

A Trail To Every Classroom

Maybe I *Can* Do This by Lisa Masi, TTEC Alumna

"There is no way I ever want to have a Wilderness First Aid certification!" I said to myself and a few of my colleagues. "I work with Kindergarten students - and anyway, who wants the responsibility of all that?" I was physically out of shape and a bit anxious about any camping with students, other than the one night, family tent-camping event that I plan each spring. Having more certifications might mean that I'd be called upon to support the overnights in which the older students participated. So, like I do about many things in life that aren't appealing, I avoided the certification and took a required basic first aid course instead. Problem solved, or so I thought.

Then Rita sent out the email about the alumni hike leadership opportunity. Like all things TTEC, I knew that it would be a great opportunity that I shouldn't pass up. But Wilderness First Aid and a hike in the Whites? I still wasn't sure, but my anxiety was overcome by my enthusiasm

for reconnecting with the TTEC program and all that I'd learn. So, I applied and, as fate would have it, I was accepted. It turned out to be one of the best professional choices I've made.

My fear of not being able to complete the hike got the best of me and I began getting in shape. I lost a little weight and started feeling stronger. "Maybe I can do this," I thought. Turns out that I made it up to the Greenleaf Hut - and back down, too - without a hitch. The conversations I had with other teachers, park rangers and AMC club members along the way were inspiring and kept me moving along. The proverbial "icing on the cake" was the hike leadership component. As both a teacher and a member of the leadership team at my school, the situational leadership and risk management portions of the week were perfectly relevant to my work.

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Lisa Masi, TTEC Alum

... to Alaska by Jen (Reis) Wyland, TTEC Alumna



When you think of Alaska, what comes to mind? Picturesque landscape, mountains, glaciers, unique fauna and flora, outdoor activities, the Iditarod, extreme temperatures and lengths of daylight, native lifestyles, what else? To me, Alaska is a place of magic, mystery, and inspiration that provides one with many opportunities to divulge themselves in history, culture, heritage, recreation, and environmental stewardship.

Could there be a better place for teachers to fully immerse their students within or engage them in experiences where they can become involved

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The book *One Small Blue Bead*, by Byrd Baylor was given to me last fall by Jeannette Kendall (2008 TTEC Alum) in Hot Springs, NC. She relayed Baylor's wonderful story of a small boy who lived in a valley that provided all his tribe's needs. Although he longed to venture over the mountains, his elders would not allow it, as they did not see a need and did not believe that anyone lived beyond them. One elder finally agreed to venture for him, and after being gone for months was assumed dead by all but the boy. The old man did finally return and was accompanied by a boy with different colored hair, eyes and skin. The new boy spoke of cultures and landscapes that were very different from the tribe in the valley and the two boys became good friends. Inevitably the new boy needed to return home, but before leaving he gave his friend a small blue bead that he had worn around his neck as a reminder that their new friendship is connected, not divided, by mountains. Jeannette connected the story of *One Small Blue Bead* to TTEC, stating that at times she felt as though she taught alone with little support. After participating in TTEC she felt connected to a network of teachers from Georgia to Maine.

This year that network has grown, not only with a new cohort of teachers along the Appalachian Trail, but trans-continently with the Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom (iTREC!). Delia, Jen (2008 TTEC Alum - see her story in this newsletter) and I traveled to Girdwood, AK in July for iTREC's first Summer Institute. We met a fabulous group of teachers from Seward to Nome, and at the end of the week I shared the story of *One Small Blue Bead*. I let them know that I would encourage Appalachian Trail TTEC alumni to connect with them to share stories and resources, as well as sharing resources and successes for creating curriculum. Jen is already planning for her students in Kutztown, PA, to connect with students in Wasilla, AK, to compare forest ecosystems. Contact me if you would like to connect with an iTREC! participant and I will send you contact information. You can also become a friend of iTREC on



"Hurricane Rita"

Facebook – search for Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom. There is a new Facebook page for TTEC set up by one of the 2010 teachers, search for T.O.T.s (Teachers on Trails).

Rita

2010 Summer Institute



2010 A Trail to Every Classroom workshop participants photographed at the National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV. NPS PHOTO

July 19 - 23, 2010 Teachers from Maine to Georgia joined National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Conservancy and U.S. Forest Service staff in Shepherdstown, WV for the second phase of the three-phase program, A Trail to Every Classroom. The Summer Institute in their words . . .

