

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

April 10, 2025

Upcoming Events:

Friday, April 11 ~ No School-PD for Staff

Monday, April 14 ~ *Let's Plant Trees!* at 1:00

Tuesday, April 15 Kindergarten Round Up!

Tuesday, April 15 ~ School Board Meeting at 4:00

Tuesday, April 22 ~ MCA Reading Test for 3, 4, 5th Grade

Tuesday, April 22 ~ Earth Day! All School Clean Up Grounds in the Afternoon!

Wednesday, April 23 ~ MCA Math Test for 3, 4, 5th Grade

Thursday, April 24 ~ MCA Science Test for 5th Grade Only

Friday, May 2 ~ Make Up Day due to Snow Day – We are in Session!

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

Another busy, short week. Please remember that there is no school tomorrow, Friday, April 11. This is a scheduled staff development day.

There are many events and activities scheduled for this and next month, so be sure to check the Upcoming Events at the top of this newsletter. Please be especially sure that your child gets plenty of sleep the night before any scheduled testing. We always appreciate this support from home.





Birch Grove would like to welcome back Stacy Coronis from her leave of absence – she returned to the 4/5 classroom today! Ms. Coronis reconnected with her students today and will jump right into 4/5's classroom schedule next week. We are all excited to have her back and look forward to having all of our amazing staff on board for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year! Welcome back, Stacy!

Birch Grove would like to thank Sara Silence for stepping into the 4/5 classroom while Ms. Coronis was on leave. Ms. Silence has always stepped in when Birch Grove has needed her throughout the years. Thank you so much for your flexibility and dedication to our school! Ms. Silence will continue on as the special education teacher for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year! Thank you, Sara!



Fall s'mores vs. winter s'mores...both taste equally wonderful!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/The-Great-Outdoors>



Wednesday, April 2 was a snow day! As such, Friday, May 2, that was previously a scheduled day off, will now be a make-up day. School, Saplings and Seedlings are now scheduled to be in session on Friday, May 2. Thank you!



Kindergarten Round Up is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15 this year. If you know of a child that will be eligible for Kindergarten next year (must be 5 by September 1), please recommend this special day to them where they can experience BGCS. We appreciate all parent recommendations!



Gala for the Grove!

Saturday, May 17, 2025

This is Birch Grove's biggest fundraiser of the year. We hope to see many at this spirited event to support our elementary school and community service programs all while having a great time out! This year's theme is Back to the 50's!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Gala-for-the-Grove>

The Gala for the Grove ~2025

Saturday, May 17



Back to the 50's

Theme for 2025!



The *Gala for the Grove*, a spirited fundraiser for Birch Grove Community School, is semi-formal and held in the Lakeside Ballroom at Surfside in Tofte. The theme this year is "Back to the 50's"! Dress for the theme or not, the choice is yours – it will be a great time either way!

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### 5:00 Champagne Social

Appetizers and champagne will be served. You can purchase tickets for items in the raffle drawing and browse live auction items to see what may catch your fancy. A cash bar is available all evening.

### 6:00 Dinner and Wine

Each dinner choice will include two glasses of red or white wine. Fine dinner choices are listed below. The raffle drawing will take place during the latter part of dinner.

### 7:00 Live Auction

Entertaining auctioneers will auction off special items live!

### Music To Follow



### Menu for the Evening:

A house salad with maple-Dijon dressing, dinner roll, and a choice of:

\* Filet Mignon with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables or

\* Pineapple Orange Baked Cornish Game Hen with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables or

\* Teriyaki Tofu Vegetable Stir Fry with Jasmine Rice

A selection of desserts will be available

To attend, please send this form with check payable to:  
Birch Grove Community School - Post Office Box 2383 Tofte, MN 55615

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number and Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_ x \$75 per ticket = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount enclosed

Dinner selection - please indicate a choice for each ticket:

\_\_\_\_ Filet Mignon

\_\_\_\_ Cornish Game Hen

\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian Stir Fry

Your tickets will be waiting for you at the door in the names listed above. Questions? Please call the school at 663-0170 or email [birchgrove@boreal.org](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org). Please use an additional piece of paper to include more guest names if needed.

Interested in being a *Gala for the Grove* Sponsor?

#### Sponsorship

\$1,000 Sponsorship includes 6 tickets

\$500 Sponsorship includes 4 tickets

\$250 Sponsorship includes 2 tickets

Sponsors are recognized the evening of the Gala, in the Cook County News Herald, as well as on the Gala for the Grove page on the school website. Sponsors will also receive tickets to the Gala event itself, so that you, or others of your choosing, can enjoy a night of revelry!

To become a sponsor, please send this form with a check payable to Birch Grove Community School ~ Post Office Box 2383 Tofte, MN 55615

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsorship Amount (see above)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsorship Name (Business, Organization, Individual, Couple, etc.)

Please include what you want to have happen with your sponsorship tickets. Include a name and a meal choice for each ticket received for sponsorship. If you choose to not use the tickets, please indicate this.

