



The Residential Moon

Volume 3 "Seasonal Reflections" Winter 2010

WHAT A WINTER IT HAS BEEN - Joseph Hufnagel

While occasional snowstorms and freezing weather chilled our majestic mid-coast this winter, many warm and heart-felt memories were being formed inside the cozy quarters of The Community School. Relationships strengthened. Friendships deepened. Students and teachers gained confidence and experience.

We learned how to trust and respect one another. We settled into routines and schedules. We engaged in daily academic endeavors, performed various apprenticeships and service projects, and shared countless learning experiences.

We also won a national championship and found our way onto national television. We shoveled, skated, and sledged together. We made snowballs, snow people, and snow angels. We danced, sang, and laughed. We had disagreements. We resolved conflicts. We helped each other through difficult times. We met some great people and explored some amazing new places. We shared many special moments with friends and family. We worried and dreamed about the future. All in all, amidst the slumber of winter while black bears and others quietly hibernated, the students and staff of The Community School kept warm by staying active.



WE ARE NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!

The *C-School You Later* toboggan team from The Community School of Camden, Maine is a member of an elite club of national champions, which includes the likes of the New York Yankees and New Orleans Saints. Yes indeed, we are national champions! While the attendance of the National Toboggan Championships at the Camden Snow Bowl on February 5-7, 2010 may pale in comparison to the millions who tuned into the

World Series and Super Bowl, the character it took to willingly endure single digit temperatures over the course of a full weekend and repeatedly climb onto a thin slab of wood that is then launched down an icy chute onto a frozen lake at 40-50 miles per hour at the very least provides the rest of us *ordinary champions* with a deserving reason to feel proud of ourselves.

Members of the fastest high school sled team included Khia Newell, Karen Johnson, Billie Pirruccello, and Natalie Paul. After enduring a crash on their first run, the girls thought about calling it quits. Billie reflected, "It was so scary getting back on the sled again... We were all pretty sore and bruised, but then we thought, well it's nothing that can't be fixed." Khia recalled, "When we woke up on Sunday morning we weren't going to do it. But then we realized that there was no point in stopping there because we hadn't really accomplished anything yet. I guess we just really wanted to finish what we started."

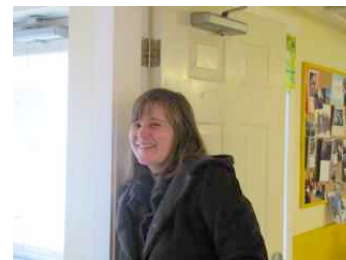
The team was a brave bunch and they seemed to actually garner strength, courage, and confidence from one another. As they hung on to each other with all their might, they flew across the finish line. They began hugging and high-fiving one another as they came off the ice after that last run, knowing that they had gone the distance and done their best. Perhaps Tyler Sabattis summed it up best when he said, "I learned that getting on a piece of wood and flying down any icy hill can be a lot of fun and it can also teach you a lot about life."

ACADEMICS - Carrie Braman



It's been a wonderful, exciting winter for the academic program, and the students are getting increasingly excited as we inch toward graduation. They are building their American Sign Language vocabulary and skills, and have spent the last few weeks practicing their favorite recipes for our sign language cooking show. Between this project and our movie-making art classes, they have become amateur filmmakers. This winter the students scripted and performed in a "mockumentary"-style movie about a Community School trip gone wrong, and are generally much more comfortable performing and hamming it up for the camera.

During our Green Initiative blocks, we've been taking what we learned this fall at NewForest Institute in Brooks, ME and applying it here at the school. The students have been working on individualized "green" related projects, and have been collecting data on school energy use, carbon emissions, and water conservation. For example, after learning about the high carbon "footprint" caused by beef consumption, Billie collected data from the culinary program on the amount of beef we eat at school and the tons of carbon we've emitted in the process (720!) and offered some suggestions on alternatives. Tyler has been compiling a comprehensive list of the salad vegetables we consume at school to make recommendations about what we could grow on campus next year. All the students have also participated in a water consumption relay race, to help them understand what life is like in parts of the world where water is lugged instead of free-flowing from a faucet; an appliance energy audit using Kill-a-Watt meters; and a visit to a sugarhouse to learn more about the science of producing maple syrup.



