

Hoonah Schools Newsletter

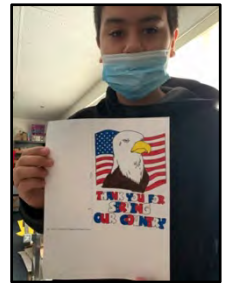
January-February 2021

Jan.--T'aawák Dísi: Geese Month

Feb.--S'ik Dísi: Black Bear Month



Kids from across the school wrote thank you notes to veterans. The day was rich with gratitude. Mr. Browning's class compiled those thank you notes and were preparing to pass them out early the next week when our first Coronavirus lockdown came. We were all sent home and have seen nary a day or two of in class learning since. The thank you letters to Hoonah Veterans have become stranded in Mr. Browning's room. Here they await, begging to be delivered. If you want to help pass any of these out by supplying current names and addresses, directions to homes, or help in any other way, please contact Mark Browning by email- browningm@hoonahschools.org.



Veterans Day at Hoonah Schools

This November 11th, Hoonah City Schools celebrated Veterans Day as best we could in the midst of the Coronavirus Epidemic just as we celebrate Veterans Day most every year. It may not have been done with the familiar fanfare of former celebrations due to our present Coronavirus limitations. However, across the school we celebrated those veterans who have both worked and fought for our freedoms over the course of our past. Hoonah itself has such a rich history of veterans, and there are many stories that come along with this history. We listened to stories provided through the Huna Heritage Foundation website. They have a fantastic selection of stories to listen to about the many veterans who hail from Hoonah.

The day was filled with activities and learning about veterans. We read books in the Elementary side of the school that exemplified what it means to be a veteran in its deep patriotic meaning. In classes around the school, we spoke of remembrance and with the acknowledgment that our freedoms are owed to our marvelous men and women in uniform. Over the lunch hours, kids came out in droves to sign the mural we made giving a Tlingit thanks for their service. This mural was hung in the front of the school along the chain fence where it proudly stood, until we received an emergency dispatch to save the poster from the tumult of wind that gusted on this blustery day wet with humid Port Frederick air. Our crack team of Mural Repairmen (and women- well mostly women) arrived and repaired and rehung the stalwart poster celebrating veterans.

Thank you again veterans for all you do for us!
Hoonah Schools Students and Staff



Students in Middle School Tlingit Language Class spent several days in November shoveling walkways and driveways for community elders. They shoveled at 15 homes over the course of a week.



A big Gunalchéesh to our kitchen crew, Kathy Harris, School Cook, and her assistant, Ronie Roberts, (HHS Class of 2018.) They make breakfast and lunch to-go during virtual school weeks, and during in-school weeks, they make bagged breakfasts and regular lunches. We all appreciate their hard work and delicious, nutritious meals!

Superintendent/Principal's Message



Happy New Year Hoonah Families,

As I sat down to write my New Year's message I came across a letter written by an administrator in NYC. What he wrote really echoes my own thoughts and feelings about these unprecedented times. I believe it eloquently states what we must

remember as parents, students and educators as we continue to learn through this crisis. As we begin the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year, let's do so with gratitude for our health, the commitment of our community in fighting this pandemic, love for our freedoms, and a conviction to do all we can to ensure that our students get the best we have to give.

With Gratitude,

Ralph M. Watkins

Superintendent/Principal

"Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am writing today about the children of this pandemic. After a lifetime of working among the young, I feel compelled to address the concerns that are being expressed by so many of my peers about the deficits the children will demonstrate when they finally return to school. My goodness, what a disconcerting thing to be concerned about in the face of a pandemic which is affecting millions of people around the country and the world. It speaks to one of my biggest fears for the children when they return. In our determination to "catch them up," I fear that we will lose who they are and what they have learned during this unprecedented era. What on earth are we trying to catch them up on? The models no longer apply, the benchmarks are no longer valid, the trend analyses have been interrupted. We must not forget that those arbitrary measures were established by people, not ordained by God. We can make those invalid measures as obsolete as a crank up telephone! They simply do not apply.

When the children return to school, they will have returned with a new history that we will need to help them identify and make sense of. When the children return to school, we will need to listen to them. Let their stories be told. They have endured a year that has no parallel in modern times. There is no assessment

that applies to who they are or what they have learned. Remember, their brains did not go into hibernation during this year. Their brains may not have been focused on traditional school material, but they did not stop either. Their brains may have been focused on where their next meal is coming from, or how to care for a younger sibling, or how to deal with missing grandma, or how it feels to have to surrender a beloved pet, or how to deal with death. Our job is to welcome them back and help them write that history.

