

## Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

October 3, 2024

### Dates to Remember:

Thursday, October 10 ~ Fire Prevention Week – Annual Tofte Fire & Rescue Visit!  
Tuesday, October 15 ~ Annual Board Meeting, School Board Elections @ 4:00, followed  
by the Regular Board Meeting  
Thursday, October 17 & Friday, October 18 ~ MEA – No School  
Friday, October 25 ~ VOA, School Authorizer, Fall Site Visit  
Sunday, October 27 ~ Annual Halloween Carnival 2:00-4:00

### Mission Statement:

*Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.*

#### **From Ms. Diane Blanchette:**

*School Director, Birch Grove Community School  
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service*

School pictures were sent home yesterday. If you have any questions about your order, contact Bruce Johnson at [brucejohnsonphoto@gmail.com](mailto:brucejohnsonphoto@gmail.com). Be sure to thank him for the wonderful job that he does for Birch Grove Community School!

K-5 is wrapping up fall assessments with Fastbridge, a standardized test that is new to Birch Grove, and replacing our long-time assessment from NWEA-MAPS. Staff have been busy attending trainings as well as managing a new school year. Thank you to staff for this additional effort at a really busy time of year! Academic Goal Contracts will be based from the fall assessment results. Families will find out more about Academic Goal Contracts this at fall conferences.



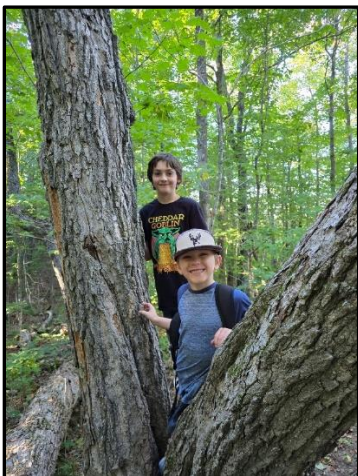
The DNR 5th Grade Field Day was held here at Birch Grove on Tuesday, and our whole 4/5 class participated with their teacher, Stacy Coronis, and paraprofessional, Jessica Klemmer. Participating schools were Great Expectations, Sawtooth Mountain and BGCS. The over-arching theme of the day was Water and Forests. Stations were held in various areas on the grounds and each station addressed some aspect of the importance of water and watersheds to our forest environment. This was accomplished through a mixture of presentation, hands-on activities and games. Thank you so much to the Department of Natural Resources for a spectacular day!



Election ballots will be sent home to K-5 families tomorrow:

School board elections are on Tuesday, October 15. There are 2 seats up for re-election: Skip Lamb and Sarena Crowley. While no one is running against them (there are open seats) we are still required to go through the motions of an election. 1 ballot will be sent home to all K-5 families, K-5 employees, and current school board members. Families will find their ballot in an envelope sent home in Take Home Folders tomorrow. Please fill out your ballot and return in the folder, or you can drop off here at Birch Grove.





### Remaining fall hikes for Birch Buddies ~HIKE!

October 7 White Sky and Agnus Lake – 6:00 Pick Up

October 14 Temperance – 5:30 Pick Up

October 21 School to Tofte Peak – 6:00 Pick Up

Birch Grove will be selling Wolf Ridge calendars again this year as a fundraiser to help contribute to the expense of the annual 2-5<sup>th</sup> graders 3-day, 2-night trip to Wolf Ridge at the end of the school year. We will be sending home 1 calendar per K-5 family and ask that you buy or sell the calendar for \$15 – just one calendar! Once sold, please send the \$15 in an envelope with your family’s name on it with the note “Wolf Ridge Calendar”. If you choose not to sell one calendar, please send the calendar back to Birch Grove letting us know. If you should want to sell more than one, please let me know and I can get you additional calendars. Tom Spence, the chosen photographer for this year’s calendar, donated two boxes of calendars for us to sell – thank you so much Tom! Your photos make this calendar especially beautiful!



Wolf Ridge Calendars  
Only \$15

All K-5 students will have an opportunity to earn a \$5 carnival ticket to the Annual Halloween Carnival that is on Sunday, October 27 from 2:00-4:00. The opportunity will be linked to academic work. 😊 We will need many volunteers to work at this event to make it successful, so please mark the date on your calendar, as a volunteer sign-up link will be coming soon. Grandparents make great volunteers for this event, so put a bug (so Halloween!) in some ears! Thank you!

