

Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

May 8, 2026

Wednesday-Friday, May 13-15 ~ Wolf Ridge Trip for 2nd-5th

Tuesday, May 19 ~ School Board Meeting at 4pm

Tuesday-Thursday, May 19-21 ~ North House Folk School for 4/5

Monday, May 25 ~ No School - Memorial Day

Thursday, May 28 ~ Last Day for Seedlings & Saplings (Until Summer Session)

Friday, May 29 ~ Graduation Celebration! 10:00am - ½ day of school. Release at 12:00.

Monday & Tuesday, June 1 & 2 ~ School is ON! FUN Make Up Days!

Saturday, June 6 ~ Gala for the Grove!

Monday, June 8 ~ First Day of Campsite Kids, Summer Seedlings & Saplings

Mission Statement:

Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.

From Ms. Diane Blanchette:

School Director, Birch Grove Community School

Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service

FastBridge assessments were completed for K-5 in both reading and math this week. Thank you for seeing that your child got plenty of rest prior to testing, a good breakfast, and for your reinforcement at home by asking students to do their best work on these assessments. We always appreciate support from home! FastBridge data will be sent to K-5 families in the year end packet along with report cards and other information on the 25-26 school year. Teachers will be available for discussion on this information; you will just need to reach out!



We are definitely counting down days now until the end of the school year. This is always a busy time with assessments and year end activities. Please be sure that your child gets plenty of sleep these last days of school. Special high energy activities, schedule changes, and spring fever can sometimes impact student behavior negatively. A well-rested child is able to navigate these special days more easily. Many thanks!



Campsite Kids starts on Monday, June 8th. If you have questions about the program, please go to the school website under Community Services/Campsite Kids and read the Campsite Kids Handbook, or click on the links below. We look forward to a great summer!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/campsite-kids/Campsite-Kids-Handbook.pdf>



Summer Saplings and Summer Seedlings starts on Monday, June 8th. These programs run the same as they do during the school year, except that Summer Saplings is only open M-TH.

We look forward to a great summer!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/summer-saplings>
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/seedlings-program>

15th Annual Gala for the Grove! ~ TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE!

2026 Theme: Hats & Horses: The Hometown Derby

A Kentucky Derby-Inspired Night of Racing, Roses, and Giving for Birch Grove!

Saturday, June 6, 2026

The Gala for the Grove, a spirited fundraiser for Birch Grove Community School, is in the Lakeside Ballroom at Surfside in Tofte. Dress for the theme or not, the choice is yours - it will be a great time either way!

For more information go to:

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/gala-for-the-grove>

Direct Link to Tickets: [Gala for the Grove 2026 Ticket Order Form](#)



15th Annual Gala for the Grove

Saturday, June 6



2026 Theme:
Hats & Horses: The Hometown Derby
A Kentucky Derby-Inspired Night of
Racing, Roses, and Giving to Birch Grove!



The *Gala for the Grove*, a spirited fundraiser for Birch Grove Community School, is held in the Lakeside Ballroom at Surfside in Tofte. The theme this year is "Hometown Derby"! Dress for the theme or not, the choice is yours - it will be a great time either way!

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### 5:00 Champagne Social

Appetizers and champagne will be served. You can purchase tickets for items in the raffle drawing and browse live auction items to see what may catch your fancy. A cash bar is available all evening.

### 6:00 Dinner and Wine

Each dinner choice will include two glasses of red or white wine. Fine dinner choices are listed below. The raffle drawing will take place during the latter part of dinner.

### 7:00 Live Auction

Entertaining auctioneers will auction off special items live!

