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Mission: Raven Hill provides a place that enhances hands-on and lifelong learning for all ages by connecting science, history & the arts.

Inukshuk

Are you a hunter of rocks and fossils? Most people are! There's something about them. Maybe it is the fact that they are from a time long past or that they will outlast us all. Maybe it is the stories they could tell. Perhaps the fascination with rocks has been ingrained in us from caveman times, when a rock might be the difference between life and death, be it ground into medicines or used to shape an arrowhead or to start a fire. I know I can't walk down the road without picking up any little rock that catches my eye. Rocks have been a part of my life forever, but here are some "rules" you should observe. Don't take rocks from parks & public places. Always ask before you take your neighbors' rocks or from along the roadside in front of someone's house. And don't take rocks from places that might lead to erosion. Just walk down a gravel road and see what catches your eye. In our Ancient World, there is a Cairn Field. It's a pile of rocks. Visitors are encouraged to build and stack the rocks, as they did in times gone by. Cairns were and still are used to mark trails. They were also used in the past to cache food. In the north, the Inuit pile their rocks in the general shape of a human and call them **Inukshuk** (ee-nuk-shuk). In fact the word, **Inukshuk**, means "to act in the capacity of a human". They were used as hunting and directional aids, coordination points and message centers. "An **Inukshuk** in the shape of a person signifies safety, hope and friendship....**Inuksuit** (pl.) have been transformed into a symbol of hope and friendship that transcends borders to reach people all over the world." (Credit blog cultural elements.com) Maybe, an **Inuksuk** can help guide us through these uncertain times of pandemics and social injustice. I built my **Inukshuk** out on my patio! He's going to be good company! Maybe you will want build an **Inuksuk** at your house or pile up little stones as markers for the toads, bunnies and chipmunks in your yard, as my sister suggested! Send pictures!

Here are some suggestions for building a cairn or an **Inuksuk**. First, find some rocks—with flat spots. Second, stack them up in any form you like—gravity will set limits! Third, be patient—if it falls over, build it again stronger. Fourth, choose your spot wisely—ask permission and don't put it in the middle of the yard or in the garden! Have fun!

