

Little House in the Forest Self-Directed Learning Program

Empowering learners to create their own educational journey through their passions, curiosity and community.

"My kids are raaaaving about Little House in the Forest's new home-school enrichment program. The childcare hours help me work, but the real prize is having another person invested in their learning and development. My son—if you know him, you know what a BIG deal this is—just said: 'I can't wait to go back on Thursday!'"

Our Vision & Purpose



"A learner is not an empty basket, but a seed... The work of the gardener is not to tell the seed how to become a tree, but to provide the right conditions: good soil, good water, so that seed can develop into a tree."
— Satish Kumar

*"Thank heavens for Amy's program!"
She offers the learning of my dreams!"*

Little House in the Forest has successfully run a Forest School and Summer Program for over 8 years on San Juan Island.

Our exciting new Project Based Learning Program for Elementary Age Children (launched September 2025) emerged from demand from homeschooling families in our existing community, and from the passion of it's founder, Amy Plant.

This dream come true is inspired by Self-Directed and Agile Learning Centers. We are here to provide the love, environment, support and resources for our learners to direct their own joyful, and respectful educational journey, in community. Whether a supplement to homeschooling or in addition to public school.



Our Founding Story: Meet Amy Plant, Director and Lead Facilitator

Amy has held a life long passion for alternative pedagogy. Disenchanted with her own mainstream schooling, she was inspired to start a school, immersed in nature, freedom and respect. Celebrating the wonder within children and the multitude of ways they express their ideas, questions and desires, she sees her role as observer, listener, facilitator and magic-maker.

- Level 3 Forest School Leader with 25+ years international experience working with children
- Founded San Juan Island's only Forest School 2018
- Founded Self-Directed Home-school program Sept 2025 to serve a gap in the community
- Masters degree in Fine Arts with focus on arts education
- Trained in Reggio Emilia, and play-based education approaches
- 5 years as Teaching Artist at Friday Harbor Elementary School

"Our daughter is truly thriving. Amy has been brilliant at helping her follow the threads of her many questions, wonders, and interests."



How We Learn



At Little House in the Forest, we facilitate a joyful process, honoring the reality that children are naturally curious, capable, and wise.

Group Planning – Gathering to determine the direction of the sessions, children identify topics they wish to pursue and skills they hope to develop.

Long-Term Projects – Children create Big Ideas (long-term goals crossing academic disciplines) that become collaborative projects such as publications and events.

Meta-Learning – We teach children how to learn. They develop research skills, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and resilience.

Individualized Support – We deeply understand each child's learning style, pace, and needs.

Reflection & Integration – Points of reflection are woven throughout the day. Children think about what they've learned, and what they're curious about next. Learning is reinforced, and next steps emerge naturally.

Access to Resources – We provide a small classroom, vegetable garden, and acres of forest. The natural world is our co-teacher. Field trips and guest experts enhance the experience. Unstructured playtime is a vital element.



"The freedom and intentional flow of this program have helped her feel more grounded and independent, and have sparked a deep sense of vivid possibility in her learning... On her days off, she genuinely laments not being there, and on school days, she wakes up brimming with excitement to go."

