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Cambium

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INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM FROM THE ARBOR SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

COMMUNITY & STEWARDSHIP

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Community: 1: a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society
2: a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests

Stewardship: the conducting, supervising or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

On a Saturday in early May Arbor's campus was abuzz with activity. In the Herb Gardens a handful of parents and children—some students, some younger siblings—uprooted clumps of buttercup and grass from the base of lavender, rosemary and chives. On the stretch of lawn south of the Library a team of teachers, parents and older students wielded spades and edging tools to remove sod from a newly designated garden space. By the Senior building a small crew of 5th- and 6th-grade students helped a teacher construct a new bamboo fence. And from the woods along Saum Creek the buzz of chainsaws could be heard as a father and son cleared downed trees from the trail.

Parents talked and laughed as they weeded. Students paused in their work now and then to visit the play structure or climb into the fragrant branches of the blossoming apple trees. Younger siblings flitted among parents, brothers and sisters, the tire swing and the sand-

box. The sun deigned to shine for part of the morning, and the work went smoothly. By early afternoon we had sturdy new fences, freshly mulched beds, a passable woods trail, and a lot of tired, happy volunteers.

Community—and the stewardship of that community—lies at the heart of Arbor School. Encouraging children to be active community members fosters empathy, cooperation, communication, and responsibility. Tending gardens and grounds is just one of the many ways in which we cultivate these qualities.

In this issue of Cambium we offer further glimpses into the habits and traditions through which we build and nurture our community. We invite you to join in the merriment of yearly Arbor rituals rooted in the culture of the school; sing with buddy families at morning Assembly and play games at Friday Buddy Time; accompany Intermediates and Seniors as they engage in the work of Community Service and goat care; discover some of the ways in which students reach out to the larger community through partnerships with a public elementary school and a transitional housing organization; and, of course, have recess.

We hope that these accounts and anecdotes from Arbor School will inspire you to consider your own school's community and the practices that strengthen and sustain it.

—Betsy Miller, Garden Coordinator



ARBOR SCHOOL
OF ARTS & SCIENCES

RITUAL & CELEBRATION

by Ben Malbin

The kindergarten and first-grade Primaries make their way to the front of the animated huddle of students, wriggling in front of each other so they will be the first to see which side the oatcake has landed on. With a flourish, Kit raises the dense, round cake (baked by fourth- and fifth-grade Intermediates) in the air, winds up, and rolls it down the grass hill by the parking lot. It eventually falls, probably having lost several chunks on the long roll, and is lifted high by a teacher to show either an X or an O, thereby predicting the weather for the next several months. Screams of joy or disappointment, depending whether that means more snow, fill the air.

Weather forecasting by oatcake may seem strange to non-Arborites, but for us it's just another day in November accompanied by poems and songs about young friends and old stories to light the winter dark. Such rituals are met with genuine, sensible seriousness by students and faculty alike.

Many other traditions punctuate the Arbor year. One is Ceili, based on an Irish celebration featuring singing (“Gypsy Rover,” “Roddy McCorley,” “Maidrin Ruadh,” and more) and dancing (with fancy footwork, and occasionally with wooden swords). The steps change slightly from year to year, but revolve around the same rhythms. The Arbor tradition of the Tomten is my personal favorite: the youngest students leave their shoes outside of their classrooms, believing that the Tomten (a figure of Scandinavian folklore—see *The Tomten*, by Astrid Lindgren) will fill them with candies, tangerines, and toys. Excitement builds as signs of the Tomten are discovered around campus (recent incarnations of the creature have often left a dusting of glitter as they wandered the grounds) and shrieks of elation issue from the Primary classrooms on the winter morning when the little presents do arrive... thanks to older students who keep the magic secret absolutely. The Winter Solstice celebration in December yields several rituals, including the reading of beloved poems like W. B. Yeats’s “The Song of Wandering Aengus,” dancing around an apple tree, and the pouring of cider onto a new tree by the youngest member of the school. Annual goat births provide Spring rites—tending to the large waddling nanny goats, visiting (and occasionally bottle-feeding) the new babies, and conducting naming ceremonies. Burger Day comes in May, when the eighth-graders cook a notoriously delicious lunch for the rest of the school to raise money for their class trip. There’s also Field Day on the second-to-last day of school, as at many elementary schools. Ours is, as veteran Senior Humanities teacher Una puts it, “more tribal,” as buddy families form the teams competing in unusual relay races (a favorite involves quickly donning a costume and singing a verse of a well-known song before passing the costume pieces to the next buddy pair) and other quirky competitions.

