

# Little Lake News

Updates from our Democratic Learning Community



## Year Eight, Feelin' Great!

Little Lake enters its eighth year with a seasoned group of unschoolers

This year at Little Lake has been a busy one, and we're only a few months in! Unlike other years, we began this year with a group composed entirely of veteran students, so we slipped back into our rhythm pretty seamlessly. With students ranging in age from 6 to 15, we have a broad spectrum of experience and perspective.

Popular with younger students this year has been "Scratch" an online tool created by folks at MIT for young people to explore computer programming. Students have been using this to create their own games and animations. Similarly, stop motion animation has been explored by students through a variety of mediums, and students have expanded this into directing live action films together. Along with all this, writing has also been an important component to school life lately. Though writing has always found its way into play at Little Lake, story-writing has begun to take off as an activity as well.

In the realm of older students, highlights include a psychology class that follows a college-level course through reading a textbook and group discussion, and math class that continues to be regularly attended.

Structurally, we've shifted a little bit since last winter. For one, we are relying more on the help of volunteers to help run the ship. This has brought lots of new ideas, perspectives, and variety to the day-to-day experience of the space. Additionally, we adopted some methods from the Agile Learning Center. Using a large "Community Mastery Board" (Kan Ban board) to facilitate daily meetings, we track our progress as a community on our goals, share projects, and exercise our consensus based decision-making model. With trips to the renaissance fair, apple picking, and ice skating we've also been out engaging with the broader community as well.

We continue to run a dynamic, energetic and curious environment together, where self-direction is key and play is seen as a core element to learning!

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*Student-led Dungeons and Dragons*

## Young Writers Spotlight

A sneak peak of "The Book that Unleashed Salazar", written by Vera Yoder

### Chapter 1

Once Upon a time, there was a boy who was skipping rocks. When he woke (in the morning) he decided to go to the pond. When he got there he saw a book, so he picked it up not knowing what it would do when it got opened. So the little boy opened the book and saw a horrible sight. He saw an old, ragged, tall man with gross hands covered in blood, then he screamed a high, shrill scream. The man, on the other hand, had left, for little did the boy know, he now had to put the man back or the whole world would be in danger. So he searched in the library for information about the man, but he only found one book. It said "Do no look at this man of horrors for even aurors can't catch him. He's slippery as ice, and filled with mice, beware of Salazar."

### Chapter 2- Beware of Salazar

As the boy closed the book in shock he heard a long, rattling breath. The librarian shrieked. He ran from the library with the book clutched in his arms. He knew that Salazar would want that book, so he would not have any help. So the boy kept running until he was so out of breath the he couldn't talk, but Salazar wouldn't waste any time. He searched for the but had no luck (because he kept hiding in the same places Salazar looked). So one day he decided that he would lead Salazar to into a trap. So he put his scent near the trap and put the book down where he thought Salazar would step, but when Salazar came he was very aware of the trap.

### Chapter 3- The Spirit Realm

The boy was shocked that the trap didn't work, but before he could figure out why it didn't work or run away, he heard a long, rattling breath and he was plunged into total darkness, not emerging until at least twenty minutes later. Then he saw at least twenty thousand spirits. When he could get over the shock, he looked into his bag. Luckily the book was still there. It no longer had the warning, but Salazar's plan.



Author, Vera Yoder (age 9)

**"Do no look at this man of horrors for even aurors can't catch him. He's slippery as ice, and filled with mice, beware of Salazar."**

# Student Art Showcase



Colored by Eli, age 10



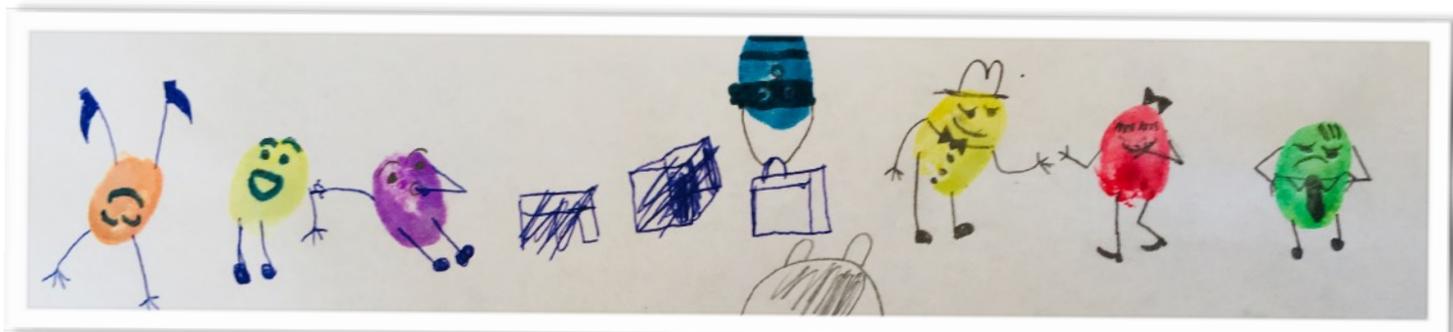
white board drawing by Lucy, age 12



Self portrait by Adam, age 11



Christmas Fashion by Tuula, age 10



Fingerprint people by Vera, age 9

## Student Interview: Tuula Martinez

**How long have you been going to Little Lake?**

*I think this is my third year at Little Lake*

**What do you think about unschooling and democratic education?**

*I really like it because I was really stressed at my old school.*

**What was stressful about your old school?**

*Well, me and my mom would fight because I didn't want to do my homework and she did want me to do my homework. And because I was expected to do everything on time and there would be no exceptions. If I did do my homework I would just have homework for the next day, and if I didn't do it I'd have double homework.*



Tuula, age 10

**How do you think your freedom to direct your own education has shaped you as a person?**

*Well I definitely got introduced to a lot more things and I feel like could just play instruments all day and if I was at my old school I could only play instruments in fifth and fourth grade (even though I am actually in fifth grade right now). I just feel like I have a lot more freedom than I did before. I get to do a lot more cool stuff and I get to hang out with my friends more.*

**What kinds of things do you do at Little Lake?**

*I like to do art a lot and play outside a lot. And learn French. And I try to go to math class as much as I can.*

**What plans do you have for the future?**

*Becoming an artist. I've always had this dream of becoming a famous actress, even though it may sound a little silly, I just have always really had that dream and I feel like I can accomplish it in Little Lake.*

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