Please have your child read (or be read to) 20-30 minutes per day/night (or more!). If there is one thing that you can do at home that has a huge positive impact on your child’s academic growth, this is it! Happy reading!



If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us:

[birchgrove@boreal.org](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org) ~ 218-663-0170

Website: [www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftware.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off and free shipping for orders over \$125

Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145](https://www.facebook.com/Birch-Grove-Community-School-and-Community-Services-4145/) | Facebook



# THE ANNUAL BIRCH GROVE HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL!



**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27**

**2:00 - 4:00**

**AT BIRCH GROVE IN TOFTE**



- ~ FUN FOR ALL AGES!
- ~ KIDS GAMES!
- ~ WIN PRIZES!
- ~ CAKE WALK!
- ~ COOKIE DECORATING!
- ~ FABULOUS FOODS!
- ~ BINGO! WITH CASH PRIZES FROM  
GRAND MARAIS STATE BANK~TOFTE



**WEAR A COSTUME (OR NOT) AND  
BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!**



**IT WILL BE A SPOOKTACULAR TIME!  
RAIN, SHINE, OR SNOWFLAKE!**



**CARNIVAL TICKETS ARE \$5 EACH - CASH OR CHECK ONLY.  
MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES CAN BE ENJOYED FROM ONE TICKET.**



**STACY'S NORTH SHORE TREATS:  
CASH, CHECK, CREDIT CARD, VENMO OR PAYPAL ONLY.  
CARNIVAL TICKETS NOT APPLICABLE.**

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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedlings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Our focus this week was on all things numbers. Each day at snack time we read a book that had a focus on numbers. We read Chicka Chicka 123, Ten Little Ladybugs, and Ten Wiggly Wiggly Caterpillars. Reading the books allowed us to practice our counting and gave us an opportunity to expand vocabulary.

We took our counting skills with us throughout our different daily activities. While outside, we counted steps, birds, and semi-trucks while out on our walks. In the classroom we played a fruit match game that had us counting the fruits on each card and finding the written number on a game board. Play dough was also used to count and sort different sizes and colors of an object. Singing songs is a great way to practice our counting so we sang a Seedling favorite "5 Green and Speckled Frogs" while using visual aids to bring the song to life.



With the temperature cooling down, please be sure to send sweatshirts or light jackets and lightweight hats and mittens for our outside playtime and walks.

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The first month of Saplings has come to an end and we are greeting the Spooktacular month of October. We have settled in - what an amazing group of little ones. Engaging in creative crafts, interactive games, and melodious songs will undoubtedly make October a Boo-tiful experience.

This week's theme was *A Ghostly Gathering*, with Ghosts, Skeletons and Mummies - focus color of white. I based the theme off of the Saplings enjoyment of playing their ghost chasing game outside. Someone is the ghost and tries to get them. Those scary moments trigger endorphins, serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine – neurotransmitters we also experience when we're happy, excited, and surprised. Children come into the realization that their body can feel so intense sometimes (scared, angry, hungry, tired), and



they are trying to figure out how to manage it. On our hike, we were unexpectedly treated to a spectacle of trees and leaves transformed into eerie ghosts and ghouls. Furthermore, we participated in a lively interactive activity where we wrapped each other in toilet paper to become mummies, developing our dexterity and coordination.

A Haunted House, featuring Wendy the Witch, has transformed the Dramatic Play area. The Graveyard sensory bin, supervised by Ghost Rider, provided an engaging setting for exploration, where the Saplings were digging and counting bones and skulls in a controlled environment.

We've talked about our skeleton and how it holds us together. The calcium in bones makes them strong and white. We utilized fragmented Q-tip bones to form words and spell out names. Corresponding ghosts featured matching letters for name association. A cauldron was used to concoct recipes, applying mathematical skills. Our scissor proficiency improved through various free and guided activities. Following a reading of Hannah Elliot's book *Día de los Muertos*, we participated in a culturally enriching activity, utilizing maracas and castanets while listening to traditional Mariachi music. Additionally, we conducted a ghostly writing experiment and a spooky milk experiment, exploring the scientific principles of liquids and surface tension.