This winter we also started a weekly Community School Reading Group, where the students and I get together and read our own individual books quietly for an hour. It's been a nice way for us to get into a reading habit and to share our learning and interests together. At first there was some grumbling; now I walk into the conference room at the appointed time and most of the students are already curled up with books in hand, excited to begin where they left off! Many are finishing grade-level books for the first time in years.



We have addressed a wide variety of themes in diversity class and have recently been getting into deeper and more challenging discussions about race and racism in America. As part of her coursework, Billie has been doing presentations on The Civil Rights Movement to other students every other week. We have also started a bi-weekly "girls' group" where we discuss gender, feminism, and womanhood with female staff.



The students have continued their commitment to Big Brothers Big Sisters at the Appleton Elementary School, and spend time with their "Littles" every Wednesday. It has been a pleasure to see these relationships thrive and evolve over time, and to observe routines being developed each week. We were recently featured in the BBBS newsletter. Check it out!

Lastly, the kids have been plowing away at their individualized core classes, meeting regularly with volunteer tutors and using Individualized Learning Time to complete projects in English Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science. These projects vary from exploring and enacting Norse Gods to Friday quilting sessions to collecting interviews with community members. Tyler is memorizing traditional Native American songs, learning their context and meaning, and recording them. Zech is researching Mormonism. Karen is writing poetry and organizing a science project related to arm wrestling. Three students are attending a Biology Lab at Camden Hills Regional High School and are using that class to structure their individualized science credit.

It's been a joy to witness students learning and growing in afternoon classes, and to see many of them using this growth to propel them toward graduation and beyond.



WORK PROGRAM

Each weekday students head out to internships from 9 AM - 12 PM. Their work efforts go towards rent forgiveness and they receive 4 academic credits. Thank you to all of the businesses and organizations, which have provided valuable work experience to our students.



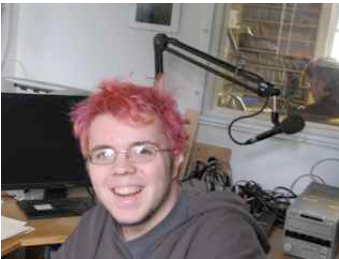
Natalie Paul at LilyPond Aquatic Therapies. Natalie also interns at Rockport Animal Shelter.



Karen Johnson at Merry Garden. KJ also interned at Penbay YMCA.



Zech McIntosh at Good Tern Co-op. Zech also interned at Three Dogs Café.



Ian Betts at WRFR



Eric Knight at Lincoln Street Center. Eric also interned at Tanglewood 4-H as well as his own Family Christmas Tree Farm.



Billie Pirruccello at the Camden Public Library



Khia Newell at Make a Wish Foundation of Maine



Tyler Sabbatis at Right Click Computers. Tyler also interned at Midcoast Recreational Center.

RESIDENTIAL LIVING



What's one or some of your fondest residential memories from the winter of 2010?



Scott McPherson: "For me, it's not really a single memory or event that stands out. It's more about seeing how even though individuals have had conflicts and that we all have shared some challenging moments together, there has still emerged a genuine looking out for one another. I think that the collection of our experiences have really pulled people together. People are definitely tighter than they were before."

Alix McLean: "My fondest winter memories are of being in that cabin at Wolfe Neck Preserve in Freeport. Seeing the sun on the ocean and the snow, attempting to sleep in the thick mound of snow, under the star filled sky - so cold, so beautiful though."



Maureen El-Hajj: "One of my best residential memories from this winter is walking into the kitchen to music blaring and students dancing all over the place. It's fun stuff. You can't be serious all the time. Another time I was talking to one of the students one night and she told me that I had been a good influence on her life. She said I gave good answers. It really affected me when she said that. I love these kids and the staff is great. It gives me energy when I go to work. I always seem to leave in a better mood than when I arrived."

