

Kelly Pierson



Kelly is a Unit Trip teacher and the Collections Manager at The Logan School in Denver. They recently received a major donation of natural history specimens, and were fortunate to work with Sandy Ludlum, Natural History Appraisals, when cataloging and appraising the collection. Sandy told her about AAPS and encouraged Kelly to apply for the grant.

The Logan School provides a unique learning environment for our students and teachers, students from neighboring public schools (Logan Learning Lab), and university/college teaching fellows. Please see the attached page for more information regarding the school and programs.

Our Head of School sums it up well... Here at The Logan School our student's "unique personalities and dynamic interests drive the narrative of their educational experience over many years. Our teachers take student passions and turn them into transformative learning experiences" Our students choose a single topic of study at the beginning of each school year. We call it a Unit. And primary sources are the foundation of our Unit explorations and information gathering.

Our remarkable collection of natural history specimens was collected over the course of our founder's 50-plus years as an educator. Patti McKinnell collected skulls, rocks, minerals, sand, fossils, shells, meteorites, and much more and upon her retirement, donated her collection to Logan.

Patti's collection had been used in many ways, but infrequently, over the years. With the creation of The Patti McKinnell Museum and Collection we have dedicated staff time, that's me, to the care, conservation, and curation of the collection. And, most importantly, the specimens in the Museum and Collection are being used to ignite student's interest in the natural world and inspire critical thinking.

For the past two years our collection has offered us more opportunities for primary source, hands-on learning than we'd ever imagined. We have grown ever more appreciative of this amazing resource and have used the specimens with students studying everything from rainforests to space, wolves to dinosaurs, gems to dragons, and so much more. Specimens from the Collection have also been used in the classroom setting by our CORE teachers, Environmental Educators and Matrix (electives) teachers.

Here are just a few examples of the ways specimens have been used:

- Fossil plant, dinosaur bone, coprolite, seafloor, ammonite and more were examined, investigated, described and sketched by a kindergarten class prior to and after a field trip to Dinosaur Ridge.
- A variety of rock and mineral specimens were examined, sorted and classified by students, K-8, studying the rock cycle and kinds of rock.
- Specimens (fossils, minerals, skulls) placed in middle school classrooms for one week periods for close examination and detailed sketching opportunities.
- A "dragon's lair" was created using skulls, bones, horns, crystals, fossils (megalodon teeth, gastropods, dinosaur bone, claw) and visited by student's asked to investigate and hypothesize as to the story of the place.