



The Cupola Academy Inquirer



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WARM

FREEZING





CA Inquirer Staff

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On the cover:
The images on this issue's cover were created by CP3 youth to represent postcards of alternate worlds that they imagined. Youth were challenged to think about culture, population & politics, geography & nature, and magic & technology of a world of their creation after learning about Afrofuturism (a cultural aesthetic that combines science fiction, history, and fantasy).

Collaborative Pod 2 Update

by CP2 Facilitators: Corinne, Lucy and Mike

On Tuesday mornings, we focus on arts and humanities with Corinne. The year started with an in-depth study of optical illusions. We learned about eye anatomy, binocular vision, the eye-brain connection, and persistence of vision. We tried our hand at drawing an optical illusion with partners, making optical illusion paper weavings, and creating thaumatropes (spinning discs) using the Glowforge.

Here are instructions on how to create a paper version:



We learned about Op Artists, Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley, as well as one of the most famous graphic artists, MC Escher, and created a Memory-style card game with famous works of Op Art. This study culminated with a field trip to the Museum of Optical Illusions in Philadelphia.

Check out our slideshow here:



Next, we studied Italian painter, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, and his imaginative portraits created out of fruit, vegetables, and other foods and objects, such as books! Each young person decided on a theme, created a list of objects that fit that theme, and drew their portrait using those objects. These portraits spent several weeks on display in the barn at Riverbend.

In December, we began a months-long service-learning project with Student's Rebuild. Students Rebuild engages young people in global learning and activism through art, also known as art-ivism. Each year, Students Rebuild chooses a large issue that requires collective action (climate change, clean water accessibility, etc) and challenges youth around the world to participate in learning and art-making to raise money for organizations that are making a difference. This year the focus is refugees and resettlement, and for each postcard made by a young person, the Bezos Family Foundation will donate to help refugees reach safety and resettle in communities around the world.

Our group read articles from *Newsela*, looked at world maps, considered our own definitions of home and identity and how these might change for a refugee, and invited a guest speaker, Amanda Bergson-Shilcock, who has worked with refugees, all to increase our understanding of the topic. The CP2ers were all so excited about the impact that they can have with this project that they wanted to involve the entire CA community in art-making and set an initial goal of creating 200 postcards (with the wish to increase this goal to 500 before the June deadline). They prepared and presented this project to the other CA programs in January, and we are happy to announce that we have collected 170 postcards (as of February 24th).



CP2 is also participating in this year's Art of Math challenge through the Barnes Foundation. From the Barnes: "In the Art of Math Challenge, students use math strategies to design and build a 3-D scale model of a painting in the Barnes collection. They collaborated as a group to build the model and write a description of their mathematical process. The competition culminated with an exhibit of all submitted models at the Barnes's PECO Free First Sunday Family Day on March 5, 2023, which was STEAM-themed and included hands-on activities and demonstrations."

Tuesday afternoons are focused on language arts. We regularly practice the rules of grammar and punctuation by editing paragraphs written by "Sally Student" (also known as facilitator Lucy Tyson). We also do a variety of spelling related activities such as playing games like Boggle, Upwords and a recent favorite called Just One to develop the youth's spelling skills. In the fall, we read *The Westing Game*, a Newbery award winning mystery by Ellen Raskin. To accompany the reading, we made some hands-on projects to further explore the novel including creating a lift-the-flap style apartment building showing the sixteen characters involved in the mystery. Each youth also made their own logic puzzles inspired by *The Westing Game* that were shared with the CP1 group. This winter we have been focused on developing research skills. The youth have identified an event from history that they would like to know more about. After doing some preliminary research answering the who, what, why, when, where, and how questions, they collected various images and maps to add additional content. The next step is to use Canva, a graphic design platform, to create informational posters to display for the CP3 group and share their learning. Lastly, the group has expressed a desire to work on a performance at the end of the year. We have been discussing and planning what that might be and rehearsals will begin after spring break.

Thursdays means math and science with Mike! We usually begin our mornings with a math challenge to ease into our day and get our minds thinking about the interplay between numbers. Some of the challenges that we have tackled this year are Sudoku puzzles, 24 cards (where you have to use mathematical operations with 4 numbers to create 24), Towers of Hanoi, various logic puzzles, and probability with card games.

CP2 is exploring the scientific method extensively in programming. The scientific method begins by making an observation. Next, youth form a hypothesis, test their prediction, and iterate. Lastly, they will analyze their results. We are currently observing seed growth in the Aquaponics space. Each young person selected a few seeds to cultivate in the space over the next month. Each week they make observations concerning the progress of their growth. Other examples of labs young people have participated in this winter include borax crystal growth, dry ice gas expansion, and cardboard machine building challenges.