Other celebrations extruded from the curriculum add color and continuity to the Arbor experience. The second- and third-graders participate in an Oregon Trail Day during years of the Communities Theme study, doing 19th-century chores, trekking past landmarks, surviving stampedes of bison (Primaries robed and masked), and fording the creek with homemade Radio Flyer prairie schooners; the fourth- and fifth-graders dress up for a grand Renaissance feast each Inventions & Discoveries year; and Seniors (sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders) celebrate Diwali every third year while studying



November, 1991: Kit Hawkins rolls the oatcake at one of Arbor’s first Samhain celebrations

Miles Cohen as a bison
on the Oregon Trail



South Asia. During the Americas Theme year, in addition to cooking a feast for a traditional Northwest Coast Potlatch, each Senior takes pride in carefully sewing an intricate Robe of Power with brightly colored felt. Senior students of Spanish also delve deeply into the tradition of the Day of the Dead, celebrating its history, creating works of art in *papel picado* and other media, and making a community altar and telling stories to remember loved ones who have passed away.

These rituals and others are crucial to Arbor's conspicuous sense of longevity and togetherness. Older buddies remember when they received Tomten gifts, students recall various goat shenanigans, and all alums remember sharing popsicles and launching rockets on the soccer field at the end of a boisterous and exuberant Field Day. We are a community knit together by singing old songs with new tunes and verses, by finding mystery and unpredictability in the familiar, by building new memories on old traditions.



Dr. Nel Noddings, a thinker whose work has been critical to the development of Arbor's philosophy of education, was gifted with a Robe of Power of her own when she visited us in 1999. Visitors often find themselves involved in school performances and rituals.

Seniors gather in their Robes of Power for a potlatch feast and celebration

B U D D I E S

by Patricia Ballarché

"I love buddy time, you get to make new friends and just have fun! My buddy has an energy that always makes me smile, she's always there to lift you up when you're feeling down, and always has an idea in mind. She and I just seem to really click!"

An eighth-grader walks hand in hand with a kindergartener, chatting about weekend plans or the Trailblazers' playoff efforts. A seventh-grader pushes a third-grader on a swing. A sixth-grader recites a poem to the entire school with a second-grader by her side. These are all natural, routine occurrences at Arbor School during Buddy Time.

In September each fifth- through eighth-grade student is carefully matched by the teachers with a younger buddy from kindergarten through third grade. Gender, interests, temperament, age, and our particular hopes for each child's growth are all considerations in the matching process. Buddy announcements usually happen at the end of the month, and fever-pitch excitement builds among the children as the day draws near. Following the buddy matches, buddy families are composed of at least one eighth-, one seventh-, one sixth-, and one fifth-grade student—with a mix of boys and girls—and their younger buddies. One faculty member is assigned to oversee

If class numbers don't permit exact pairings, we sometimes assign a trio in which two older students "share" a younger buddy.

Fourth-graders work as a team to perform community service jobs while the rest of the school is at Buddy Time. They are still assigned to a buddy family for Assembly and other events, and throughout the year they prepare to become older buddies by reflecting on the qualities they appreciated in their own older buddies and by brainstorming possible approaches to help younger students be good community members.

each buddy family for the year, but the family is primarily known as the eighth-grade student's buddy family. "I like leading my buddy family," one eighth-grade boy reflected. "It's a nice responsibility."

Each week the older buddies retrieve their younger buddies from their classrooms for all-school Assembly, where they sit with the other members of their buddy family. Assemblies regularly include announcements and singing, with older buddies helping the younger ones manage themselves as respectful audience members—often by making their laps available to the littlest. Afterward they escort the younger students back to their classrooms. "My buddy is not as shy anymore and likes to race me back from Assembly," another eighth-grader noted with pride.

On Fridays 30 minutes are set aside for Buddy Time. Buddy families gather, and eighth-graders take it in turn to plan an activity that will engage everyone, whether it's reading, an art project, Charades, or an outside game. Buddy families also form the structure for events throughout the year, sitting together for a Thanksgiving meal, planting and mulching trees, building outdoor structures, or participating as a team on Field Day. "We have a good buddy family that is well balanced and we all have a blast whenever we are together," wrote one sixth-grader. A seventh-grader agreed: "We have nice people in our buddy family... everyone is supportive." Many students notice that buddy families help form closer bonds between kids who might not otherwise interact socially.

The older students appreciate the sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of the younger students, and the younger look up to the olders as role models and friends. Their relationships often extend to other times throughout the day and the year when they seek each other out for recess play or an exchange of birthday greetings or hand-made Valentine's Day cards. "I enjoy it when he comes and finds me during the day to say hi," said one Senior of his buddy. "I like that we have gotten close, and now whenever she sees me she will run over and give me a hug," wrote another. "She's just my kind of girl, and I'm glad we're together," said a third.