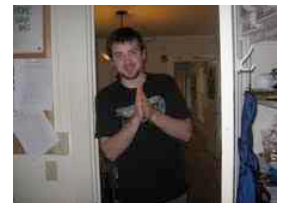
Khia prepares dinner as part of her residential living requirements.



Students gather upstairs for the weekly reading group.

RE-INTRODUCING JAKE SCHMIDT

Jake Schmidt has returned to The C-School as an intern. In addition to responsibilities around the school, Jake has also been working full-time at the Snow Bowl this winter. When asked why he decided to return, Jake replied, "I liked the atmosphere of the school. I also wanted to get a job so that I could save some money and get my life started. Jake has found his internship different from being a student. "There's more responsibility. I've been getting more involved in the community and meeting more and more cool people in the Camden/Rockport area. It's been really exciting."



There have also been challenges to being an intern. "I've had to deal with things that I never really knew existed last year when I was a student, like the long meetings and the amount of time that is spent trying to figure out ways to help each student." However, being a former student is also helpful and Jake finds that he has a lot in common with current students. "It feels really good to be able to help them out every now and then with different parts of life. I hope that they succeed out there and that they don't lose the opportunities that they've been given here. When you're a student you don't really realize how much The Community School has helped you out. The students probably won't realize it until they leave. But I hope that they take advantage of their opportunities. That's a big part of why part of why I came back."

In terms of Jake's future, this summer, he plans to work on a boat in Rockland, save up money to get his own apartment and go to college to learn a trade. "I think I'll always stay in touch with The C-School. It's done a lot for me and I think I'll always feel like I want to give back in some way."



CATHY'S KITCHEN

Teach with food and the heart will follow

Cathy Ames is the culinary instructor at The Community School. Beginning as a tutor in 2000, she now works closely each week with a different residential student to plan, purchase, and prepare nightly dinners. "I started out as a tutor and then I realized that I really liked it. I liked the atmosphere. I liked the whole idea of the place. I was a kid who didn't fit in, too."

From learning how to cook vegan food to participating in the Toboggan Championships, to traveling to New York City, Cathy is an integral part of the school. "I think, overall, the camaraderie of this term has been pretty special to me. Watching the students hug one another and really care for one another. But, if I had to only pick one memory above all of the others that stands out for me from this term it would have to be my birthday. They had food, balloons, cake - it really meant a lot to me."



Some of Cathy's favorite meals of the term include Zech's Vegan Pasta Alfredo and Chocolate Beet Cake and Eric's delicious Thanksgiving Dinner. "Something that I'm really proud of is that all eight of the students have learned how to make a decent lasagna and for many of them it was their first time making lasagna. Lasagna is a really important meal to know how to make, especially as you get older and start cooking for others. Basically, if you can make a decent lasagna you can get by."

RECIPE FOR VEGAN-FRIENDLY CHOCOLATE BEET CAKE

Ingredients: 1 large beet, water, unsweetened apple sauce, 2 tbsp. water, 1 tsp. vanilla extract, 1 tsp. apple cider vinegar, 1 cup whole wheat flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cocoa, 1 cup sugar, 1 tbsp. cornstarch, 2 tsp. baking soda, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cinnamon

Peel and dice one large beet. Place the pieces in a saucepan with water to cover and boil until soft. (I've heard that you can buy canned beets, so you may want to skip this step - and the resulting red hands - by using pre-cooked beets.) Allow the beets to cool, and then drain them, reserving the red water for another purpose. Put the drained beets into the food processor with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (clear) water, and process until pureed.

Pre-heat your oven to 325 degrees. Oil or spray a 9x13 pan. (Different sizes can be used, just adjust cooking time.)

Put the pureed beets into a 2-cup measure. Add enough applesauce to reach the 2-cup line. Add the 2 tablespoons of water, vanilla extract, and apple cider to the beets and mix well.

Mix the remaining ingredients together, then add the beet mixture and stir until well combined. Transfer to pans. Bake for 35-60 minutes, depending on the size of your pan. I used a 9x13 pan and it took 35 minutes. Test by inserting a toothpick into the center; it's done when the toothpick comes out clean.