### Music and Dancing To Follow



### Menu for the Evening:

A house salad with maple-Dijon dressing, dinner roll, and a choice of:

\* Filet Mignon with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables or

\* Tuscan Chicken with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables or

\* Creamy Pesto Ravioli

A selection of amazing desserts will be available

To attend, please send this form with check payable to:  
Birch Grove Community School - Post Office Box 2383 Tofte, MN 55615

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guest's First and Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number and Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_ x \$75 per ticket = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount enclosed

Dinner selection - please indicate a choice for each ticket:

- \_\_\_ Filet Mignon  
\_\_\_ Cornish Game Hen  
\_\_\_ Vegetarian Stir Fry

Your tickets will be waiting for you at the door in the names listed above. Questions? Please call the school at 663-0170 or email [birchgrove@boreal.org](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org). Please use an additional piece of paper to include more guest names if needed.

Interested in being a *Gala for the Grove* Sponsor?

#### Sponsorship

\$1,000 Sponsorship includes 6 tickets

\$500 Sponsorship includes 4 tickets

\$250 Sponsorship includes 2 tickets

Sponsors are recognized the evening of the Gala, in the Cook County News Herald, as well as on the Gala for the Grove page on the school website. Sponsors will also receive tickets to the Gala event itself, so that you, or others of your choosing, can enjoy a night of revelry!

To become a sponsor, please send this form with a check payable to Birch Grove Community School ~ Post Office Box 2383 Tofte, MN 55615

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsorship Amount (see above)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsorship Name (Business, Organization, Individual, Couple, etc.)

Please include what you want to have happen with your sponsorship tickets. Include a name and a meal choice for each ticket received for sponsorship. If you choose to not use the tickets, please indicate this.

Thank you and we hope to see you at the *Gala for the Grove*!

### Order Tickets On Line!

<https://forms.gle/QwNnibpPtVdizbKp6>

K-5 had some fun last Friday to celebrate the completion of MCA testing and had a little pre-fun prior to FastBridge assessments scheduled for this week! K-5 enjoyed a bonfire at the Campsite with peer reading and s'mores and another tasty treat of personal pizzas baked in the outdoor woodfired oven. Plenty of North Shore air accompanied the day! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/>



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)



Birch Buddies ~ HIKE! afterschool program enjoyed waterfalls, Lake Superior views, and a lovely pine forest during this week's hike at Onion River. A walk through the woods with friends will soothe your soul! <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/birch-buddies>



Going to Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center is a part of Birch Grove Community School's elementary program for grades 2-5 at the end of every school year! We are so excited to be able to include this incredible trip in our programming.

This year's trip is Wednesday-Friday, May 13, 14 & 15.



For those families that are transporting students to Wolf Ridge: Please read below:

- ❖ Birch Grove is staying in the Summit Lodge; there will be signs directing you where to go
- ❖ Arrive between 10:45-11:00 on Wednesday morning
- ❖ Pick up will be the same place on Friday at 12:45

- ❖ The Wolf Ridge driveway is approximately 3 miles long and is a dirt road. While this information is helpful for the whole year, it is especially relevant in the winter.
- ❖ Parents will need to drop off their child at the top of the hill in front of the Summit Lodge, say their goodbyes and send their child in by the Birch Grove staff. Parents, please do not turn off or park your car as we will need to keep cars moving to allow for everyone to arrive on time
- ❖ When traveling to Wolf Ridge, it is easier to go up Highway 1 through Finland than it is to go up Highway 6.



It's Teacher Appreciation Week! Show some ❤️ to this incredible team by dropping positive vibes through a Like, Love, or Comment on the school Facebook page, or send them a quick email. Truly amazing staff that elevates our school and community service programs. Go Birch Grove!



☁ Saplings were hard at work crafting their very own RAINSTICKS! Creating a connection to nature's gentle rhythms and evoking a sense of calm and wonder.

🔨 *Pounding and Playing!*

Rhythmic tap-tap-tap came from the classroom! Saplings used hammers to pound nails into cardboard tubes developing:

Hand-Eye Coordination: Aiming for the nail head takes focus and steady hands.

Fine Motor Control: Gripping the small nails and the hammer handle builds the muscle strength needed for writing.

Confidence: Completing a "real" project with real tools gives them a huge sense of accomplishment.