"Thank you for all you do! Go teachers - you have made a great difference in the lives of many future hikers, outdoorsmen, environmentalists and teachers!"

"I've participated in many workshops over the years and this is, by far, was the best I've been to!"

Reflection & Evaluation Toolkit

The new Reflection & Evaluation Toolkit will be sent to you soon! This toolkit uses reflection and evaluation tools developed by Marshall Welch, TTEC Summer Institute presenter, and Rachel Becker-Klein, TTEC evaluation specialist with PEER Associates.

The toolkit will assist you with student assessment and overall program evaluation. Surveys entered on-line will help us document our hypothesis that a quality place-based service learning curriculum, developed through TTEC, has resulted in increased student levels of civic responsibility, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, and physical activity. Please help us with this research!

Maybe I *Can* Do This (continued from page 1)

I am continually amazed by the participants and presenters that TTEC attracts. Aaron, Jess and Clare were exceptional workshop leaders. Rita and the other ATC staff behind the scenes did a great job putting this together (and thanks for all the goodies, Rita!) It's not just the training, but the people that I've met and the relationships that I've cultivated that make TTEC so wonderful. My resolve to continue promoting place-based service learning is stronger than ever. I can't wait for the next TTEC opportunity – I'll be first on line to apply! Lisa Masi, Ridge and Valley Charter School, Blairstown, NJ

IN THE HEAT OF THE SUMMER . . .

by Kimberly Williams, ATC Staff



THE JULY 2010 TRAIL TO EVERY CLASSROOM BACKPACKING TRIP

. . . memories are made. Threat of severe thunderstorms, humidity so thick you could part it, and a 500 foot rise in a mile did not deter ten teachers representing multiple schools, communities, and states along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. These teachers are part of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's and the National Park Service's Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) program. A Trail to Every Classroom is a professional development program for K-12 teachers that promotes conservation, civic participation, and healthy lifestyles by using the Appalachian Trail as an educational resource. TTEC promotes multi-disciplinary / whole school approaches to curriculum development and provides toolkits on everything from grant writing, and experiential education to hike leadership.

At the weeklong summer institute in West Virginia, teachers chose from multiple workshops, and ten signed up for an overnight hike on the Appalachian Trail. For many, this was their first over-night camping trip, their first lugging of a 30 pound pack all day, and their first jaunt out on the Trail. For all, it was a first-hand experience to learn about the culture of the Trail, practice Leave No Trace ethics, and have a miniature experience of a day in the life of a thru-hiker.

With determination the group prevailed, making it three miles to the top and to Ed Garvey shelter, the first shelter north of Harpers Ferry, WV. As temperatures soared into the 90s in mid-July, these teachers bonded as they ascended with laughter, conversations, and inquisitiveness about the Trail and the surrounding environment.

Teachers were broken out into groups, each with an assignment and discoveries to make: preparing meals on gas-powered stoves, hanging bear ropes, the wonders of composting privies, siting and setting up tents, and a half-mile, several-hundred foot descent to filter water for the entire group. Ridgerunner Faren MacDonald joined the group at the shelter, and answered questions and discussed her experience on the Trail.

One of the teacher's greatest discoveries was to find a teenage group (led by young adults) on an overnight trip. The teachers conversed and built a friendship with the younger campers who were the same age group as their students. Later in the night, it was a picturesque moment as the young teens, listened, peeping through the rungs of the loft of the shelter, as the teachers told ghost stories; one in particular telling the travails of her hobby as a ghost hunter.

The next day, all remarked that the three-mile hike out seemed to be done in no time. There is something about an overnight backpacking trip that can bond a group together. It's a magical mixture of communally forged memory, of shared sweat and laughter, of sharing tent space, and hearing the wild noises in the dark of night. Whatever the mixture was, it put a smile on this group of ten as they rode back together in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy van. The experience surely imparted a sense of love, respect, and curiosity about the Trail into these teachers that will be passed on to their students.

Kimberly Williams is a landscape protection coordinator for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. She works out of the, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania.



Alumni Workshop Testimonials . . .

