



Brandon Wood tried hurdling on a whim at AE/MS; now he's a junior at MVHS and one of the top hurdlers in the state. He's been invited to represent the US at the 2016 Down Under Games in Australia, but he needs the community's help to get there. Look for the donation buckets at Jake's and Pizza Chef.

Brandon Wood Becomes a Top Hurdler

Needs help to represent US "Down Under"

Jason Wood, for the Beacon

By now you have probably seen one of these buckets at the hottest hangouts in Andover: Jake's Market and Pizza Chef. Some of you have been generous in making donations, and some may have looked at the buckets and wondered what they are for. Well, let me tell you a story.

Brandon Wood is a multi-sport athlete and currently a junior at Merrimack Valley High School. He is also an AE/MS alumnus, class of 2013. While at AE/MS he decided to run track in his

seventh and eighth grade years to stay in shape for football.

Brandon found he was pretty good at his new sport. He qualified for the state meet in every event he tried. In eighth grade at the last meet of the season, he decided to try hurdles. When asked "Why?" he simply said, "Why not?" He took first place in the event and qualified to run hurdles in the state meet.

At the state meet, he took first place in hurdles and set the AE/MS school record, despite it being only the second time he had ever run in the event.

Now in high school, he continues to

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Proctor's Ocean Classroom participants have completed the nine-week run to St. Croix on the schooner Roseway.

Proctor's Ocean Classroom Sailors are Back

Nine weeks at sea on a schooner

Scott Allenby, Proctor Academy

Andover's Carl Hubbard '17, Cope Makechine '17, and Taylor Methven '16 returned home on November 21 after spending nine weeks aboard the Schooner *Roseway* as part of Proctor Academy's Ocean Classroom program. Each had a transformative experience aboard the *Roseway* and is eager to share their reflections on their journey.

For now, enjoy Carl's journal entry below from Day 47: Friday, November 6. "Today I went snorkeling, an experience unlike any I've had. I started into the warm waters of Cane Bay with my flippers, snorkel, and mask. I fumbled with my flippers, put on and tightened my mask, and I was off swimming about in the shallows.

"After everyone was ready, we headed off to the buoy where one of the reef restoration project sites were. The first 100 meters or so were no more than four feet deep, and there were many black sea urchins we were warned about. Because of this, we couldn't rest

and let our feet sink to tread water.

"At this point, I was very much still getting acclimated to my snorkel gear. My mask wasn't sealed entirely, my breathing device was positioned poorly, and at that point I wasn't so sure about snorkeling.

"I took a quick second on the life ring that Matt was towing and situated myself, then resumed swimming. At this point, I was beyond the point of freaking out. My breathing had stabilized, and I was ready to go.

"The sea floor had dropped off and it was now 10 to 15 feet deep. There were small fish all about the sea floor; it was incredible.

"Shortly, we were at the coral reef restoration site, able to see the branching corals growing from PVC piping. I watched others dive down but didn't decide to dive down myself.

"After looking at the smaller coral beds, we proceeded to the larger coral trees. We were instructed how to dive deep without hurting our ears. I then dove down, held my nose, and blew out the pressure built up in my ears. I was able to keep swimming down without

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AE/MS first grader Tony Mori works on his Zentangle for the day. Each day, the first graders spend a little time concentrating on patterns and designs. This activity also develops and strengthens fine motor skills. Mr. Wiley has been creating Zentangles for many years. The students look forward to admiring the finished projects at the end of the week.

Caption and photo: Jen Bent