🎵 *The Science of Sound*

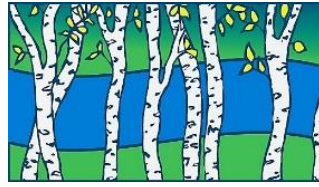
Using cardboard tubes, nails and dried beans, this sensory-rich activity provided a soothing, rain-like sound. Saplings experimented with tipping their sticks to make soft, cascading noises or fast, shaking sounds.



More pictures can be found on the school Facebook page.

[Facebook](#)

Please have your child read (or be read to) 20-30 minutes per day/night (or more!). If there is one thing that you can do at home that has a huge positive impact on your child's academic growth, this is it! Happy reading!



[birchgrove@boreal.org](mailto:birchgrove@boreal.org)  
[www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftwear.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off  
Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The Seedling learned about the ocean and sea life this week. Our sensory table was filled with blue felt and various sea creatures including orcas, whales, sharks, dolphins, seahorses and much more! There were also seashell cutouts of various sizes that allowed the Seedlings to practice their counting as well as size comparisons by distinguishing between small and large seashells. The Seedlings also worked on their pretend play skills as the whales and sharks ate the smaller fish and sea creatures and swam around the classroom.

During our morning read aloud, we read books that showed the Seedlings what different things can be found in the ocean such as jellyfish, octopus, coral, seaweed, and a variety of fish. During our reading we learned new words and also worked together to identify the different colors in the book. We played a sea creature matching game as a group that required the Seedlings to find the matching picture in an array and place the card on top. This activity also allowed the Seedlings to practice taking turns with each other. To get our wiggles out, the Seedlings danced to a fun song that changed up the words to "If You're Happy and You Know It" and pretended to be whales, dolphins, crabs, and sharks.



Have a good weekend!

218-663-0170 ext. 7

[emily.vandorenbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:emily.vandorenbgcs@gmail.com)

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

Up in the Sky is the theme for this week. Monday commenced Saplings intergalactic adventure, as we launched into the wonders of our solar system and planets. A STEM-inspired straw rocket ship craftivity replicated the experience of launching into space. Saplings enjoyed seeing how far they could get their straw rockets to go and had fun trying them out at all different angles. The manipulative tables incorporated a countdown and size sequencing exercise utilizing rocket ships. The writing tables comprised letter recognition tasks centered on the planets. The sensory bin consisted of a galaxy of stars with sight word recognition.

Tuesday marked the celebration of Cinco de Mayo. This significant holiday celebrates Mexico's victory over the French. We practiced Spanish counting throughout the day. Our craft project highlighted the distinguished Talavera pottery of Mexico. Using the six traditional pigments of blue, yellow, green, black, mauve and orange Saplings painted their paper planter.

Then filled their pot with Saguaro or the round Prickly Pear cacti. The Taco Tuesday lunch was accompanied by lively Mariachi music. The manipulative tables comprised multiple Mexican-themed counting activities designed to enhance number recognition, and the writing table showcased words such as sombrero, maracas, guitar, and cactus to reinforce letter recognition.

Saplings continued soaring high up in the sky on Wednesday. The letter "K" was introduced by crafting kites using parchment paper, crayons and colored pencils. As Sapling's adventured outside with their kite, they explored how wind moves different directions around buildings and learned how air pressure helps a kite lift. Math and manipulative activities involved counting the bows on a kite's tail and matching the various pattern kites.

On Thursday the focus was on airplanes, stressing the operating principle based on the aerodynamic force generated by the wings in an upward direction, known as lift. The higher an airplane flies, the faster it will travel. With this understanding, Saplings engaged in experimenting with different paper airplane folding techniques, which developed fine motor skills, spatial reasoning, and introduced early science concepts of lift and flight. Pre-writing sheets feature tracing skyline patterns or the



letters in words like pilot, wing or jet to help develop grip and control. Shape matching was utilized to identify and match shapes like triangles, rectangles, and circles to build an airplane.