I sincerely plead with my colleagues, to surrender the artificial constructs that measure achievement and greet the children where they are, not where we think they "should be." Greet them with art supplies and writing materials, and music and dance and so many other avenues to help them express what has happened to them in their lives during this horrific year. Greet them with stories and books that will help them make sense of an upside-down world. They missed you. They did not miss the test prep. They did not miss the worksheets. They did not miss the reading groups. They did not miss the homework. They missed you.

Resist the pressure from whatever 'powers that be' who are in a hurry to "fix" kids and make up for the "lost" time. The time was not lost, it was invested in surviving an historic period of time in their lives—in our lives. The children do not need to be fixed. They are not broken. They need to be heard. They need to be given as many tools as we can provide to nurture resilience and help them adjust to a post pandemic world.

Being a teacher is an essential connection between what is and what can be. Please, let what can be demonstrate that our children have so much to share about the world they live in and in helping them make sense of what, for all of us has been unimaginable. This will help them— and us— achieve a lot more than can be measured by any assessment tool ever devised. Peace to all who work with the children!"

Happy New Year,

Dr. Floyd
Principal

FYI: This newsletter has been a component of the Hoonah City Schools Native Education Program for over twenty years. We strive to share the good news about school programs and activities. We are in the process of archiving past newsletters on the school website. Go to www.hoonahschools.org and click on News, then Newsletters. Gunalchéesh to all of our contributors and readers. You can contact Newsletter Editor Daphne Wright at wrightd@hoonahschools.org with any questions, suggestions or comments about this project.

School Board President's Message

Learning How to Learn

Often in a High School Algebra class, a common question asked with frustration by students is "When am I ever going to need to know this in the real world?" A version of the answer, while may be good and true, misses an important opportunity to show the student the bigger picture of education. Instead of "Well Suzy, if you want to study engineering in your future you will need to properly solve quadratic equations." We may wish to tell our students, "You might not use it at all in the future, but you will be using your brain. You'll use it a lot. At times you will need your brain to solve complex issues for your life. Your brain will need to learn new things, and quickly, in order for you to have success in work or relationships." When we lead our students to practice in this learning process, they will be able to learn exponentially more information that will matter to their lives when they leave school.

It's not as much *what* we learn in school as it is that we've learned *how* to learn. There are simple cognitive skills that without mastering, make it more difficult to succeed beyond graduation. Often, I find we take them for granted. I was home visiting family several years ago and I mentioned to my dad that I didn't take much of what I learned in high school beyond the confines of the building. I felt I had learned far more from personal reading, online college courses, work experience etc. His response was simply "Yes but you learned how to learn." I had never thought about it, but he was right.

As a district we obviously have many metrics we use to track progress and we have many benchmarks of learning success more concrete than a vague mantra "learn how to learn." Yet I feel it's a healthy companion to go along with our continued efforts for student achievement in Reading, Writing, Math, etc. It's simply a skill to be obtained; maybe the most important of skills.

As the new President of the Hoonah City Schools Board of Education, I am humbled and honored to serve the students and members of the great City of Hoonah. My wife and I are proud to have Hoonah as our home and cherish the opportunity to raise children in this special corner of the world. Hoonah has long had a reputation for achieving scholastic success relative to the size of our community. We have seen many students graduate from Hoonah City Schools and take what they have learned and bring themselves forth into the world to find their scholarship continue to flourish. Whether the flourishment took place in the lecture halls of an esteemed university, or it presents itself in a work field with opportunity for continued growth and success, one constant remains---our students have had to "learn how to learn."

Dillon Styers, HCS Board President

Hoonah City Schools Board of Education Members:

Dillon Styers	President
Amy Courtney	Vice-President
Esther Heath-Mills	Secretary-Treasurer
Karen Hinchman	Member
Harold Houston	Member

Spotlight on New Staff



Sascha Smith is the new teacher in the Second-Third Grade. Before moving to Hoonah, she was working as a Fifth Grade teacher in Phoenix, Arizona. Below are her answers to our questionnaire:

Where are you from; where

did you grow up---go to college, etc. I was born in Topeka, Kansas. My Father was transferred to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona when I was young and we lived in Glendale, Arizona. I received my Master's Degree in Education from Grand Canyon University.

What would you like to share about your family? My husband and I are high school sweethearts and have been married for 26 years. We have two amazing daughters, Sophia, 21 and Mia, 13.

