CURRENT

OCTOBER 2026 | SPOOKY SEASON



Spooky Season, Seriously Fun

From the pumpkin patch to a courtroom full of fairy-tale villains, October was all treats and no tricks. Grab a costume and dig in.

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

CARL'S CORNER

Help Us Grow a World of Discovery



Carl Sabatino
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Aloha, Tradewinds!

I mentioned giving Tuesday in the last *Current*. Here is more information.

This Giving Tuesday, help Tradewinds School create a learning environment unlike any other.

Our vision is to build a World Biomes Greenhouse & Sustainability Center—a living laboratory where students explore the remarkable diversity of Earth's ecosystems through hands-on investigation, scientific inquiry, and environmental stewardship.

In addition to cultivating Hawaiian native plants, subtropical species, and cultural connection, the center will feature greenhouse environments representing some of the world's major climate zones and biomes, including tropical rainforests, deserts, Mediterranean regions, temperate forests, grasslands, and other unique ecosystems.

As the Polynesians adventured North to Hawaii, South to Aotearoa, and East to Rapa Nui, some of the types of agriculture they could grow changed. So as students move from one environment to another, they will experience how climate influences the plants, animals, cultures, agriculture, survival, and ways of life found around the globe.

This immersive learning experience will integrate science, mathematics, geography, engineering, history, environmental studies, nutrition, and sustainability. Students will grow food, investigate soil health, monitor weather, collect scientific data, design irrigation systems, study biodiversity, and learn how responsible stewardship can help sustain both local and global ecosystems.

(Continued on next page)



CARL'S CORNER (cont'd)

A World Biomes Greenhouse & Sustainability Center

GIVING TUESDAY

Tuesday, December 1, 2026

Your Giving Tuesday gift will help fund:

- Construction of greenhouse learning environments
- Native Hawaiian and climate-specific plant collections
- Raised beds, irrigation, composting, and sustainability systems
- Scientific equipment and student research projects
- Outdoor classrooms and hands-on learning experiences

Every contribution helps cultivate curiosity, scientific thinking, environmental responsibility, and a deeper understanding of our interconnected world.

Together, we can create a place where students begin in Hawai'i, explore the polynesian triangle, and then out to the world's ecosystems, discovering that caring for one environment helps us better understand and protect them all.

Thank you for helping us grow the next generation of scientists, innovators, and environmental stewards.

Oops almost forgot...

Expand Your Giving Tuesday Impact!

There are many ways to help grow the impact of your Giving Tuesday gift! Ask your employer if they offer matching gifts or corporate grants—your contribution could go twice as far. Reach out directly to friends, family, and colleagues through Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media to invite them to support Tradewinds. A personal message can make all the difference!

And remember, giving isn't just about dollars. Sharing our campaign, making introductions, and encouraging others to participate all help us grow a community of support. Every connection counts!

FOUNDERS' CORNER

Valuing Our Kids' Time



Andy Szybalski
CO-FOUNDER



Dr. Heidi Meck
CO-FOUNDER

Aloha families,

People often talk about school as a means to an end. You work hard in fifth grade to get into a good middle school, which gets you into a good high school, and so on until, presumably, retirement. Like every parent here, we want our kids to thrive long after they leave Tradewinds.

There's another way to look at it that matters just as much. A school year is more than a thousand hours of your child's actual life. Those hours aren't practice, they are real life. Yet how often does anyone stop to ask whether those hours feel meaningful to our kids?

We both love our work, so we think about this a lot. If someone made us do something mind-numbing every day, we'd quit. Our kids don't have that option. They can't quit school, so it's on us to make sure school is a place that's deserving of their time.

What does a meaningful day at school look like? This month, the Seals put the Big Bad Wolf on trial. A room full of kids argued, with real conviction, about whether the wolf ever got a fair shake in his own story. Along the way they practiced building an argument, weighing evidence, and seeing a familiar tale from a new angle. Mostly, though, they were completely absorbed. That's a Tuesday well spent.

At Tradewinds, we take our kids' time seriously. Yes, we're preparing them for what comes next. But childhood isn't a waiting room for adulthood. We want the hours your children spend with us to be ones they'd choose if they could: full of curiosity, challenge, friendship, and the kind of deep engagement that makes time disappear.

So when your child comes home tired and happy, know that's exactly what we're aiming for. One family recently told us their daughter announced she'd "rather be at school than at home (except for family bonding time)." That's what we hope for every morning when we drop off our own son, and we hope you feel it too.

