



Camp Newsletter

2020 Mid-Winter Break : February 17-19

Mid-Winter Break Camp

3 Mornings of Farm & Forest Fun In The Studio & Beyond



Newsletter Prepared By Chondra Norman

We had five young campers attend camp this week, between the ages of 3 and 5. I (Chondra) was the camp mentor, and my two older children, Phalizha and Annika (ages 11 and 8) chose to be my assistants. It turned out to be a great group of people sharing three beautiful mornings together. Thank you for allowing us this opportunity!

MENTORS' DIARIES:
NOTES FROM THE FARM, FOREST AND STUDIO



3 Beautiful Mornings

Monday morning began with a little getting to know one another while coloring and an introduction to our welcome songs and studio routines. The children watched me enact a story with dolls, entitled “Millie’s Stones”. This story was told in 3 parts, one part per day. The first story was about the first stone, and its “wisdom of old”. In this story, the children watched Millie learn to listen to the song of her heart, with the guidance of her great-grandmother. She also began to listen to the songs of other’s hearts and was able to save her animal friends in the forest from some troubled waters (literally) by following the wisdom she had gained. After the story, the children enjoyed picking out fabric and yarn and practicing with scissors and glue, as they created their very own satchels that would later hold their own magic stones. We then enjoyed a snack of organic apple slices and gluten free pretzel sticks. Outside, we first ventured over to the pasture and met the cows.

The children fed them hay through the fence. Some of the campers were thrilled, and others were quite cautious. We then wandered over to the mud kitchen, where the children explored the pots and pans and other utensils. A few of them were too chilly to enjoy themselves after a while, so we made our way back to the studio for some warmer free play, and a repeat of snack time- apparently they worked up an appetite outside! At closing circle, we tried to see who could remember everybody's names, and finished with our closing song and excitement to return the next morning.

We entered Tuesday with watercolors and free play as everybody seemed drawn to the baby dolls and dollhouse. Part 2 of our story watched Millie receive the second stone from her great-grandmother, and the "wisdom of old" to go with it. In this story, Millie learned to "tune into nature", and she figured out how to save the forest outside her home by providing the soil with the nutrients it needed. We watched her learn all about how composting works. After the story, the children were able to choose their own 3 magic stones from an assortment we had available, and then they enjoyed some time painting them to their liking. After they were dry, they got to add them to their satchels to take home! Snack that day was organic oranges and gluten free crackers. We began our outside time in the field, where there aren't a lot of trees, so the children could feel the warmth of the sun as the frost around us began to melt. They played some runaround games, such as tag and 'unicorns and dragons', which helped get their blood pumping and their bodies warm. It worked- many of them shed their coats after a while! They then asked to return to the mud kitchen, where they began to work together to create soups and drinks. They discovered the pond just a little ways from the mud kitchen, and we took trips down together to gather water for their muddy concoctions. When we returned to the studio, they reminded me of our repeat snack time (if you do it the first time, that's the way it always must be done, right?), and then we had our closing circle with songs and books, and the children unanimously agreed that the best part of the day was the mud kitchen, so we planned to return there the next morning.

On Wednesday, we started out the morning with play doh, a card game, and of course baby dolls. In Part 3 of our story, we watched Millie receive the third stone and she was able to cure her great-grandmother's illness as she reaped what she had sewn in the previous two parts of the story. The children received their camp t-shirts and we had some fabric markers out for them to take turns signing (or otherwise marking) their friends' shirts. However, it quickly became apparent that this age group was not ready for this idea and they did NOT want other friends marking on THEIR shirts. Haha. So- the mentor/assistants signed their shirts, and other than that they each decorated their own shirt in whatever beautiful design they chose. Enjoy those! For snack, we had organic carrot slices, tortilla chips, and hummus. Outside, they spent some time warming up in the field playing hide-n-seek in the sunshine, and then they all wanted to head to the mud kitchen. We wandered back and forth between the pond and the mud kitchen, where they collected pieces of ice off of the frozen pond, found different ways to break them, and then threw a mud-cake birthday party. We returned to the studio just in time for a quick repeat snack ;) and then closing circle to say goodbye.

