

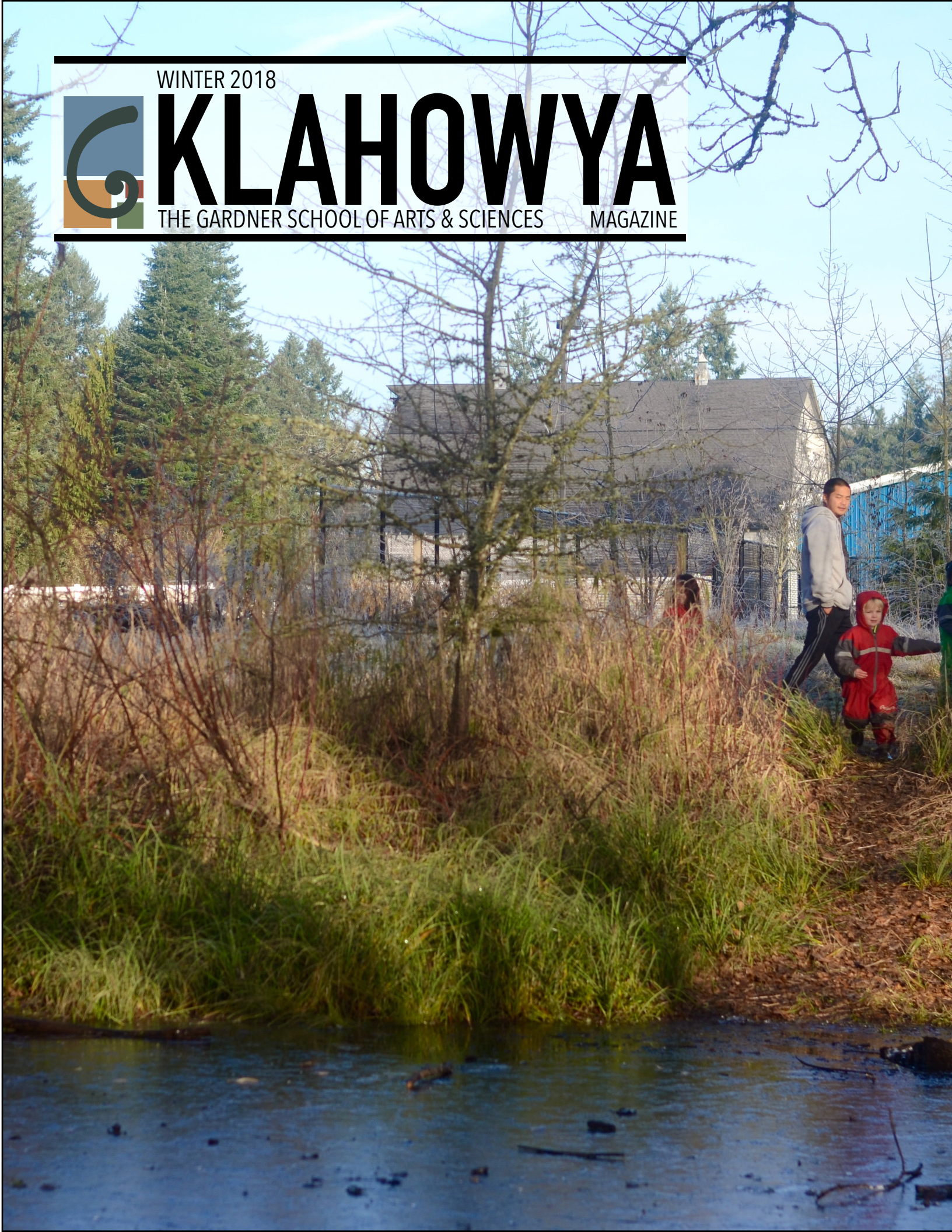
WINTER 2018



# KLAHOWYA

THE GARDNER SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

MAGAZINE





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# THROUGH THE WOODS

It's a typical northwest morning on the Gardner campus, with clouds overhead and fog in the air. Kids are bundled in their hats and jackets to brave the chill, and as they step through the paths of the wetlands, the bark crackles under their shoes. The morning sun begins to stream light from the east through the trees, and the children stop to look, and soak in the uplifting and fulfilling nature surrounding them. Squeals come from some, while others quietly stay close to Peter, their P.E. teacher. There are paths everywhere, but the cluster of preschoolers are stuck together in a bunch. They all look down the path together. *Should they go?* Peter is with them, but he is standing back, letting them lead the way. They all turn back and stare, but he doesn't offer them any direction. It's up to them. They have to determine whether they are ready to head into the woods. *Maybe today isn't the day...but maybe...maybe it is.*

"The longer they are out there, the more they start venturing further out," says P.E. & Wellness teacher Peter Pickett. "It's amazing how at a young age, kids will naturally connect to explore an environment they are unsure about." Peter explains that slowly over time, led by curiosity, young students start developing more confidence and a sense of adventure. He can see them

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from where he stands, but they can't see him. "It's the illusion of being on their own," he says. "And when you hear them talk, it's incredibly fulfilling to hear how empowered they are in their adventure together." They are so exhilarated by their experience, the first thing out of their mouth is "can we go out there again?"

Physical education may be the name of the class, but it is so much more than getting kids to move. As Peter explains—stamina, balance, coordination, strength are all important, but those are byproducts and benefits of the program, not the focus. "If all we wanted to do is make strong and athletically tuned kids, we would just do push ups or run around the track," says Peter. "But we would lose so much that is great about the program."

Instead, Peter has designed a P.E. program for The Gardner School that utilizes the natural surroundings to cause confident, engaged kids that take initiative. In P.E. at Gardner, students are expanding what they know themselves to be capable of, developing their relationship to natural consequences, learning to collaborate and show resilience in the face of failure. Beyond movement, beyond competition, beyond heart rates and healthy activity, Peter's P.E. program is about social emotional growth and development as a human being.

When kids first arrive at Gardner in Tumtum preschool, the program is designed to set them on a path to becoming healthy humans—mentally, physically and socially capable to face the challenges ahead. The program builds on itself through eighth grade in Tahoma, balanced with what individual students are facing in their development, all the way fostering a love of activity.

For the younger Gardner students, it

starts with developing a comfort with the outdoors, and with individual decision-making through kid-led expeditions. The forested wetlands on the Gardner campus offer kids a chance to follow their imagination, and to use their surroundings as a teacher. "Being in the wetlands is very grounding for kids, especially kids who don't have a lot of natural consequences," says Peter. "Maybe they are used to 'restrictive' environments or parents say 'you can't do this because of this.' But outside, if you run and don't know where you are going, you are going to run into bushes you don't want to be in. Or if you aren't mindful of where you are, you may turn around and there may

not be someone right next to you." Peter notes that his students aren't limited by their surroundings. "At this young age they are only limited by their confidence, comfort, and initiative."

For middle schoolers at Gardner, the focus is more on social growth, creativity and collaboration—adding in complex games that they have created or refined themselves. The games increase in complexity and many include levels or phases to promote advancement and proficiency. In the fall, Peter came up with a concept for a game and Klickitat students in fifth and sixth grades refined it, finding ways to exploit the game to

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Students of all ages play P.E. games in the wetlands, developing collaboration, teamwork, strategy and planning skills. "They form their own groups, and can either work together or against other group," says Peter. "Everything happens organically."

A Loowit student fishes with a stick during his exploration time. Students use this first 15 minutes of their class period to get accustomed to the environment before they start a structured activity.

## BEING IN THE WETLANDS IS GROUNDING FOR KIDS

Students in Loowit (1st/2nd grade) experience the winter season as they create their own game of harvesting ice from the frozen wetlands pond. Using collaboration, they split up the roles of cracking, carrying and stacking. "This was an idea that they came up with, and they agreed and carried it out together," says Peter.

A preschooler in the TumTum class comments on how cold the tree feels in her hands, while other classmates find courage to climb a branch. The natural setting of the wooded wetlands offers students many opportunities to explore the environment around them and engage their imagination.



During Kalama / Mazama field day in the fall, our preschool and Kindergarten students played tugawar against the staff. They practiced collaboration with mixed ages, resulting in one win and one loss.



Middle school students rush to the center to get balls at the start of a dodgeball game. Students try to gather as many balls as they can for the team while fending off opponents.



Peter talks with preschool students about the foods they eat during his time with them. "At this young age, I don't give them answers, but kids share experiences and learn from each other. Sometimes they learn that it's ok to try something new." In addition to P.E., Peter teaches a Health and Wellness class to Gardner middle school students.



Loowit (1st / 2nd grade) students came together in a huddle to strategize how they can best capture the cone. This self directed huddle happened organically when they realized it was the best way to connect during the P.E. game.