Thursdays also give young people the chance to utilize the STEM resources that we have on campus to solve real world problems. When young people couldn't easily identify their clipboards, we decided to make our own on the Glowforge laser etcher. The clipboards are almost completed and young people really enjoy seeing the process unfold. Another STEM project was born out of the group wondering if different places on the preserve experienced slightly different weather conditions (e.g. more rain, more sun and thus higher temperatures, etc.). So we are exploring Micro Bits and some introductory coding to create a mobile weather station for Riverbend.

Collaborative Pod 1 Update

by CP1 Facilitator: Alexandra

Every morning we start with "morning stations" that rotate through various content areas and offer a chance to help young people get engaged first thing as they arrive. The morning stations we have explored so far have included:

- Inquiries in Math: open ended questions, such as "how many triangles?" and logic puzzles using manipulatives;
- Collaborative Board Games: "Proof," Phylo cards, and more;
- Nature Journaling: specific prompts to help youth explore and observe the world around them;
- Poetry: various forms including haiku, poetry concrete, collage poetry, etc.;
- Words and Writing Games: Boggle, Storymatic;
- Mindfulness: creating mandalas, painting kindness rocks to distribute on campus, self reflection journaling prompts, mindfulness nature scavenger hunt, and more!

We loved engaging in a multi-week session of art with CA facilitator Corinne on Tuesday afternoons! We have all enjoyed benefiting from Corinne's background in art, and exploring both art history and creating art using various mediums. We were all challenged to think critically about the art we were studying, and to notice details, imagine, and ask questions about what we saw. It was so special to see the youth present the various pieces they created at our mini art show. We look forward to having another show in the spring!

Thursday afternoons we work with CA Co-Director Mike and our friends in Collaborative Pod 2 (CP2). So far with Mike we have embarked on:

- STEM challenges: building with tracks and various other materials to try to get a matchbox car to complete a loop;
- Science labs: "Elephant Toothpaste" and exploring the reactions of hydrogen peroxide;
- Creek explorations: measuring the speed of the creek and creating a hypothesis as to why the creek has seemed slower in recent months;
- Rocket building and launching: designing rockets that are the most aerodynamic, making predictions about how far, fast, and high rockets will go based on designs), and more!



We have some activities that we do monthly in CP1, and these include our monthly fire, sky scenes, and reading from our chapter book. Each month the young people have practiced their fire building skills using Swedish fire steel, raw cotton, char cloth, and oakum. Youth gather all of the kindling, tinder, and fuel (various sizes of sticks and fire wood) that has naturally fallen at Riverbend to build our fires. This fall we read *The Adventures of Prickly Porky* by Thornton Burgess, and in January we began reading *Chasing Vermeer*, an art history mystery book that has already hooked us all! Another monthly activity is our sky scenes. We take ten minutes to observe, sketch, and color what the sky looks like at the present moment. Youth write the date and time and we enjoy looking back to see how the sky (and trees and animals in our "sky view") change as the seasons change. We are looking forward to having ten of these to look at and compare by the end of the year.

Over the last couple of months we journeyed through the process of making our very own deck of Phylo cards. We had fun downloading and printing a deck to play earlier in the year, and so we were extra excited that Corinne led us in making our own CP1 deck of Pennsylvania animals! Each young person was in charge of a couple of species to research and design, until we had a full deck. (If anyone is curious what they look like, ask to see the deck we keep in CP1's program space!)

Lastly, we just enjoyed a field trip to Bryn Mawr Film Institute (BMFI). The BMFI educational staff presented the first part of the "See Hear Feel Film" program, a film literacy program for Elementary students that focuses on storytelling and becoming active (vs. passive) viewers of films. Highlights of our trip there included viewing two short films in one of the theaters, and being treated to popcorn while we developed our own mini storyboards, just like film makers do.

I hope this has given you a window into our Tuesdays and Thursdays! It has been a delight to work with the CP1 young people, and I always look forward to my days with them.





How To Play SPOONS

by Kelley C.

The farmhouse folk (CP3, CYP) have been loving Spoons, so we're teaching you how to play!

To play, a standard deck of 52 cards is needed, plus an amount of spoons with one fewer spoon than the number of players. Setup by arranging the spoons in a small circle in the center of the table and dealing four cards to each player.