Thank you and we hope to see you at the *Gala for the Grove*!



The spring session of the after-school program, Birch Buddies ~ HIKE! has been scheduled for:

Thursday, April 17 Sugar Loaf Cove

Thursday, April 24 Onion River/Ray Berglund Wayside

Thursday, May 1 Dyer's Lake/Cramer Road

Thursday, May 8 Cascade River State Park

This session is limited to 15 participants: there is one spot left as of today.



### COMING SOON!

Birch Buddies ~ ART! After school program  
4 sessions will be offered to 2-5<sup>th</sup> grades. Space is  
limited. Registration forms to come out next week!

Friday, April 25 ~ *Robin Painting on Birch Bark*

Friday, May 2 ~ *Moose in Birch Grove*

Friday, May 9 ~ *Pinecone Owl Family*

Friday, May 23 ~ *Paper Pulp Bowls*





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!



[birchgrove@boreal.org](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org)  
[www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftware.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off  
Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



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From Ms. Emily VanDoren

Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service

This week's theme was Birds & Butterflies. We swapped out our acoustic background music for a bird song soundtrack. It was a nice change to our week and a great way for the Seedlings to be introduced to a sound they may not have heard yet, or haven't heard since winter began.

The older Seedlings practiced flapping their arms like bird wings and waving their hands like a butterfly flutters their wings. Butterfly cutouts provided an opportunity to learn about colors and counting. By using pictures of birds attached to popsicle sticks, the younger Seedlings worked on their visual tracking skills and practiced reaching for and grasping the pictures. They also loved playing peek-a-boo with the pictures during tummy time.

Reading continues to be a favorite activity in our classroom. This week we read books that offered opportunities to see birds and learn about how they live and move. We read *In My Tree* by Sara Gillingham, which includes an owl finger puppet to add to the fun. We also read *Flip, Flap, Fly!* By Phyllis Root.

Our sensory activity for the week was a pretend bird nest that the older Seedlings could explore as they wished throughout the day. Small baskets were set out with shredded paper grass, bird pictures, and pretend eggs.

Have a good weekend!

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Saplings explored a spring theme centered around Butterflies, Bees and Birds, reflecting the season's vibrant new life. Sapling's first lessons focused on the butterfly, whose lifecycle is marked by metamorphosis. As important pollinators, butterflies play a vital role in facilitating plant and flower growth. With over 180,000 distinct species worldwide, butterflies can be found on every continent except Antarctica. We examined how a caterpillar navigates around by inching or crawling. The Saplings then emulated this movement before making a representation of our Very Hungry Caterpillar wriggling around. They learned that



butterflies are insects with 6 legs, 4 wings, a pair of antennae, and 3 parts to their bodies. Their wings are made up of tiny scales and can be colorful with symmetrical patterns and designs. They flap their wings 5 times per second. We attempted to flap our arms 5 times really fast. Subsequently for an art project they crafted symmetrical Monarch butterflies.

Wednesday's lesson centered on the American Robin, a symbol of spring. We noted their distinctive singing calls include a loud *cheerily cheer-up cheerio* and a rapid *tut tut tut*. Saplings learned that Robins are often seen on lawns searching for earthworms and insects. Saplings created a life-size Robin art piece, measuring about 10 inches long with a brick-red breast and a short yellow beak.

On Thursday, we concentrated on bees, engaging in two hands-on, sensory-rich experiences. The first involved honey production, where the Saplings used eye droppers to transfer nectar from the flower bin to the ice tray honeycombs. The second experience focused on hexagon shapes and constructing beehives using Honeycomb cereal and playdough.

As part of our syllable-learning activity this week, Saplings clapped out the rhythmic beats of one and two syllable words, enhancing their phonological awareness and literacy skills. We also continued our letter recognition program, focusing on the letters B, C, and R, while developing writing and pre-writing skills. Furthermore, we worked on refining our utensil grasp techniques, including digital pronate (2-3 years), static tripod (3-4 years), and dynamic tripod (4-6 years). The development of gross and fine motor muscles, including upper body, shoulder, wrist, and finger muscles, is essential for writing skills. This development can be achieved through play-based activities, such as outdoor play, jumping, climbing, drawing, and craft projects. Parents can support this development by providing age-appropriate tools, like crayons, markers, and pencils, and encouraging activities that build hand strength, including cutting paper, peeling stickers, or squeezing stress balls.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

K/1 started a new science unit this week about animals! They learned animals need food, shelter, and water to live. We went on a nature walk looking for tracks and animal signs. K/1 is excited to continue to learn about animals and to learn about plants!

In math, K/1 is learning about time and adding and subtracting. This is a good time to get a refresher on what we learned at the beginning of the year. We will review the number lines, place values, tell the time to the 5 minutes, and count all the change. In language arts, we are practicing our writing. We are focused on the mechanics of writing, such as capitalization, correct letter formation, spacing, spelling, punctuation, etc. I have seen big gains from the beginning of the year!