Allow to cool completely before cutting and serving.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXPEDITIONS

Over the course of the winter, students completed four experiential learning expeditions. In November, students sat in on classes and spent the night at Unity College. The next day, students took a tour of Thomas College in Waterville. December brought students to Augusta to explore our capital city with a night spent enduring the elements at Wolfe Neck's Preserve in Freeport. In February, students traveled to New York City for a weeklong expedition. Highlights included museum visits, a tour of the NYC public library, a televised appearance on the CBS Early Show, a walking food tour of Chinatown, and a hike across the Brooklyn Bridge. For ELE #6 in March, students went back to basics for a camping trip on Deer Isle. Students and staff look forward to sharing two more adventures together in the spring before graduation.



Students and staff on the
Brooklyn Bridge

Camping on Deer Isle





STUDENT REFLECTIONS OF NEW YORK CITY

New York City was in many ways what I thought it would be and yet in other ways it was totally different than what I had expected. There were tall buildings, tons of restaurants, subways, and cars everywhere. There were so many people, so many different people. The first day we were there was so crazy. Walking through the city and seeing all the people heading to work or going about their everyday routine was crazy. And with the rain and all the umbrellas - it was kind of overwhelming. One of the first interactions that Billie, KJ, Mo, and I had with a lady on the street in Jersey City was not a pleasant one, and so I kind of thought that all people in the city were going to talk to us rudely. But when I first got on the subway and was talking to one of the other students, we were trying to figure out what stop was ours and this kind lady helped me out. She was so sweet. It made me realize, not all city people are rude. I can't just clump them all into a group of rude people because of one bad interaction I had. It kind of lifted some weight off of my shoulders. Coming back to Maine was so weird, walking on the streets that were so bare; no one on them, just Billie and I. I always thought that living in the city (when I move out on my own) was what I really wanted. But I realized while I was in the city that it's not really what I want at all. I mean being there for a week or two every now and then would be a great vacation, but I wouldn't be able to live there every day... - Khia Newell

I didn't sleep that well on the drive down because it felt like we were never going to get there. Finally 8 hours later we got to New York City, and, oh my goodness, was the traffic nuts. People were honking their horns! (And honking your horn is a three hundred and fifty dollar fine - now that's pretty crazy.) So we drove through New York City and all I saw were these big tall buildings and a lot of people. Then we got to New Jersey and found the firehouse that we we're going to stay in for the week. When we got there we went inside and it was way nicer than I thought that it was going to be. It had a swing and a rope inside. Russell and his wife were very nice to us. That night we had dinner and walked to the waterfront to see the backside of New York. It was so pretty. Tuesday was pretty crazy, too. We went for a ride on the subway and, oh my goodness, there were a lot of people on it. (Way past my comfort zone!) Then we went to Ground Zero and that was pretty shocking, being able to see where the twin towers fell.... - Karen Johnson

Going into the museums and the library was really amazing just because of the size of the buildings. They were so much bigger than the ones that I've been into around here in Maine. Obviously the stuff inside was really cool, too, but the buildings themselves were so detailed and massive in size. It's kind of funny to take a look at some of the bigger cities in Maine now and compare them to NYC. They really don't even compare...I also really liked going to China Town and seeing a different culture than I am normally used to. It was really cool to see the signs that were in English and Chinese. It was also really interesting going into a store and seeing brands and names that I couldn't understand... - Billie Pirruccello

The first dinosaur I decided to seek out was T-Rex. It had stubby little arms with small claws and huge legs with large feet connected to a lengthy body that contained a tail on one end and a thick skull on the other. It also had teeth the size of daggers...Next I met up with an exceptionally tall, goofy-looking creature that had a wide body with huge arms and legs and thick curved claws at the end. Its head looked like it was wearing a little helmet and it had wide stretched eye sockets with a zombie-like expression on its face. Never seeing something like this before I decided to read up on it and it turned out that it was a giant sloth...Now I see several suits of armor made from different materials consisting of leather chainmail and steel all woven with cloth on the inside to comfortably fit the wearer...After a while of walking through the armor exhibit a sad feeling came over me as I thought of the era of skilled and honorable warriors giving way to a wave of modern gun technology in which a child could bear arms and a man could be killed before he even realized what happened... - Ian Betts

STUDENT VOICES



What are some of the most important things you've learned since being at The Community School?