Child-Lead Interests

On your camp registration form, you each provided a small list of your children's interests. Here is that list, with an arrow next to everything that we were able to incorporate this week. Yes- all of them have arrows! Success! We like to keep our activities as interest-driven and child-lead as possible. Please thank your children for keeping this week interesting.

- painting rocks
- a unicorn craft [ok, it wasn't a craft- it was a game]
- playing hide and seek and tag
- storytime
- baking/cooking [I hope the mud kitchen counts!]
- sandbox [Is the forest kind of like a giant sandbox?]
- make-believe
- playing cards: crazy eights and go fish
- playing with toys
- barbies or dolls
- playing on the playground outside [A child-made teeter-totter!]
- stories or games with a "magic" theme
- singing
- collecting rocks or gems or other treasures.



Overheard

Observations Of Your Children Being Adorable & Amazing

“Why is this mud so hard? I like mud to be squishy!” ~Brinley, walking over frozen tractor tire tracks in the muddy path to the barn.

“Let’s see if it’s magnetic!” ~Gwendolyn, investigating the horseshoes in the field.

“You can have my baby.” ~Emma, offering her doll as a solution to an argument by two of her peers.

“I want to see if it floats. Or maybe it will break.” ~River, throwing a stick out onto the frozen top layer of the pond.

“I bet the chickens are hungry.” ~Oria, considering donating the unappealing portion of her snack to our feathered friends.

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DIRECTOR’S NOTES:
REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Program Is Enrolling For Next Year

Ashlar runs a Farm & Forest Program through the school year, and our options are expanding for next year. We will be offering a morning and an afternoon program, and families get to choose 2, 3, or 5 days per week. There are also drop-in options, breakfast options, lunch options, and after school options. These will be available to ages 3-7 and 8-12. Please see our [updated homepage](#) for the complete list and more details.

Yes, We Have Room This Year, Too!

This year’s Farm & Forest Program is on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday mornings from 9am-Noon. Exactly like the camp you just experienced! Pro-rated tuition (just paying the proportionate percentage of enrollment fees) is \$478 per month, March thru June. *Mid-winter break campers can attend the last week of February for free when enrolling now for the remainder of the school year!* We currently have 4 spaces open. Please contact me if you are interested in enrolling. You can learn about this year’s mentors by clicking on their names: [Ms. Melissa](#) and [Ms. Anne](#). I am always there in the morning to help children transition in, and would be happy to stay until your child is comfortable with our other mentors, too. It won’t take long- these mentors are fabulous!

Have You Seen Our Drop-In Option?

Our Farm & Forest Program has a drop-in option. Registration for the drop-in program is \$15/year, and then each drop-in day is \$40 for the morning. Drop-in days are available while space remains open, and in that case, you come as often as you'd like. (We currently have 4 open spots for this school year.)

LOOKING AHEAD::
SEE WHAT'S IN STORE!

More Camps To Come!

Please see our website for information or to register for our [Spring Break Camp](#) in April and any of the [5 Summer Break Camps](#) we are offering this year!

AROUND TOWN
FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT & EDUCATION

We'll See You In Town!

Ashlar will have a booth at many fun activities around town over the summer months. If you see us, be sure to stop by and say hello!

Sat,Sun 6/13-14 Maple Valley Days @ Lake Wilderness Park. Kidland is open 10am-8pm

Fri 6/19 Auburn Kids Fest @ Les Gove Park 11am-4pm

Sun 6/21 Auburn Farmers Market @ Les Gove Park 10am-3pm

Sat 7/25 Maple Valley Kids Festival @ Lake Wilderness Park 11am-3:30pm

Sat 8/8 Covington Kids Fest @ Covington Community Park 10am-2pm

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS
THIS WEEK IN PICTURES

Phone Photos

Here is our featured photo from the week!



We enjoyed our week with you! Come back soon!



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