

Upper School brings learning to life through place-based learning



Shannon O'Connor's high school Ecology students performing a campus bird population survey

How does urban development affect animal populations? Why are some neighborhoods more polluted than others? Why do dialects vary, and how are they an expression of identity? How can I make my community stronger? At Pioneer Springs Upper School students (grades 6-12) use our campus and local community to explore compelling questions such as these—and to make connections between local trends and global patterns. The community is our classroom, and learning about local human-nature interaction, culture, and history, serves as the foundation for academics including science, social studies, math and ELA. Using the community as the classroom is known as *place-based teaching and learning*, and is an approach to education that has been shown to support academic success, civic responsibility, and leadership in students. What stories do you see in your own community, and how do they connect to broader trends? What kinds of place-based teaching and learning would you like your student to explore?

IMPORTANT DATES & ITEMS TO NOTE

- [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Who to Contact and When](#)
- [Academic & Events Calendar](#)

Hoop greenhouse construction is underway



Mr. Chris and Mr. John attaching cross-braces to the greenhouse

Exciting things are happening behind the high school complex this summer—construction of a hoop greenhouse is underway! When complete the greenhouse will house an aquaponics lab, and space for starting seedlings. The greenhouse will be used by high school horticulture and natural science students to cultivate plants for our campus garden, as well as for student-run plant sales. Students who work in the greenhouse will learn about aquaponics, traditional methods for cultivating plants, as well as about the economics of horticulture.

All ages can explore the world of stories and storytelling at Imaginon



Nestled just to the south of First Ward Park, and across the Blue Line from the Public Market is [Imaginon](#). Part library, part theater, part digital storytelling innovation center, Imaginon sparks creativity for visitors 19 and under (and adults, too!). [Visit Imaginon this summer](#) to find good books, attend storytime, create a weekly all-teen news show, see an exhibit, or complete a pre-teen service project.

Get Outside!: Try stargazing and explore the magic of the night sky



From the chorus of frogs singing, to lightning bugs, the call of owls, and the swooping of bats, summer nights are magical! To add even more wonder to your summer nights, try stargazing. All you need is a patch of open sky, a blanket to lay on and perhaps binoculars or a telescope to view the heavens in more detail. Simply looking up at the stars and sharing what you notice and wonder can be awe-inspiring. If stargazing sparks your family's curiosity, the book *A Child's Introduction to the Night Sky* includes a sky map, information about astronomy, and myths. Teen readers might enjoy the detailed introduction to stargazing found in *National Geographic Backyard Guide to the Night Sky*, or *What We See When We Look in the Stars*, a guide to different cultures' interpretations of constellations and planets. The next new moon, when the sky is the darkest and stars are their brightest, is July 5.

Find more ideas for [stargazing with children here](#), and [ideas for teens here](#).

Marvelous Math: Games that keep math skills strong



Here are some fun puzzles and games to build math fluency and number sense this summer. Once your family has completed these activities, challenge your student to create games or puzzles of his/her own!

- Elementary-create a sidewalk chalk jumping math maze
- Middle School-review angles by playing "Position and Direction": player 1 is blindfolded and player 2 calls out angles and steps to direct player 1 around an open area to a destination, then players switch roles
- High School-try this "Factors and Multiples" challenge!

Get outdoors and get into STEM

Explore the natural world and the ways in which scientists describe the natural world with these outdoor activities:

For elementary school students and beyond:

All you need is a sunny day and some sidewalk chalk, and you can make your very own human sundial.

For middle school and high school students:

What lives under a log? Even the smallest spaces are teeming with life!

- Find a fallen log, and carefully roll it away from you (this part is important, rolling the log away from you encourages the snakes and other critters to move away from you)
- Investigate the animals you find. This Critter ID will help you identify the animals you find.
- Why do those animals choose a log as their habitat? How do the animals depend on each other?
- When your investigation is done, move the log back to its original position.



Want more ideas? Check out STEAM Bingo!

Summer reading resources for elementary students, by Tanya Blumenfeld, Third Grade Lead Teacher

In the last edition of the *Coop Scoop*, I shared strategies for encouraging your child to read by reading together. Another easy way to get your child reading this summer is to take advantage of free reading resources. One site that we use during the school year is Readworks. This website provides a variety of resources that are available to you after signing up for a free parent account. North Carolina has provided a [Literacy at Home](#) program that includes activities for students by grade level. They have also created a [summer program](#) that includes 10 weeks of activities for Kindergarten–Second grade. Don't forget about your local library! Many libraries have summer reading programs that your child can participate in to help motivate them to continue reading.



Looking for resources for teen readers? [Check out your local library!](#)

Recommended books:

Kindergarten *Leave Me Alone!* By Vera Brosgol, *I Don't Want to Be a Frog* by Dev Petty

First grade *There's an Alligator Under my Bed* by Mercer Mayer, *Freckle Juice* by Judy Blume

Second grade *Double Bass Blues* by Andrea J. Loney, *Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude* by Kevin O'Malley

Third grade *The World According to Humphrey* by Betty Birney, *The Marvellers* by Dhonielle Clayton

Fourth grade *Indian No More* by Charlene Willing McManis, *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster

Fifth grade *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Middle School *Isaiah Dunn Saves the Day* by Kelly J. Baptist, *Alliana*, *Girl of Dragons* by Julie Abe

High School *Just Mercy*, *Adapted for Young Adults* by Bryan Stevenson, *Darius the Great is Not OK* by Adib Khorram

Summer letters



Writing is wonderful and important because it allows people to connect with one another through time and space.

- Encourage your child or teen to write a letter or a postcard to a loved one, family member or friend who is far away. You could use notebook paper, or you could choose beautiful stationery or a postcard.
- Start a [communication journal](#)-it's a great way to share experiences, thoughts, feelings and stories now, and will be a wonderful keepsake in the future!

Camp Smiles



Our nickname for our Upper School students, "Hellbender", was chosen to call attention to Hellbenders, an important and endangered salamander species found in the mountains of North Carolina. [Check out this recent news article](#) to learn more about Hellbenders.