With aloha,

Andy Szybalski & Dr. Heidi Meck
Co-founders

At Tradewinds, we take our kids' time seriously ... childhood isn't a waiting room for adulthood.

PUMPKIN PATCH FIELD TRIP

Harvest fun at Waimānalo Country Farms.














SPIRIT WEEK & HALLOWEEN

Fall Spirit Week and our Halloween costume party.













WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Humanities



Amber Spahn
HUMANITIES & ELA

FROM MS. SPAHN

Dear families,

This month, our Geckos have been exploring where food comes from and the people who help bring it to our tables. Scholars learned how pumpkins and apples grow through the seasons, from planting to harvest, and how farmers and community helpers work together.

We also traveled the world through harvest holidays! Scholars learned how families in different places celebrate the autumn harvest, including the Mid-Autumn Festival, Sukkot, Chuseok, Oktoberfest, and Día de los Muertos. They compared the foods, symbols, and customs of each celebration and noticed the themes that connect them: gratitude, time with family, and giving to the community. Scholars also shared their own family traditions and learned to appreciate how similar and different they are from their classmates'.

To bring it all together, we visited the pumpkin patch at Waimānalo Country Farms, where scholars saw the harvest cycle up close: real pumpkins, real farm work, and the farm-to-table journey they had been learning about.





WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Humanities (cont'd)







Our Seals just wrapped up their Build Your Own Civilization projects, inspired by Weslandia. Each scholar designed a brand-new society from the ground up. They mapped their land, rivers, and biome, explained how the shift to farming created food surplus and specialized jobs, and decided how their people would be governed. They also tackled big questions about liberty and social structure, including who gets which rights and freedoms, and created a citizen chart showing what different groups can and can't do. Scholars also chose optional sections like religion and creation myths, historical figures, foreign relations, and culture, each with its own creative artifact, such as a peace treaty letter to a neighboring leader.

Now we've moved into a new challenge: Villains on Trial Debate! Scholars are asking, "Is a villain something you are, or something the storyteller decides you are?" Working in pairs, they're building courtroom cases for and against fairy tale characters like Jack, Captain Hook, and the Big Bad Wolf. Scholars are learning to make a claim, back it up with specific evidence from the text, and consider how a narrator's point of view shapes the way a character comes across. This week they're practicing cross-examination, responding to challenges by giving evidence, reframing, or conceding a small point. Our rule in court is: "Does the story SAY that?"

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Language Arts



Amber Spahn
HUMANITIES & ELA

FROM MS. SPAHN

This October, our Seals continued reading Kelly Barnhill's The Girl Who Drank the Moon, a fantasy full of witches, magic, and a town that believes a story it has never questioned. A big focus has been figurative language. Scholars have been hunting for similes, metaphors, personification, and idioms, and explaining what each one means and why the author chose it instead of a plain description. They're learning that figurative language does more than decorate a sentence. It helps readers see characters, feel moods, and understand big ideas.

Our big idea for this book is courage, and scholars are digging into some tough questions:

- Is courage about being unafraid, or about what you do when you're afraid?
- How can one person's courage inspire others to be courageous?
- How can you show courage when the right thing is difficult?
- How can something that scares you change the way you see yourself?

As they read, scholars are finding evidence in the text to support their thinking and tracking how characters' choices and motivations change.



WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Language Arts



This October, our Geckos have been reading their way around the world through fall holidays! Scholars learned how Halloween is celebrated in the USA, Ireland, Italy, and Mexico, and how each place has its own foods, games, and traditions. In Ireland, scholars discovered that people carve turnips instead of pumpkins, tried to imagine playing Snap Apple, and learned about barmbrack cake with a fortune hidden inside. They also explored All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in Italy and Día de los Muertos in Mexico.

Each day, scholars practiced reading comprehension by reading, then turning and talking with a partner to answer questions about what they learned. They also practiced comparing and contrasting, noticing how holidays are alike and different.

In small reading groups, scholars worked on decoding at their own level. Some practiced short and long vowel sounds (e, o) with Sensei Taylor, while others worked on vowel teams like ai/ay and ee/ea/ey with Miss Spahn. To finish, scholars chose a country and created a presentation sharing the holiday's name, how it's celebrated, its history, and a drawing or picture.