## THROUGH REFLECTING, AND THROUGH TRYING, OUR STUDENTS CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING!

come up with meaningful rules that they could all agree on. After playing the game they call *Quaffle* for two weeks, they taught it to third and fourth graders in Wy'East and seventh and eighth graders in Tahoma. Quaffle was added to a list of tournament games that students have opportunities to participate in throughout the year. Tournaments take place over one to two weeks, and students come in on their recess to engage, compete and collaborate with students across the classes.

Many of the games Gardner students play during P.E. are ones that Peter has come up with and adapted to the kids, and to the wetlands. "A lot of games we couldn't do if we didn't have a forest." One such game, called *Double Agent* (known as *Chameleon* in the younger age groups,) is a tag game with a twist. Taggers have a flag in their hand, but they don't have to show their flag, so nobody knows who is "it". Because of this twist to the traditional game of tag, Peter says a lot of the intelligences come out. "The interpersonal kids tend to collaborate or use their skills read someone's body language or even fool people in the game. Some even take leaves and put them in their hands to trick others. The naturalists are comfortable to hide in different places to avoid being tagged. Meanwhile the body smart kids will be in constant movement from place to place to achieve their goals." Students can all be successful at the activity but they approach it in different ways.

The cornerstone of Peter's teaching centers around the process of *Perception-Choice-Action-Reflection*. "We cycle through this hundreds of times a day in every age group in every activity that we do," says Peter.

"Perception always comes first," he says. This involves being aware and gathering information. "When you play in free play, consequences are pretty natural. There are no rules, no results, everything free flows. But when you put them in games, you see them engaging. They see a problem, something for them to solve."

Next comes "choice," which is the moment kids decide to do something. "You can tell something has clicked and they've decided this is something I'm going to do," says Peter. "For some kids, they can't get past this decision initially when they first come to the school. They have already perceived a solution, chosen then action, but they aren't ready to act on it."

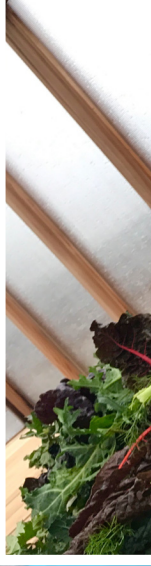
The third step in the process is action, or execution of the choice based on the perception—while the last and final step is reflection. "If it didn't work out this time, try again," says Peter. "What worked? What didn't work? If it worked out well for you this time, how do we manage that again?"

"I have one student who initially was so focused on results, it hindered

him from taking action or re trying. Yesterday I saw that same student attempt to get an egg during a Dinosaurs and Eggs game and fail 11 times. He finally achieved success on the 12th time." Peter says what stood out was that each time he failed, he would declare his reasoning of why it didn't work and what he was going to try next. "It is a goal for this student and all Gardner students to apply and enjoy this process with any challenge they meet outside this school."

"We go through this process a lot," says Peter. "We go through in different speeds. Sometimes the games are very fast so kids don't have a lot of chance between choice and action. They have to act on it. And sometimes, they'll be hesitant, and that too has a natural or social consequence to reflect on." Even in the wetlands, without the structure of a game, young students engage in this process. "Was it a good time? Will I do it again? Should I try again?" They repeat this process enough until some point they are rushing around the wetlands with confidence.

Peter says, "P.E. is about learning to engage, and appreciating that activity and the importance of it." The program at Gardner piques their problem solving, aligns their mind with their body and has them learning about themselves and about others. "Through reflecting, through trying, our students can achieve anything." ■



# GROWING by GIVING

GARDNER STUDENTS GIVE  
TIME AND FOOD TO THE  
CLARK COUNTY FOOD BANK  
AS A PART OF GARDNEREACH



Through the generosity of the Gardner community, the weeklong community food drive raised 445 lbs of shelf stable food to be donated to the Clark County Food Bank.



Preschool students from Tumtum and Mazama classrooms harvested 11 lbs. of fresh produce from the Gardner garden. Students not only experienced the excitement of seeing the fruits of their labor in the garden, but learned about using the scale and preparing the vegetables to be donated.

Kindergarteners gathered the food donated in the weeklong Gardner Food Drive and used their math skills to count and weigh it.

While many kids across the country had their attention on the upcoming Thanksgiving break, students at Gardner had their attention on something else—how they could make a difference for people in Clark County dealing with food insecurity.

On November 21st, The Gardner School partnered with the Clark County Food Bank for a day of volunteering and education as a part of the school's twice annual GardnerReach project. All of the first through eighth grade Gardner students spent the afternoon volunteering at Clark County Food Bank, repacking food for distribution.

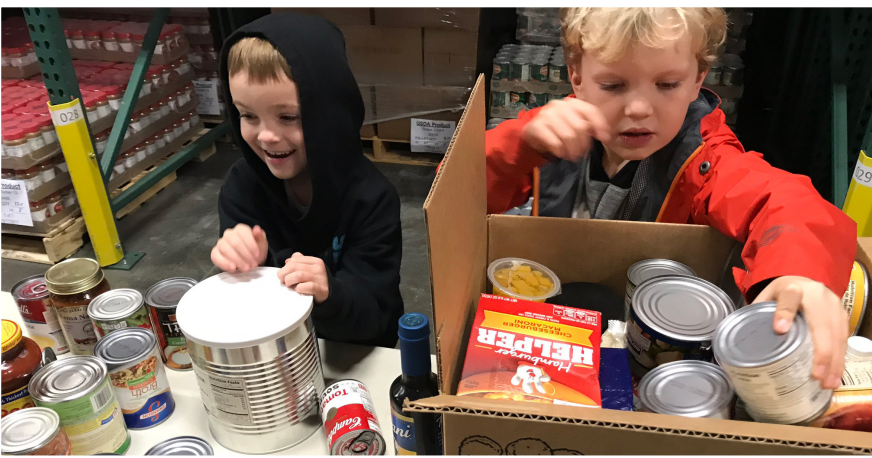
Prior to the visit, students kicked off the GardnerReach project at school with an all student meeting where they learned about food insecurity by reading "Maddi's Fridge" by Lois Brandt, followed by a week-long food drive leading up to the day at the Clark County Food Bank. Between the food

drive and winter produce grown and harvested at school, the students brought 445 lbs of shelf-stable food and 11 lbs of fresh produce to the food bank during their visit.

Reading "Maddi's Fridge" to the students helped to introduce issues around food scarcity, while also focusing on the power of friendship. Regardless of your age or resources, there is always something you can offer to the people around you. As author Lois Brandt explained, "that's what friends are for."

While the trip to the food bank was limited to students in the Loowit through Tahoma classrooms, the GardnerReach project itself included Gardner staff and students of all ages. On Monday, November 20th, the youngest preschool students harvested winter vegetables (primarily kale and chard) from

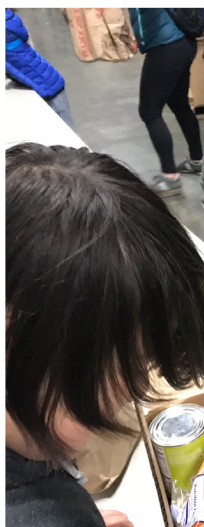
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"Hey -- that's the food we brought!" Students were delighted when they recognized their own food drive donations were a part of the repacking.



Teamwork was an important part of the process, as students fell into different roles that helped keep things moving.



Gardner's organic garden. They weighed and prepared the harvest for the visit to the Clark County Food Bank on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the Kindergarteners gathered, counted and weighed food donations from the Gardner community's weeklong food drive. The first through eighth graders then traveled by school bus to the Clark County Food Bank in the afternoon. Their visit allowed them to learn firsthand where the food goes once it is donated to the Clark County Food Bank, and included repacking over 6000 lbs of food.

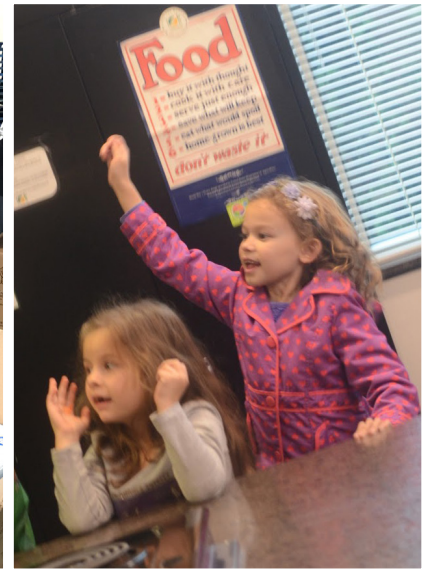
"Having the opportunity to volunteer off campus made the impact of their work more immediate for the students," said teacher Rose Hout. "It is one thing to watch the success of the food drive pile up in the school. It becomes much more significant to take that food to the Food Bank and start it on its journey out into the community."

The Clark County Food Bank nutritionists and farming coordinators educated the young visitors on how the food bank utilizes farming, the role nutrition education plays and how the facility runs and supports the community.

