

CA

The Cupola Academy Inquirer

A COLLABORATIVE POD II PUBLICATION



Issue #2

Spring 2022: A Celebration of Partnership Education



Founders and Co-Directors, Mike Hilbert & Julia Bergson-Shilcock

What We Do

Cupola Academy (CA) is a secular, nonprofit educational organization that provides a supportive community-base for homeschooling families. CA offers full-day programs for young people ages 4-18 to attend 2 days a week in a collaborative and resource-rich environment. We nurture the innate intellectual curiosity of young people in a pro-social atmosphere.

At Cupola Academy, we embrace our responsibility of making the world a better place by providing a nourishing environment for changemakers. At the heart of all of our programs is our belief in natural curiosity, the value of collaboration, the importance of engaging in Real Work (vs. make work) and an emphasis on Process Consciousness.

Cupola Academy is designed for families who are seeking an intellectually rich atmosphere that promotes a growth mindset, encourages lifelong learning, and emphasizes social and environmental justice. These values are fostered in all of our programs.

For the 2021-22 year, Cupola Academy programs are taking place at Riverbend Environmental Education Center in Gladwyne, PA while we continue our search for our permanent location for future years.

Upcoming Events

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1st:
Graduation (invitation only)

THURSDAY, JUNE 2nd:
Last Day of Programs

FRIDAY, JUNE 3rd:
End-of-Year Celebration and
Family Fun Night



CC and CP1 at the Colonial Plantation

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Inquirer Staff

Special thanks to photographers Amrit Gluck and Sarah Pitrus for their contributions.



CP2 outside of the Academy of Natural Sciences after their Behind-the-Scenes tour of the Academy's bird specimen collection

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Callie B-H

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Maddie B-C

Activities

Freya B

CP1 Project NextTrex Update

By: Freya Bohn

CC and CP1 have been working on collecting 500 pounds of plastic in 6 months, and they did it! They want to thank everyone who took the time to save their plastic and send it in. The final amount of plastic sent to Nexttrex was 512 pounds! Even though they are no longer taking plastic, they encourage you to send in your plastic to a local grocery store. You do not have to email Alexandra or bring it to Riverbend. Again, thank you so much to everyone who sent in plastic!



About the Aquaponics Lab

By: Connor B-C

Aquaponics is a system of aquaculture in which the waste produced by farmed fish or other aquatic animals supplies nutrients for plants grown hydroponically, which in turn purifies the water. The CYP group had the opportunity to start the aquaponics project at CA using Betta fish. CYP facilitator, Mike Hilbert, had the chance to speak with Mike Backus, who is an aquaponics system consultant. Hilbert was then able to share his knowledge with the CYP youth. The nutrients from the Betta fish were used to grow micro wheat grass. CA recently got a grant to improve the aquaponics lab. There is now a full-scale fish tank with Minnows in the aquaponics lab that is providing nutrients to grow lettuce, kale, cucumbers, cantaloupe, red lettuce, and sweet magnolia. The CP2 group is now taking care of the Betta fish and plans to grow catnip, mint, and other herbs. Currently, CYP youth are working on a series of infographics for the aquaponics space in addition to working on the full scale aquaponics with the Minnows. The CYP and CP2 group took a field trip to AgWorks in April. AgWorks is a large aquaponics lab in Harrisburg that is home to three thousand plants and four hundred fish.



The Aquaponics Lab Grand Re-opening

Field Trips and Domain Experts

By: Maddie B-C

Most people would agree that Americans spend too much time sitting, and school students are no exception. At CA, we are always on the move! Each day we have multiple opportunities to explore the campus. In addition, each program has had numerous Domain Experts as well as opportunities to take off-campus field trips. Here are some* of the many Domain Experts who shared their expertise with CA youth this year:

- Sherina Poorman is a woodworker from Center for Creative Works that worked with CC and CP1. She described the workshop as: “Woodworking in the Woods. We are inspired by the tradition of 18th century British bodgers who worked in the forest making spindles for Windsor chairs. They used very simple and portable tools and made their products on site in the forest where they harvested.”
- Keville Bowan, a professional comic book artist shared his love for comics and art as he guided youth in CC, CP1 and CP2 through a six-week course culminating in the completion of individual comic books that depicted an activist.
- Karen Romano Young is an illustrator, writer, artist, deep-sea diver, and is working to make science more accessible to everyday people. She shared her work with CP1 to explore science comics: <https://www.karenromanoyoung.com/humanimal-doodles>. Special thanks to Amy Hertzog for this workshop opportunity!
- Walt Hettinger, grandparent of a CP2 youth, shared family artifacts in his hands-on presentation about native peoples of North America.
- Nicole Palman is a parent of a CP1 youth and is working to reduce the amount of plastic that is wasted to preserve our planet. She presenting on becoming zero-waste.
- Amanda Bergson-Shilcock and Suzanne Weltman worked with CC and CP1 youth to create hand-sewn bags, costumes, and creative works of their own doing both machine and hand sewing.
- Peter Bergson worked with CA families to build Feel-and-Find Boxes and Cuisenaire Rod trays to be used during CA programs.
- Experts from Bluestone Environmental Group, Molly Reynolds and Carl Gibney, gave a presentation to CP2 and CYP about soil testing. They also facilitated a hands-on water testing activity where youth got to test Riverbend’s water.
- Alex Smith, a journalist, talked to CP2 about the process of creating newspapers.
- Leonard Haas, professional actor, mentored CP2 as they prepared for their production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream.
- Korin Tangtrakul, Sustainability Manager, Sustainable Water Resource Engineering Lab at Drexel University gave a presentation to CP2 and CYP about climate change.
- Sophia Tanaglia, Adam Lastowka, and Evelyn Lawrie spoke to CYP about their paths to college as self-directed learners.
- Dr. Steve Hilbert spent multiple weeks working with CYP on linear algebra and theoretical math.

- Dr. Jim Hertzog facilitated several chemistry and biology labs for CYP.
- Amy Hertzog, Master Naturalist, shared her skills and passion for the natural world with CA community members.
- Dr. Adam Himebauch demonstrated how to use an ultrasound machine and spoke about the circulatory system which was a topic that CP2 studied for multiple weeks.
- Ali Hettinger, parent of CP2 youth, worked with CP1 on lino printing.
- Daril Browning, CC & CP2 parent, shared her excellent baking skills with CC.

In addition to on-campus Domain Experts, youth have had the opportunity to visit many off-campus sites for museum tours and team-building. Field trip destinations included:

- Pennsylvania Colonial Plantation for an outdoor day of colonial exploration
- Science History Institute for a tour of their Down Stream workshop
- The Fabric Workshop and Museum for a tour and a workshop on how to screen print
- The Academy of Natural Sciences for a behind the scenes tour of their bird specimen collection
- Treetop Quest for team-building ropes course adventure
- All-campus team-building and games at YSC Sports
- AgWorks in Harrisburg to learn more about Aquaponics

*Due to space limitations, we were unable to list all domain experts and field trips.

Activity: Word Search

Answers to last issue's
Crossword Puzzle:

ACROSS:

- Marcus
- Bamboo Forest
- Collaborate
- Lucy
- Shakespeare
- Smores
- Partnership Education
- Stone Story Circle
- Reimagine*
- Create
- Frog Pond
- Alexandra

DOWN:

- Sarah
- Cupola
- Capture The Flag
- Balanced Response
- Community
- Word Present
- Hike
- Mike
- Homeschool
- Riverbend
- Corinne
- Julia

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CCNOCODPARCAZJCOXJKO
ALMFNZRHOHQCPSSZSMNWL
ZXIWHSMKMLSUSNVUCNUL
BMOSJGTMIKANZSXGAHA
ZJCUDDRANBAOIJWGTTB
QPOJTEOALGFCWCJZUVO
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EXDCWPWELCOMINGTUARI
NFR IENDSHIPSTCGYETVA
CUCJAXIASTHNPQCWC I HK
EMKMI PNGROABBPAJIFDZ

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Working Together	Collaborative	Cupola Academy	Constructive
Friendships	Aquaponics	Welcoming	Listening
Feedback	Betta fish	Community	Nature
Youth	Outdoors	Fun	Science
Open	Safe		



Snapshots
from
Creative
Choice



CP1 Mobile Museum Presentations



Snapshots from CYP





Keville Bowan- Visiting Comic Artist

By: Callie B-H

This winter older CC, CP1, and CP2 youth had the opportunity to work with Keville Bowan, who is a teaching artist. CC and CP1 youth spent their afternoons for six weeks working with Keville while CP2 youth spent their mornings with him.