What do you like to do when you aren't working at school? Any special interests you want to tell us about? When I am not working I love to explore outdoors, cook, and read. I really love spending time with my family playing board and card games.

How is it that you ended up here? How do you like Hoonah so far? Moving to and teaching in Alaska is something my husband and I have been discussing for years. We looked into Teach for Alaska and interviewed with several school districts all over Alaska. When Hoonah City Schools reached out to us, we of course did some research on the village of Hoonah. We instantly fell in love with the beauty of the village and its surroundings. We absolutely love being here in Hoonah, we feel very welcomed by everyone and we are enjoying exploring and learning about this extraordinary place and the people who live here.

Library News

From Mrs. Lee, Librarian

Share A Book with Your Child

Did you know reading a book with your child has tremendous benefits that will last a lifetime? Reading together:

- Fosters a love for reading
- Helps your child learn to read
- Develops their vocabulary
- Exposes them to new ideas, cultures and places
- Develops their imagination
- Lowers stress
- Creates bonds between participants

As a child, you may or may not have been read to on a regular basis. If you were, then this habit will be familiar to you. Either way, if you haven't started a tradition of reading together with your child on a regular basis, then perhaps now is the time to start.

Some families will read a story with their children at bedtime. This helps the little ones feel the love and comfort of being with an adult and calms them down before drifting off to sleep. But if this time doesn't work for you, then consider reading with your child another time of the day.

If you are starting a new reading tradition, be aware that beginning a new habit can have some ups and downs. Some days you may not feel like reading with your child or your child may want to do other things instead of reading a book. Keep the attitude that this is important for your child's development and future, then experiment with ways to make it happen. Whether reading a book with your child is a long-standing tradition in your family or something new to you, I commend you for taking the time to read with your child. I know this is or will be a very pleasurable time and you will be amazed at what you both gain through the experience.

If there is any way I can help you with reading at home by answering questions or helping you get books to read, then please give me a call at 945-3611. I am usually available in the library from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm.

A BIG THANK YOU!

I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Browning for helping me learn and navigate Zoom meetings for library story time with his Fourth Grade class. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with me and coaching me through the process. I know at the heart of this kindness is your care for our students and desire to see them succeed. Thank you so much!

I would also like to thank Judy Bitz who offered to help in the library in any way she could during our online

learning time. She worked so hard organizing books in all sections of the library. Thanks to Judy, I can say our library is now more than ready for checking out books. All of the library patrons will benefit from your help, Judy! Thank you so much!

COMING SOON ----- WORLD BOOK ONLINE! ACCESS FOR ALL OF OUR STUDENTS!

Our school was able to purchase a 5-year subscription to the online World Book through the SAIL Project grant. Hardcover or paper encyclopedias are becoming obsolete. We removed our encyclopedia sets from the library years ago because they were outdated. Now we will have access to a digital encyclopedia which is updated on a regular basis. Our subscription to World Book offers more than an encyclopedia, such as basic skills practice and education games. Thank you, Joan Martin, for your idea to purchase World Book!

More New Staff in the Spotlight

Mark Smith, our new First Grade teacher, came here from Phoenix, Arizona, where he had been teaching Second Grade. Below are his answers to our questionnaire:



Where are you from; where did you grow up---go to college, etc.? I was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. I received my Bachelor's Degree from Northern Arizona University and my Master's Degree from Grand Canyon University.

What would you like to share about your family? I have been married to my amazing wife, Sascha, for 26 years and we have 2 incredible girls, Sophia, 21 and Mia, 13.

How is it that you ended up here? How do you like Hoonah so far? Living in Alaska has been a dream of mine for many years, this year was the perfect year to make the move. I love being in Hoonah. I love that I can take my boat out and fish whenever I want. This is the most beautiful place I have ever been and I feel very lucky to live here every time I step out of my door.

What do you like to do when you aren't working at school? I love to fish and in general be outdoors.

What are some things you would like to accomplish in the near future? I plan on teaching until I retire. To me there is no greater joy than teaching a child to read. Once you help a child break the reading code, you open up a whole new world of possibilities for them. It is an amazing thing to experience.



More New Staff Spotlight

Teresa McConnell is working in the elementary school this year. Her official job title is "Literacy Coach," but she would much prefer "Part-time Reading Teacher." Teresa taught for 23

years in the Fairbanks School District in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grades. She and her family came to Hoonah for about 20 summers in those years and moved here permanently in 2008 when she retired. Teresa really loves working with students in Hoonah helping them to become better readers. Teresa wanted to add that she is super excited to now be a grandma!