Buddy relationships are an important part of each child's experience each year at Arbor, and those special friendships often endure throughout the kids' time at the school. Graduation night finds proud kindergarteners fighting to stay awake long past bedtime in order to hear their buddies' speeches reflecting on Senior Projects and personal growth during years at Arbor. When one of those speeches acknowledges heartfelt gratitude for the younger buddy's unwavering

trust, devotion and support, a seed is planted that the little one will cherish as he grows to leadership himself.



Buddies pictured: Emilio Gray and Michael Brock; Peach Milton and Lisa LeFeber

SINGING AT ARBOR

by Craig Stewart

Craig Stewart taught math & science to Arbor Seniors from 1990 to 2004.

He began the tradition of Senior Sing, which endures to this day. On Friday mornings the Sixes, Sevens, and Eights gather on the floor of a classroom and sing from their own songbook, which contains songs the Senior team has chosen that are not sung by the lower grades—everything from “Love Potion No. 9” to “Istanbul, Not Constantinople,” from “Ring of Fire” to “Twist and Shout.” Several teachers and a handful of students accompany the singers on guitars.

Familiar and stand-out tunes at Arbor include:

“Scotch Cap”

“The Sunny Side of the Street”

Jimmy McHugh and
Dorothy Fields

“The Golden Vanity”

“Iko Iko”

“Kwakiutl Cradle Song”

“Guantanamera”

Jose Fernandez Diaz,
Jose Marti

“Raghupati Rhagava Raja Ram”

Ramdas

“Chemutengure”

“Jana Gana Mana”

Rabindranath Tagore

“Scatter the Mud”

“Maidrin Ruadh”

“The Drunken Sailor”

“The Road Not Taken”

Frost, Thompson

“The Promise of Living”
and “Laurie’s Song” from
The Tender Land

Aaron Copland

“Skokiana”

For me, nothing brings a group together better than joining voices in song. In my first year at Arbor, we sang as often as we held silent reading: nearly every day. Ours is a rich tradition of folk music in this country. It seemed only fitting that we tap into this deep reservoir of wisdom and sing together about the evils of moonshine, infidelity, sloth, brawling, betrayal, murder, thwarted romance and lack of moral fiber. We also sang occasionally of sunshine and brother/sisterhood and having a friend. As with many things in the lives of children, once is a tradition, and a few of the songs endured perhaps in spite of their dubious overall usefulness toward the common good, though the argument could be made that lasting, positive dietary choices were formed as a direct result of singing “Johnny Grevek’s Sausage Machine.”



*Now all the neighbors’ cats and dogs will never more be seen
They’ll all be ground in sausages in Johnny Grevek’s machine*

RECESS AT ARBOR

by Peter ffitich

There was a serious tone to the children’s conversations as they returned to the Junior classroom from lunch recess. Recess Chat was on the schedule and these second- and third-graders were anxious to begin. The two leaders of the day asked the opening question: “Are there any problems that you would like us all to help you with?” But in this case it was merely a formality. Everyone knew that there was a problem at Nilly Ways, a store established by Junior children on the playground weeks earlier and now a recess institution drawing interest from kindergarteners to fifth-graders.

Using the cast-off plywood and boards provided for fort building and an old bucket for hauling and storing water, a few girls had set up a platform for making pots from clay dug up under the tree where they had chosen to locate. Then one of them had the idea of making clay “food” to sell to other children at recess, and they named their store Nilly Ways. Arbor kids have long used pinecones as currency for such ventures and, with a ready supply to be found in the campus woods, business boomed for the store. Soon more children wanted to participate, and the founders had to wrestle with the challenge of being inclusive without losing control of what for them seemed more than just a game. Recess Chat provided a supportive forum for these children to think through how to do this and they felt comfortable allowing all comers to join, as long as they worked hard and supported the original mission of the store. With only an occasional social bump along the way as children learned how to manage and be managed by their peers, Nilly Ways was fully staffed at each recess by boys and girls

from across the lower grades. The older children had fun, too, playing the role of hungry customers.

Eventually, more children were interested in working at Nilly Ways than could be happily engaged at the original location. To accommodate more players, the children created branch locations around the playground where they sold “food” produced at the original store. This arrangement was comfortable for all the participants: those who loved to sell had more opportunities to do so, those who loved to make mud pies were happy to respond to increased demand, and the original participants still felt they had some control over the production and pricing.

On this day, however, a new problem had arisen and the children of Nilly Ways were not happy. A few enterprising first-grade boys had begun buying product from Nilly Ways and then re-selling it at their own location. The staff of Nilly Ways were upset about the loss of business that this caused them, but they were more upset about the principle of the thing. These boys weren’t doing any of the work of making the “food” but were getting rich on their pinecone profits. At Recess Chat the aggrieved children asked for the counsel of their classmates in responding to this perceived unfairness, and the collective wisdom of the group did not let them down. When one child suggested that the store refuse to sell to these boys, others cautioned that this would put the staff of Nilly Ways in the position of making decisions about who to include and who to exclude, seemingly counter to Arbor’s general policy that all children are always welcome in any game. Another child supported the younger boys’ right to do as they pleased with the mud creations once they had purchased them, and tried to explain the concept of “buy low, sell high.” In the end, the Nilly Ways workers agreed that they could not stop the practice of re-selling their goods, and decided instead to try to make it more attractive for the boys to cooperate with them. They also decided to try to lure back their lost customers by adjusting their own prices.

