

Local Fifth Grade Students Visit Echo Hill Outdoor School

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Chestertown Middle School's fifth grade class made its annual four day trip to Echo Hill Outdoor School two weeks ago. Sixty three students headed down the road to Worton on the morning of September 28th to take part in a 96 hour outdoor learning experience.

Chestertown fifth graders jumped full force into the Echo Hill experience, taking part in classes focused on science and ecology, history and the human environment, and individual and group development. At Echo Hill, students were given the opportunity to learn hands-on about the environment around them. Some engaged in Bay Studies, where they boarded boats to explore the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay, while others took a Swamp Ecology class and got their hands dirty in the Outdoor School's swamp. All Chestertown students took part in a three hour Adventure I class, where they were given the opportunity to take on challenges and play games that helped develop teamwork and individual growth.

This is Chestertown Middle School's 25th year sending its fifth grade class to Echo Hill. Science teacher Katie Hughes sees the four day trip as a new and invigorating experience for her students. "Although these kids are from the area, some of them have never had this kind of outdoor experience. It's a great way for them to bond and see their hometown in a whole new light," she said.

Language Arts instructor Diane Reynolds appreciates Echo Hill's hands-on learning techniques and experiences outside the classroom. Ms. Reynolds stated, "People who might not be leaders in the classroom are leaders here. It's so important to get out of your comfort zone every once in a while and try new things, and being at Echo Hill allows our students to do that. They get experiences they can't have inside the classroom."



The students of Chestertown voiced their own appreciation of Echo Hill. "The activities are the best," said Chris Conner, "I really liked being in the swamp. We got to scanoe (canoe through the swamp), which is something I've never heard of until we came here." Jordan Jachimowicz also enjoyed activities at Echo Hill, saying, "I really like them. We had to learn to work together as a team on the adventure course. It really helped us get along easier."