

The **Andover Beacon**  
*Our Hometown Newspaper*  
**Our 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**  
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The AE/MS class of 2023 helped spread the wood chips required for playground safety so that all students would be able to use the playground for the first day of school. Pictured are Sahara Peterson, Chance Thibault, Lissa Teeter, Ben Simard, Maykla Martin, Addy Boucher, Connor Lawrence, Brennan Dunkle, Korbyn Jenne, Kasey Schoch, Victoria Koran, Addison Bickford, Talia Hardie, Wyatt Barton, Isaac Norris, Caden Bendixson, and Colin Murphy. Great job, class of 2023!

Caption: Kasey Schoch. Photo: Jennifer Bent



Proctor Academy faculty engaged in powerful professional development training at the end of August focused on better understanding learning differences. Activities included simulations of six different learning differences and were led by the SEAL Foundation. Caption and photo: Scott Allenby

## Proctor Faculty Experiences Learning Differences First-Hand

Faculty gained new perspectives, empathy

Scott Allenby, Proctor Academy

When we peel back the layers of Proctor's educational model – the programs, buildings, and people who make up our community – we find a shared understanding that, at its core, our work is to create, sustain, and teach young people how to live in a meaningful relationship with others.

Recently, two days of faculty professional development covered a wide range of issues, all centered on creating and sustaining an inclusive community that celebrates the remarkable diversity of learning styles, family histories, cultures, and backgrounds that exists within Proctor.

In Brene Brown's most famous TED Talk on vulnerability, she cuts to the core of our work of community building, work that is rooted in belonging: "There was only one variable that separated the people who have a strong sense of love and belonging and the people who really struggle for it. And that was, the people who have a strong sense of love and belonging believe they're worthy of love and belonging. That's it. They believe they're worthy."

The beauty of the Proctor community is that we do not claim to be a

flawless educational institution where students arrive as uniform, pre-finished products. Instead, we are energized by their rough edges, uniqueness, and the beautiful mess of adolescence.

We allow students to show up in their own brokenness, with their educational wounds poorly bandaged but ready for the healing balm of love and support found in a place like this. We

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## AE/MS Eighth Grade Attends "Nature's Classroom"

Full week program in Massachusetts

Kasey Schoch, AE/MS

The eighth grade class at AE/MS was given a unique opportunity to attend Nature's Classroom in Massachusetts from September 19 through 23. Nature's Classroom offers a fully immersive and highly engaging environmental education program (coupled with a strong team-building and character development component) that makes Nature's Classroom a very meaningful and powerful experience for students.

School Principal Dennis Dobe was aware of the opportunity and wanted students at AE/MS to get a chance to experience the program. "Many of our students and adults in and out of our school have experienced hardship over the past two years as a result of the COVID pandemic. At AE/MS, we are getting back on our feet, and rebounding fantastically well.

"Having said that, the prospect of providing a transformative experience

(a positive one!) for our eighth graders (considered the 'top of the food chain' and the 'crown jewels of our school system') was extremely compelling. We wanted to provide our students an opportunity to come together and develop leadership skills and confidence that will support their growth as individuals and as a group that will have the ability to have an enormously positive influence in our school over the coming school year.

"Essentially, these kids have worked hard, been through a lot, and really deserve this opportunity to succeed at the highest levels this year as they prepare for high school next year," said Dobe, who had experience with this program early in his career while working in Exeter.

Not only are students receiving an amazing life experience, they are getting to do so for free. There is no cost to the trip as Principal Dobe was able to secure grant money to cover 100% of the costs. He had to do so quickly over

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Second graders went on an insect hunt and found that crickets and grasshoppers love grass and sun, but cannot be found in other spots. We found milkweed bugs, a katydid, ants, dragonflies, butterflies, and bees. After seeing a toad, birds, and fish, we realized they are there because their food is there. Fun times! Mrs. Lane, Mrs. Robinson, Kalea and Siena Leith, Aidanne Chandler, Autumn-Lynn Meier, Laurel Ware, and Lyla Lipnickas are shown. Caption: Kasey Schoch. Photo: Gretchen Hildebrand



Second graders released over 30 monarch butterflies in September and hope some make it all the way to Mexico! Kalea Leith studies one before it starts its journey.

Caption and photo: Gretchen Hildebrand

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