Ideally, each session of Recess Chat ends in this way, with the parties who brought the problem to the class letting the group know that enough solutions have been offered and that they feel they can move forward productively. The success of this process seems to arise from the fact that the offered solutions are coming from children who may have lived similar problems themselves and so are adept at understanding what will help. Solutions that are impractical or that no 8-year-old would ever try are quickly dismissed, and students who have tried strategies similar to those being proposed are able to offer feedback based on experience. In suggesting ideas, children take into account what they know about their classmates and about other potential actors in the story. “Oh, you have to wait until he cools down to talk to him,” or “She’s my cousin, I could try and talk to her for you if you want,” are responses that demonstrate the practical thinking that this process inspires.

Beyond serving as a forum for the resolution of specific issues, we have found that Recess Chat also helps our students begin to generalize about common types of problems and the kinds of solutions that can be effective. This knowledge then serves them well in the moment of conflict and fewer issues arise that require the help of the class community to resolve. When classmates do offer help, it is with a shared language and set of tools.

Recess Chat does take time during the school day that could be used for more traditional academic work, and the fact that we devote time to resolving the children’s social problems signals to them that we understand the importance of these issues in their lives and that we value the hard work that it takes to live in a community. We take the time because we do see recess as more than just a break from intellectual work and more than just a chance to get up and move: we see it as integral to the healthy development of the child. The lessons children learn at recess may be as important and are perhaps more lasting than any that we offer in the classroom. The problems they solve are their own. And the consequences of their decision-making loom large in their lives. Beyond playing traditional games and inventing new ones, beyond simply

“Dona Nobis Pacem”
“Gesù Bambino”
Pietro Yon
“Long Black Veil”
“Roddy McCorley”
“St. Anthony’s Chorale”
Joseph Haydn
“The Butterfly”
“To a Wild Rose”
Edward MacDowell
“Wondrous Love”
Alexander Means,
William Walker
“The Keeper”
“Do You Love an Apple?”
“Can’t Complain”
Naomi Shihab Nye
“Fanfare for Clappers, Rattles, and Drums”
Gunild Keetman
“Apple Tree Wassail”
“Adonai Ro’i” from <i>Chichester Psalms</i>
Leonard Bernstein
“North Skelton Sword Dance”
“A la Media Noche”
“Divertimento and Serenade”
Joseph Haydn
“Laudamus Te”
Antonio Vivaldi
“Trio in G Major”
W. A. Mozart
“Morning Has Broken”
Eleanor Farjeon
“In Soweto”
“Spring” from <i>The Four Seasons</i>
Antonio Vivaldi
“Largo”
G. F. Handel
“Opsa!”
“Through This House Give Glimmering Light”
Felix Mendelssohn
“Sheep May Safely Graze”
J. S. Bach
“The Circle Game”
Joni Mitchell
Canzona on “Romanesca”
G. A. Frescobaldi
“The Giant”
Stan Rogers

reveling in the freedom to exercise their young bodies and voices, it is at recess that children are given the opportunity to practice the habits that we teach. They may choose to include or to exclude, to negotiate fairly or to take advantage, and to lead, follow, or collaborate. In the unstructured environment of the playground, children practice making and keeping friends, joining new groups and games, and simply finding their place in the social mix. Through recess and Recess Chat, we work to provide a safe environment in which children can take the opportunity to try and, sometimes, to fail as they internalize the lessons that we teach.

For the children at Arbor, that environment includes open space for ball games, trees to climb and build forts under, gardens to dig and discover in, as well as a couple of play structures and one set of swings. By design, that environment also includes children from kindergarten to eighth grade sharing the same resources at the same time.



A visitor to Arbor during recess would likely see a K–8 group of boys and girls playing soccer, other smaller mixed-age groups playing ball games and tag, a few children climbing trees and a few more building forts under them, some finding treasures in the garden or gathering around the pond, and—always—a group practicing turn-taking at the tire swing.

Mixing the children in this way provides an opportunity to build the same commitment to productive relationships and to a sense of community across the grades that Recess Chat helps support in the Junior class. As they play together, we ask all of our students to see themselves as resources for their peers. We ask them to notice the lonely classmate, to include the newcomer, to adjust the game for those younger or less confident, and to take seriously their role in conflict resolution. In turn we ask those who need help to turn first to their peers. To the extent that this works at Arbor it is because we endeavor to develop a culture that supports peers as resources.