"Our trip to the Clark County Food Bank was a wonderful way to bring our garden program full circle, as well as dig deeper into an essential component of our school mission," says teacher and garden program coordinator Betsy Jager-Lee.

This project continues a partnership created two years ago when The Gardner School began donating the summer garden harvest to the food bank. Students have been harvesting, weighing and donating between 75-100 lbs. of fresh produce from the Gardner garden per year. The project also ties in with The Gardner School's focus on outdoor

In total, Gardner volunteers helped repack 6000 lbs of food during their visit to the Clark County Food Bank. Those boxes were then distributed by the Food Bank to pantries throughout Clark County.



Clark County Food Bank staff members led the first through eighth grade students through proper food repacking boxes as full as possible, glass only next to cardboard, and balancing each box with protein, canned fruit or vegetables, and carbohydrates.

Students worked in groups at each table to transfer food from the bulk bins to the individual boxes.

Nutritionists and farm specialists worked with students to educate them on balanced food groups, and what people need for proper nutrition.

education, the gardening program and the school mission which includes, *"While building knowledge of self and an awareness of their connection to others, our students develop responsibility for themselves, their community, the earth and humanity."*

"Two years ago, when we redesigned the garden, our goals focused on reducing crop waste and using the garden to develop community partnerships," says teacher Betsy. "In the Summer, the garden is bursting at the seams with produce. Our students come in even though it is their summer break and help harvest crops to donate to The Clark County Food Bank."


GardneReach projects give students of all ages an opportunity to participate in the Vancouver community

impacting the lives of others through community service. "I am grateful that most of our students have never faced food scarcity in their homes," says teacher Rose. "It is so important for them to understand how easy it can be to lend a hand to help children and families in Clark County."

Past GardneReach projects have included putting together backpacks for Share, food bags for the Evergreen Schools emergency food closets and ivy removal at Whipple Creek in conjunction with the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership. ■



Students in Kalama were able to ask a marine biologist their sea creature questions while aboard their Marine Discovery Tour in Newport, Oregon. The trip to sea included whale spotting and hands-on exploration of crabs. The Kindergarteners and their families also visited Oregon Coast Aquarium while spending two days in Newport during the annual overnight field trip.



# THE GREAT DEPTHS

to which we **GO**

**T**he circle of sixteen five-year olds was full of raised hands. “How fast can sharks swim?” “How can starfish grow back their arms?” “How do jellyfish sting?” “What is it like on the ocean floor?” “Why do crabs pinch?” “How do sea animals move?” It was early Fall, and the Kalamans were just beginning their study of the ocean. Teacher Rose couldn’t write fast enough as their curiosity caused questions to pour from them.

At The Gardner School, one of the cornerstones of our teaching is focusing that curiosity through in depth semester long studies centered on a theme. As national education expert Wendy Puriefoy explains, “The skill of question formulation—a thinking ability with universal relevance—can make all learning possible.”

Thematic studies at Gardner starts with students’ unanswered questions. “Asking questions and understanding the answers (which leads to more questions) means that you have to think holistically and topically,” says Tahoma teacher Caitlin Littlefield. “Everyone is more engaged and students make more connections.”

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Each semester, The Gardner School selects an overarching subject area—such as the Fall 2017 unit on Earth Sciences. Each classroom, from preschool to eighth grade, then approaches the overarching school wide unit from what is relevant and developmentally appropriate for their age. The youngest students look at the topic from an individual focus (“where does my food come from?”), while the oldest students expand their focus outward. “Tahoma’s study of Climate Change takes advantage of the adolescent’s burgeoning awareness of fairness, social justice and equality,” explains teacher Caitlin, “while Loowit’s exploration of Vancouver builds on the developing concepts of past/present and cause/effect.”

Curiosity sparked by essential questions takes over as students dive into their quest for in depth understanding: “How big is big, and how old is old?” “How does the earth’s climate system work?” “Where are we?” “What is the earth made of?” “How does the earth change over time?” “Why do volcanoes erupt?”

“Thematics are simply the best way to learn!” says Loowit teacher Jackie Taylor.

Thematic studies develop over three months, allowing students to process information, forge connections, and think critically. Our teachers provide students with an abundance of opportunities to discover and fully grasp the answers to those questions –weaving the thematics into all subject areas: literacy, history, geography, art, science, Spanish, music and math.

**WITH THEMATIC STUDIES,  
STUDENTS SEE THE WORLD AS  
IT IS – AS A WHOLE, NOT AS  
SEPARATE SUBJECTS.”**

In Klickitat, our fifth and sixth grade students created clay models to gain understanding of mountain formation, created paintings of landforms, and 3-D maps of national parks in art. They scientifically analyzed geologic texts, and expanded their skills as they wrote argumentative research

papers pertaining to an issue in National Parks. In Spanish, they explored geology terms, and in music they created a compilation pertaining to plate tectonics. The thematics exploration is intricately planned with an awareness of all multiple intelligences.

“It feels more genuine in thematics because you are privileging the idea that a topic can be examined through many lenses”, says teacher Caitlin. “Learning holistically is the

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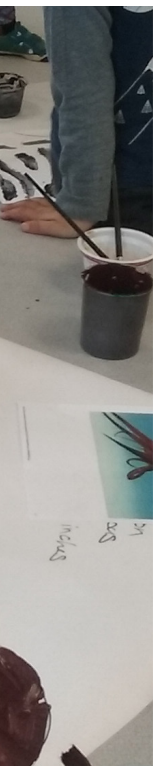
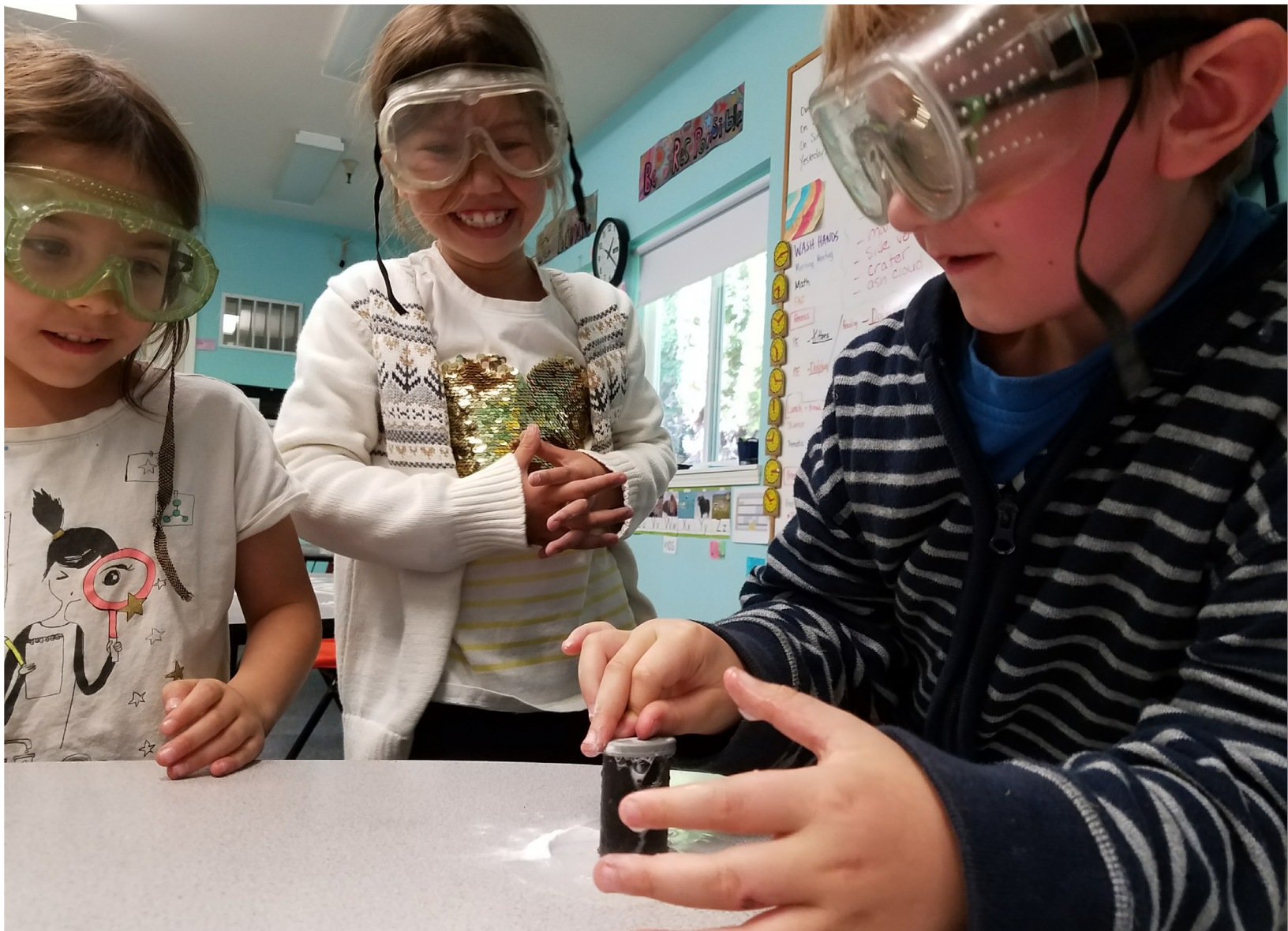


Tahomans (7th / 8th grade) used their body smarts to physically mimic the planets’ interaction with the Sun, enhancing their grasp on the relationship between the sun and Earth’s climate system.

