



## WEEKLY RECAP

UPPER SCHOOL

8/5/19 - 8/9/19



## **GARDENING AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY**

MS. CAMILA, MS. SAVANNAH, MS. ANGELA, DR. J

This week we worked on establishing bonds with our animal friends and preparing the groundworks for fall season of our market garden. During animal husbandry, students were introduced to the many needs of our school pets: fresh food/water, sanitation, safety and socializing. The students were shown how to handle rabbits and chicks. We discussed how to approach the animals and the difference in restraining for physical examinations vs. socializing. For gardening, students worked on clearing out the garden plot of weeds and grasses in preparation for marking pathways and the rows that will be topped off with compost. Each student (or team of two) began the sprouting of their own trays of seedlings! We will be planting these sprouts in the market garden and have a promising season ahead of us! It's time for broccoli, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, pumpkins, and so much more!

## **MORNING MEETING AND SOCIO EMOTIONAL**

MS. SAVANNAH, MS. ANGELA

This week during our morning meeting block, we discussed and practiced our morning meeting rituals (Brain Smart Start, Breath Keeper Ritual and Safe Keeper Ritual) and our morning gardening and animal husbandry responsibilities. We also created and applied for class jobs, and created our birthday ritual!

## **KEEPING IT SAFE**

MS. SAVANNAH, MS. ANGELA

This week, the students discovered what a safe environment looks like, feels like and sounds like. They also practiced the differences between solving a problem in a passive way, an assertive way and an aggressive way, as well as the benefits of responding with assertiveness, by creating our own plays!

The students also participated in a safety drill with Mr. John. The students practiced responding to our safety code words and learned about our safe spots to evacuate to in case of emergency.

## **BUILDING THE SCHOOL FAMILY**

**MS. DENISE**

This week, several Conscious Discipline concepts, structures, and rituals were introduced.

### **ASSERTIVENESS**

We introduced and acted out the difference between passive, assertive, and aggressive language and tone. More specifically we practiced using our words to make boundaries with each other in context: "Stop. I don't like it when you \_\_\_\_\_. Next time \_\_\_\_\_." (example: "Stop. I don't like it when you push me. Next time, walk around me.") We also focused on the importance of honoring each other's words. That is, stopping when someone asks you to. We discussed and practiced what to do when someone does not honor your words: ask for help instead of reacting/escalating. Using our assertive voice and

honoring each others words are an important part of keeping a safe environment so we can learn.

## **SAFE SPACE**

The Safe Space is an area in the schoolhouse where children can go to change their inner state from upset to composed in order to optimize learning. This week, we modeled and practiced how to use the safe space by going through each individual step. Some students are already using it independently to calm themselves so they can shift from a survival or emotional brain state to an executive brain state and get back to their classroom learning! 1. Notice. How are you feeling? Identify negative emotion. 2. Breathe x 3. What kind of breath would you like to take? 3. Choose. What activity would you like to choose to calm yourself? (Reading book, draw or color, ask for a hug, listen to music, etc.) 4. Solve. What step can you take to solve the problem (time machine, let it go, ask for help, pause before reacting).

## **TIME MACHINE**

The Time Machine is a conflict resolution tool used for problem solving in those times where you make a reactive mistake and just wish you could have a "do over." Both kids face each other and walk through the steps on the mat: 1. "Are you willing to solve the problem?" If not a yes from both parties, go to safe space until calm and ready. 2. Breathe. Chose any breath. 3. Wish Well. Take a deep breath to shift to positive intent towards the other person. 4. I don't like it when you \_\_\_\_\_. Next time, \_\_\_\_\_. 5. Commit "I can do that". 6. Make peace (choose a handshake, fistbump, or hug).

## **MS. SAVANNAH**

This week, the students discussed the importance of each and every individual within a community. They learned that each person can show up with their "best parts" and use them to enhance the community. Students worked this week to discover and describe the best parts of themselves, and create a poster based on their thoughts. These posters will be laminated and hung in our classroom to serve as a reminder that each and every student has something within them that makes them absolutely amazing and valuable.

## **GROWTH MINDSET**

### **MS. ANGELA**

After reviewing students' prior knowledge of what a growth mindset is, students learned about the science of the growth mindset. When a person is challenged, their brain actually develops more neurons to rise to that challenge. It is very easy to give up on tasks we deem difficult but, if we push through and complete them, our brain benefits and we learn something new.

The students were challenged to create a tower out of raw spaghetti that could support at least one marshmallow. They also made a nest that could protect an egg from a fall. Although both tasks seemed difficult, they all persisted and were successful in accomplishing their goals.

DR. J

Using Conscious Discipline strategies and a Growth Mindset philosophy, we have been working to lay the foundational principles of our class interactions and learning environment. We have held class discussions on how some of science's greatest inventions or discoveries were mistakes! What is true today, may be false tomorrow. Information and "facts" are always changing as people continue to explore the world around us. In science, MISTAKES are OK any day, any time (while striving to be SAFE in words and actions) and sometimes mistakes are WONDERFUL DISCOVERIES!

Students have been encouraged to calmly and respectfully share their thoughts, opinions, ideas, and questions as they will always be welcome, valued and respected without judgment or censure. We are working in the Big Life Journal to learn about what exactly defines a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset and how we can change our internal thoughts and the messages from the voice inside our heads to help us to achieve our goals instead of defeat our efforts.

## **COMMUNITY BUILDING**

MS. ANGELA

We spent a lot of time playing team-building games which required collaboration to be successfully completed. After each game, we debriefed and talked about what worked, what didn't, and why. It became apparent to all of us that communication skills are vital when working with others.

We also discussed what it means to be a school family and why we need to be respectful even when we have differences with another person. I'm very proud of each student's ability to reflect on their interactions with others, deciphering what was helpful and what wasn't.

DR. J

Students have been engaged in various activities to build our school family. We have been building social emotional connections one day at a time, renewing prior friendships, making new friends and learning to trust one another with our ideas, our feelings and our personal opinions without fear of judgment or censure.

We have created self-portraits that represent our inner-self and/or who we strive to be, acrostic poetry that reflects our personalities and interests using positive affirmations, venn diagrams of our common bonds, played a mystery who game based on clues about one another, used our 5 senses, analytical reasoning and prior knowledge to solve a "mystery organism" challenge, and survived on a "floating raft" by working as a team to turn the raft upside down without falling off or stepping off into the "deep ocean". One team accomplished this feat in 15 seconds!!! We have worked in teams to create spaghetti towers to hold marshmallows and next week, we will create bird nests to protect baby bird eggs when a natural disaster (hurricane) blows the nest out of a tree.

We have harvested and cooked a meal using foods found in the community garden, just as ancient humans had to forage for sustenance, eating whatever was growing in season. Many students found that they have a passion and talent for farm-to-table activities. Students created recipe cards to reflect on the foods and meal, adding comments on improvements for the next harvest and meal preparation. We look forward to the fall growing season and hope to add a diverse set of crops including strawberries, blackberries, lettuce, carrots, and more!