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Science



Julia Hunckler
MATH & SCIENCE

FROM MS. HUNCKLER

Aloha Families! 🌺🌸

We have officially kicked off our Aquaponics unit, and the Seals have started building our very own aquaponics system! 🌱 🐟 Over the past several weeks, we have been learning about the nitrogen cycle, how the fish plants and microbes work together, and how water moves through the system, and why each part is important for keeping the fish and plants healthy.

🐟🌱 The students are learning how fish produce waste, how beneficial bacteria convert that waste into nutrients plants can use, and how plants help filter the water before it returns to the fish. This has opened up conversations about the nitrogen cycle, water chemistry, ecosystems, and sustainable food production.

🔬As we continue building, students will learn about the water flow, pump function, growing media, and the biological processes that make aquaponics possible. They will also learn that engineering involves testing ideas, identifying problems, making adjustments, and trying again. A focus for the students is to understand that building a working system is not just about putting the pieces together; it is about understanding how the entire system functions as a whole.

Throughout this unit, the Seals will take on the role of scientists and engineers. They will monitor water chemistry, collect data, make observations, troubleshoot problems, and use evidence to make decisions about our system. They will investigate how ammonia, nitrite, and nitrate change over time and how these measurements help us determine whether the water is healthy for aquatic life. 💧🐠

Students will also be working on research topics within aquaponics that interest them and pursue independent projects. We are also connecting our learning to Hawai'i by exploring traditional Hawaiian fishponds, loko i'a, and the importance of mālama 'āina, caring for the land. Students will observe how traditional Hawaiian aquaculture and modern aquaponics both demonstrate the importance of understanding relationships between organisms, water, and the environment.

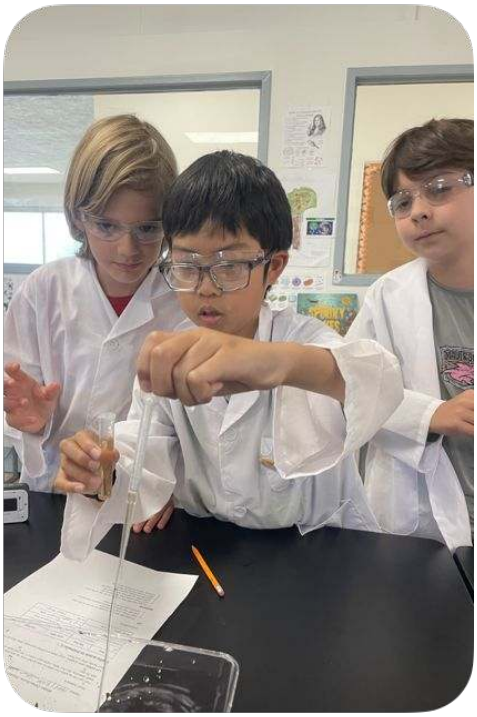
We are looking forward to visiting Moli'i Fishpond at Kualoa Ranch, where the students will learn more about traditional aquaculture, the history and construction of Hawaiian fishponds, and sustainable food systems. By the end of this unit, we will not only understand how aquaponics works, but also appreciate how design and scientific problem-solving can help communities grow food and use resources more sustainably. We are looking forward to seeing our system develop and watching the students take ownership of this exciting project! 🌱🔬🐟

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Science (cont'd)



















WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Science (cont'd)

FROM MS. HUNCKLER – Geckos 🦎

The Geckos have been exploring habitats, ecosystems, and different types of bodies of water, including oceans, lakes, and rivers. They have been learning about life cycles and comparing hibernation and migration to understand how animals adapt to seasonal changes. 🐻🦋

The Geckos have also been introduced to several scientific disciplines and have been exploring their interests to discover which areas of science they enjoy most! They have also been learning about the differences between freshwater and saltwater environments and exploring different biomes. 🦜

As part of their biome research, each student chose an animal and researched its needs, diet, adaptations, and interesting facts. 🌴 They also researched the biome's geographic location, climate, and defining characteristics to understand how animals survive and thrive in their environments.





