



A Collaboration of Discovery Trail, ICSD and IPEI

PROGRAM GOALS

1) Enhance school experience through curriculum-based learning that includes exploratory learning experiences for grades Pre-K through 5 at the eight Discovery Trail sites. The program also includes classroom activities before and after the visits. The curriculum is carefully designed to meet NYS Learning Standards. An independent evaluator monitors how well goals are met and provides suggestions for improvement.

2) Provide equal access to Discovery Trail sites so that every elementary student in Ithaca schools can take advantage of these learning opportunities. Although many classrooms and families visit the Discovery Trail sites independently, many more are now able to take advantage of this educational program.

3) Promote understanding and respect among elementary students from different neighborhoods by providing opportunities for positive social interaction through shared academic experiences. Each year, classrooms from different schools are linked and visit the Discovery Trail site together.

4) Expand community awareness of the resources of the Discovery Trail by reaching out to students, their families, and others in the community. Students take home materials that encourage families to visit, including free admission passes.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

Each grade, Pre-K through 5th, is linked to one Discovery Trail organization. Trips to each site combine students from two of the district's elementary schools. Fifth graders visit two sites, which provides two opportunities to mix with their peers as they prepare for the transition to middle school. Most trips take place from January through June. The goal is to have each child over the course of his or her elementary-school years experience each of the eight Discovery Trail sites. More than 90% of the district's elementary classes participate in the program.

GRADE-LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS

Pre-Kindergarten.....Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell
Animals in art: Children love animals and are delighted to find them throughout the museum's collections.

Kindergarten.....Tompkins County Public Library
Books about Friendship and Family: The joy of reading comes alive at the library when students listen to stories, learn how to use a library, receive a library card, and choose books to take home.

First Grade.....Museum of the Earth at PRI
Dinosaurs: Studying dinosaurs teaches how scientists develop knowledge of extinct animals and builds appreciation of science while learning about fascinating creatures.

Second Grade.....Sciencenter
Magnetism: Students extend their knowledge of the properties of magnetism by exploring the world of magnets and identifying real-world uses.

Third Grade.....Cornell Plantations
Native Plants and Wildflowers: Children explore the beauty of the outdoors while learning about plant reproduction and developing an appreciation of native flora and their habitats.

Fourth Grade.....The History Center in Tompkins County
19th-Century Life in an Eight-Square Schoolhouse: Students learn about local history and how children lived prior to the Industrial Revolution by attending school for a day in a one-room schoolhouse.

Fifth Grade.....Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell
Animal Adaptation, Human Environmental Impact: Children use the indoor and outdoor spaces to study how birds adapt to specific habitats and human impact.

Fifth Grade.....Cayuga Nature Center
Ropes Course and Environmental Stewardship: Outdoor adventure teaches environmental respect and the importance of team building to help students learn to work together in preparation for middle school.

PROGRAM FUNDING

The program is funded through the generosity of foundations, corporations, and individuals in our community. The budget of \$80,000 per year covers Discovery Trail admissions and program fees, busing, teacher professional development, and program administration and evaluation. This program depends on wide community support and gifts of all sizes are needed. For more information on how to make a gift, call IPEI at 256-4734.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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