's school-wide event will be held in its shadow and reflect the ways learning has been different at NS. The biennial Learning Fair is an important part of the fabric of Neighborhood School, and this time we will come together in early May to celebrate the process and the products of how learning happens here and to learn from one another.

An online museum-style framework with opportunities to view and experience student work from all levels will be complemented by separate in-person, outdoor events for each level where parents can interact with students about their projects and their learning.

A variety of presentations and formats will allow each student to shine in areas of learning they love and where they have grown. The different ways that students will speak individually to guests will allow them to share their voice and their pride in what they bring to their learning. Our Learning Fair museum website will offer opportunities for families and friends to share feedback and support students with questions and appreciation, and students will take time to respond to what they receive.

This Learning Fair will be a different experience for all of us, but it is still our chance to get involved in the learning that has happened and that continues, and to let the students of Neighborhood School see that there is a whole community of people who support their efforts to learn under extraordinary conditions. There's so much that students are eager to share - we hope that you will rise to the occasion and reflect their excitement back to them. Look for more information and a website soon! *

Winter Learning in a Nutshell

A summary from Levels 1-4

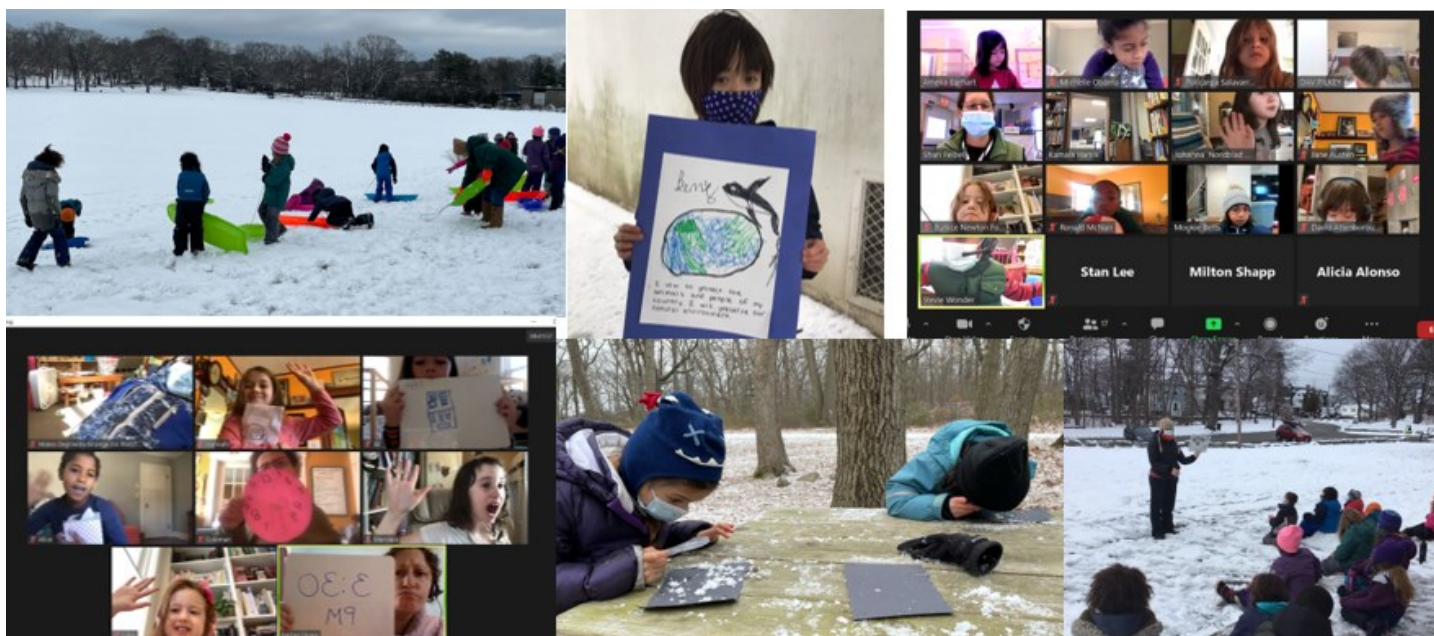


No matter our mode of learning this past winter season, the children of Level One have, without a doubt, continued to be flexible! Shifting our focus from Backyard Birds to the incredible lives of the penguin species has been an ongoing highlight. Most recently, we have enjoyed learning about the amazing Emperor penguin species. Nurturing empathy in young children while admiring the nothing-short-of-magical ways these birds have adapted to the harshest breeding environment were some of our goals.

We also found opportunities to connect to Women’s History and Black Excellence by doing some research and learning about the major roles Black women (as well as women of all colors and races) have played in the advancement of technology and Marine Biology.