Teresa explains iReady Reading:

iReady Reading is an online program that our Hoonah elementary students have been using this year. You've been seeing them use it when they've been distance learning at home!

This program engages students as they build their reading skills. It's designed to address every student's learning needs, and provides personalized instruction at their level. This program monitors student progress throughout the year. There is more information for families, and even a short explanation video, at this website: www.i-readycentral.com.

HCS Family Engagement Program Activities

Family Engagement Activities had to adjust from meeting face-to-face in the gym like we were able to in October, when we had hands-on learning activities & fun raffles. For the months of November and December, we worked together to create packets to keep families engaged with each other while we continue to take precautions during the fight against COVID.



In November, we put together a Family Engagement Packet for students to pick up from Collette's Cupboard. Thank you to Colette's for being a community partner. Activities included a paper turkey to hang in their windows for a fun Turkey Scavenger Hunt. We also created a Gratitude Scavenger Hunt as well as a fun Thanksgiving Mad Lib.

In December, we compiled fun activities to put into packets for students to take home on December 11th before going virtual the week before Winter Break. There were multiple coloring activities, along with a paper cut-out of a wreath to decorate at home. ACT information for high school students, as well as hot cocoa were sent home in the packets. Middle School Students received a blue pull-string backpack from Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's Community and Environmental Department. Arianna Lapke and Jillian Schuyler from Hoonah Indian Association's Environmental Program contributed an Environmental Quality Scavenger Hunt for families to enjoy together. Heather Powell contributed a Tlingit Art Design received from Huna Totem. Extra Family Engagement Activity Packets were placed in a basket for pick-up at Colette's Cupboard.

Santa was spotted passing out presents on Christmas Eve and some of his elves looked familiar, both during the gift distribution and during preparation activities.



During our fight against COVID and until Family Engagement Night can be held face-to-face in the gym, we will continue to provide family fun packets. The packets will contain college and career information, fun and healthy activities and Tlingit and Huna traditions. Our January Family Engagement packets went out on the 22nd.

HCS Clothes Closet: School staff worked together to create the Hoonah City Schools Clothes Closet, located in the Elementary Building. The Clothes Closet is filled with many different clothing items in various sizes. Other items include backpacks, water bottles, school supplies as well as helmets and winter gear. Hoonah City Schools has received brand new clothes most recently from Hoonah Indian Association.

Please watch for postings on Huna Bulletin Board's Facebook page for updates on the items available in the Clothes Closet in the coming months. If any students are in need of clothing items or if you have any items that you would like to contribute to the Clothes Closet, please call the school at (907) 945-3611 and ask for Elana Cranston. She can help coordinate a date and time for pickup of any item.

Tlingit Language and Culture Classes



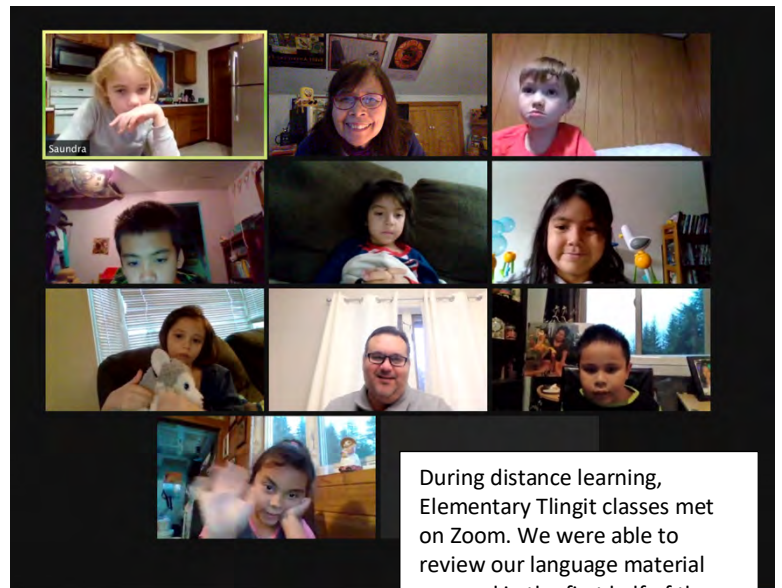
Mark Browning's 4th Grade and 8th Grade Lingit Language class did a Kooteyaa Tour with Jeff Skafelsted and his current project as well as the Guntz pole.



Tlingit Language & Culture class students went hunting with Uncle Levi Mills. Above right: Sh toowaa Kháa Tyrell Cromer got his first deer. Tyrell worked with his Grandfather to butcher the deer.