"The generosity of your organization and the AMC are amazing! What a great week. I will be taking our students out into the the White Mountains with a confidence I lacked in the past. The people you have in place to facilitate these learning opportunities are top notch. TTEC through the ATC has added immensely to my teaching and love of the outdoors." Donna McCusker, 5th Grade Teacher, The Whitefield School, NH



Donna McCusker



Nick VanSant

"Just wanted to thank you for the TTEC Alumni course. As always the program was high quality, high interest, and well worth the time. I commented to Aaron and others that I felt the program pushed me to the limits of my comfort zone and provided the encouragement and support to go beyond that. So I came home with a larger "zone" and increased enthusiasm and ideas for my own program. Kudos to all presenters for good leadership examples and sound pedagogy. Plus the accomodations and experiences were top notch. In an earlier review I asked for more outdoors and this really came through in fine style. Many thanks to all who make this training possible." Nick VanSant, Monument Valley Middle School, MA

"Participating in the TTEC alumni training program meant that I would not have my new classroom set up and ready for school before in-service week this year. I also knew that meant in-service week would be especially stressful and challenging for me to be ready for students the following week. Nevertheless, I knew that the training program would be very high caliber, given the exceptional TTEC training I received in 2009, would likely greatly improve my skills in forming and leading a middle school hiking/ecology club at my school, and would certainly be a lot of fun in the outdoors. I made the right choice and got myself to New Hampshire. I was not disappointed. Everything about the program was outstanding, from the accommodations and meals at AMC's Highland Center, to the level of leadership support, expertise and enthusiasm provided by the training staff, the opportunity to interact with and learn from fellow TTEC alumni, and the rewarding experience of an overnight hike to an AMC hut in the White Mountains. The TTEC Alumni Wilderness First Aid and Hike Leadership Training Program is the very logical and worthwhile extension to the original TTEC training program. I am very grateful for this educational opportunity, and would recommend it to all TTEC alumni interested in furthering their qualifications to lead students in outdoor educational settings." Shelley Stahlman, Kindergarten Teacher, Ashley Academy, Johnson City, TN

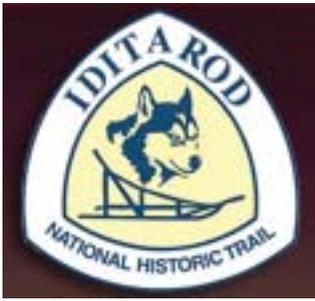


Testimonials were provided by TTEC Alumni who applied and were selected to attend the Hike Leadership & Wilderness First Aid Workshop in the White Mountains of New Hampshire August 2 - 6, 2010. This opportunity was offered free of charge, including instruction, certification, meals and lodging.

If you are interested in attending an alumni workshop -- be on the look out for future offerings in upcoming TTEC Newsletters!

Photo Courtesy of Amber Kraft, Education Specialist, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

... to Alaska (continued from page 1)



and active within their natural surroundings and communities? This truly seems to be a fabulous idea, but how and why? Ever heard of the Iditarod? Well, when you hear that word, what first comes to your mind? I can almost guarantee it's the Iditarod Dogsled Race. At least that's what I had thought and pictured until I entered Girdwood, Alaska, outside of Anchorage, where my perspective fully changed. In Girdwood, to be followed by Seward and then Nome, a unique collaborative effort is being undertaken to open people's eyes to the Iditarod National Historic Trail, in addition to enabling our students a chance to engage themselves in becoming stewards of the environment through place-based service learning.

Hmmm.....sounds vaguely familiar to a program that I participated in three years ago, along the Appalachian Trail, ring any bells? The program is TTEC (A Trail to Every Classroom), which my school and I became huge supporters of. In its pilot year, Alaska is en route to establishing and running the same program along the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) called iTREC (Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom). Teachers from all regions located somewhere along the trail will be placed within sessions, both in and outdoors, that will offer support in creating lessons, projects, and/or curricula that encourages the use of the outdoors, place-based service learning, and involvement within their communities.

Thanks to the positive experience I received as a TTEC participant, and grant opportunities the program provides, I was awarded the chance to attend and present at the first summer institute of iTREC in Alaska. Workshop sessions surrounded many of the same ideas and thoughts that TTEC provides, along with partnership opportunities specific to Alaskan communities. Within my session, I was able to bring a sense of what a successful program could look like within a school, after attending TTEC, including obstacles, challenges, and accomplishments, in addition to how one could go about creating such a curricula. TTEC has opened many doors for me, but I have never had such an experience as with iTREC.