KJ: "I've learned more about myself and others. I've learned that I can just be me. I've learned how to live with other people even though we have our differences."



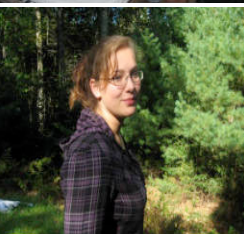
Eric: "How to live on my own and how not to have to be dependent on my parents. I also learned that I probably should go to college because I'll probably make more money and have more opportunities if I do. I wasn't really wanting to go to college before I came to school here. But now I'm starting to think that it might be the right thing to do. I even did my FAFSA the other day."



Khia: "I've learned a lot about myself. I've learned that the future is mine and that it is what I make it."



Zech: "I've learned how maple syrup is made. I've learned how to say cowboy in sign language. I've learned how to use apostrophes correctly. I've learned a lot things that you can't really write down on a piece of paper."



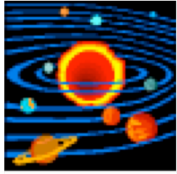
Billie: "The most important thing I have learned since being at The Community School is that it is up to me to figure out what I want and what makes me happy. I don't have to do what I think I should or what I think other people want me to do. Before coming to The Community School I made choices that I thought would make everyone else happy."



Tyler: "Trust. Opportunity. Self-determination. Wisdom. Educational learning, like math. I've learned a lot of math. Friendships. Relationships...with staff, students, tutors, and outside of school peers. Career planning. Being yourself. I guess I've learned a lot of things."



Ian: "Being at The Community School has helped me to learn what I want to do with my life. It's given me a deeper appreciation of my family and friends. It's made me realize that I want to spend most of the rest of my life trying to help them out. Before when I was living at home, I didn't really know what I wanted. Coming here I've gotten the opportunity to do and learn things that I never knew were possible. I think I've learned more in the last six or seven months than I have in my entire life. Basically, I've learned how to support myself so now I can help others."



Community Corner

First and foremost, we want to thank our amazing team of academic tutors who graciously volunteer time and energy each week to connect with our students. Their efforts helps students to gain confidence in their academic abilities, produce individualized projects, and fulfill graduation requirements in their core classes. Thank you for warming our school with your kind and generous hearts. We simply could not do what we do without you.

Over the winter, students have continued to learn how “community” can be a valuable resource in their lives. Whether utilizing the facilities at the YMCA, taking night classes at Camden Regional High School, partnering with neighbors to complete service projects, or finding fun social opportunities, with peers, students have been busy connecting with others.

In addition, The C-School experienced a wonderful flurry of memorable moments and special events this winter season. Some community-related highlights included: Family Days, Permaculture Design Charrettes with Newforest Institute, a collection of local community service and work projects, academic presentations, our first annual C-School Coffee House, and a Dinner & Movie Night with a group of students from Camden Regional High School.



Family Day



C-School Coffee House



Newforest Institute
Permaculture Design Charrette



Academic Presentations

Zech McIntosh



Academic Presentation

Khia Newell

Without community, we'd be just another school.

Seasonal Calendar of Events

March 3 rd	Annual Dinner
March 11 th	Coffee House
March 19 th -21 st	E.L.E.#6 - Deer Isle
April 3 rd	Family Day #3
April 3 rd -11 th	Spring Break
April 22 nd	Earth Day/Social Activism Project
April 23 rd	Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
April 23 rd -25 th	ELE#7 - International Maine Tour
May 7 th	Dancing with the Local Stars Fundraising Event
May 9 th	Elder Listening Project
May 3 rd -14 th	Academic Presentations
May 17 th -23 rd	ELE#8 - REFLECTIONS
May 24 th -27 th	Finalize Requirements & Prepare for Graduation
May 28 th	GRADUATION DAY



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