Students in Middle School Tlingit Language shoveled snow for elders after our big snowfall in November.



During distance learning, Elementary Tlingit classes met on Zoom. We were able to review our language material covered in the first half of the year material with slide shows, games and songs. Fourth & Fifth graders used Quizlet to review. Above: Mr. Smith and his 1st graders in Tlingit Zoom class with Mrs. Wright.

Carpentry Class—Learn by Doing

We are so excited about this year's carpentry class. The students are learning so many life skills that they will use later in life.

We start each carpentry class with a review of the shop safety rules. The students learn the importance of such safety rules as wearing safety glasses in the shop and hard hats on job sites. We discuss and give examples of the correct clothes and shoes to wear while working. When we finished the first week this year, we had the opportunity to take the students on a field trip within the community and see different job sites enforcing these same safety rules.

During this initial phase of carpentry, we investigated careers in the construction industry. We looked at the job market for carpenters in Alaska and the lower 48. Through the field trip and our classroom investigations, it was apparent to the students that there is a lot of demand for carpenters.



Throughout the class, students learn to identify and use all of the basic tools that a carpenter would use building houses. We start with basic hand tools such as a claw hammer, speed square, hand saw, tape measure and crowbar. As you can see in the pictures, students are using the chop saw, jig saw, and hammers.

One of the things that is evident in each picture, and is stressed during carpentry class, is that students learn how to work together and help each other.

As the class progresses throughout the year, students are assigned to different teams with different tasks. It is during these work teams the students learn the importance of helping each other to reach a common goal. They learn that while I may not be good at something to begin with, if I practice and learn from others, I too can be successful.

We learn about the process of making lumber. We look at trees going from forest, to the saw mill, to the lumber yard. The students were in awe at the size of some of the lumber mills in states like Washington and Oregon. It was through this process that students really began to see trees as a natural resource that can be harvested, but also needs to be protected and replanted.



During the final phase of the class, the students build an actual shed. The students learned how to do everything from building the sub floor, to framing, to felting the roof. In one of the pictures, you see the student standing up the walls of a storage shed. As a teacher, nothing gives you more fulfillment than to see the pride on the students' faces and hear them say "We built this."



KHOO Relaunch Coming Soon!

KHOO will relaunch soon with a refurbished studio and a new sound. The station, which sits in a small room in the middle of the school, has been upgraded for professional broadcasting, interviewing, and more. The station will broadcast at 90.7 FM and stream at hoonahschools.org/khoo. Hoonahschools.org/khoo also features interviews by students with Geisteen Miguel Contreras, Kaayeetaan Veronica Dalton, Renee Gray, Alexandria Tannehill-Smith, Superintendent Ralph Watkins, and K'ashgé Daphne Wright. A big thanks to Superintendent Watkins, Lgéik'i Heather Powell, Authentimedia's Kashóok' Scott Burton, Jeremiah Byers, KTOO, and the students of the Northwest Coast Broadcasting class. Also look forward to a video about harvesting s'ikshaldéen Hudson Bay Tea on the school's YouTube page. Updates on Facebook will be coming soon.



