

## Grant Park Naturalist News August 2018



Hello GPCP community! I am Ella, the Naturalist and Farm to School Coordinator. I have been enjoying my time at the school during these first few weeks of the school year and I sincerely thank all the children, staff and parents for being so welcoming.

Declaration of Intent: This year, we decided to continue our research question from the previous two years, "What are the processes children devise to interpret their interconnectedness to the natural world?", in addition to embracing a new Study on Identity. During this year's retreat, the GPCP team of educators committed to an ongoing investigation of the identity of our school and its impact in the wider community.

As a group, we will begin exploring the ecosystem that exists within our community through observing the natural world. For the children in the Cats and the Ladybugs classes, the Naturalist Nook is a space we can use where children can familiarize with the different plant life that they will encounter on our walks. We walk to a neighbor's house weekly, to pick up the CSA and take other walks around the



neighborhood. This space offers the children multiple opportunities for communicating their thoughts about the natural world, using the language of artistic expression, through drawing and building tools. The Nook also provides a place for provocations that we hope will inspire discoveries and observations about the life cycles of plants in a space where the children feel safe and comfortable to explore.

Every Wednesday, we have a wonderful opportunity to take a walking field trip to pick up the CSA down the street from the pre-school. There are charming houses that we pass with many plants growing onto the sidewalk. We take time to identify plants and learn the names.



Every time we open the CSA boxes, we look inside and see what they hold. If we don't recognise something, we have an opportunity to learn a new fruit or vegetable!



We enjoy our snack in the park. I got to meet Sally for the first time. The children told me stories about Sally the Climbing Tree, a tree the children named many years ago. The children let me know that she is strong enough to hold adults, good to know!



As we continue to gather and document, it will encourage discussions about the role we play in our community. There are many exciting moments ahead and I look forward to spending this year with all of you. Thank you for your ongoing support!