October initiates our Show and Tell activity, where children are encouraged to bring in Halloween or spooky-themed items, firefighter pictures, or explorer equipment like a compass, binoculars or maps. In our small group setting, participants may share once a week, on a day of their choice.

Have a fa-BOO-lous weekend!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**  
*K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

K/1 finished fall Fastbridge assessments. These assessments will be used to create school year goals for each student. They are also valuable data I can use to drive instruction! We will do additional testing in the winter and spring to observe growth! Way to go K/1!

In Kindergarten, we are learning letters D and G this week. We also read a story about pets. We used inferencing skills to predict what will happen in the story. In math, we are practicing writing numbers 0-20 and we learned about circles, rectangles, and squares.

The first-grade students are continuing to practice reading and reviewing letter sounds. We read a story called *Curious George Goes to School*. We talked about sequence of events



in a story. We summarized the events that happened to Curious George in a flow chart. In math, we learned all of our addition partners up to 10!

We spend most Fridays outside all day. As the weather turns colder, please send your child with appropriate clothes to wear for extended periods of time outside. We hope that the weather will continue to stay warmer through October!

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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

This week was getting back into the swing of things after assessments! It has been amazing to watch the growth over the last month as we get comfortable with large group discussion, small group rotations, and our overall routine. We “landed” in the continent of Europe for October so we will spend the month exploring features of that continent each week. This week for art, we explored Van Gogh with an art project inspired by his “Starry Night” painting.

In math, we have been working through each of the curriculum as well as introducing our new online math platform, IXL. We refreshed on addition and subtraction strategies in second grade while including how to add three to four addends. Though this may be review for some, incorporating the proper vocabulary and showing the steps has been our focus. In third grade, we spent time reviewing our multiplication facts from the last month and introducing area and the “3’s” facts. Math is a favorite in the classroom already!

In reading, we explored main idea and character traits as our target skill. Students have been experimenting with reading aloud to small groups and that has been fun to watch their confidence grow. In phonics, we focused on sounds for C and vowel pairs. Our word study focus was the prefix “pre-” and why knowing word parts can help our reading and writing. Each week, the activities will change and adapt as I get to know where each student is at in their reading journey!

As the weather progressively gets colder, we will continue to venture outdoors. Please ensure that your child dresses in layers, or has layers at school to add if needed. I remind students that we can always take off layers as we need but to dress warm first. Also, please check folders daily as students bring home important notes, projects, or work that they are proud of. Thank you!

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

This school week began with our DNR Field Day event on Tuesday. The weather was beautiful, our DNR leaders were engaging and the schools in Cook County enjoyed spending the day at Birch Grove! The students were able to learn about several topics including the water cycle, impact of rain and the role that vegetation plays in water runoff, Lake Superior, dragonfly migration and the human impact on the fish in our water. The 4th and 5th graders all learned so much and so did I!

All students are finishing up their Fastbridge math and reading assessments this week. The results of these tests will help us plan student goals this year and give us a baseline so that we can watch academic growth as the year unfolds. In reading students have learned the routine that we will use weekly this school year to practice fluency. Ask them to tell you about it. In math the 4th graders reviewed place value up to million and compared and ordered numbers up to the hundred thousands place. 5th grade students worked with fraction circles to create equivalent fractions and then tried using pencil and paper. We will use an online program in math this year called IXL to supplement our current math curriculum. IXL allows students to practice skills at grade level as well as enter into their "individualized math arena".



In our afternoons we have continued to learn about mapping skills including scale, reading a key, and interpreting boundary and historical maps. This learning will be used next week as we begin our Pirate Island social studies project. Watch for more details in the weeks to come. In reading we have been responding to writing prompt choices and this week all students were invited to share in an activity called Author's Chair.

Please remind your child to read about 30 minutes most nights and practice their multiplication facts for 5-10 minutes. Students can practice the facts using flashcards, the plastic sleeve in their take home folder, or they all know how to use a free online flashcard site that they may do at home if they have permission to use a device. The online practice site is called "ascend flashcards". Many students have also wanted to practice reading on Lexia and math on IXL from a device at home to help improve their reading and math skills. If your family is OK with allowing your child to use a device at home that would be wonderful (but not mandatory).

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