As a part of their ocean studies, the Kalamans (K) each researched an ocean animal, then created life size paintings of their animals using both their art and math smarts.







As a part of understanding the eruption process, Loowit (1st / 2nd grade) students experimented with creating a film canister volcano using baking soda and vinegar.

Preschool students in Mazama explored different kinds of seeds in the garden as they dove into their study on plants, and where our food comes from.

Kalamans got their hands on sea creatures at the Oregon Coast Aquarium when visiting the tidepool exhibit. Most of the kindergarteners were able to visit the sea animals they were each studying as a part of their ocean research projects.

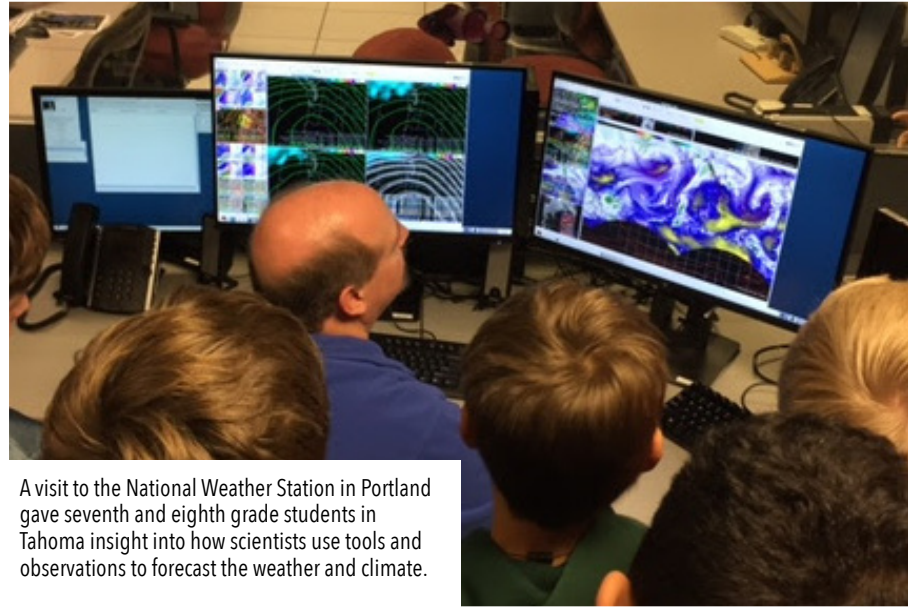
Mazamans (preschoolers) furthered their understanding of plants and where their food comes from by visiting the Portland French Bakery.



Wy'East (3rd / 4th grade) students traveled to the Evergreen Space Museum, where they participated in a workshop, and toured the equipment that enabled astronauts to visit space.

As a part of their study of geology, Klickitat (5th / 6th grade students) hiked Beacon Rock in the Columbia River Gorge, giving them a new perspective of the mountains surrounding us. The trip also included a visit to the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center where they analyzed the processes that formed the Columbia River Gorge.





A visit to the National Weather Station in Portland gave seventh and eighth grade students in Tahoma insight into how scientists use tools and observations to forecast the weather and climate.

As a part of their studies on the volcanoes of the Cascade Range, Loowit (1st / 2nd grade) students explored the underground Ape Caves formed by lava flow from an early Mount St. Helens eruption.

← *continued from page 16*

best representation of reality, is more engaging, and makes it more fun! Skills that can feel rote or tedious in isolation, are intriguing and useful when connected to a larger question. With thematic studies, students see the world as it is—as a whole, not separate subjects."

In addition to approaching their thematic studies across subject areas, hands-on projects and field trips give students real and meaningful experiences. Preschoolers in the Mazama classroom enriched their understanding of plants by picking them from our campus garden, grinding wheat seeds to create flour, then traveling to a french bakery to watch and assist the professional bakers with large scale baking—eventually tasting the bread themselves. Meanwhile, third & fourth graders in Wy'East—engaged in questions about our solar system—traveled to the planetarium to view the planets with their own eyes before building a scaled model of the solar system spanning the east side of campus.

Students not only reach an unrivaled level of depth in their thematic studies, but they learn how to learn. Curiosity may be the spark—but the engagement with their study, the

sense of accomplishment from creating 'beautiful work,' leaves them feeling confident and proud. At the end of the fall and winter semesters, students share the 'beautiful work' they have created over the prior three months of thematic studies with their families at the school at Culminating Event, adding 'performance' to their repertoire of skills practiced.

Ask any Kalamian now about their ocean knowledge, and they will excitedly share the unique mastery they found when led by their own curiosity.

"Moon jellies can bob up and down, seahorses bob to move, and snakes can swim moving diagonally," shares one Kalamian. "It is important to keep oceans clean so that animals won't eat it and turtles won't get caught in garbage," shares another.

"Exoskeleton means the bones are on the outside. The endoskeleton, that's the one that's inside the skin. Most people have endoskeletons." When the (now) six-year-old is asked how he remembers that, he smiles widely, "I just do!" ■



# TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

## TUMTUM

Our youngest preschoolers, who are fascinated with the animal world, studied hibernating animals. Their exploration included story, 3-D hibernation art and song.

## MAZAMA

Our pre-k students explored plants, how they grow, how they change in Fall and how they become the food we eat. Garden exploration, cooking, vegetable drawings and field trips to the pumpkin patch and the Portland French Bakery.

## KALAMA

Kindergarteners studied Oceans and Ocean Animals focusing on answering "How are ocean animals alike and different," "What are the different zones of the ocean?" and "what do ocean animals need?" A field trip to the Oregon Coast including a Marine Biology cruise out to sea, time at the beach and at the Oregon Coast Aquarium added depth to their at-school studies. Students picked an ocean animal to study, created art and reported back to the group. They used sea stars and crabs to count by 5's and 10's and learned ocean vocabulary in Spanish. They also learned two ocean themed songs and created art to transform their classroom into an aquarium.

## LOOWIT

Our first and second graders looked at earth sciences through the lens of volcanoes. "What are volcanoes? How does the Earth change?" "Why do volcanoes erupt?" "How do volcanoes shape the Earth?" Field trips to Lava Canyon, Ape Caves, Johnston Ridge Observatory and Rice Rock Mineral Museum added to a Skype visit from a NOAA geophysicist teaching them about underwater volcanoes. Students created a large clay model of the Cascade Range, clay and paper models of earth, experimented with eruptive reactions, each researched a mountain and created maps of the Cascade Range, also made a bar graph of Cascade Range elevations.

## WY'EAST

Third and fourth grade students focused on our solar system, asking the questions: "Where are we (in the solar system)?" "What are we made of?" "Why and how do we explore space?" "How do the objects in our solar system compare and interact with one another?" They traveled to the Evergreen Space Museum and to a Planetarium for field trips. They researched a planet and created reports, complete with graphic design learned in technology class, created scaled ratio string bead rulers of the solar system, designed and built rockets in science with informational brochures, created chalk and glue drawings of their planets in art, created space music, and built a scaled solar system model.

## KLICKITAT

Fifth and sixth graders focused in on geology, asking "How does the Earth change over time?" and "How do Earth's changes affect humans, plants and animals?" Students visited the Columbia River Gorge Interpretive Center and hiked Beacon Rock, as well as a trip to the Rice Rock Mineral Museum. They explored interactive earthquake maps used by geologists from the USGS, and the relationships between plate tectonics and the formation of the Earth's crust by constructing models and using manipulatives. Students researched geologic issues facing National Parks, and used art to create mountain models, rock cycle models and representations of landforms.

## TAHOMA

Seventh and eighth grade students investigated climate change, asking "How does Earth's climate system work?" How are humans impacted by climate and how is climate impacted by humans?" "What makes good evidence and how can it be used to make a line of reasoning?" Students explored the OMSI Carbon Lab to complete climate change experiments along with a visit to the National Weather Station in Portland. They examined responses to climate change through adaptation, mitigation and geoengineering, and analyzed statistical evidence of climate change using mathematical tools and graphical representations. They also solved the case of the missing gecko using real forensics techniques, and explored the mystery genre of fiction.



Whodunnit? Seventh and eighth grade students in Tahoma developed a mystery skit for Culminating Event, creating characters for the different elements in climate change as they investigated who is responsible for Climate Change. Their performance also included commercials of imagined products that could combat Climate Change, recognizing that most solutions will also have unintended consequences.



