



KDT! Program Begins Ninth Season

Last week the first *Kids Discover the Trail!* activities of 2013 brought PreK and Kindergarten students to the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell and to the Tompkins County Public Library. These three visits to Discovery Trail sites were the first of over 150 scheduled for this ninth year of the collaboration between the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI), the Discovery Trail and the Ithaca City School District (IPEI).

The second half of the school year signals the start of the *KDT!* season for all elementary students and teachers of the ICSD. Although the program began as a once-a-year field trip by Ithaca elementary classrooms to their assigned Discovery Trail museums and the public library (see list below), *KDT!* has grown into an enriching learning experience for teachers, students, and Discovery Trail educators alike. Additional information including videos can be found at www.ipei.org and at www.discoverytrail.com and www.kidsdiscoverthetrail.org.

Approximately 2,900 students or nearly 100 percent of the students participated last year. Every teacher sets a date for their field trip pairing their classroom with one from another school as a way to encourage friendships among children of different neighborhoods (except in Grade 4 since the Eight Square Schoolhouse can accommodate only one class at a time). Discovery Trail sites include the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell, the Tompkins County Public Library, the Museum of the Earth, the Sciencenter, the Cornell Plantations, the History Center's Eight Square Schoolhouse, Cornell's Lab of Ornithology, and the Cayuga Nature Center. Program themes include animals in art, dinosaur science, clean energy, 19th century life, and local bird habitats.

Every interested teacher sets a date for their field trip, pairing their classroom with one from another school as a way to encourage friendships among children of different neighborhoods (except in Grade 4 since the schoolhouse can accommodate one class at a time). At some grade levels, Discovery Trail educators visit the classroom to prepare everyone for the experience, or they provide pre- and post-trip activities for the teachers to use. "Buddy-up" trips are a second opportunity for the paired classrooms to get together for more fun and learning. In addition, there is a special book for each grade level that corresponds with the content of Discovery Trail experiences; *KDT!* books come home with every child every year.

KDT! is funded by generous donors through IPEI. Supporters throughout the program's nine years have included the Park Foundation, Triad Foundation, Cornell University, BorgWarner Morse TEC, Legacy Foundation, M&T Bank, Brooks Family Foundation, Adams Foundation, Friends of the Tompkins County Public Library, Tompkins Trust Company, Community Foundation of Tompkins County, Johnson Museum of Art, Ian Alberta Fund of IPEI, Gannett Foundation, United Way Youth and Philanthropy, Alpha Delta Phi, and the Social Service League as well as many individuals and families.



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Feb 16

As the PreK children arrived by school bus for first KDT! trip of season, their little faces in each window showed awe of the Johnson museum

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