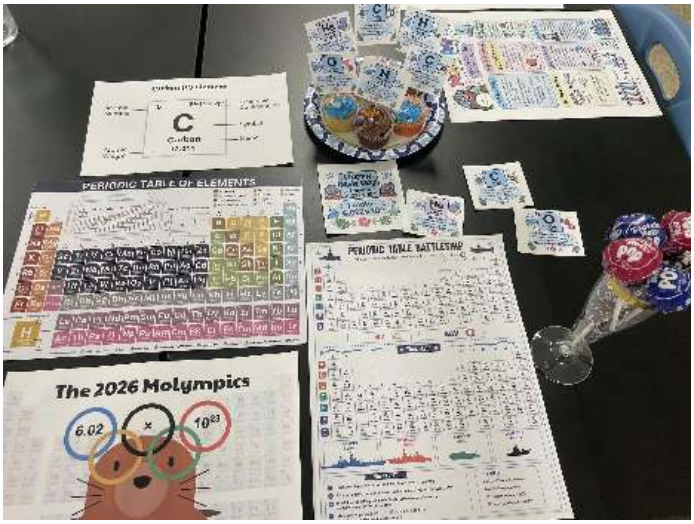




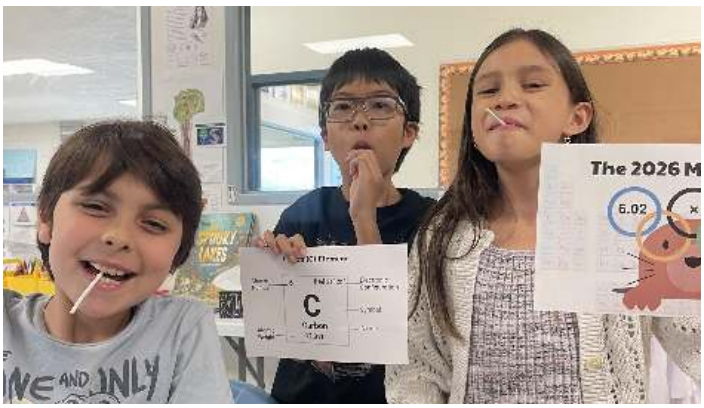
WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Science (cont'd)

MOLE DAY! On October 23rd, we celebrated Mole Day! 🔬 The students explored this important chemistry concept by learning about Avogadro's number (6.022×10^{23}), which represents the number of particles in one mole of a substance. The students discovered how chemists use the mole to count atoms and molecules that are far too small to see. 🔍 It was a fun opportunity to connect the microscopic world to the science we observe every day! 🦠









WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

Physical Education - Karate



Taylor Kaneshiro
PHYS ED (KARATE)

FROM SENSEI TAYLOR – It has been an exciting and hardworking month in Karate! Our Seals class recently completed their very first belt test after spending the past two months practicing and building their karate basics. We are so proud of the progress they have made and all the hard work they put into preparing! Meanwhile, our Geckos have been continuing to practice their basics, improve their skills, and get ready for their upcoming belt test in November. We are excited to see everyone continue to grow, learn, and do their best!





WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY



Nicole Zimmerman
ART & PHOTOGRAPHY









FROM MS. Z

In art, students have been exploring new ways to express their creativity through hands-on projects. We've been focusing on adding details, experimenting with different techniques, and bringing their own ideas to life.

In photography, students have been learning how to edit and improve their photos using Lightroom. We've been exploring how small adjustments to lighting, color, and composition can completely change the look and feel of an image.

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

ENRICHMENT: Keiki Cooking Lab



Momo Okada
ENRICHMENT, CHEF

FROM CHEF MOMO – Hello, families! This month in Keiki Cooking Lab, students explored a variety of Japanese dishes and practiced different cooking techniques.

We made Japanese fried chicken (karaage), gyoza (Japanese dumplings), okonomiyaki, bacon and spinach wafu pasta (a Japanese-style Western pasta dish), and Japanese egg salad sandwiches. Through these hands-on cooking experiences, students practiced following recipes, preparing ingredients, working together, and building confidence in the kitchen.

In November, we'll begin preparing for our special restaurant event in December, where students will welcome their families and share what they've learned through a fun, restaurant-style experience. We're looking forward to practicing our cooking, teamwork, and hospitality skills as we get ready for the big day!
I'm excited to share this special experience with everyone!

















WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

SPOTLIGHT: JAPANESE RESTAURANT



Amber Spahn
HUMANITIES & ELA



Julia Hunckler
MATH & SCIENCE



Momo Okada
ENRICHMENT, CHEF

NEW ENRICHMENT CLUSTER – From kitchen to dining room!

Our newest enrichment cluster turns the kitchen into a restaurant! Building on Keiki Cooking Lab with Chef Momo, scholars are learning what it takes to run a Japanese restaurant: planning a menu, prepping and cooking, setting tables, greeting guests, and serving with omotenashi, the Japanese spirit of wholehearted hospitality.