A Kalamian translates the lyrics of "Tres Pececitos" to parents before the Kindergarten class performs the Spanish song about three fish. The Culminating Event performance also included another song, "Take Me Out to the Ocean," before guiding their parents through their own student-made aquarium complete with touch tanks.



Wy'East (3rd / 4th grade) students took their families on a Scaled Solar System Space Walk complete with excerpts from their published planet reports. Students also shared at Culminating Event planet pinatas created in Spanish class and "space sounds" created in music class.

As a part of Loowit's Culminating Event, the first and second grade students performed the song 'Old St. Helens' and the Reader's Theatre 'Volcano!' Following the performance, students guided their families through the classroom which housed a scale model of the Cascade Range constructed out of clay and natural materials, research posters, volcano diagrams and mini ceramic volcanoes.



During the month of October, students had an hour each Wednesday to attend their selected Open Choice course. Options included Puzzles, Chess, Trail Running, Printmaking, Improvisational Theater, Photography, Cooking and Survival Skills. On January 24th, students once again were able to select a class to attend for the entire day during All Day Open Choice. Options were Yearbook Journalism, The Greatest Showman, Culture Cooking, Sewing & Valentine Crafts, Rock Climbing, Sound Effects and Ice Skating.

# CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

"So much of children's lives today are structured and timed and organized for them, that very little of what they do is based on their individual wants or needs," says teacher Jackie Taylor. Open Choice was created from the desire of Gardner teachers wanting to provide students with more choice, and these special days were built into the Gardner curriculum and calendar, allowing children to choose how they want to spend some of their instructional time at school.

"Open choice provides opportunities for students to pursue passions, learn new skills, and develop their multiple intelligences," says Jackie. Often the classes offered are cross-disciplinary, or combine multiple modalities of learning for students. Classes may have thematic connections, combine two or more special areas, or originate from student suggestions.

Teachers collaborate to design offerings that span a range of intelligences, and activities. The classes are presented to students, who in turn vote for their top choices. Children are then placed into multi age classes, which provide opportunities for community building,

leadership, and strengthening social skills. Students become teachers both informally within classes, and formally through many eighth grade projects.

"Open Choice is fun!" says a Loowit student. It's something students look forward to, and reflect upon with fond memories. It's not a surprise that Alumni students remember classes they took years later and cite it is one of the things they miss most when leaving Gardner. "I loved the freedom," says a Gardner graduate. "It was one of those times that you could really express who you are."

"Open Choice also teaches students about making choices and how those choices affect them," says teacher Caitlin Littlefield. "In some cases, students may pick an activity that they have never tried before and gain confidence about trying new things. Or a student may choose a class based on what their friends are doing—and then come to find it wasn't as fun because the activity wasn't suited to them."

Why Open Choice? Because it's meaningful, engaging, inspiring, and, most importantly, THEIR choice. ■



**I LOVE BEING ABLE TO  
PICK THE CLASS THAT I  
WANT TO DO!**



# DIA





# DE LOS MUERTOS

It's not often that the words *death* and *joy* are mentioned in the same sentence, but on November 1st, one can only describe the environment at Gardner as joyful. The campus is transformed for the day into a colorful festive environment as students celebrate the Mexican holiday of Dia de los Muertos, also known as Day of the Dead.

"In Spanish class we learn about the language, but it is also important that we involve kids in the traditions of Mexico," says Spanish teacher Maria Flores.

"Students often compare the holiday to Halloween. Halloween is about being afraid, but Dia de los Muertos is happy, and is about honoring the people that have died—that they have another life." The holiday originates from Aztec civilization.

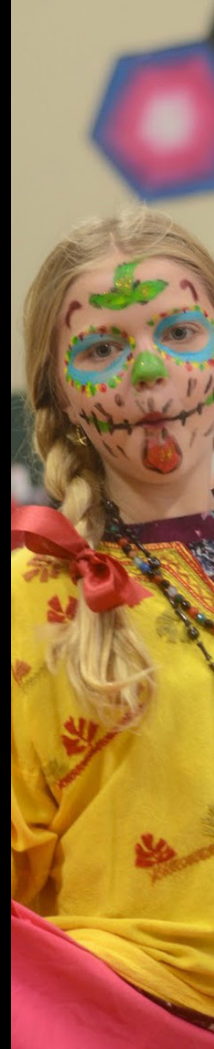
For 12 years, Gardner has celebrated Dia de los Muertos. "It started out simple with songs, but now kids are more involved in the tradition, including dancing, and altars for people they know that have died," says Maria.

*continued on page 26* →



Students in art class created an altar in the school lobby to honor the life of Jose Guadalupe Posada. An illustrator and political satirist, Posada is best known for creating "La Catrina," a skeleton wearing fancy hats and clothing.

Spanish Teacher Maria Flores says, "it is important that we involve kids in the traditions of Mexico."



Students of all ages tour the altars created by each class. Loowit students created an altar in honor of David Johnston, a deceased scientist who died in the Mt. Saint Helens eruption in 1980.

← continued from page 25

The student celebration includes all ages, and while the Gardner Spanish teachers are the three lead coordinators, many of the other classes contribute to the celebration.

In the month leading up to Día de los Muertos, students in art class study a deceased Mexican artist, and create art in that style. According to art teacher Jane Rhombert, each year students study one of three major Mexican artists: Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo and this year—Jose Guadalupe Posada. Posada was a cartoonist and political satirist in Mexico, best known for creating the iconic image of “Catrina” who is now seen everywhere in Mexico during Día de los Muertos celebrations. His art featured skeletons wearing fancy European clothing, with flowers and feathers. For

“**DIA DE LOS MUERTOS IS HAPPY, AND IS ABOUT HONORING PEOPLE THAT HAVE DIED**”

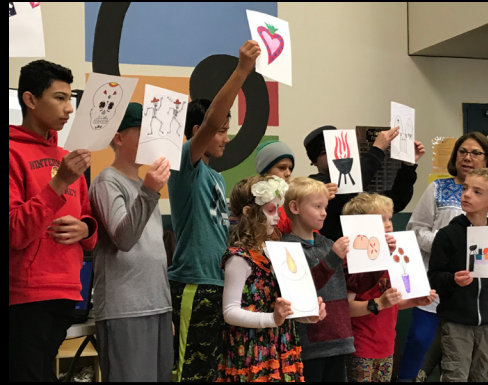
the celebration, art students not only drew skeleton art in Posada’s style, but created a large altar in the lobby honoring Posada.

“Kids here learn the history and understand the importance of this day in Mexican culture,” says Maria. Students in Loowit through Tahoma classrooms also create altars to honor someone that was an important part of their thematic study. In music class, Dana and Jason work with students to learn Mexican songs and dances. Students decorate with *papel picado*, which is brightly colored tissue paper cut into elaborate designs. This year, Kalamans also painted pots with skeletons to add to their classroom altars. The result of the collaboration is a festive and culture-rich celebration for students to share with one another. ■



Tahoma (7th / 8th grade) students celebrates Day of the Dead by performing a traditional Mexican song called *Canción las Calaveras*, with vocals by Klickitat (5th / 6th grade.)

After the performances, students of all ages toured the altars created by each of the classrooms to honor the life of someone important to their thematic study. Guides from each class were available to answer questions.



Wy'East students dress in traditional Mexican clothing and makeup for the celebration of Día de los Muertos. Traditionally, faces are painted to look like skulls, with flowers and colorful designs.

(above right) What are the elements of an altar to celebrate *Día de los Muertos*? Student representatives of all classes illustrate the symbols that make up an altar.



Wy'East (3rd / 4th grade) students dance to the Mexican folk dance "La Raspa," in full makeup and traditional Mexican clothing.



Loowit (1st / 2nd grade) students sing *Las Tumbas*, a playful Mexican children's song.

Gardner students from Kalama through Tahoma perform class and all school pieces, led and choreographed by their music teachers Dana Harris and Jason Kaiser. The November 17th event had a full house watching as students sang about "Stepping Up."

# STEPPING UP!

## CHARACTER MEETS PERFORMANCE

If you are going to sing, why not have it be about something great? As a part of music teacher Dana Harris' preparation for Music Night, she looked for songs that not only included opportunity for students to expand their music skills, but had a message worth singing about. For those families that packed in to the great room in November, the end product was an upbeat musical performance featuring students ranging from five-year-old Kindergarteners to eighth graders singing about stepping up to be their best.

Each class performed their own song as a part of the greater theme, in addition to combined class

performances where all students sang or played instruments. All songs worked together to present the message about character.

