



# The Hiland Hall School NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

Dear Friends,

We have been fortunate to have had a series of seminars this fall on the nature of Progressive Education with founding teacher, Jessica Howard. Scheduled during our 'in-service' days when there is an extended period of time to meet as a staff for professional development, the seminar series has given us the opportunity to delve more deeply into our thinking about what underpins a philosophical perspective; how do we each articulate such; and how does that manifest school-wide. These meetings have been rich in thinking, reflecting and ideas. They have also been a great opportunity to consider and develop an authentic sense of teaching practice and refine educational perspective – not to mention enjoyable! It's also been a great way to continue to build collegiality and sense of purpose.

- Meg Cottam, Director



Teaching staff 2019  
Brennan, Nancy, Quena and Jessica



Math symmetry exercise, Grace, age 13

## Excerpted from "Notes on the Friday Seminar"

– Jessica Howard

What we want is an educational approach that will assist our students to live as free a life as possible, by giving them knowledge about the world and themselves, including experiences in choice making and the consequences, recognizing that knowledge starts in experience, (but not being literal about that, especially considering today's technologies) or in interest. At the same time, we have to provide a setting that promotes understanding of the culture in which they find themselves, and the skills necessary to navigate the groups to which they belong, or will belong. We also want to promote the attitudes that underlie open mindedness, mutual respect, understanding, kindness, and generosity, in the hopes that those qualities will be necessary in the world they will enter, or perhaps in the hope that they will contribute those attitudes to a world that needs them.



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## In the Classroom

### Notes from Quena

The children have been learning about forest ecology and the forest habitat, including what the living or biotic factors of a forest ecosystem are (plants, animals, fungi, as well as micro-organisms) and what the nonliving or abiotic factors are (water, soil, air, temperature). We also discussed what uses humans get out of a forest, including resources of wood, stone, and animal meat or products, but also enjoyment and fun through camping, hiking, canoeing, etc.



Telling the 'story' of a tree cut



Picking apples at Granpa's by Eli, age 6



Belle and Bright demonstrating sustainable logging

Last spring a parent brought in sections of different trees he has cut down and the students counted the rings and measured the diameter of each tree sample. He then showed us how you can read the "story" of a tree in the width of its rings and in how centered the rings are. The rings of trees that are crowded by neighboring trees or don't get enough sunlight will have smaller rings overall or on the side where they are crowded.



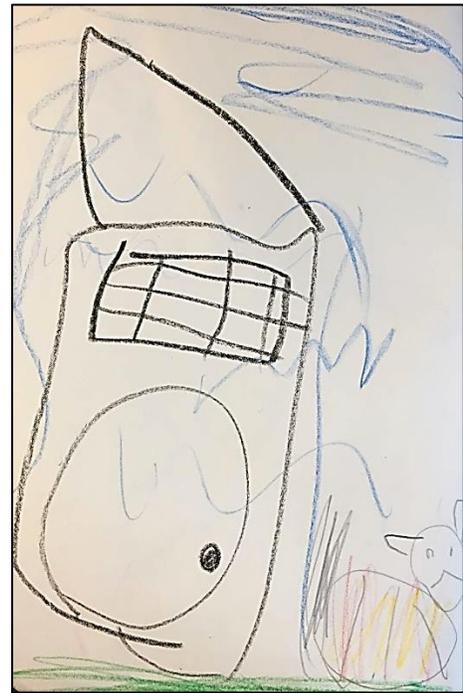
Apple change jar experiment

North Group has been exploring some of the harvests of fall during afternoon math and science sessions. We used apples from the tree outside to set up change jar experiments that we used and will use to hypothesize, observe, and draw conclusions about apples left in jars with salt, water, vinegar, baking soda, and one left to the open air (brave, I know!).

Another thing that is around my house there is a lot of forest. The forest is a habitat that houses many creatures and has both life and death. A tree dies, then lichen and fungus grow on it. A rabbit dies and a hungry fox eats it. The forest is good for mother earth because in it there is harmony, it has a circle of life, there is a food chain, and in it all, a harmonious balance. In this balance a death can make a life, and life can save another from death. The woods help make our mother earth more healthy. Here is a picture of part of the woods.



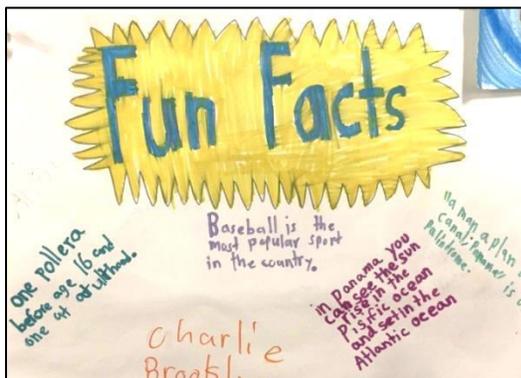
Planetary health journal entry (partial) and sketch  
Noel, age 11



The cat popped out of the egg.  
The cat built the house.  
Lycienn, age 7

## World's Fair

Last spring our students put on a "World's Fair" where they presented research on countries they studied as part of the second language program. Parents and family group members attended to view displays of flags, maps, delicious treats and fun facts about the country of their study.



Panama by Charlie, age 10 and Brooklyn, age 11



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## Middle School notes from Brennan

Middle Schoolers have been taking a look at Color in a long term study touching on science, psychology, art and more. We have spent time understanding how light waves create color, how our eyes perceive color, how color affects our moods, and how colors blend together to name just a few areas of focus.

Students recently shared their knowledge from this unit in a Remembering Exercise that saw students create skits, coding projects, poems, written explanations, paintings and Making Box creations on Color!



Middle School students at Mass Moca



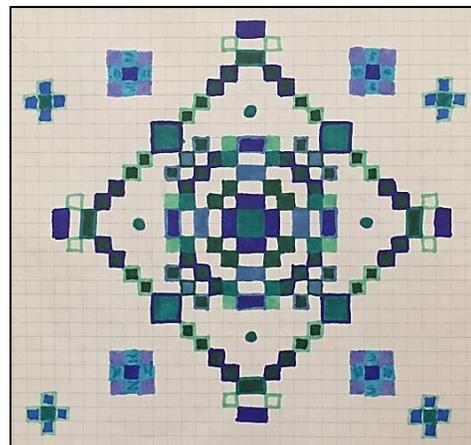
Middle School students painting 'en plein air'

We went to Mass MoCA to check out artist James Turrell's "Into the Light," an interactive exhibit exploring color and light and the relationship between the two. A highlight was experiencing his ganzfeld work, *Perfectly Clear*, which helped tie together all we had studied without a word being uttered, as simply experiencing the power of light and color brought the concepts we studied to life.

## More Math Symmetry



Beth, age 12



Isabella, age 11