

## NATURE'S CLASSROOM IN APRIL

By Carmen Bates  
AE/MS PTO

Fifth and sixth grade students of AE/MS have the opportunity to attend an environmental education program called Nature's Classroom on March 31 through April 4. The students and chaperones will be spending a week in a camp setting in Freedom, New Hampshire, exploring a variety of educational activities first hand in the great outdoors.

AE/MS has been taking students to Nature's Classroom for several years now. So much of what students learn at Nature's Classroom can be directly applied to their school life and future.

Nature's Classroom offers a unique educational experience to students and their teachers. The goal of Nature's Classroom is to create a living/learning community that integrates the social development of that community with academic experiences. Common goals that are woven throughout the experience are for the student to improve his or her self-concept; to work together with others for the positive benefit of all members of the community; to recognize that the community is comprised of individuals with their own individual needs; to appreciate the individuality and uniqueness of each other; and to gain an understanding of what education can offer him or her.

One of the most memorable experiences at Nature's Classroom from the last group that went was the Underground Railroad role-playing activity. An introductory explanation of the history of slavery in the United States sets the mood for the Underground Railroad. The students play the part of escaping

slaves journeying to Canada under the guidance of an adult "conductor." Along the way they must evade the sheriff and his bounty-hunters, follow signs left by helpful abolitionists, and seek shelter in the local safe-house.

It is a time for the kids to, under complete supervision, eat all meals together, share good experiences together, help each other through difficult times, live together, and have fun. From a past chaperone's point of view, "It is a wonderful outdoor experience that few kids get to experience. They learn a tremendous amount without even knowing that they are learning lifelong lessons."

After spending a week at Nature's Classroom, living and learning together, students develop a sense of community, a confidence in themselves, and an appreciation for others that carries over to the school community. The strengthened peer cooperation and expanded student-teacher relationships have an influence on the cognitive growth of the students throughout the school year. Together, they return to the classroom united through this shared experience to achieve the common goal of the pursuit of knowledge.

There is a cost for this program, which in addition to the educational experiences includes all lodging, meals, and snacks for the week. There is some fundraising money available to offset the price for each student, but it can still be a hardship for some families. For one child to attend camp, the cost is \$243. If you would like to help sponsor a child to be able to go on this unique and educational trip, please contact the school principal, Jane Slayton, at 735-5400.

be directed to Ellie and Howard George. Participating students will be dismissed early on Friday afternoons to participate in the Town program.

Those students who do not ski on Friday afternoons will have the opportunity to skate at the Proctor Academy rink. We appreciate Proctor Academy's staff for making this possible once again. Skaters will return to school in time for dismissal.

### Andover Lions Club Peace Poster Contest

Andover Lion Bill Leber (l) congratulates Sam Bentley for winning first place among AE/MS students in the Lions Club Peace Poster Contest. Sam received a \$50 savings bond from the club. His poster will now go on to the next level of the nationwide competition.

Photo: Julie Gaudette



## First Grade Studies History & Art

By Jennifer Bent  
AE/MS First Grade Teacher

The first graders in Mrs. Bent's class are going back in time.

Tim Frost, the grandfather of first grader Jared Frost, has been volunteering in grade one. Recently, Mrs. Bent gave "Papa" a homework assignment. Tim went home and researched some of Andover's interesting moments in history. He returned to class with lots of amazing facts and photographs.

The children are each going to sit down with Papa and learn about their fact. Then the young illustrators will create a picture to accompany the fact they are given. A book will be created, entitled *Did You Know? Fun Facts About Andover, New Hampshire*. We are hoping to make several copies available in the library at our school.

Mr. Frost has been such a treat to have working with the children of Andover. His patience and kindness make all of the first graders delight in working with him. He has helped to make history come alive in the classroom, and students are realizing that Andover is quite an interesting place to live!

By Linda DeMinico  
AE/MS Art Teacher

The students in the first grade have been learning quite a bit about art this first trimester. Our most recent project involved many steps in learning. We first read two books. Our first book was *Round Trip* by Ann Jonas. It features a journey to and from a big city.

Our second book was *The Inside-Outside Book of New York City* by Roxie Munro. This book features the buildings and sites of New York City. We learned about the job of an architect, as we were going to design our own buildings for New York City. Our buildings were painted by mixing colors. Young students are fascinated when learning how to mix colors.

The buildings are unique, and some of the students thought that being an architect would be a good job for them as an adult. Our final steps were designing a big Christmas tree, just like the big one in New York City, and adding touches of snow and glitter.

The pictures are now hanging by the school library. Our display is named *New York City from Morning 'til Night*. For young students, learning art is a journey to new knowledge and understanding.

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limited to only six attendees.

#### Ski Program

The Town of Andover is once again generously making the ski program available and affordable to Andover families. The first ski day is January 11. Students have the opportunity to alpine ski or snowboard at Ragged Mountain or cross-country ski at Blackwater Ski Area. Any questions regarding this program should

### Volunteer!

The Beacon is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteers for almost everything. Please do your part to keep our community newspaper going strong. To find a role that's right for you, call Charlie at 735-6099.



## Tilton Family Practice

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