"Music and performing are important pieces of our school curriculum and culture," says Dana. Students have many opportunities throughout the year to share their talents: Music Night, Talent Show, Culminating Events and even our student events such as community meetings and Dia de los Muertos celebration. "The more opportunities the students have to perform, the easier it becomes for them," says Dana. "They develop self-confidence through those repeated successes." ■



## MIDDLE SCHOOL ROCKS

With the addition of Jason Kaiser to the music teaching team this last year, sounds of rock have been filling the school during Klickitat and Tahoma music classes. Students have benefitted from Jason's extensive rock background with training in guitar, drums, keyboard and other instruments as they explore musical genres of interest to them. "Exploring new instruments at this age is vital to a student's engagement in music," says Jason. "While some students prefer the recorder, others may prefer the bass or piano and it is important to let them find their own interests and create their own musical path."





## PRESCHOOL INFORMANCE



TumTum and Mazama students also got their chance to shine this fall & winter, during informal performances, nicknamed "Informance." Families gathered in the music room and watched as their preschoolers shared Halloween and Valentine's Day themed songs that they had learned in music class. "While the children aren't ready to perform on the big stage yet, they are excited to share their music in the comfortable atmosphere of the music room," said Dana.



Scott's first official day on campus was January 8th, and has been working closely with Interim Head of School Andy Fields to learn the ways of Gardner during his transition.

# Welcome, SCOTT KERMAN

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of The Gardner School of Arts & Sciences, we are thrilled to welcome Scott Kerman as our Head of School. The board voted unanimously to appoint Scott to the position with the enthusiastic support of the head search committee, faculty, and staff. Scott stood out in the pool of highly qualified candidates for his wealth of experience in school leadership, his classroom experience, and especially for his extraordinary ability to connect with students, faculty, staff, and parents. As Wy'East student Mina Mohandessi reflected after meeting Scott, "He would be like spreading a rainbow across our school."

Scott's background and educational philosophy are strongly aligned with our school's mission and values. He joins The Gardner School of Arts & Sciences from Northwest Academy in Portland

where he spent seven years as Assistant Head of School, Dean of Curriculum, and as Interim Head of School. He has also taught middle school, high school, and college students beginning with Teach for America in 1992. Scott has been recognized for his expertise in independent school governance after his six years as a Trustee and President of the Board at The International School in Portland. He has practiced law and was most recently the Senior Program Manager at The Classroom Law Project in Portland. As a former Trustee at The International School said, "He's seen the spectrum; he's been a teacher, a lawyer, a board chair, an administrator, and a parent. He's so well-rounded."

Scott holds a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law, an M.A. in English from Portland State University, a B.A. in English from Washington State University, and a B.S. in Political Science from Santa Clara University. He has three children: Jared, a sophomore at The University of Chicago; Ethan, a sophomore at Jesuit High School; and Chase, an 8th grader at Arts & Communication Magnet Academy in Beaverton. His wife, Jill, is a physician and partner at a local Vancouver medical clinic, Creekside Medical. ■

## HEAD SEARCH & TRANSITION COMMITTEES

**M**any thanks go to the team of volunteers that gave immense amounts of time in November to conduct the successful search for our new permanent head of school. The team, comprised of parents, staff & faculty and trustees, conducted Skype interviews with our five finalists and selected the top two finalists to visit our campus. Thank you to search committee members: Krista Davis, Kevin Fischer, Gretchen Grey-Hatton, Betsy Jager-Lee, Ken Lader, Caitlin Littlefield, Angela Maguire and Peter Pickett. A very special thank you to Carrie Cofer for the careful pre-screening of our many applicants to round it down to the top five finalists our committee interviewed.

A transition committee has since been formed to assist Scott in achieving a successful transition during his first year at Gardner. The committee will support our new Head of School as he develops new relationships in our community and discovers Gardner's amazing history, traditions, and culture.



## MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE PROJECT

A parent volunteer in the art room helps a Kalamam weave fabric through the spokes of the bicycle wheel to represent her class breakdown of self-identified "smarts." Each color of fabric represents a different intelligence from Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.



**E**ach Fall, shortly after students self-assess which smarts are their strengths, art teacher Jane Rhomberg dreams up and coordinates a school-wide art project that represents the many ways that Gardner students and staff are smart.

"It's a fun way to get the whole school involved in a project, and to create something beautiful that represents all of us," says Jane.

To get started on this year's project, students in each class used math smarts to compile a graph displaying the percentage of each smart represented in their class. From there, they took a proportional amount of each color of fabric that represented those intelligences and worked together to weave the strips of fabric through bicycle spokes. Each class created their own wheel to be displayed.

"Creativity breeds creativity," says Jane. Once the seven wheels were completed, students thought of adding lights and the ability for them to spin. The completed wheels were then installed on the West wall of the Wy'East classroom, offering a colorful and interactive visual representation of the intelligences found at Gardner.



# THE DYNAMIC DUO OF WY'EAST

**“I LOVE THAT LITTLE  
LIGHT THAT GOES OFF  
IN A STUDENT’S EYES  
WHEN THEY REALLY  
GET IT.”**

Enter the Wy'East classroom and you'll notice a buzz of hands-on learning: building projects, murals, small intimate learning groups. You'll also notice something distinct—two teachers, effectively partnering to deliver learning for the whole child to their third and fourth grade students.

“A nice thing about co-teaching is that you are able to bounce your ideas off of somebody,” says Wy'East co-teacher Guinevere Getchell. “You get to see what works and what doesn't work, and see if someone does something better than you to incorporate that into your teaching style.” As Wy'East co-teacher Amelia Carter notes, “The key to co-teaching is being communicative, and really listening to each other's ideas.”

Guinevere says the two rely on each other for different things. “We buoy each other in the places we are not as strong and we are able to divvy up the housekeeping stuff, which has been really wonderful.” They also say they plan everything together. “There are slight similarities with math or differences in how we are sharing information, but targets are the same,” says Guinevere. “We plan it all together, but the execution of it is different depending on who you get it from.”

They each bring distinct backgrounds to the partnership. Before getting her Masters in Education at University of Portland, Guinevere was on the path to be an art therapist. She brings a strong background in neuropsychology and art. “That has been very helpful with this age group, as they navigate coming into their own and use different strategies.” Guinevere focuses on social emotional learning to the classroom, and says she really appreciates being able to weave that into the curriculum. Amelia, on the other hand, brings a familiarity with Gardner from her student teaching in Loowit, and brings a background in math. Before earning her Masters in Education at Concordia University, Amelia worked as a



Guinevere and Amelia spent time last Spring visiting Guinevere's former classroom at Catlin Gabel, where Guinevere taught in a co-teaching environment. "It was really valuable to see how the co-teaching model works," says Amelia. The two have also spent time connecting outside of the classroom, including a snowshoeing and yoga trip to Government Camp. "We called it *Shnow-ga*," says Amelia.



Math Intervention Specialist for first through fourth graders.

The two talk of their shared love of teaching math, which is helpful since they are then able to split out into four different math groups supporting students at different levels. "Having a co-teacher enables more small groups, and allows more one on one with students," says Guinevere. "Even in what would normally be *full group* time, we have small groups." Having two equal teachers in the classroom when half the class is with a specialist teacher allows for group ratios of one teacher for every three to six students.

What is also evident in talking to these two is their shared love and appreciation for their students. "I love seeing them shine and doing what they are really good at because it makes them so proud," says Amelia. "...and get confident in the things they aren't as excited about or competent in," adds Guinevere. Amelia's own eyes sparkle when she talks about "that little light that goes off in their eyes when they really get it." ■

## TAHOMA TRANSITION

### INGRID DAHL



Tahomans have seen their fair share of change this year. Luckily they'll have a familiar face finish out the school year as the Tahoma classroom teacher—Gardner teacher Ingrid Dahl.

Ingrid was born to be a teacher. "When I was 12 my first job was teaching sewing classes, then I moved on to teaching rock

climbing and snowboarding," she says. In college while studying to be a teacher, Ingrid worked teaching outdoor education, then started working for Rocky Mountain Youth Corp, leading teens on trail restoration projects. The path led her back to school to get her Masters in Education before teaching science to seventh and eighth graders at Sellwood Middle School for four years.

When asked about her passions, Ingrid says "I love getting kids outside, having them experience the natural world—connecting their experiences to science." For the past three summers Ingrid has taught a field biology course for Cascade Mountain School—two-week programs for high school students at Trout Lake. "We study the ecosystems from the top of Mt. Hood to the Trout Lake Valley, including a three night backpacking trip. We talk about what is happening in each system and we look at it through the lens of climate change."

Gardner has been on Ingrid's radar for a really long time. "On the 5-year-plan I wrote when I started teaching, it literally said *Work at Gardner*. I feel like *this* is how education should be. *This* is what it should look like."

When asked about her experience so far this year teaching Klickitat during Emily's maternity leave, she says "I love the kids. I love the community. I love the setting. It is so calming to be here everyday. I show up and I feel good just to be here. I also love the autonomy that teachers have here, and the trust that we are given. I feel that teachers here are really treated like professionals."