In addition to class councils such as Recess Chat, a key element in building this culture is our buddy program, which creates mixed-age relationships across the grades. Ask an Arbor younger whom he might look to for help on the playground and “my buddy” will be at the top of his list. Given the responsibility of caring for their younger schoolmates, these olders step up in a manner that is different from adult guidance. Not so far removed from the early elementary years themselves, they are readily empathetic, and yet their additional years of maturity give them useful perspective as well. The impact of having a buddy program on the development of a caring community is evident at any Arbor recess, where we see youngers run to olders for hugs and olders making accommodations for youngers in games across the playground.

Of course teachers have a role at recess, too. We watch, listen, and occasionally join in the children’s fun. Certainly there are moments when we must step in and assert ourselves as the enforcers of the rules, especially when safety is an issue. More often, though, we are able to stand back and use our ears and eyes to assess the quality of the play around us. Like coaches on the sidelines of a game, we may quietly pull a child aside to suggest a change in approach or behavior. When children seek us out for help in solving problems we try to respond with the same steps that we ask them to practice among their peers. First, we listen, and sometimes that is all the help a child needs. If more is required, we brainstorm strategies that may help solve the problem without our direct intervention. Finally, if all else fails, we step in. Even then, however, it is not our preference to assert ultimate authority, but rather to model respectful dialogue and thoughtful dispute resolution. We ask all parties to consider their role in creating the problem and we ask all to think about appropriate ways to make amends. Always, our goal is to help the children develop the skills that they will need to address the inevitable challenges of living in a community, and recess provides both the reason and the opportunity for that development.

INTERMEDIATE COMMUNITY SERVICE

by Charles Brod

From the woods at the head of the bridge, cries ring out: “The Trojans, the Trojans!” “Attack, attack!” “Take no prisoners!” “Get Hector!” With a rush, a charge is mounted and fourth- and fifth-grade Intermediates spring into the underbrush, not with sword and shield, but with loppers and long pants to set upon brambles and nettles with gleeful ferocity. The minutes pass quickly and when I announce it’s time for lunch, students turn and plead to stay just a while longer, their enthusiasm and determination to beat back the blackberries unabated by the prospect of food and recess. In transformative moments such as these, work has become play and play has yielded work.

Community Service at Arbor is a time when we put children to work bettering the campus in innumerable ways. We hope to help them develop a sense of stewardship, of taking care of their environment, and to give them an opportunity to learn hands-on skills our modern culture has too often precluded. Hammering a nail, sawing a board, pushing a wheelbarrow, mucking out a goat pen, and swinging an ax to dispense with invasive trees are all part of the Intermediate community service experience.

There’s no fooling kids when it comes to recognizing real work. Real work has a concrete and immediate purpose; the results of bona fide efforts are tangible and visible. You know you have worked when the nettles lie piled and the path is passable. The sparkling aquarium glass and clear water speak to a job well done. Loose pages converted to stapled and folded project booklets indicate careful effort. Many children relish the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty. As a teacher, it’s rewarding to be surrounded by eager children all asking what it is they will do for this Community Service period.



*Betsy Miller and Reuben Mindlin
Schafir plant sweet peas in the
front garden*

At Arbor, Intermediate students each spend a half-hour each week serving their school community. Children gather in a group of ten while the other three-fourths of the class participate in P.E. This frees a couple of classroom teachers to plan jobs for the students. In fall and spring kids commit to working in the gardens or woods on a regular basis, which minimizes time spent on organization so they can quickly get started with the task at hand. Gardens need to be seeded and weeded, beds mulched for winter and then tilled in the spring for summer growth. Windfall apples need picking up. Trails must be routinely cleared. The cleaning of a fishpond can lead to fascinating discoveries of what lies buried beneath the muck.

Community Service also becomes an extension of classroom lessons as informal conversations arise. For instance, the reproductive strategies of various plants become more than merely academic when you strain against the deep-rooted blackberry crown or pick your socks clean of burrs. Determining the appropriate quantities of food for a celebration or overnight field trip requires competence with fractions and conversions. Students can experience the action of the lever in loading up a garden cart with materials. Community Service is also a forum for casual conversations with students that reveal their thinking and view of the world. These interactions, unburdened by instructional expectations, can open a different dimension of the student/teacher relationship.

When the winter turns the weather sour, Community Service efforts often come inside to the classroom. Children’s work always needs filing or display on the walls.

Materials require preparation for an upcoming lesson. The inevitable hodge podge we've made of class supplies needs sorting and reorganization. Wood needs cutting under the Portico to make building supplies for the catapult competition.