As the weather became milder and our Big Top tent returned, we traded our sleds for rain boots. The deep sense of community we’ve built over the course of the year has only been strengthened by this spring’s focus on “learning how to be friends.”

Level One Teachers: Tracy Pimentel & Caitlin Palm



Level Two spent winter mornings learning virtually, with in-person afternoons at Franklin Park when the temperature allowed. We used whole group learning in units of study ranging from telling time, to writing personal narratives in the form of comics, to reading biographies of some amazing people who worked for justice and lived their dreams. We individualized learning through book groups, math lessons split by age group and one-on-one sessions with teachers. Outdoor learning continued to highlight the natural setting around White Stadium, taking us through snow construction, snowflake exploration and enjoying sledding while it lasted!

Level Two Teachers: Rachel Shapp & Shari Feibel

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Level Three shifted to a hybrid schedule this winter, primarily learning online, with Thursday afternoons together in Franklin Park.

Literacy and math continued to be our core subjects each day, taught in half-groups and one-on-one sessions, and supporting our winter theme: biomes and ecosystems. Literacy and social studies blended together for our biannual biome project. Students created brochures that taught readers about five land biomes (desert, grasslands, rainforest, taiga, and tundra). The project wove together informational reading and writing units with research and note-taking skills. They also wrote short speeches about problems that impact their biomes, such as deforestation and climate change.

As a whole group, we continued to learn about changemakers and placed them on a timeline of American History. Level Three couldn't get enough of our read-aloud, *Ban This Book*, which inspired conversations about censorship and the importance of speaking up! On Thursdays, we engaged in play-based activities that helped to maintain community even while we were learning from a distance.

Level Three Teachers: Anna Slavin & Malika Walker



Even though the cold kept us remote for most of the winter weeks, Level Four still explored the world around us through our units of study. Science, juggling, and art projects kept our hands busy. Students used the design process to build bridges and towers related to our study of engineering responses to climate change. Studying how social movements used music led the way to music writing projects. Our humanities unit of Indigenous Studies integrated a wonderful new novel, *Peacemaker* by Joseph Bruchac, with Social Studies projects about the history of colonization and Indigenous resistance. Small group math learning included an exploration of geometric concepts related to art and designs found in the Islamic tradition. Other community projects included: celebrating the Inauguration, participating in local mutual aid efforts, learning about city political campaigns, and more!

Level Four Teacher: Lisa Nam

Alumni Update

by: Johnny Blazes

“My face already hurts from smiling so much!”

One alum summed up the group feeling midway through an online gathering of former Neighborhood School students. On a Sunday afternoon in late February, a group of nearly 30 alums called in from across the United States -- from as far as Utah to as close as uphill on Peter Parley Road! -- to reunite with each other and start asking the question, “How can alums help Neighborhood School, and how can NS help alums?”

This group of young adults, ranging in age from mid-twenties to early forties, reminisced about field trips and Reading Buddies, rides in the van and plays at the Footlight Club. They got to reconnect with Tricia, Joyce, and Shari, as well as members of their cohort, and share a laugh at all the 80s and 90s hair choices we collectively made. Updates were shared about NS, and about how our justice-centered learning has adapted to new models during the pandemic.

Some ideas that are just starting to grow from this first gathering include: more alum involvement with Sustainer committees, an alum network that could connect younger NS grads with older ones for career advice, alums connecting with current students -- grad projects, anyone? -- and increasing the school's outreach via social media. But most of all: more alum gatherings! There was an overwhelming consensus that more of these events should happen, and plenty of alums who weren't able to attend who would love to reconnect.

Our next young adult alum event will be on **Sunday, April 25 at 4 pm**. If you are an NS alum 25 or older, please contact Johnny at jblazes@neighborhoodschooljp.org if you'd like to attend, or if you want to connect another time! And if you have the contact info for an NS alum of any age (looking at you, parents!) please send that info along to Johnny as well.



Common Cents

It is a stretch to characterize anything as common during this unprecedented school year. We can say it is common for NS families to pay their fair share of tuition and for supporters of NS to give all that they can to balance our budget. Yes, that is an “uncommonly” good thing about NS; a common purse that helps us stay in balance even when expenses are extraordinary. We celebrate these financial facts:

- NS faculty and staff experienced no lay-offs or salary cuts during the pandemic, despite the fact that tuition income decreased by 25%.
- NS qualified for Payroll Protection Plan loans that kept our salaries stable.
- Increased giving is helping to balance increased program expenses needed to pay for pandemic-related additional space and materials, from tents to rent, from computers to PPE.

We need to raise \$30,000 by May 31 to meet our giving goal of \$120,000. Please give as you are able!

Donate today at: <http://neighborhoodschooljp.org/giving/>