Ingrid will officially begin her time with the Tahomans next week, as she leads them on their week-long field trip to the Tetons. ■



**W**e don't talk enough about the vision for The Gardner School. The mission guides everything we do: it informs our program decisions,

prioritizes the board's investments, and drives the richness of our daily activities. The vision, on the other hand, is the quiet aspiration of the school, it is the secret desire of what we want to be. "Cultivating life-long learners" is the phrase that sticks with me from the school's vision. "Cultivating" speaks to intentional, directed growth. "Life-long learners" addresses a hopeful outcome that we haven't measured...yet. As Albert Einstein said "Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think." Critical thinking throughout one's life is, in some quarters, the definition of life itself.

Life in this community of learners has many unique attributes I've observed over the years. Individual members have personal and family values aligned with the mission and vision. Parents, teachers and students all attach great importance to opportunities for reflection and improvement. Within the community, we value feedback for insight and change. Inquiry, observation, and contemplation drive organic transformation as members join and bring their own experiences to the whole.

The characteristics of inquiry and growth are closely aligned with progressive education at The Gardner School. As I took on the role of interim head, I rethought my view of outcomes vis a vis The Gardner School. For years I've taken the position that the outcome we want is for students to "be ready for the next educational step," and to be "advocates for their own learning." It is tenuous to attach data to these outcomes, so I like to tell anecdotes that are important to me and my family personally. After nine years as a Gardner student, our eldest child, a senior in high school, causes me to shake my head in wonder at the independence and initiative taken in selecting, applying and accepting college admission. With ten years of Gardner education as the platform for her critical thinking skills, our middle child, in the second year of high school, is narrowing

down the ocean of opportunities available as a result of her commitment to do her best work while questioning everything (including the *traditional* education she is enduring in high school.) Our youngest child has been a part of the Gardner community in *utero* and nearly every day since. With seven years and counting as a student, I can only imagine the outcomes for her in terms of impact, character, stance, knowledge and understanding.

That represents 26 years of Gardner education I have experienced as a parent, a trustee, and an administrator- so I feel like I have a pretty good handle on what we do here. The greatest validation, however, is to have another set of eyes, those of an experienced educator, steeped in progressive education, affirming that we do something exceptional here at The Gardner School. There is always room for improvement! As I step away from an active role in school leadership, what I want for the future is continued "progress" in our progressive education.

As I have worked with Scott on our transition the past month, I have reflected a lot on the various roles I have had at The Gardner School. Being a firm believer in the importance of life-long learning, I had to enumerate what I learned as interim Head of School that was different than what I learned as a parent, as a trustee and as Board Chair. As a parent, I knew from the perspective of my children that they were being intellectually challenged while developing self-confidence in, and intrinsic rewards for, exercising their curiosity. As a trustee, I learned how hard the Head of School and Board work to contain costs while accomplishing the mission of the school. I tried to boil down what I learned as Board Chair to one sentence, and failed. The most important thing I learned, though, is that The Gardner School is like a living thing that has many critical organs, all of which have to be doing their part for the whole to be healthy. Students, parents, faculty, staff, facilities, donors, volunteers, board, head...even the garden and wetlands. Each has a indispensable contribution to the overall vitality of the school. All that knowledge I brought with me to this role. In my stint as interim Head of School, I came to a whole new appreciation for the teachers on whose shoulders this whole dream of progressive education rests. I learned how emotionally invested they are in each and every student. I learned how intellectually committed they are to the challenge of individualizing our curriculum for all their



students. I learned about teamwork and self-sacrifice seeing them rally to support colleagues and kids who needed help. I came to comprehend that the Head of School is much more than a manager of people and budget and facility and fundraising. The Head of School is cheerleader in chief, responsible for the emotional and intellectual care and feeding of this remarkable group of people that pour so much of themselves into The Gardner School.

How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard! I would like to thank the Board of Trustees for giving me this opportunity to learn alongside fantastic teachers. I offer my eternal gratitude to the faculty and staff for their trust, support, and teamwork. To every parent who is or ever has been part of The Gardner School community - thank you for entrusting us with the education of your children. Most of all, after working shoulder to shoulder with Scott for the last month, I want to thank him for coming to The Gardner School. I rest assured that the school is in good and capable hands.

### **MISSION**

The Gardner School inspires students to actively seek knowledge and understanding, think independently, reason critically, and embrace challenge. Teaching to the uniqueness of each individual, we focus on the process of learning and value the exchange of ideas through collaborative work, inspiring all learners to reach their highest potential. While building knowledge of self and an awareness of their connection to others, our students develop responsibility for themselves, their community, the earth and humanity.

### **VISION**

To be the premier progressive independent school serving a diverse community from Southwest Washington and Portland. Cultivating life-long learners whose foundational critical thinking and problem solving facility positions them to meet the challenges of the future, the school will be an inspirational educational resource.

# MY VIEW FROM HERE



**W**hen my son Ethan was five years old, he started taking piano lessons. About a month into his lessons, the piano teacher took me aside and told me, "Ethan's really good."

I thought perhaps she was being nice. Or maybe just trying to encourage me to keep paying for lessons. After all, I'd only heard Ethan plunk out versions of what I assumed to be "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." So, I replied politely, "Thank you. That's really nice of you to say," and then quarter-turned toward the door.

The piano teacher stopped me. Looking very intently at me, she stressed, "No, you don't understand. *He's really good.*"

I relay this story not to brag about Ethan (who eleven years later plays eight or more instruments). I tell this story because I want to say to you, the Gardner School community, that Gardner is special.

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "Yes, it's a pretty special school."

You don't understand. *Gardner is a really special school.*

I've seen a lot of schools, many of them remarkable. And Gardner stands right there with them. Still, there is something really special about this school. It's almost ineffable—a feeling . . . a buzz . . . something that students, staff, and families seem to feel the moment they step on campus. I felt it the first day I stepped on campus last November for my interview visit. I feel it every day since.

This buzz flows through the halls and into the classrooms. I spent seven days following students through their classes, beginning in Mazama and working my way through Tahoma (with a brief halftime stop in Tumtum). I want you to know something I learned during these visits. You should know that there is solid teaching going on in our classrooms.

I don't think you understand. *There is really solid teaching going on in our classrooms.*

I know this because I watched teachers from morning circle through specialist classes to the close of day. What

a marvel to see them teach a range of subjects with expertise and unflinching enthusiasm—and all the while deftly inspiring, guiding, and often soothing a dozen or more students who cycle through a dizzying array of emotions and stamina over the course of four to eight hours.

I have also spent a lot of time in the Wetlands and on the playfield, watching and hanging out with students. I've met with teachers, staff, trustees—sometimes individually and often in small committees. You should know that Gardner lives its value of creating a community where individuals encourage and support one another.

I'm not sure you completely understand. *This is a community where people lift each other up.*

I know this because I watched older students include younger students in their games on the field—and not just letting them play but playing in ways that the younger students are as much a part of the game as anyone. I know this because I've seen time and time again teachers and staff step forward to help colleagues when they ask for it and even when they don't. I know this because I've seen parents and volunteers give of themselves to our community in ways that inspire me and my colleagues.

Is Gardner perfect? Of course not. And thank goodness. Perfect is boring. After all, what would there be to aspire to? So like every other school out there, we have shortcomings to mend and challenges to meet. But we have something not all schools have: a vibrant growth culture. No matter their existing strengths and natural talents, Gardner teachers and staff are passionate about professional growth. They have perhaps the most important quality in a teacher (and in a student)—a growth mindset. Combine this with Gardner's commitment to its mission, values, and pedagogy, and there is no limit to what we will accomplish together.

I really want you to understand this. *There is no limit to what we will accomplish together.*





"It is rare to find someone like Andy—someone who is ready to commit so completely to the life of a school. When I look back on my eight years as Head of Gardner, it feels like Andy was alongside me for all of them. As a parent, a board member and for almost all of that time as an insightful, endlessly supportive, and dedicated Board Chair, Andy led the development of our school. It takes many people to move a school along the path of growth and success but I think it is fair to say that in this case The Gardner School is what it is today because of Andy's humble, intelligent and thoughtful leadership over so many years."

---- **Mark McGough**  
*former Head of School*



# OUR GARDNER HERO

**WE ARE FILLED WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL AND FORMER BOARD CHAIR ANDY FIELDS FOR HIS SERVICE TO OUR SCHOOL. AS HE PASSES THE TORCH TO OUR NEW SCHOOL LEADERSHIP THIS MONTH, AND RETURNS FULL CIRCLE TO HIS ROLE AS GARDNER PARENT, WE THANK HIM FOR THE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTION HE HAS BEEN ALL OF THESE YEARS.**

**THANK YOU, ANDY**

It is hard to think of Gardner without picturing Andy Fields. And when I think of Andy, one word stands out: *Dedication*.