The groups discussed drawing, storyline, character and plot development. Each youth created their own four-page story over the session. While CC and CP1 each created their own fictional story, CP2 youth each researched a different real-life activist and created a biographical comic about the person they chose.

During the first week, the groups discussed three-act stories which is the way most stories are written. Act One is the problem, Act Two is broken up into three distinct attempts to solve the problem, and then Act Three is the resolution. Keville also discussed realistic drawing and helped the young people develop their character drawing skills. He showed youth how to draw in one, two, and three-point perspectives and guided them through the process of comic-making.

After finishing up their story outlines, each young person went on to make a small-scale rough draft of their comic. Keville then reviewed the rough drafts with youth and helped them improve their designs. Once the rough drafts were finalized, youth began drawing their final full-sized drafts, using all of the techniques Keville had facilitated.

Youth finished their final black-and-white drafts and added a pop of color before the session ended. Keville took all of the youth's comics back to his workplace and digitally cleaned up any marks, organized all of the pages, and professionally printed a collection of all of the comics.

Learn more about Keville's work here: kebiru.deviantart.com



Matchstick Rocket Maker Challenge

By: Nolan O and Connor B-C

This issue's maker challenge is matchstick rockets. To participate, make a matchstick rocket and email us a picture or video of your rocket(s) at cp2youth@cupolaacademy.org. We will put included images in our next newspaper! You can find instructions on how to make matchstick rockets by scanning the QR code below and watching the video. Note: you need to use matches and candles for this challenge. Adult supervision is recommended.



Scan this QR code to
access the DIY
matchstick rocket video

Cupcake Baking Challenge Update

By: Callie B-H

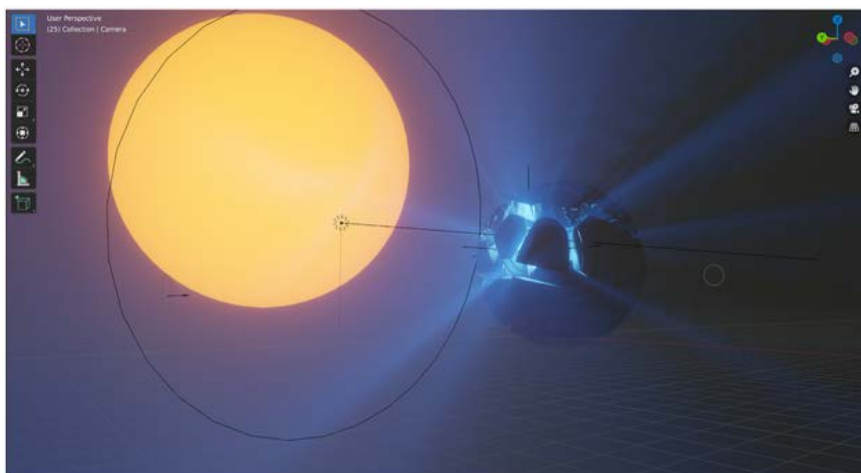
Thank you to all of the people who participated in the first issue's baking challenge! The challenge was to make Hot Chocolate Cupcakes, and all of your cupcakes looked delicious. Here are some participant photos from CC youth Lincoln, Seneca, and Nora!



Blender Offering

By: Connor B-C

CA offered a six-week blender offering led by Keith Nelson, an alumnus and self-directed learner currently in college. Blender is a 3D animation program that is used to make everything from video game characters to animated movies. In the offering, youth learned to make basic animations. At the end of the offering, youth made space animations. Below is a picture of one of the animations.



CYP Group Trip and Fundraiser

By: Connor B-C and Cali G

Constructing Your Path, the oldest program at CA, is planning to take a three-day trip to the Catskill Mountains in New York. During the trip, they are going to hike, rock scramble, do some group cooking challenges, and spend time boating and swimming at the lake near their Airbnb. As a fundraiser for this trip, CYP organized an online auction. The auction ended on March 26 with a virtual game and countdown. The most expensive item auctioned was lawn work that was sold for over \$600! All in all, CYP raised over \$1600 for their trip to the Catskill mountains in New York so far. They also held a raffle to raise the rest of the money needed for their trip. Due to the community's generosity, they have raised approximately \$4,000 in total! Thank you to everyone who participated in the fundraisers.