It all comes together on **Wednesday, December 16,** when scholars welcome families for a real restaurant-style meal. Scholars created a **tasting menu priced at $20 per person** for adults and children. Save the date!

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS BY WEDNESDAY, 11/25 at tradewinds.school/restaurant





MOMO SAN'S

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

ROBOTICS



Coach Serena
ROBOTICS & ENRICHMENT

FROM COACH SERENA – Our Extended Ed engineers wrapped up the first half of the semester with midterm presentations, and we couldn't be prouder! Each scholar walked us through their build, explained their code, and shared what they tested, what didn't work, and what they'd improve next. It was clear how far everyone has come as engineers and communicators.

Next up: the FIRST LEGO League Challenge! Teams will design, build, and program a robot to tackle missions in the Robot Game, OR take on the Explore Biodiversity team project, researching a real-world problem and designing their own solution. Teams will present on the last day of Extended Ed: Monday, December 14 at 3:00 PM. More to follow!











HOLDING AI TO A TEACHER'S STANDARD



Andy Szybalski
CO-FOUNDER

Aloha families—

Our kids' time matters as much as our own, and that includes the experience they have inside the apps they use. That's why we built Rabbithole ourselves. LLMs like ChatGPT and Claude, out of the box, have the soul of an assistant, not a teacher, so we've been teaching Rabbithole the habits of great educators.

Great teachers know when to hold the line. AI is trained to give people what they ask for. In October, scholars designed defenses against microbes and turned their designs into working apps. My son Oliver chose cholera, and with an AI assistant eager to follow his orders, his project soon gained a crossbow, a vending machine, and a chicken. While we loved his creativity, we also wanted him to be thinking about cholera. So every app project now comes with a contract, written around the teacher's goals: a few things must stay true to the science, and everything else belongs to the child. So the chicken can stay, but only once the disease spreads the way cholera really behaves.

Great teachers leave the thinking to the child. Left to itself, AI tends to steer a child through a chain of small questions toward an answer it already has. Educators call this funneling, and it looks like good tutoring, but it's really the tutor who is doing the thinking. We've been training Rabbithole out of that habit. To see whether it's working, we replay moments from past sessions and score the new replies with a published research guide for differentiating funneling from real follow-up questions, after first checking our scoring against expert ratings of classroom conversations.

Great teachers can distinguish between busyness and learning. A child can be absorbed for hours while thinking about something other than the subject at hand. Our teachers are involved every step of the way—designing each activity, steering it as it runs, and keeping scholars on track. When a scholar needs support, Rabbithole steers them toward human connection.

Creating AI with the soul of a teacher is a huge opportunity that is not fully solved, but we get closer every day as we develop new ways to evaluate, prompt, and harness frontier AI models. Try asking your scholar at dinner, "Who worked harder today, you or Rabbithole?" and let us know what they say.

With aloha,

Andy Szybalski
Co-founder

LLMs, out of the box, have the soul of an assistant, not a teacher.

Looking Ahead

Upcoming dates; check our school calendar for more upcoming events.

NOW OPEN

Extended Ed Spring Registration

New offerings: Drone + VEX Robotics and Theatre. Sign up with the QR code or at tradewinds.school/extended.

NOV · 10

Open House & Admissions Info Session

Tue, Nov 10, 5:30–7:00 PM at Tradewinds. Prospective families, grades K–6. Scan the QR code to register for any of our open houses tradewinds.school/events

NOV · 11

NO SCHOOL - Veterans Day

No school and no Extended Ed.

NOV 13

Family Meeting

Fri, Nov 13 – Family Meeting at 2:00 PM. We sent a Google Calendar invite; haven't seen it? Email serena@tradewinds.school.

NOV 17

Field Trip Kuala Ranch, Mōliʻi Fishpond

Complete permission slips in Rabbithole. Print and drop off completed waivers to the school by 11/16

NOV 25

DEADLINE: Reservations for scholar's Japanese restaurant

Make resos for Momo San's Nokodomo at tradewinds.school/restaurant

NOV 26–27

SCHOOL CLOSED - Thanksgiving

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at Tradewinds!

DEC · 01

Giving Tuesday

Help grow our World Biomes Greenhouse: tradewinds.school/giving-tuesday

TRADEWINDS

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