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# Kearsarge Regional School District

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Kearsarge Sixth Grade Teachers Keep Nature's Classroom Tradition Alive Amid COVID-19



*From left: Sixth grade students Nash Fournier, of Newbury; Natalie Sherman, of Newbury; Carrie Crandall, of Warner; Adidan Duchesne, of New London; Ollie Smith, of North Sutton; and Ciara Beauchemin, of Warner. (Courtesy Photo Kearsarge Regional School District)*

NEW LONDON, N.H. -- Though the annual trip to Lake George, New York was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sixth grade teachers were determined to bring the cherished "Nature's Classroom" event to their students this year.

Usually, the trip is a three night excursion to New York where students have an opportunity to take science and outdoor education centric classes of their choosing and stay in dorms.

"Kearsarge has been attending Nature's Classroom in New York for about 25 years now. It's a right of passage for our Kearsarge students, but due to travel restrictions this was not possible this year. We wanted to make sure sixth graders still had a similar opportunity to be outdoors, engaged in hands-on science activities and not looking at a screen for the day," Sixth grade social studies teacher Cristine McCloskey said. "We are so lucky to have a great administration that supports 'out of the box' learning experiences for our KRMS students."

The overall goal of the event was to stimulate curiosity in students; make learning a dynamic, hands-on experience and help students understand a "classroom" can be any

place where they have the opportunity to learn.

"This was a phenomenal idea by our Kearsarge Regional Middle School sixth grade teachers, and it was a real highlight this fall for many of our students who took part," Superintendent Feneberg said. "It's wonderful to see our teachers going above and beyond not only to keep students engaged but to provide them with opportunities that foster genuine fun and excitement as well."

On Monday, Nov. 9 and Tuesday, Nov. 10, Kearsarge Regional Middle School hosted staff from Nature's Classroom and the Lake Sunapee Protective Association for two days of programming with sixth grade students. At-home learners were also invited to attend the special in-person event, and at-home learners who did not opt to join the in-person session were given their own remote lessons.

In all, approximately 130 students participated in the in-person, outdoors event, while maintaining COVID-19 public health guidelines and district expectations including social distancing.

During the two day sessions, students stayed in their pods for their activities, which included team building, a "mad scientist" activity featuring lab experiments emphasizing the scientific method, nature identification and a perch dissection. The two days were carefully planned out to provide a safe outdoor experience for students, and took place on the field at the school as well as in the wooded area by the school.

"I think it was a very good opportunity to get outside, and get some fresh air because not everybody gets the chance to do that, and I am glad we got to," said Pippa Bartlett, a sixth grade student of Wilmot. "I learned that listening to your surroundings, and enjoying life is important, and getting outside can be a big healer to our problems. I loved the bio blitz activity just because we discovered so much that we would have never even thought about in the first place."

"My favorite part was being out in the woods," said Addison Spears, a sixth grade student of Springfield.

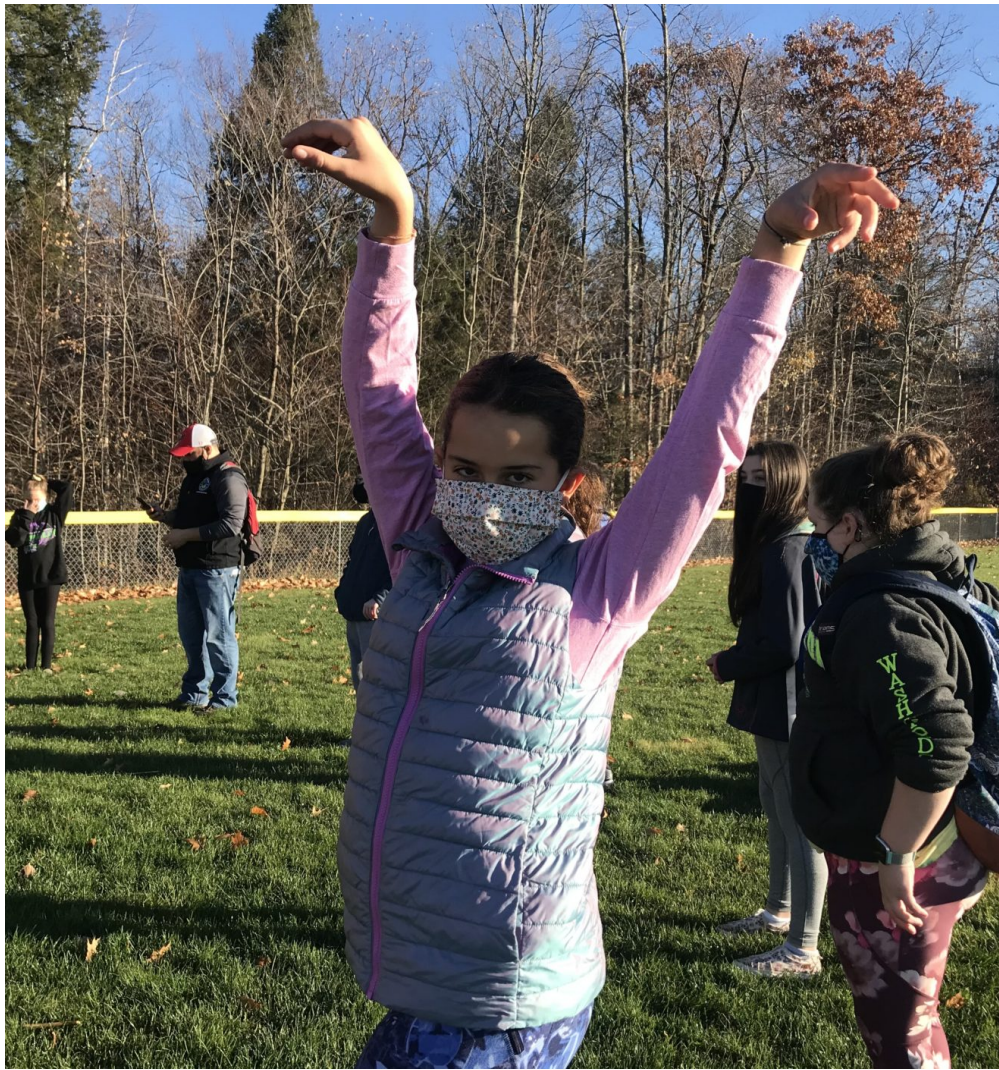
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*Sixth grade students at Kearsarge Regional Middle School took part in a two day outdoor learning experience earlier this school year. (Courtesy Photo Kearsarge Regional School District)*





*Emma Dubaere, a sixth grade student of Bradford, participated in a two day outdoor learning event at Kearsarge Regional Middle School. (Courtesy Photo Kearsarge Regional School District)*



*Approximately 130 sixth grade students at Kearsarge Regional Middle School took part in a two day outdoor learning experience earlier this school year. (Courtesy Photo Kearsarge Regional School District)*

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