



How do *Kids Discover the Trail!* ?

ICSD elementary grades are linked with Ithaca's seven museums and the public library through *Kids Discover the Trail!* (KDT!), a collaboration of the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI), ICSD and the Discovery Trail. Individual classrooms from different schools are paired to share the field trip as well as preparations for the learning experiences at the sites.

Each year Pre-K - 5, all students have *KDT!* activities that enhance their grade-level curriculum and connect their classroom and its "buddy" classroom with the Discovery Trail's resources. Fifth graders have two opportunities to share academic and social activities with their peers as they prepare for the transition to middle school--to the Cayuga Nature Center for the ropes course, and to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

In late May, South Hill and Fall Creek teachers Martha Levine and Caitlin Baxter rode the school bus together to meet Lab of O educator Anne Rosenberg at the Lab of O for "Exploring Habitats" and to use their *KDT!* Book: *The Birds of Sapsucker Woods* by Jeffrey V. Wells and Allison Childs Wells.

After a guided trail hike observing habitats, they kept track of what was seen and heard creating a group bird list. Working with their "Buddy" from the other class, they drew birds from life and identified them in their bird books.

Through the large glass windows they could watch the heron parents from the world-famous nestcam search for food and take it up high to the nest that they had watched online from their classroom computers.

After lunch together, the students played the "Habitat Tag" game. Everyone plays the roles of birds and each of the different elements of a bird's habitat through different conservation scenarios.

KDT! is offered without charge to 2900 ICSD students each year. Support for the program that is in its ninth year includes ICSD's bus transportation and professional development for teachers. Financial contributions from individuals, businesses, and foundations are essential. For more information, visit www.ipei.org.