At Arbor the real work has real consequences for stewardship of the land. With 20 acres on the edge of suburban Portland to maintain, there is plenty to be done. Children help to tend several gardens, one dedicated to produce we harvest and donate to a local family shelter. Many garden chores are accomplished by the fourth-graders, who work as a happy tribe with a couple of teachers while the rest of the school has Buddy Time.



A large part of the campus is woodland that hosts a number of invasive species and, in recent decades, had grown far from its original mix of native plants and shrubs. In the past eight years, students and staff have planted more than a thousand trees and shrubs in an effort to restore the woods to its pre-settlement diverse composition of plant species, enhancing its health and augmenting its utility as an outdoor lab and classroom. The children have continued to tend this legacy as they clear around plants and make surveys to check survival rates from year to year. On certain work days the entire school has gathered in buddy pairs to mulch and plant.

Over the years, Community Service has become an increasingly integral part of life at the Intermediate and Senior levels. High school officials have reported that Arbor grads know how to work. They mean that

our students not only know the value of academic effort but are well skilled and eager for physical labor. We hope, too, that they carry with them something of the value of forming an attachment to a piece of landscape and tending it for the benefit of all.

TENDING ARBOR'S GOATS

by Lily Brod, Lianna Semonsen, Anna Hall, and Claire Williams



Arbor is situated on a former horse farm; in the earliest years of the school there were still horses in residence in the building—known as the Stables to this day—that now houses music classrooms. Perhaps it was the farm-like atmosphere that made those early students yearn for animals of their own. After much research, pygmy goats were selected as the ideal species for school life, and two or three does have graced a garden-side pen ever since, commended to the particular care of the Intermediates. Four of our current “Goat Girls” agreed to write about their duties.

We love our goats, even when they have lice, hoof rot, and four demanding kids (baby goats). They teach responsibility and bring us together. When Ellery came in new to our class this year, she loved the goats almost as much as the other girls did, and when she got the goat job with Lily, Anna and Claire, the goats helped us become friends. Sometimes there were problems: we argued because we felt that some people were only doing fun stuff, like walking the goats. But we worked it out. Another thing that

Intermediates and Betsy erect a tepee that will support scarlet runner beans

Helen Meigs, Ellery Ross, and Claire Williams with three of the new babies

brought us together was when one of our three goats was pregnant.

For months we had waited for Aspro, the white goat, to come home. She was sent away to be bred, and almost a year later she came back after miscarrying babies and then having pneumonia. She looked so different and sickly we nicknamed her Skinny Mini, but she was clearly very pregnant. We thought she might have twins.

One Friday morning in April, Betsy came running to find us. She was talking fast: “There’s *four!* She’s had four! Run fast, go now!” We screamed happily and ran as fast as we could to the goat pen. We saw a crowd of people hovering around the shed window. We ignored the gate and jumped right over the fence. We rushed in the shed. There were four bundles on the straw with Mom licking them fiercely. But one of the babies was very weak—we thought she was dead until we saw her ear flick.

Lily and Anna took this little runt home and nursed her over the weekend, staying up the whole night to bottle-feed her. She was still so weak Betsy had to feed her with a tube for about ten days. Now she lives with Betsy and is getting stronger every day. We call her Poppy and kids all through the school love her. The babies are healthy, happy, frisky, cute and lovable toddler goats. We nicknamed the boys Capricorn and Oreo and the other girl Cristina Columbus, because she was the first to venture outside the pen.

We love having goats at Arbor!



An Intermediate team mucks out the goat pen

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

by Greg Neps

Most Arbor students enter the Seniors (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) having grown up within the Arbor community, gaining comfort and confidence working on, around, and for this school. Accustomed to daily jobs from their first weeks as Primaries and having been introduced to Community Service as a formal class as Intermediates, they know that pitching in is a daily part of our lives. By the time they become Seniors, their Primary, Junior and Intermediate teachers have done a superb job of fostering a sense of responsibility while stoking enthusiasm for helping out. Many kids, in fact, view Community Service as their favorite part of the week. Senior students both past and present might joke that Senior Community Service is about moving tables and chairs or shoveling bark chips, but upon further reflection they have a deeper view:

“It has taught me to relax.” CV

“To make it count when it’s most important!” SH

“Community Service has prepared me to drive in front (to be a leader).” KRL

“I learned so much about my classmates in Community Service.” MT

“Most of what I know about how the world works, I learned in Community Service.” DGS

Senior Community Service occurs three days a week, with each student participating for 45 minutes per week. Additionally, each day ends with all the Seniors performing assigned clean-up tasks for the last fifteen minutes of school.