Players take turns trying to collect a four-of-a-kind. Once someone does, everyone tries to grab a spoon. If a player ends up without a spoon, they're out! The last player standing wins!



The dealer takes a card off the top of the deck to have five cards in their hand, removes one and passes it face down to the left. Each player discards to the person on their left.

The last player places their discard into a trash pile. Cards are picked up and passed quickly around the table. If at any time the draw cards run out, pause to reshuffle the trash pile and keep going.



HAVE FUN!!!



BMFI Community Partnership

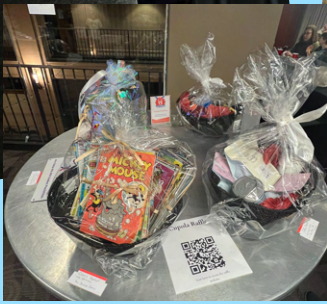
By Sebastian E.

This year Cupola Academy has partnered with Bryn Mawr Film Institute which grants us access to their outstanding staff and their multimedia conference room. Bryn Mawr Film Institute (BMFI) is a nonprofit movie theater and film education center located in Bryn Mawr. The Seville Theater was built in 1926 with intricate ceiling details, decorated chandeliers, and a skylit atrium, all designed to copy the movie theaters of big cities. It re-opened in March 2005, with Ben Kingsley present. Ben Kingsley is an American actor who has starred in multiple hit movies and is a respected figure in film. Bryn Mawr Film Institute currently has over 9,100 supporting members.

Cupola Academy has benefitted from numerous collaborations with Bryn Mawr Film Institute. In the fall, CYP visited after they studied the play *Macbeth*, and then they went to BMFI to talk to staff about three different film adaptations of the play. CP2, CP3, and CYP have enjoyed a tour around the institute, viewing the equipment, and learning about the history of film. The CP1 group also visited and participated in the "See Hear Feel Film" program, a film literacy program for Elementary students. Recently, CYP/CP3 hosted a movie trivia fundraiser. Everything this year with BMFI has been wondrous, and we're looking forward to more!



CYP & CP3 FUNDRAISER



ICE SKATING & PIZZA PARTY



ICORE FITNESS



SUNRISE RETIREMENT HOME



Cupola Community Events

By June H.

Cupola Academy (CA) hosts many events throughout the year. These events vary, and each one fits in with a goal. The goals for Cupola's events are community building, learning opportunities, physical activity, community service, and engaging with the broader community. Sometimes events are open to the public, and other times they are just for CA families.

Community Building Events from the 2022-2023 year include:

- Philadelphia Union Game
- Bonfire and Board Games
- Family Movie Trivia Night

Non-CA Day Field Trips included:

- Goggle Works
- Brandywine River Museum
- iCore Fitness
- Ice Skating and Pizza Party
- National Liberty Museum

Educational Support includes:

- Portfolio & transcript guidance and support
- Test Prep for 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades
- Dual Enrollment and/or college application guidance and support

Service Learning Events that have happened so far are:

- CSA garden cleanup at Foulkeways Retirement Home
- Making blankets for veterans
- MLK Day story and craft at Sunrise Retirement Home

One of my favorite events that I attended was the Bonfire and Board Games. I enjoyed this because we got to hang out with people out of program, and I thought that was fun. We also had a huge game of Exploding Kittens, and it was very chaotic but fun.

Movie Trivia Night

By Ella G. and Maddie B-C.

CP3 and CYP planned and hosted their fundraiser for their respective end-of-year trips. Our community partner, Bryn Mawr Film Institute, provided a great space for the event! The youth worked together to create four rounds of movie trivia. It was a very successful event and they raised over \$2000. CYP is planning to fly to Orlando, and CP3 is planning to drive to a retreat in PA. The goal of these trips is to help teens develop agency, hone their team building skills, and build responsibility. CYP is in charge of choosing a location, planning all the details, and raising money. This year is different because CYP is flying instead of driving. Also, CP3 gets to join in on their fun and go on a trip of their own. Look out for future fundraisers!



Abby and Cali ran check-in and graded the trivia throughout the night. Also, June and Kelley worked together to create flyers on Canva and spread the news through social media. We couldn't have done it without them!