Up, up and away in their beautiful balloons was on Friday. Saplings learned how hot air balloons work: a burner heats the air inside a large bag called an envelope and because hot air is lighter than cold air, the balloon rises. I demonstrated the flying tea bag, a simple demonstration where a tea bag is lit at the top, causing it to rise into the air like a hot air balloon. Saplings crafted 3-D hot air balloons, where their cut out pictures were in the baskets. Counting, number writing, and number recognition skills were strengthened by counting balloons and writing the correct number. Hot air balloon cards were used to match uppercase and lowercase letters.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

218-663-0170 ext. 6  
[pam.holmbgcs@gmail.com](mailto:pam.holmbgcs@gmail.com)

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From Ms. Sara Knottski
K & 1st Grade Elementary Teacher

The Kindergarteners and 1st graders did spring FastBridge testing this week! We all worked hard and showed what we have learned! I am excited to share the results with you at the end of the school year. It is always fun to see growth from the beginning of the school year to the end!

This week, K/1 reviewed all grade-level topics in math. They all did a great job remembering old topics! We played lots of games to review. In language arts, we are continuing to practice reading, writing, and spelling! It is time to focus on perfecting grade-level skills!



This week and last week, K/1 worked with 2/3 on project-based STEAM lessons. Last week, some students were working on coding Finch robots while others built with Legos to observe force and friction. This week, the groups switched projects. One group is coding the Finch robots with the goal of making shapes by determining length and angles. The other group is creating push cars to experiment with force and friction.

Next week, K/1 will get a special substitute, Ms. Silence, while I am with 2/3 at Wolf Ridge! I know they are going to have a blast with her!

Have a great weekend!

218-663-0170 ext. 2

sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski (Subbing for Ms. Forster during her maternity leave)**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

2/3 graders did spring FastBridge testing this week! We all worked hard and showed what we have learned! We are happy to be done with testing for the year! It is always fun to see growth from the beginning of the school year to the end!

This week, 2/3 continued project-based STEAM lessons with K/1. Students switched groups this week from last week and got to explore with different materials. Students working with the Finch robots this week learned about shapes and the angles we see in them. We then coded the robots to draw shapes! We ended the week by using the robots to make a spirograph art mural!



Students working with Legos created a push car and a Lego spring mechanism to launch the cars. We learned about force, friction, and gravity by experimenting with different forces and ramps!

Next week is Wolf Ridge!!!! We are all very excited at school to embark on a great field trip! Please ensure your child has everything they need to be successful for two overnights and three days! Feel free to reach out with any questions you may have! YAY Wolf Ridge!

Have a great weekend!

218-663-0170 ext. 2

[sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com](mailto:sara.knottskibgcs@gmail.com)

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From Ms. Stacy Coronis

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

Next week is our 3 day Wolf Ridge trip! Now is a good time to review the packing list, check the weather for next week and think about what outerwear will be needed for our trip. Keep in mind that we will be outdoors all three days for most of the day. There is an extra packing slip in your child's

take home folder if needed. If your child will need any medications check your email for the information from our nurse, Ms. Gayle about sending it along with your child with the medical release form attached in her message.

We wrapped up our FastBridge math and reading tests this week. It was wonderful to see all of the growth that our class made from fall to spring. Your child's scores from this school year will be sent home along with their report card. I was really proud of our class! While our class had testing in the mornings this week, in the afternoons we were able to host the K-3rd graders in our room for an Author's Chair session and a spring craft time.

Our new read aloud book, *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich, has become a class favorite. Her beautiful writing about the Ojibway culture from the point of view of the young main character Omakayas not only tells a beautiful story, but lets us learn more about the Ojibway culture. Read aloud is a peaceful time in our classroom right after lunch where students record story elements in their journals and can also listen to the story while they crochet, knit or draw. It's a great way to ease back into learning after our lunch and recess block of time.



Please reach out with any questions about Wolf Ridge! We can't wait!

218-663-0170 ext. 4

stacy.coronisbgcs@gmail.com