A Look Into HS/MS Science Class

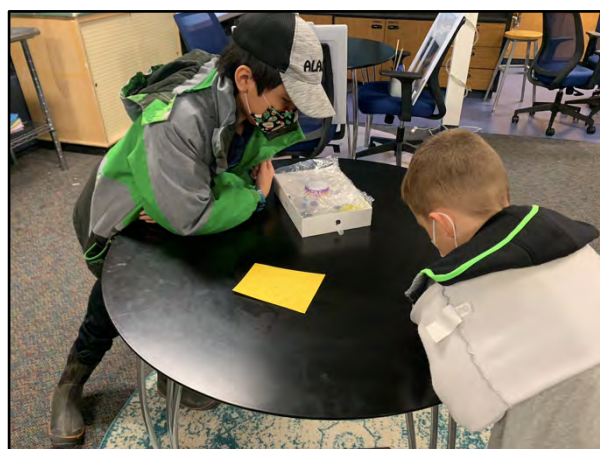
From Ms. Tannehill-Smith



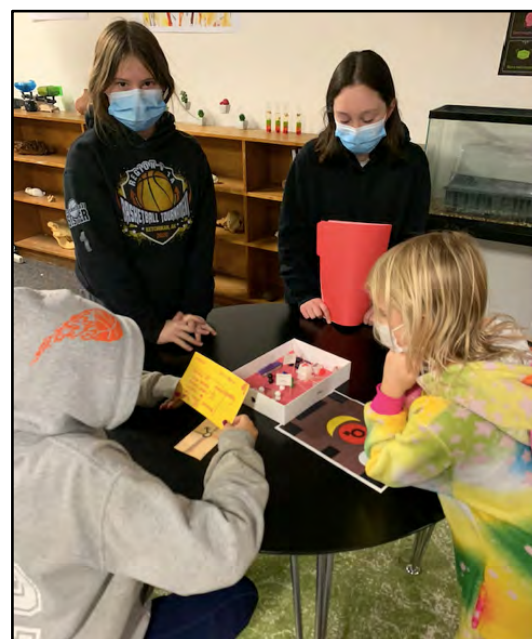
Kyah is creating an edible diagram of the moon phases using Oreo Cookies! These incredible 6th graders can tell you all about the moon phases, seasons, eclipses and tides if you ask them!



Tanner, Josh and Jorge let the creative juices fly when imagining and bringing to life their Mars Colony Design Project. The students were given several tasks to accomplish and used an insane amount of critical thinking to bring their plans to life when creating a model of their Mars establishments. Junk-yard labs are my favorite way to reduce waste and reuse recyclable materials in the name of learning science! **I'm always accepting "clean-trash donations!"



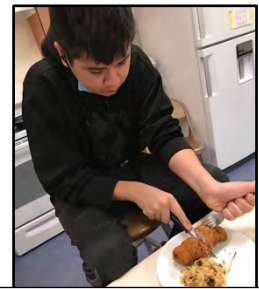
Our amazing 6th grade class had the opportunity to pair up with Mr. B's awesome 4th grade class. The 4th graders had previously shared a lab about Newton's Laws of Motion with us and we wanted to return the favor by showing them what it would take to colonize Mars after our Astronomy unit! We also invited the entire school to come and check our projects out! Needless to say, watching my students take pride in their work and presentations and seeing the reactions of their peers was a truly magical moment.



Culinary Elective

This class was taught in the First Semester by Annie Humphrys, chef/owner of the *Chez Alaska Cooking School* in Juneau. She has been in the food business since she was 14; she started catering business at 21 and bought the cooking school in 2012.

Annie wrote about her class: *I absolutely love Hoonah and my 11 students, mostly boys and 2 girls! They are learning techniques of good cooking. Some of the things we have covered are kitchen safety, knife skills, thickeners, sauces, soups and stews, roasting and frying. We made German Rouladen and Izzy said it was the best thing he had ever eaten!*



Izzy enjoying Chicken Kiev



Annie and RJ making saurkraut



Olivia, Anthony and Orion making stew for Family Night

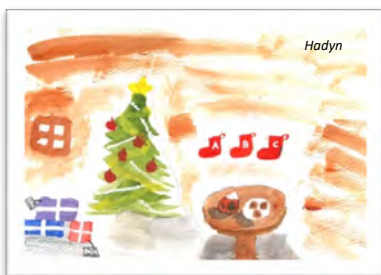


Art Elective in Middle and High School

The Art and Creative Communication Elective with Stephanie Harold has been exploring visual thinking for sketching and using watercolor. We have also been learning different lettering styles and developing our personal creative process.

According to the students, this phase we practiced the following drawing and painting skills:

- continuous line drawing (which means never taking the pen off the page)
- not mixing the paint but letting it create magic on the page – even when painting trees
- intentionally choosing the thickness of paint to match the thicknesses of tea, milk, or honey
- shading three dimensional objects with paint
- trying to think of things just as shapes, including the shapes of the shadows



We used these skills to create illustrated Christmas cards. First, we planned using a blue lay-out pencil, then painted and, in some cases, added pen. Lettering and borders came last. We also experimented with different background techniques and ways of creating patterns with handmade tape stencils.



At the end of the Phase, we annotated our sketchbooks with reflections. We realized that as well as practicing techniques, we learned about ourselves as artists, specifically that sketching is calming and is a good way to remember things. We discussed how overly self-critical we are and how important it is to finish our projects, even if we don't like how they look midway through the process.

“Ohhh... NO! Not more Online Learning?”

Mr. Browning’s Fourth Grade Class

The months of December and January have been consumed with Online Learning. While there is certainly no replacement for in-person learning at school, students are highly adaptable and have become accustomed to the new learning routine; some even seem to enjoy it. In school, a teacher’s love for learning and the concern for their student’s education and social welfare is palpable. It is easily understood by students most of the time, and it is quite often felt by parents as well. When a teacher and a student make a strong connection, amazing things happen in the classroom. It is what all teachers worth their weight in salt strive for. But how does this social/emotional aspect of learning translate in the online world?