This is the Lemon Squeeze trail that CYP plans on hiking

Featured Hikes: Schuylkill River

By: Jack G

This issue's hike is to the Schuylkill River! This hike is an interesting travel because you get to go down to the Schuylkill river. To get there, start at the Farmhouse and continue down to the highway tunnel. Then, go through the tunnel and continue under the railroad tracks. After that, make your way through the weeds and debris, and the Schuylkill River should be right in front of you!



Cali (CP2 youth) is going under the tunnel on the way to the Schuylkill



Youth Interviews

Name: Ari, Creative Choice

Why did you decide to join CA? I wanted to try it out.

What are some things you do outside of CA? Playing rainbow tag, drawing, doing crafts, baking.

Favorite book or series? My favorite books are princess books.

Favorite group game at CA? Spot It

How did you end up homeschooling? I just wanted to try it.



Name: Jojo, Collaborative Pod I

Why did you decide to join CA? Because I thought it would be fun, and I would learn more.

What are some things you do outside of CA? I like to do a lot of sports and paint when it is warm outside.

Favorite book or series? Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Favorite group game at CA? Four on a Couch

How did you end up homeschooling: I started when I was 7, because I was not learning anything at school.



Name: Nolan, Collaborative Pod II

Why did you decide to join CA? I was doing a more standard schooling and when the pandemic hit, I did not want to go to a public school. For one year I was just homeschooling, not doing CA. Then I learned about CA and thought it would be a good fit for me. I was right!

What are some things you do outside of CA? I compete in fencing tournaments, I'm in a band, and I play a lot of video games.

Favorite book or series? 1984

Favorite group game at CA? Handball

How did you end up homeschooling? The pandemic hit, and I did not want to be in a school with a bunch of kids.



CYP using the Glow Forge



CYP working with Bluestone Environmental group



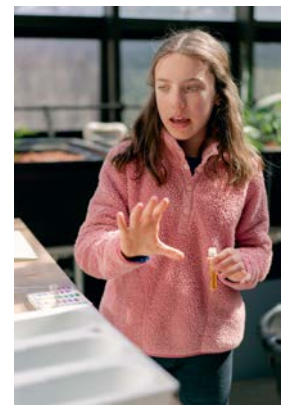
Connor is working on a geometric tessellation project



Sarah is helping Callie on a tessellation project



Tanner and Lincoln are sword fighting



Cali working in the aquaponics lab



Cade and Maddie are preparing for the CA open house



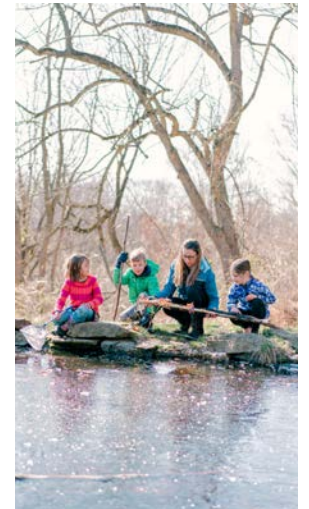
Cassie is working on an art project



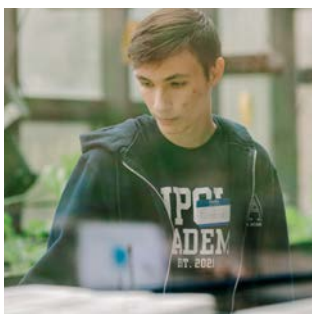
CP2 at AgWorks in Harrisburg learning about propagation



Eli and Clay are sawing a log



Ari, James, Julia, and Cassie are looking at macroinvertebrates



Connor M. is working in the aquaponics lab



Pond exploration



Jack is testing water in the aquaponics lab



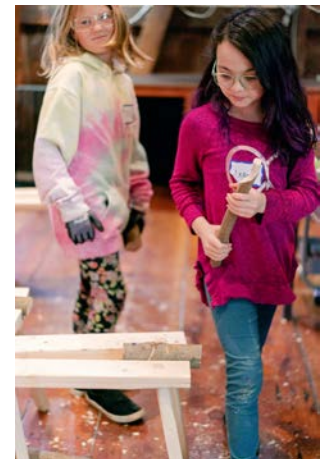
Nolan and Connor working a light project



Connor M and Noah are showing Lucy their stop motion video



CP1 at Colonial Plantation making rope



Jojo and Leila wood working