Frequently we joke about being “servants” of our community and how, if we were to put together a list of the things we built, tended, or mended, it would look like this:

- Tech booth
- Long-jump pit
- Fences, fences, fences
- Trails, paths, etc.
- Signs & placards
- Stages
- Pouring concrete
- Tables
- Garden beds
- Invasive plant eradication
- Trimming trees
- Painting walls & murals
- Multimedia displays
- Preparing feasts
- Repairing guitars
- Fixing broken plugs
- Snaking drains
- Distributing weekly pizza
- Cleaning gutters
- Trellises
- Raking leaves
- Play props
- Picking apples
- Planting native trees
- Fixing basketball hoops
- Shelving books
- Ball boxes
- Moving furniture
- Soldering circuits

Above right: Greg and a Senior tech crew hang a 60' x 15' canvas backdrop, painted by a group of their classmates for this year's outdoor production of “A Midsummer Night's Dream.”

Moving furniture and bark chips are a couple of the things the Seniors do to help in the smooth operation of our school, but the work is widely varied and serves as a foundation for Arbor's efforts in character education, too.

Community Service for the Sixes starts before the school year begins. During the waning days of the summer a group of sixth-graders comes to Arbor to prepare the school for everyone's arrival. Setting up classrooms, organizing materials, seeing their schedules for the first time, labeling cubbies and hooks with each student's name (taking into account each person's height while loosely adhering to alphabetic order is an exercise in problem-solving and diplomacy), and making a welcome sign for all the Seniors give these sometimes-nervous Sixes the opportunity to take ownership of their new space. This low-key introduction allays many fears, introduces new students to the community, and serves a concrete purpose: to prepare our 20 acres for the new year.

The Senior Community Service program has varied jobs dependent upon schedules, the needs of the community, and the talents and interests of the students. A few things are critical to its success: small groups, real jobs with impacts and consequences, and opportunities for open, honest dialogue among students and teachers. Sure, every year starts out the same—with spreading bark chips and bark dust on paths and around play structures. And sure, these early classes are largely spent catching up with friends, but the camaraderie around a shared task with a definitive end helps to draw us back together—to get (re)acquainted through stories and splinters.

At the conclusion of this task, we gather together to talk frankly about why we do community service and what it means to be part of a community. Borrowing from the *Tao Te Ching*, I share with them the three treasures that the Sage prizes: charity, simplicity, and humility. We periodically evaluate our actions in terms of these tenets throughout the year. From opening the door for a fellow student to raising money for victims of Hurricane Katrina, from saying thank you for the loan of a pencil to volunteering at the local food bank, from picking up a piece of trash along the path to building a garden trellis, we reflect on all our acts to help demonstrate how each of us can have different perspectives on service and on communities.

At Arbor, one important aspect of community building through service is asking the Seniors to work in the classrooms of the younger students. For many it means returning to former classrooms and former teachers. Helping out as a math tutor, a reading coach, a Design or P.E. assistant keeps the students connected to where they come from, reminds them of the example they should set, and allows them to gain confidence in themselves and in their skills. For many (both teacher and student), this return is remarkable—to relive those memories, milestones, and projects from a different perspective and to help the youngers build their own memories, to pass those milestones, and to assist them in those same projects.

When the Seniors leave Arbor they have all dug holes, hammered nails, and used a drill to drive screws. We have hung chalkboards level on the walls, repaired plumbing fixtures without leaks, and mended electrical fixtures without shock or fire. We have constructed watertight boats and earthquake-proof shelves, but that is not what Community Service is about. As our long-time Senior Humanities teacher Una Whitcomb says, “It's lifting up the other end of the board—to share each other's burdens as well as their joys.” The best thing we build, tend, and mend here is community.



MARYSVILLE BUDDIES

by Fran Hossfeld



Nina Seidel and her Marysville buddy, Juliet

As a small independent school community, the Arbor faculty and parents have always worked to find and to foster sincere connections within the broader community. The effort to connect Arbor School to another school with different demographics and cultural make-up began in 2002, when we started an educational partnership with Marysville Elementary School in Southeast Portland, a K-8 public school of 460 students with a linguistically and culturally diverse student body. This partnership allowed us to begin a regular interchange between Arbor's fifth-graders and Marysville's kindergarteners and, reciprocally, between Marysville's fifth-graders and Arbor's K/1 Primaries. This student exchange has been thriving since its inception and continues to provide an opportunity to foster positive student connections and friendships that are beneficial to Primary students and fifth-graders alike.

As a K/1 teacher at Arbor this year, I've been excited to witness the success of this program and to play a role in working with the Marysville fifth-graders as they plan, prepare, and reflect on activities with their younger Arbor buddies. These enthusiastic students have spent the year as math coaches, teaching math games and lessons; dealing with fairness, winning and losing, and sportsmanship; and working to be strong leaders focused on and encouraging about the math work. During the Marysville visits to Arbor, I've seen fifth-graders reminding other fifth-graders to set a good example of behavior around the younger buddies, I've seen buddy pairs cheer upon finding out about a common interest, and I've seen many examples of patient teaching and deep care for another person.

