

## IN BLOOM

Last spring, HPEF funded ten KCS and Little Peaks Preschool teachers highlighting the importance of outdoor education at Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, VT. As place-based learning becomes increasingly revered as a successful way in which to engage students, our school district is taking note. Workshops at the In Bloom Conference focused on cultivating student curiosity, strengthening analytical skills, and promoting collaboration in problem-solving. Our community's breathtaking beauty serves as the perfect backdrop for blending challenging curriculum with outdoor experiences. Inspired by this conference and continued support, we look forward to further developing enriching programs for our students. - Heather Odell-Fey

## LEARNING OUTSIDE

Stimulated by the Shelburne conference, KCS elementary teachers have developed and HPEF has funded an inquiry-based outdoor program coordinated by an outdoor consultant teacher, Emily Furman. She will visit KCS weekly to bring students in kindergarten through grade six into the forest to connect with the environment and do hands-on exploration. This initiative affords each elementary teacher the opportunity to work with Emily while planning and executing deep and memorable outdoor lessons with students. We expect this innovative approach to inquiry, science, and outdoor education should foster both deep understanding of the complexities of the natural world and student collaboration, communication, creativity, and social skills. This program will afford all elementary students the opportunity to connect deeply to nature and our environment and has future potential for younger and older students, as well. Successfully implemented, the initiative could enhance KCS's reputation as a district using its spectacular natural environment to spark and enrich student learning and be a draw for area families looking for schools where the teaching and learning are active, where there's a sense of place, and where there's a deep connection to the natural world.

- Megan Woolford



KCS

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*A copy of High Peaks Education Foundation's latest annual report may be obtained, upon request, from HPEF at High Peaks Education Foundation, PO Box 475, Keene Valley, NY 12943 or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau at 120 Broadway, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10271.*

[highpeaksed.org](http://highpeaksed.org)

## STORIE LAURIE - Bunny Goodwin

Back by popular demand, professional singer/songwriter, Storylaurie, Laurie McIntosh, returned in October 2016 to write songs with KCS elementary students. The songs celebrate themes of gardening, whole foods and environmental issues.

While collaborating with KCS music teacher, Lynn Dewalt, Laurie elicited from the students, words for five songs that the students performed at concert at KCS. Laurie has a magical ability to let kids be kids while tapping into many areas of the curriculum such as science, vocabulary, writing, and math, as well as music and performing arts. The youngest children shouted out when counting seeds by tens to 100 and they giggled while singing about giving lettuce a hair cut. Second and third graders boasted in song about their knowledge of cucurbit vines and fruits. Fourth and Fifth graders sang about plant life cycles. Sixth graders reflected on a recent field trip to Echo Lake and created a song about invasive plants. When performing is such a joyful experience it builds self-esteem and provides an opportunity for students to sing out about the unique environmental programs at KCS.

## MEDIA ARTIST - Chad Filipski

The Don't Wait to UnMake a Bully project returned to KCS in September of 2016. Media Artist in Residence, Mike Feurstein guided children in grades 4-6 through the production of public service announcements that speak to a range of bullying issues. Each class wrote a script, and worked with commercial video and audio equipment to produce a professional PSA. The final cut of each PSA will be on Youtube and local media. The children take great pride in the final product.

There are seven international students attending KCS this school year. We have a boy and a girl from Spain, a boy from Japan, a girl from Russia, a boy from England, a girl from Thailand, and a girl from Austria. All seven are staying with local families, and each host family has a support family.

They are all on the boys and girls soccer teams. The international students are a wonderful addition to our academic, extracurricular and community programs.

- Joy McCabe



## NEW YORK CITY TRIP - Lynn Dewalt

Thanks to generous funding from HPEF, the KCS Drama Club was able to go on its biannual trip to enjoy a musical and sightsee around NYC. The students were first treated to a musical, magical carpet ride, seeing Aladdin at the New Amsterdam Theatre. After the show, they broke into groups and spread out through the city to go to activities they had set up on their own. After spending the night in a hotel in Queens with a beautiful view of the NYC skyline, they returned to downtown Manhattan to tour the 9/11 Memorial Museum. Many students were deeply touched by the representation of that day's events and the thousands of artifacts helped bring the story to life for them to remember. Without HPEF, these students wouldn't have had the opportunity to be moved by such an experience and 9/11 would just be something they'd read about in a textbook.

Last year, as a result of getting to know some Keene students through the mentoring program, and then being asked by Laura Eldred if he'd like to take a team of students to the North Country Jr. Iron Chef Competition, John Schuler, who is manager of the Ausable Club and a chef, started something good. He did it largely on his own and without outside funding. This year HPEF is happy to provide funding to help build on last year's successes to continue and enlarge the program. Of last year's experience, John writes:

- Greg Farrell

## CULINARY PROGRAM - John R. Schuler

"Over a couple of months preparing for the competition, the students learned the art of working together. Each practice session the individual competitors worked on the competition dish and ultimately assembled one example of the same finished meal. Then, they would have to select whose was best for the judges' plate and whose would be used for the tasting plates. The process taught respect for each other's decisions and contributions to the whole. The young chefs learned organization, knife skills, teamwork, and life skills that will be theirs for life. They learned to be proud of their individual accomplishments not by placing in the competition but by being respectful of others who did place. A very hard lesson for young individuals to learn. They have been exposed to a vocation and an opportunity to consider Culinary Arts as a career option. As much as I had the opportunity to be part of five young individuals' lives, they have been a part of mine. I have realized more intrinsic value from working with these children and the school than almost anything else I have done in life. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to work with the school, the young individuals and the HPEF."