The raffle was run by Connor B-C, Connor M, and Sebastian. Connor & Connor went around Bryn Mawr and asked people for donations for the fundraiser. When it came time, they got the supplies to make the baskets. We secured donation baskets from **Showcase Comics**, the movie basket from **BMFI**, a \$30 gift card to **Via Bellissima**, a \$20 gift certificate to **Juice Pod**, Spin-Gineer Kit from **Lucky Duck Toys**, **Micro Brix** Basket from the Moyer Family, Valentine's Day basket from the Himebauch family, two tickets to **Rock West's Spring Performance**, an art basket from the Hettinger/Bohn family, coffee from **One Village Coffee**, running-themed basket from **Bryn Mawr Running Company**, **Twist Kits**, and a Japanese snack basket from **Maido! Market**.



Freya, Callie and Maddie worked on creating a detailed list of all the food and supplies they would need to make the fundraiser successful. During the night of the fundraiser, the youth were in charge of running the snack bar, bake sale table, and mobile food services.

The movie trivia was created through a slideshow on Canva. We had a movie clip in the beginning and at the end of each section. Ella & Noah were the emcees. They created all of the questions and designed the slideshow. The night went smoothly and had good attendance from our community. There were four sections of trivia:

Disney/Pixar, Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Marvel. Here's a word from Noah about his perspective on the night:

“I thought the trivia was a smashing success! I thoroughly enjoyed putting on this fundraiser for the CA community. My favorite part of the night was telling jokes in-between trivia sections. I thought the entire event was well-received...Overall, I had an amazing time and can't wait to run a similar event next year!”

Hackman Family Interview

By Freya B.



Names and ages of family members and programs youth are in?

Jaren (9) in CP1, June (13) in CP3,
Scott, & Andrea



How do you spend your days outside of CA? Our days outside of Cupola are typically mixed with family time, school work, and activities. During the day, June and Jaren focus on schoolwork. They are mainly independent in their work, however, we read some books and do some activities together in the morning. Scott and Andrea are partners at Scott Hackman Ventures. Scott works as an Advisor at the firm, and Andrea does strategy, operations and marketing. As a family, we enjoy playing games, hiking, being outside, watching shows together, cooking, and spending time with friends. June is involved with Jiu-Jitsu and Jaren plays travel soccer.

Curriculums you have found helpful? Our main curriculum is Khan Academy. They both use Khan for their main math curriculum. Jaren also uses it for grammar, reading, and vocabulary. June also uses Khan for science. June uses Brave Writer for ELA. We have found fun activities from Teachers pay Teachers, including the States & Capitals curriculum Jaren is working on this winter/spring. We also get fun items sent once/month such as the Crunch Lab engineering kit from YouTuber Mark Rober and the Honest History magazine. We also like going to the library to find both educational and entertaining books.

What are your youth(s) favorite part(s) about CA? June's favorite part about CA is the activities & projects they get to do, as well as the flexibility. Jaren's favorite part about CA is how flexible it is, and that he gets to spend most of the time outside.

What brought you to CA? June and Jaren wanted to be homeschooled, and we knew we couldn't do it alone. Since Scott and Andrea both work, and this is our first year homeschooling, we knew we needed help. Cupola provided an educational partner & advisor that answered all of our questions. The twice a week facilitation is very important to our family because it provides June and Jaren the opportunity to be around young people their age and to have facilitators guide their learning. As we learn more about homeschooling and partnership education, our relationship with Cupola continues to enhance our lives and the education of our family.

How long have you been homeschooling? This is our first year.

What are the biggest benefits of homeschooling and CA? There are so many benefits to homeschooling and CA. First, it provides our family with a ton of flexibility, such as letting the kids determine their own schedule of learning. Jaren oftentimes has his work complete by 10 am and June just starts at 10 am. It provides a more natural rhythm. Along with flexibility, it also provides a sense of ease. When the kids aren't feeling well, we no longer have to worry about how many days of school they miss or work they need to catch up. Our evenings can be spent as a family versus ensuring homework gets completed. Lastly, we feel more content. Being able to research and study topics that June and Jaren are interested in is so beneficial for their engagement in learning. So many times over the last 6 months, we've said this is one of the best decisions we could have made as a family.

What are the biggest challenges of homeschooling and CA? The biggest challenges for us have been finding what works for our family. Since this is our first year homeschooling, we tried a variety of curriculums until we found what works for June and Jaren. We also needed to balance school work with life and with our actual jobs. Some days are more challenging, especially when we didn't yet identify the best curriculum. The other biggest challenge has been re-imagining education. Since we came from a traditional school environment, we were used to all day school plus evening homework. Now, education is not time-bound and is more weaved into our everyday life. Being patient and communicating with each other have been key to making it a successful transition for us all.





Sleet + PJ day + sewing your own pillow = perfection 🌧️❄️