In between visits from our Marysville buddies, we've kept up a consistent pen-pal exchange. I've loved watching my young students create colorful letters and fill them with eager questions about a buddy's favorite color and birthday or a sweet comment like, "I had a great time with you. I can't wait to see you again." The Primary Arbor buddies are very interested in finding out about their Marysville buddies' classroom and playground, and love to lead their buddies on tours around the Arbor campus, making sure to bring them to the best stops: the bunny cage, the Enchanted Forest, the goat pen. During each year of our fifth grade and K/1 exchange, the students have come together for a final visit, and this year we look forward to hosting our Marysville buddies for a garden-themed celebration.

It has been a joy to watch children of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds learn from each other and grow to care deeply about one another. Whether teaching a card game, preparing a geometry lesson, or helping their buddies navigate the 1-100 chart, the fifth-graders have been dedicated to the service of noticing and caring about someone else. While this project unites children of diverse backgrounds across Portland's southern regions, it also empowers students to apply their intellect, empathy and imagination toward leadership and friendship. We look forward to many more years of a sustained connection with Marysville students and faculty.

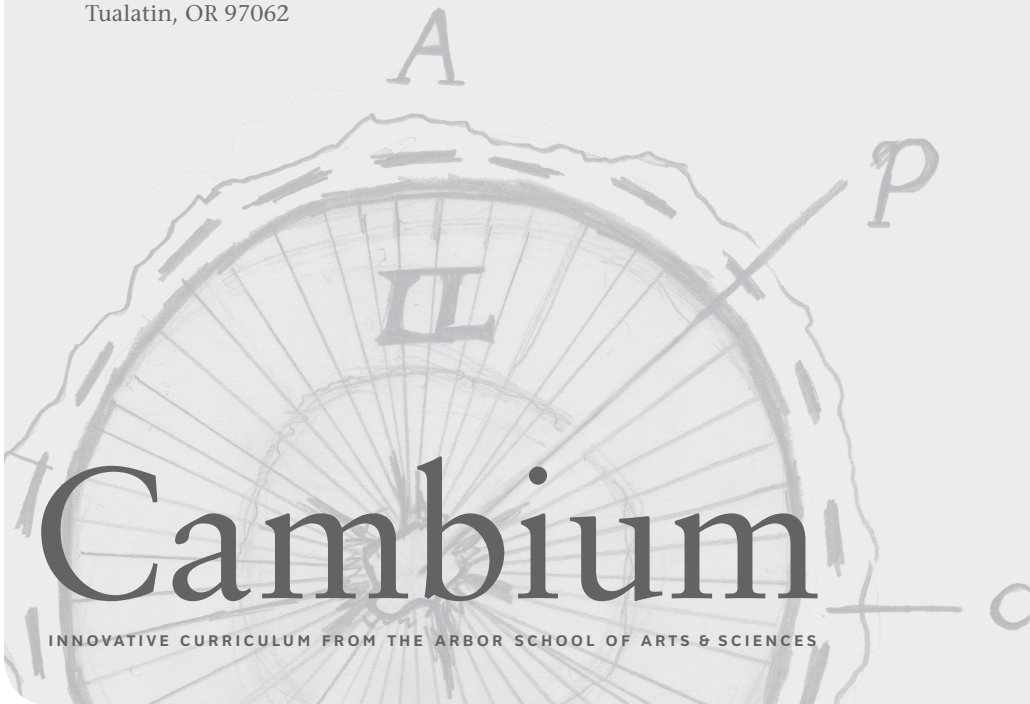


Marysville fifth-graders and Arbor Primaries enjoy a basketball game



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INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM FROM THE ARBOR SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

THE INTELLECT, CHARACTER, AND
CREATIVITY INSTITUTE AT
ARBOR SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

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Cambium: (n) the cellular growth tissue of trees and other woody plants, from medieval Latin "change; exchange."

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Masthead by Jake Grant, after an 1890 botanical illustration of a scotch pine cross-section.

The Arbor School of Arts & Sciences is a non-profit, independent elementary school serving grades K-8 on a 20-acre campus near Portland, OR. Low student-teacher ratios and mixed-age class groupings that keep children with the same teacher for two years support each child as an individual and foster a sense of belonging and community. An Arbor education means active engagement in learning, concrete experiences, and interdisciplinary work. For more information on the Arbor philosophy, please visit www.arborschool.org.

ICCI is a private, non-profit organization created to train teachers in the Arbor educational philosophy through a two-year apprenticeship while they earn MAT degrees and licenses, and to offer guidance to leaders of other independent schools. ICCI is now accepting applications for the 2010-2012 cohort of apprentices.



Arbor students at a garden work party

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HOME TO SCHOOL;
SCHOOL TO HOME**

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