Jenn in Alaska

As much as my goal was in attending and presenting, I walked away from Alaska with unbelievable experiences. It was the most refreshing, invigorating, inspiring, and exciting opportunity one could ask for as a teacher getting ready to head back to school. In a few days, I watched the teachers' confusion, turned upside down into sheer, overwhelming enthusiasm. At first you could recognize the apprehension on every teacher's face, much like mine when I attended the first spring workshop, and by the end, the ideas and projects the teachers began to create were incredible. Of utmost importance, I thought, were the relationships and networks formed between the teachers and their partners. I just sat at the end, in total astonishment the opportunities those teachers, and teachers to come, would be creating for their students. Ideas the teachers generated included adopting a stream and tree, art integration, questing, community awareness, pedometer competition, Iditarod Trail unit, post cards and calendars along trail, scale model of INHT, trail mapping, stewardship of land/resources, and many more.

Did You Know ??

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a unit of the National Park Service, winds through five national parks. Can you identify the park it does not go through?

- a. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
- b. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
- c. Acadia National Park
- d. Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- e. Shenandoah National Park
- f. Blue Ridge Parkway

In what year did the National Trails Systems Act authorize funds to both federal and state entities to protect the entire route of the AT with public lands?

1921, 1937, 1968, or 1971 ?

So, what better way to continue my efforts with TTEC than to further the relationships that I made with the teachers pursuing iTREC and their projects. I plan to integrate what I learned, especially about Alaska and the INHT, within my classroom, as well as collaborating with several teachers from iTREC. Some ideas I hope to add are: questing, construction of mural and art connection, hiking/survival skills, "bioblitz," and community garden. Once again, thanks to the National Park Service for its continued efforts in place-based service learning with programs like A Trail to Every Classroom that enable teachers to engage their students with their natural surroundings while creating citizen students. Jen (Reis) Wyland, Kutztown Middle School, Kutztown, PA



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Appalachian National Scenic Trail
P.O. Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

Virginia Journeys 2011

ATC's 38th Biennial Conference
July 1 - 8, 2011
Emory & Henry College, Emory, VA

Hosted by the seven A.T. maintaining clubs of central and southwest Virginia, the Biennial will celebrate the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Blue Ridge Mountain Trails of Virginia. Planned around ATC's membership meeting, Virginia Journeys 2011 is also an opportunity for A.T. enthusiasts to take a Trail-related workshop, hike on the A.T. (and other trails) in Virginia and Tennessee. Explore Damascus, Virginia - the "friendliest town on the trail." For more information log-on to: www.appalachiantrail.org

This publication is made possible through the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior in cooperation with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) in addition to many other trail partners and clubs.

NPS Trail Superintendent/Manager
Pamela Underhill

Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Executive Director
David Startzell

Contributors:

Amber Kraft, Education Specialist, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Lisa Masi, Ridge and Valley Charter School, Blairstown, New Jersey

Donna McCusker, The Whitefield School, Littleton, New Hampshire

Shelley Stahlman, TTEC Alumn, Ashley Academy, Johnson City, Tennessee

Nick VanSant, Monument Valley Middle School, Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Jen (Reis) Wyland, Kutztown Middle School, Kutztown, Pennsylvania

Share YOUR Stories with US

To keep the Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) program alive - we want to hear from you! Celebrate some of your curriculum achievements with us by sending news of your activities and photographs that document your journey. Photos can be submitted with your stories, however, be sure they can tell a story on their own - action or activity shots are best. For every photo submitted, all individuals captured in the photo must have filled out/signed a National Park Service/Appalachian Trail Conservancy photo release form.

Submissions can be sent electronically to Jessica_Liptak@nps.gov or via regular mail to:

Jessica Liptak
TTEC - Appalachian Trail Park Office
P.O. Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

← TTEC Alumni Opportunity →

Newsletter Submission
Deadlines:

November 20, 2010
February 20, 2011
May 20, 2011
August 20, 2011



Join the Journey! Become a Member

When you join the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, you become a member of the distinguished group of people dedicated to preserving and protecting the Appalachian Trail. Every dollar we raise goes to support ATC and maintainer club efforts to conserve the footpath, viewsheds, and environmental and cultural resources along the now 2,178 mile Trail.

As a member, you will receive the following benefits:

- *A.T. Journeys*: The Magazine of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, focusing on conservation efforts and celebrating the stories of our volunteers, hikers and Trail communities.
- Discounts at the Ultimate Appalachian Trail Store.
- An Appalachian Trail Conservancy decal and patch.
- An ATC Member card.

Join by phone (304.535.6331 ext. 120) or on the web by completing an on-line form at www.appalachiantrail.org.