



January Newsletter

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New Year, New School! We are now Down to Earth Nonprofit, a forest school with the long term goal of continuing to offer high quality outdoor education but additionally expanding our school to be more equitable and inclusive. A nonprofit cannot belong to one person; a nonprofit program lives in perpetuity and belongs to the collective group involved- that's you! As staff and families pass through the program it will likely evolve and change, but the hope is that as a nonprofit our program has a better chance of being around long term, becoming more accessible, sustainable and shrinking the gaps to forest school among our local diverse community. Your tuition dollars are not just going to your own child's education but to a long term investment in making outdoor education a place for all children. Together we have such an opportunity here, to pool resources, support trying new things and together creating the framework for a strong program. We're still a young school and trying to figure out what works and your flexibility and feedback are integral in rooting down and building out something that can thrive. We are open and available for your questions and curiosities; they are most welcome! Thank you for being a part of this community, each of you; it's an exciting time full to the brim with possibility!



Class Updates

Water Class There was a lot more dramatic play in class right before the break which is a big milestone for many preschoolers and means they are moving on developmentally. It takes a lot of growth to play with others, have self control, be flexible, have good communication as well as access and verbalize creative ideas. A pack of preschoolers playing “kitty family” is chock full of all the growth goodness. Come on out and observe us anytime!

Fire Class Fire Class is going to hit the ground running in this next Season! We are going to review our class agreements on how we “do school,” knowing that we’ll all be a bit rusty (myself included!), and we’re going to dive into our FolkTales and Storytelling unit. We’ll be *play* acting, learning the writing process and reading so many wonderful stories. We will start easing into small groups with specific areas of study and I cannot wait to play!

Earth Class This month the Earth Class will be embarking on an exciting project, studying native animals of the Pacific Northwest! Students will choose their favorite animal, learn how to do research on a topic, and collect facts and information to present. We will also be adding Nature Journaling as a literacy component, and we plan to continue learning improv games to foster collaboration.

Air Class Air class has a lot to look forward to this coming month. Students will be working together to decide on a big project based on their own interests, trying out some Readers Theater for the first time, challenging themselves with learning new math strategies and continuing to work with compasses and maps to become proficient in orienteering and ancestral skills. We will also be doing art projects every week with Ms. Diana and keeping up with our Nature Journaling. As always we will have plenty of time built in for unstructured play!



A Message from Ms. Heidi



When I started this school all those many years ago, I just wanted a place where Tobias could be free. He had two imaginary friends (Kayak and Judah), and he hated being inside. I never said “I am going to start a forest school,” rather it has just evolved into what it is today with very little effort, & doors continue to fly open as if Down To Earth was always meant to be. As a small female business owner wading through covid, the raising of my own kids and dealing with a life changing loss, I look back and treasure what I have built and cherish what I have learned. But in the end Down To Earth does not belong to me, it belongs to the people, the community. As a nonprofit I can widen the net and catch more of those kids who really do need more dirt under their nails or to smell the air after a rain and know what that’s called- petrichor.

I bid farewell to a beautiful seven year run and dissolve myself as owner. I was hired by the DTE board in December as the executive director. Forest School is now in all our hands and together its pathway forward depends on where we as a community want to see it go.



Ms. Heidi’s first forest class 2015

Announcements

It is getting cold! Time to put on all the layers. Here is a [handy guide to layering](#). It is a good time to make sure your child has *extra warm socks in their backpack* and mittens too! It is also nice to have a small hand or dish towel to dry off cold wet hands when needed. Please keep extra socks and a towel in your backpack for the duration of the rainy season.

Enrollment We will be starting enrollment for next year beginning February 1st. All current families will have a two week period to give us confirmation of their 23/24 school year plans before we open slots to the general public.

February Break There is no school February 20-23rd for a Break. Please try your best to squeeze in those family trips during that week. School resumes on February 27th.

Camp Forest Camp dates will be released mid February.



WE WILL MISS YOU, MILLER!



The Air class made over \$600 on their hand carved block print greeting cards. THANK YOU SO MUCH! I think we have convinced Ms. Audra and Ms. Diana to do one more print run. Email Ms. Heidi with requests.

School Directory If you would like to share your information with other families for playdates, birthday parties, carpooling and to support each other's businesses, please add your info here: [Family Roster Survey](#).

If you would like to see other families' information, you can find it here: [Family Roster](#).

Calendar Make sure to keep an eye on our school [calendar](#)!