We have had a major winter meltdown this week! This has led to puddles! Make sure your student is equipped with rain boots, a jacket, gloves, snow pants, and a hat so they can play! A lot of children are going home wet because they are playing hard! Please check their clothes and make sure to send them back dry the next day.

Please continue to work with your child on reading, writing, and math needs that we discussed at conferences! Together we can ensure success!

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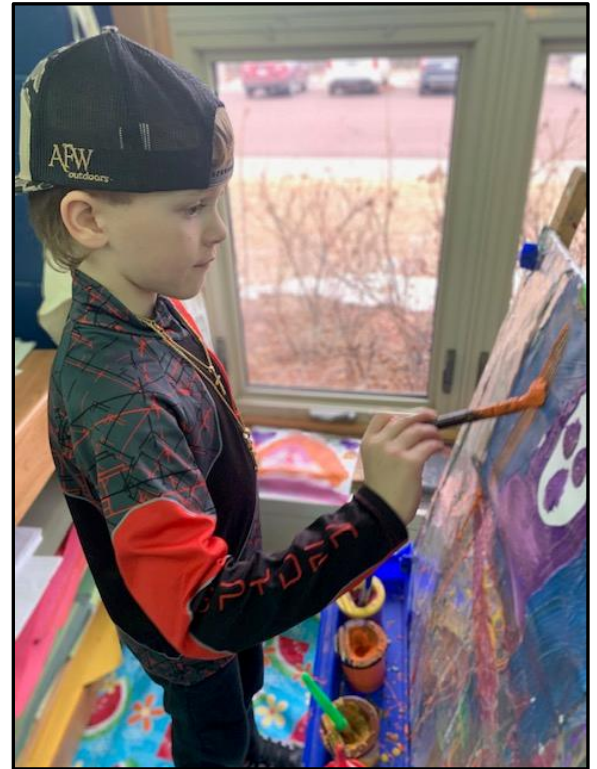
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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**

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

This has been such a fun week! The main focus for this week was test preparation. Though second grade does not complete the MCAs, it is great practice for the spring testing. The classroom runs so smoothly and students have been filling their independent work time with lots of quality work. We have started our presentations and finished our timelines for our biography research project. The last things to do is present to the class and complete the portraits then we will be completed with this unit.

Reading has been filled with short passages that involve multiple choice or summarizing the main idea. Though I think the writing is the most important, standardized tests are multiple choice so we have practiced picking the BEST answer. This has helped us include testing strategies like cross off the ones that you know aren't the answer, reading all the answers before choosing one, and picking





the best one based on what you have left. These strategies have been essential for boosting student's confidence. Also, though testing is important, we have kept the conversations light-hearted and incorporated funny things (like naughty notation and tricky test makers) to make the process less stressful. With that, third grade read an anchor text about Mount Everest which involved lots of conversations about plate tectonics theory, frostbite scenarios, and different goals students may have in their life. Second grade focused on a text about seeds and seed dispersal. This is good knowledge as we move into spring, plant the garden, and complete a seed dispersal unit in social studies.



Math has been almost completely review. I have had the third graders look back on skills that we have learned throughout the year and individually re-teaching skills that may have been challenging or frustrating. This has included lots of multiple choice packets. They have (surprisingly) approached this with enthusiasm and positivity though it may not be the favorite thing to do. Second grade has been reviewing subtraction and addition. Next week, I will be starting the introduction to multiplication with a review on time and money!

Keep sending dry things, it is very wet and muddy out. I have the students wear their snowpants most of the spring to keep them warm and dry so please continue to bring them to school.

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From Ms. Sara Silence

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

This week was a very exciting week in fourth and fifth grade. We were able to finish measuring our Lego towers we built before spring break. We were also able to make significant progress in our tour of the United States. In math, we have also finished our units on fractions and quadrilaterals. The end of the year is in sight!

On Wednesday, we had an outdoor learning day, spending most of the day at the Campsite to complete our work. The kids were so excited to be outside, they finished most of what we were going to do before we even got there! Students painted mini treasure boxes at the picnic table and did some science while making Peep Smore's. Each student then took time to create a how-to writing entry, most students picked how to make a smore or how to start a fire. Students also spent some time "in the trees" reading to a partner. Everyone enjoyed the time outside even as we watched some snow flurries around us.

Around the campfire, eating s'mores, I was able to share the most exciting news. Mrs. Coronis will be returning from her leave of absence. Her first day back was today. The kids just had to wait one more

day to see her again! We are all so excited to welcome her back. Mrs. Coronis and I will continue to work together to meet the needs and goals of all the students as we transition again.

Looking ahead, the class will be working through a year-long review to prepare students for end-of-the-year testing. Students have made a lot of growth this year and should not be concerned about any test. We want them to come to school well rested and prepared to take their time in order for their best work to shine.

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