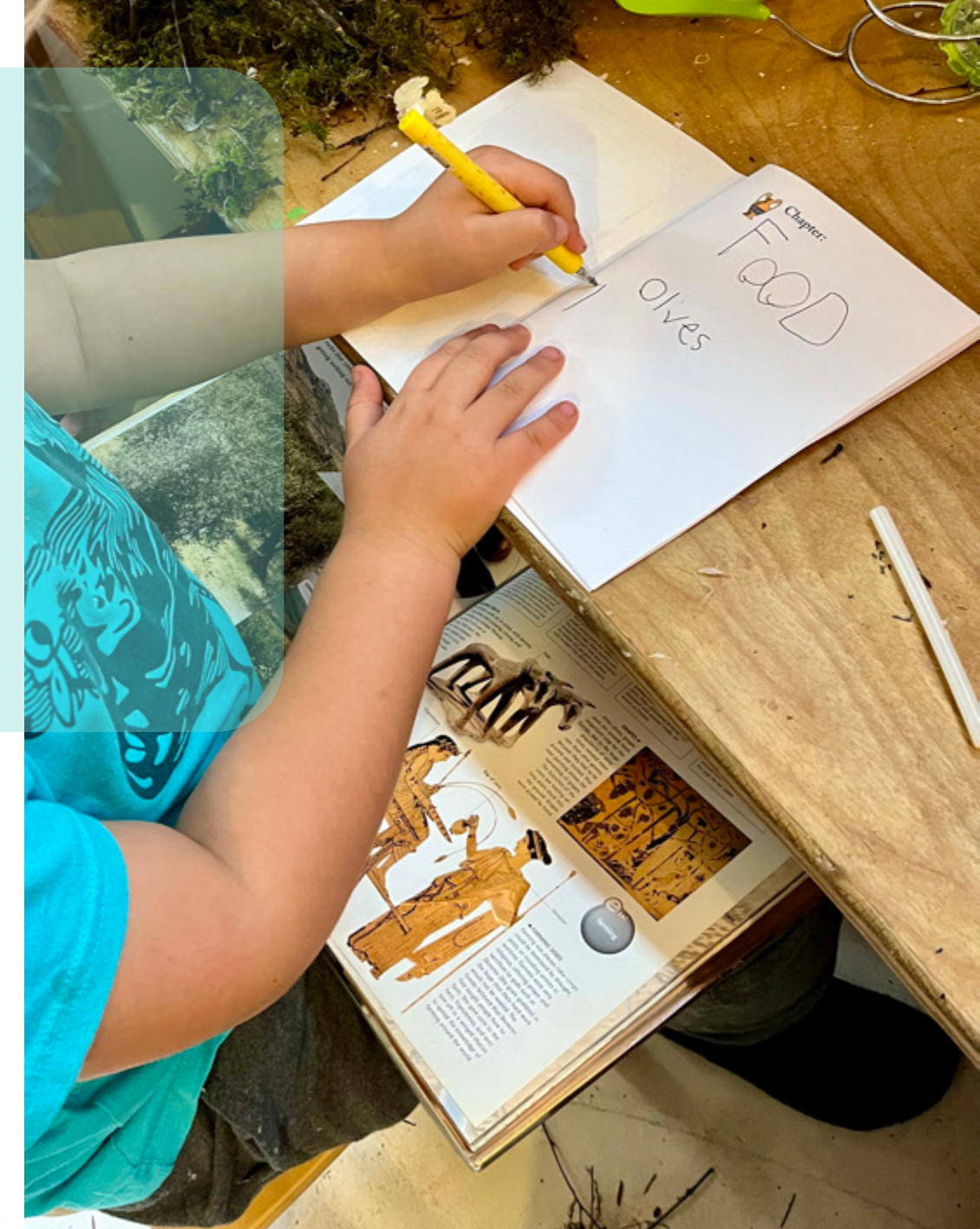
What We Explore

"Our daughter comes home absolutely lit up by her discoveries, inspired by her friends' projects, and full of endless plans for what she wants to explore next."

Families come to Little House in the Forest because they are seeking something different. Some have tried traditional school and found it restrictive, anxiety-inducing, or misaligned with their values. They are homeschooling and looking for community and expert facilitation.

Some sense that their child needs a more flexible, individualized approach. They want their children to love learning, to follow their curiosity, to be known and celebrated for who they are.

Parents choose us because they see the results: children who wake up excited to learn, who think deeply about complex topics, who develop genuine friendships, who feel safe to be themselves. They choose us because we see their children—all of them—and we honor what each child brings to our community.



Arts, Crafts & Handwork
History & Humanities
Sciences
Children's Rights
Social & Emotional Skills
Mindfulness & Reflection
Story Creation, Theatre & Music
Homesteading & Bush Craft Skills



Learner-Driven Projects

"My kids are engaged, explorative, curious, and wanting more more! It's better than homeschool because they have a learning environment they feel real ownership over, developing a whole world as they collaborate under Amy's guidance. I'm able to work, and our home learning is supplemented perfectly. What a gift!"



These project examples are self-directed learning in action: children as designers, researchers, creators, and community builders.

Seasonal Wheel of Native American Natural Resources – exploring indigenous knowledge systems and land stewardship. The children started researching seasonal availability of plants, animals, and resources, and learning about ecological wisdom passed down through generations.

The Lore Book of Dragons – investigating folklore, cultural interpretations, learning biology from dinosaurs and reptiles, creating maps, writing descriptions, drawing pictures, designing layouts, printing and marbling, and bookbinding. Producing a beautiful book that will be shared with the community. This project develops research skills, writing, visual design, and collective creativity.



Calvin, Georgia, Fern & Evren invite you to the world's first ever mini...

wild cat face paints!

slime!

yummy snacks!

snail vs cat races!

cat, snail, & slug crafts

snail, slug & wild cat festival!

tuesday december 23rd • 3 - 4pm • the grange

Snail, Slug & Wild Cat Festival – the children had fun studying some of their favorite creatures and celebrated them with a community event. This project connects science with real-world application and civic participation.

The Little House: Our New Indoor Space!

Thanks to a mirco-grant from VELA Education Fund, we are able to pay the rent for a cozy little cabin on site, as a much needed indoor space within the forest campus, to expand our programs. With more room for learners, and more wonderful projects!

This hand crafted, homely environment, has a little kitchen, and wood burning stove, and serves as an art studio, laboratory and tinkering place!



"We're so grateful for Little House in the Forest's new class! Its small size and incredibly flexible, supportive environment offer our daughter a much-needed opportunity to connect with other kids and feel part of a vibrant community of learning."



Enrollment

If you are curious to know more about Self Directed Education and are considering the program, Amy is eager to discuss our unique approach, and how we can help meet your goal of creating a beautiful, joyful, respectful life for your child. Tuition scholarships are available.

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"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete," Buckminster Fuller

"It has been such a gift to see our daughter so joyful and to watch her feel so seen, celebrated, and encouraged in everything she is learning and becoming. We're deeply grateful for Amy and the magical environment she has created at Little House in the Forest."



Little House in the Forest:
Where every child is seen, celebrated, and free to grow.