Not all teachers use the online forum the same way. I can only speak for my class and what I attempt to make happen. And here it is:

I meet with each student 5 times a day. We have Morning Check In, Online Math Gaming, and Recess together as a whole class. We play a lot in these whole group meetings and joke around during these times. It is lighthearted and fun.

“I like online learning and I don't. The part I like is that there are fun games, and the part I don't is that we're not in the same room. That makes it less fun.” **Tank “The Bank” Tyler**

I also meet with each student for 30 minutes for Reading and 30 minutes for Math. I meet with them in small groups so that I can work with them at their own personal learning level for these subjects, and so that I can spend as much time as I can with each kid individually. When I do the math, I actually get to spend more time each day with students in small groups focusing on their individual work than I ever get to in the actual classroom. This is, of course, because parents at home are in charge of managing kids when I am not meeting with them individually. This allows me to spend so much time working with individual students. Thanks, parents, for your help- it is a big part of what we can accomplish in our class with online learning.

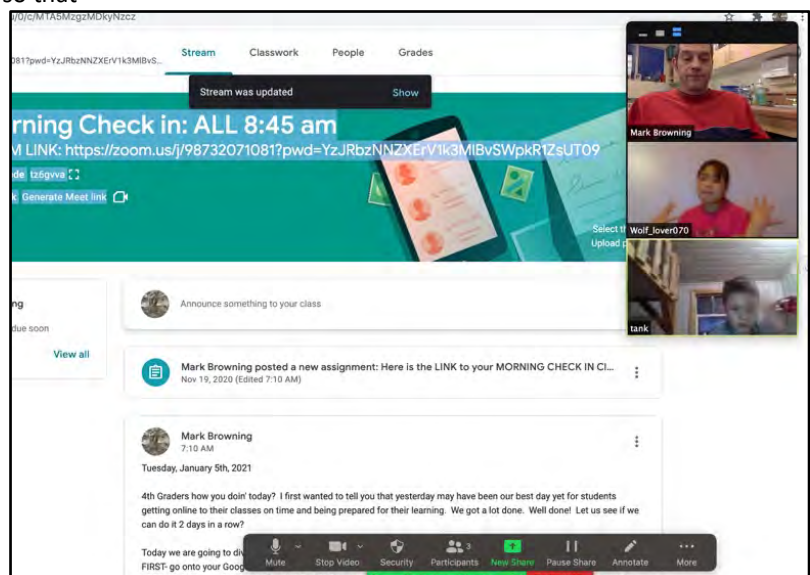
On Fridays we try to take a field trip to go explore something outside. I do this to keep students engaged and to share experiences with them. They get to socialize a bit with other kids in a pretty safe

way—outside and spread a bit apart. We try to do some fun things.

“It is hard to be on time for class, but I love when we learn math in Salmon Math Class. The thing I like the most is when we go on lovely, fun field trips. My favorite is when we went to look at awesome sea animals just before Christmas.” **Ava “Pillow Eater” Hinchman**

As the teacher, I have found my most important aspect of online teaching is keeping the students feeling good about what they are doing. I like to give them as much time as I can to meet individually so that I can replicate the wonderful affect that a good teacher can have on the lives of a student—developing relationships and sharing with each other. When this happens, even online, student learning is strong; kids care about what they are doing and what they produce; they are happy to work hard and continue being great learners even online. In my class, I would like to thank all the parents out there who take the down and dirty time management out of teaching and allow me to just spend quality time with their kids working on student learning without having to worry about what the rest of the class is doing. That is a hard job. And, I would like to thank all the great students in our class for making this year’s online learning great!

“It's pretty nice though getting to stay in bed and do class. That's probably my favorite part. But the worst is bad Wifi”. **Taylor**



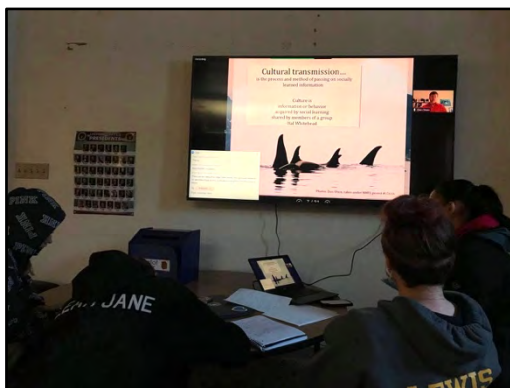
Hoonah Students Attend Virtual Whalefest

Can you imagine living in a Hoonah that wasn't on the water? You're right—absolutely not! Port Frederick, its neighboring waters and all the resources swimming in them, are a huge part of Hoonah's culture. To celebrate the marine environment, life, and our connections with it, we brought [Whalefest](#) to our community.