For more than a decade he has given his relentless support of this school. From the little things, like attending almost 50 Culminating Events, driving on field trips, and putting his chain saw and pressure washer to work on each Sweat Equity Day, to his tenure as Board Chair, and this year fulfilling the vital role of Interim Head of School, Andy has been here. Investing his time and energy in a school he wholeheartedly believes in. *Supporting. Guiding. Leading.*

His calm, unflappable presence has steered us through many tumultuous times, but also through tremendous growth. The thing about Andy is, you'd never know by his affect if the school was navigating under clear skies, or riding edge of a storm. He is a true professional—putting the students and the school first.

I cannot imagine where we would be without Andy's years of service. Gardner is a better place because of him and his family's impact. Please join me in saluting a true Gardner hero!



*(And.....he wears the best auction costumes!)*

*---Jackie Taylor, Teacher*



"Caitlin slipped into her role at Gardner as if it was built specifically for her. Her skill, dedication, enthusiasm, laughter and total commitment to the school and to all of our students was, and has always been, absolutely exemplary. I am fortunate to have worked with and learned from her and I wish her all the very best in her life after Gardner."

--- Mark McGough, former Head of School



# WE ARE BETTER FOR THE KNOWING OF YOU, CAITLIN

**THIS MONTH WE SAY FAREWELL  
TO OUR BELOVED TAHOMA  
CLASSROOM TEACHER CAITLIN  
AS SHE DEPARTS TO JOIN HER  
FAMILY IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK.  
OUR GARDNER COMMUNITY  
IS GRATEFUL FOR THE LAST  
FIVE YEARS WE HAVE BEEN  
SO FORTUNATE TO KNOW  
HER. THANK YOU CAITLIN  
FOR BRINGING THE BEST OUT  
OF EVERYONE YOU COME IN  
CONTACT WITH.**

Caitlin wooed us from our first glimpse. Both her resume and interview told us we had someone special. We had found a perfect match - which is not always easy at Gardner.

Caitlin's tenure has filled us with a myriad of inspiring, meaningful, and happy memories. While not a complete list, these are some of the ways in which her legacy has impacted us:

- Raising the curricular bar by her ability to create relevant and critical Thematic Studies, including spectacular Culminating Events and amazing field trips.
- Her ability to take on projects and lead events - using her passion for music coupled with her master organizational skills.
- She is the ultimate puzzle master—able to build our complicated schedule with ease.
- Her compassion and support during Patrice's illness was constant and relentless. She's often our emotional rock.
- Baby Miles!
- Caitlin's connection to her students is exactly what middle schoolers need - a teacher who cares about who they are, where they're at, and where they're going.

It's hard to imagine Gardner without Caitlin. I will miss my inspiring colleague, my soccer teammate, my 'Buddy' teacher, my friend. Change is not always easy, and this particular one feels like a loss for us. But, as she reminds us each June, 'I am better for the knowing of you'.

--- Jackie Taylor, Teacher



# OVERHEARD

## AT ALUMNI NIGHT

### ON TRANSITIONING TO HIGH SCHOOL

"I feel like the personal learning experience I got here was amazing, because it set me up better. When I got to high school I knew what I was doing and I did well. Even when it got harder I had the tools necessary to keep going."

"Just valuing the quality of the work you are producing, and the ability to have a discussion about it, and seek assessment along the way, helps take some of the pressure off of what grade you are getting. At Gardner I learned to take pride in my work and do my best, and then it turned out I was really well prepared when I got to high school."

"Going in to high school...I figured I'm going to do the same thing I did at Gardner... I excelled here. I went into every assignment and project and outdid it. I was holding myself to such a high standard that I didn't have time for everything. I had to figure out how to take pride in my work, but also tone it down a little bit! It was an adjustment I had to go through when I left."

"I think the academic standard you maintain here translates to high school. When you get there, you strive to learn, because when you come out of Gardner you are a lifelong learner. You are prepared to want to know things."

### ON STANDARDIZED TESTS AFTER GARDNER

"I wasn't used to the testing environment, but what I was used to was critical thinking, and knowing my strategies going in. At Gardner you don't have standardized tests, but they do give you practice—they give you tests. It is about critical thinking, answering every question, knowing what time to spend on each question, going back through. They build those strategies into you from the moment you start at Gardner."

"The thing that Gardner teaches you is HOW to take a test. The best way to prepare for a test is to know how to take them. Know how to read critically and know how to think clearly when you are putting together an essay. Know how to do math equations in your head. That's what Gardner teaches you. Rather than shoving non-important information down your throat 24-7, Gardner teaches you HOW to learn. And then they allow you to do it on your own which prepares you more for high school."



In November, Gardner hosted Alumni Night, which gave Gardner grads an opportunity to share about life after Gardner. A panel of graduates spoke about their transition to high school and answered questions from current Gardner families. The panel included students now attending Seton Catholic, Catlin Gabel, iTech Preparatory, Portland Christian, Prairie High School and a graduate of VSAA.

## ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

### 2005

#### **Rahee Nerurkar**

Rahee is incredibly excited to be attending the UW School of Medicine beginning fall 2018. It has been her dream to be a doctor since she attended Gardner. She has been working as the clinic supervisor for Seattle Neuroscience Institute, a neurosurgery clinic in Seattle, and will continue to do so until she starts school. She welcomes communication from any parents or students who want to learn more about the pre-medical journey.

### 2014

#### **Noah Fields**

Noah has been accepted and plans to attend University of Montana, beginning fall 2018, after graduation from Seton Catholic.

#### **Hayden Cofer**

Hayden has been accepted and plans to attend California State University Maritime Academy, beginning fall 2018, after graduation from Seton Catholic.

*Have an update for a future edition of Klahowya Class Notes? e-mail [amaguire@gardnerschool.org](mailto:amaguire@gardnerschool.org)*



# SELF PORTRAIT GALLERY

Every year, Gardner students capture their own likeness in the form of a self portrait. Kalamans (K) through Tahomans (7th / 8th) work in the art room with teacher Jane Rhomberg, with each class using a different medium to create their self portraits.





**W**hile there has been much change over the past few years, we find many things remain the same. Our wonderful faculty and staff bring their magic every day to nurture the learning for our students that we as a community value. Our kiddos still come home every day filled with questions, invigorated by challenge, and covered in mud. Our community continues to grow and change as new families join us and alumni families move on, taking a bit of the Gardner magic with them as they move out into the world. In our twenty-third year, the laughter of children in tight-knit classes exploring the world around them continues to be the heart of what we do each and every day and we find ourselves poised to sail into a bright future.

And while all of these things remain cherished elements of our shared Gardner experiences, the hallmark of a progressive education is progress, change, and new experiences. We enjoy the fortunate position of having the highest enrollment in our school's history, have a fantastic and professional faculty and staff who are as committed to professional growth and development as they are to Gardner life, and devoted Trustees who value preserving the essence of a Gardner education for the generations yet to come. We have come a long way since our founding in 1995 and know we have much to be grateful for.

But Trustees must be focused on our future. How do we preserve and protect that which is so special about Gardner for the students of our students? There is much work to be done to ensure our continued success. A few of the most important elements of building a secure future together involves the creation of a strategic plan to guide the school through the next decade. While many of the objectives of our previous plan have been achieved, we know from American philosopher and father of progressive education John Dewey that despite past successes, we must begin the process anew: "Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another." It is our primary duty to develop and engage in a deep and thoughtful process to establish our goals and outline the necessary steps to achieve them over the next ten years. This will be a sustained,

comprehensive, and inclusive effort in which all members of the Gardner community are invited to engage, participate, and collaborate. This is an exciting time in the life of our school! None of this work will be possible without the continued expansion of the Board's expertise, Scott's leadership and guidance, and more hands on deck.



We are a small board of growth-oriented trustees looking to perpetuate the beautiful things about Gardner, and also to grow our own skills and knowledge base that will support the school in overcoming the challenges and opportunities ahead. As we work to increase our professional systems and achieve new levels of best practices, the Board knows that the path to the school's long-term success lies in thoughtful strategic planning, robust financial health, and effective facility planning. To this end, we are looking for contributors within our community who have experience and expertise in financial analysis and projections, facilities or buildings, or governance and strategic planning work to reach out to the Board or to Scott for a conversation. We'd love to talk!

While the Board must consistently scan the horizon for opportunities and challenges the school will encounter in the future, none of this would have been possible without the dedicated support of our outgoing interim Head and former Board chair, Andy Fields. For more than ten years, he has served, protected, and nurtured The Gardner School through a variety of possibilities and unique challenges. Without his stewardship, we would not be so well poised to capitalize on the next decade of opportunity and success. Join me in thanking him for his devotion, commitment, and service.

On behalf of today's students, and the future students yet to be, thank you for supporting the Board, faculty, staff, and students by coming together in the joyous work of collaborative achievement. We are excited about all that is to come!

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Gretchen". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.



# Treasures of the Sea

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**MARCH 3, 2018**

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