



# STMS STORY



## UPCOMING

### October 23 NO SCHOOL

Professional Development Day

### Week of October 26 - 29

Parent Nights! 5 pm, details TBD.

Monday, 10/26 Boreal

Tuesday, 10/27 Tongass - Upper

Wednesday, 10/28 Taiga

Thursday, 10/29 Tongass - Lower

### October 30 NO SUNSET

Halloween Party! 2 pm, Details p. 4

### November 3 Election Day

Kids' Voting Activities

### November 9 - 11, 17 - 19

Parent Teacher Conferences

### November 16, Time TBD

Annual Give Thanks Open House

### November 26 - 27 NO SCHOOL

Thanksgiving Holiday

### December 11

Holiday Program & Party, TBD

### Dec 18 - January 5 NO SCHOOL

Holiday Break

## SPOTLIGHT

Mrs. Kristen, Lead Teacher in our Boreal community, announced she and her husband, AJ, are expecting their second baby in April! Congratulations to Kristen, AJ, and to Harris, who will soon be a BIG brother!



## : REVIVED PERSPECTIVE :

### Practical Life, The Next Generation

### – Social Emotional Learning –

**By Mrs. Erica Nash, School Counselor, Fall 2019**

*with 2020 Perspectives from Mrs. Annie Scott, Administrative*

*Manager, Mrs. Sabrina Binkley, Head of School,*

*and Dan Adamczak, Parent Advisory Committee Chair*

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons at the Children's House level lay the groundwork for healthy emotional expression, while Elementary students are guided to bring awareness to their emotional responses and recognize how to have thoughtful conversations with their peers and adults.

*In 2020, healthy emotional expression and self-awareness has become a very personal journey for all. As parents we have been forced to change our daily routines, encouraged to analyze every sniffle, and advised to stay home and away from those we connect with and love. This has taken a toll on the consistency of routine we seek – that which we know is best for young children and most comfortable for us. "Schools play a critical role in supporting the whole child, not just their academic achievement. In addition to a structure for learning, schools provide a stable and secure*

Our **Elementary Program** is using *MindUP*, an evidenced based mindfulness curriculum that seeks to promote self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. If children can learn to hold space for their thoughts and feelings, instead of reflexively reacting, I genuinely believe we are setting them up for a lifetime of health and wellness.

"It is easier to build strong children than repair broken men." -Frederick Douglas

**How Our Brains Work** - This serves as an introduction to parts of the brain, and how our brains function when stressed compared with relaxed.

**Awareness** - We use a walk in the woods as a metaphor for learning and practicing mindfulness. When a skill is practiced regularly, the more worn the trail becomes, and the path becomes a familiar stroll.

**Focus** - Introduce the Core Practice which is a breathing exercise that bookends our lessons and provides an opportunity for students to quiet their minds as they transition between the class and the Peace Room.

**Listening** - The first in our sensory series where each sense is highlighted for one week. Students practice identifying mystery sounds, and how to filter out irrelevant background noise to focus on what is important. Older students are challenged to identify different musical instruments from various songs.

**Seeing** - Students hone their visual acuity and expand their vocabulary as they describe similar wood pieces and work to differentiate their piece from others. As they slow down to notice the intricate details, they become more grounded and able to access that higher judgement and processing area of the brain. Upcoming lessons include: smelling, tasting, and movement.

*I feel so thankful that my children are able to attend in person learning at Spruce Tree right now. After spending the summer missing out on many of their favorite events, (like the fair and the over nights with friends) I am so glad they have the normalcy of going to school, especially as we head into the cold months of winter. I've also noticed that they seem to know how to behave in public spaces according to the health guidelines implemented at school, understanding their responsibility to protect and care for others. -Mrs. Annie Scott, Administrative Manager*

**Our mission is to create an experience that we all love.**



*environment for developing social skills and peer relationships. Social interaction at school among children in grades PK-12 is particularly important for the development of language, communication, social, emotional, and interpersonal skills." CDC on the Importance of Reopening America's Schools this Fall, cdc.gov -Mrs. Sabrina Binkley, Head of School*

Our **Children's House Program** uses a book called *Connected and Respected* as a foundation for: community building, welcoming similarities, and celebrating differences. This evidence based curriculum grew from national violence prevention efforts into an early childhood social emotional learning curriculum.

**Making Connections** - Students learn foundational social skills, such as introductions and greetings. They practice acknowledging others in order to shift their focus from egocentric toddlers to children who notice others.

**Alike & Different** - Children are encouraged to share their likes and dislikes and recognize that different preferences exist in their classroom community.

**Groups We Belong To** - As students are more connected to their classroom community, they begin to learn about each other, such as who has siblings, pets, or plays soccer.



Taiga students working on geography using the World Continent Map, and a lesson in numeration using Numeral Cards & Counters.

*As parents of Spruce Tree students we have been fortunate to have 9 weeks of school behind us but the social benefit to our children has likely been greater. Although school looks and feels different and there are adaptations they have had to make, my kids as well as many others gladly do this for the chance to come learn and play with friends in person. While I can say from experience that this excitement is not unique to this year at Spruce Tree, it is more appreciated in a time when other options for safe socialization and community involvement are fewer. As we head into winter, quarantining remains a possibility and continuing updates to health guidance will need to be addressed but I am happy that STMS, along with you the parent, sees the value in working through these to continue in person learning and the social and emotional benefits that come along with it. -Dan Adamczak, PAC Chair*

**Our Class** - Students participate in a community art piece and see how the contribution of each member adds to the overall aesthetic. This year we did a tree with fall leaves, and students were excited to see how many leaves were added by each classmate.

**Cooperation** - As children become more comfortable with one another, we progress to cooperative play and problem-solving as a group. An example: Students will be challenged to devise a way to cross a chocolate river using only marshmallows. The group only wins when everyone makes it safely across!



Ms. Erin, Upper El Lead Teacher, presents a multiplication lesson using the checkerboard.



Above Middle: Taiga children work together using a matching lesson.

Above Right: Upper El students work diligently on morning handwriting.



At left, fall is in the air at STMS!  
Above: Taiga children watch a video presented virtually by Ms. Jamie.  
Right: Lower El children work on geography.



OCT  
30



# SPRUCE TREE MONTESSORI HALLOWEEN PARTY!

- Who: Spruce Tree Goblins, Ghosts, Princesses & More!
- What: Carnival Games | Snacks & Treats | Crafts
- When: Friday, Oct. 30, 2 pm (NO SUNSET)
- Where: Classrooms, Playground & Gym



**COSTUMES ENCOURAGED FOR ALL!**

Students should bring their costumes to school, teachers will assist with dress up.

Sign up to provide carnival supplies or make a treat at [SignUpGenius.com!](https://www.SignUpGenius.com)