Normally hosted in Sitka with the [Sitka Sound Science Center](#), Whalefest is a festival that raises awareness of and educates participants about the marine environment and



issues we're facing today. Students involved attend seminars with scientists from around the world, learn about various marine topics, participate in hands-on



workshops, and engage with other passionate students from around Southeast Alaska through games and discussions. As if that

weren't great enough, the students had the option to gain college credit while attending this 3-day virtual event. Four of Hoonah's youth not only participated in the virtual Whalefest event this year, but signed up for the Whalefest "course" to gain college credit too! Through this awesome opportunity, the students got to learn about cultural connections within the marine environment and how they relate to our own cultures.

We were thankful to still have the option to engage local youth in an opportunity as awesome as Whalefest despite the many challenges COVID-19 has presented. Offering opportunities for students to get college credit, learn more about topics they're passionate about, and reconnect with the natural environment by assessing their cultural connections with it is something HIA Environmental strives to do more in the future. Thank you to all the speakers and those who made Whalefest possible this year! Opportunities like Whalefest are great ways to get involved with science, natural resource management, and environmental/social issues. **Thank You, Whalefest!**



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November, 2020

Taken from a longer article at the link
<https://www.hia->

[env.org/2020/11/16/whalefest-in-hoonah-celebrating-cultural-connections/](https://www.hia-env.org/2020/11/16/whalefest-in-hoonah-celebrating-cultural-connections/)

Hoonah Recyclers Update

The Recyclers have continued to open up some Saturdays; gunalchéesh to volunteers Karen Mills and Mark Browning for working on our lastest open Saturday. Gunalchéesh to the following for donations of metals: Minnie Dalton, Paul & Sally Dybdahl, Jessie & Jeremy Martin, Daphne & Frank Wright, Jr., Jeff & Phyllis Tischer, Xiu Farley, Debbie Wright, and City of Hoonah Public Works Department. Gunalchéesh also to Paul Dybdahl for shoveling snow and transporting donated cans down to the van.

Gunalchéesh to AML for free freight when we fill our van, and to the US Forest Service and Hoonah Native Forest Partnership for the second delivery of donated metals.

The Recyclers contributed gift wrap supplies to the ANS Christmas Eve Drive-By Extravaganza, and cash to the Christmas Lights Contest.



Boxholder

Hoonah City Schools Newsletter
January—February 2021

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**Hoonah's Christmas Eve Celebration During the Pandemic—
photo by Deborah Badertscher**

Dates to Remember

End of 2 nd Qt./1 st Sem.	Feb. 5
Teacher Inservice—No School	Feb. 8
Spring Break	Mar. 22-26
End of 3 rd Quarter	April 8
Teacher Workday—No School	April 9
Memorial Day Holiday	May 31
Last Day for Seniors	June 4
Last Day of School	June 11

Gunalchéesh: We recently deposited \$64 and change into our Playground Improvements Fund. This came from the collection boxes that are at Colette's Cupboard and Hoonah Liquor Store. Gunalchéesh to those two stores and to all those who added to those collection boxes!

Christmas 2020, Hoonah Style

This year was not our usual Christmas Eve Community Tree gathering that we are all accustomed to. Due to social distancing requirements and Covid-19 concerns, we had an outdoor, drive-by event instead. Gunalchéesh to all who worked to put this together and to all the businesses and individuals who donated gifts, food and cash to make it all happen. The gifts were donated by the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program, and the whole event was sponsored by the Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp 12. Businesses in Juneau and Hoonah were generous contributors. Many volunteers masked up and gathered in small groups to wrap the gifts and stuff the stockings; others volunteered on Christmas Eve to distribute the gifts and stockings and to lend a festive air to the event (we're looking at you, Elves, Santa and Mrs. Claus, and Mr. Grinch!)

We hope to see everyone next Christmas, in a more normal indoor setting, with all the socializing and catching up that is a big part of Christmas in Hoonah.

New staff: Karoline Henry is now on staff, working as a para-professional aide in the Elementary School. Karoline is a Hoonah High School graduate, class of 2011. She is enjoying working with the kids, and said that a fun part of the day for her is "Dance Party" which they do after lunch.

