

Scavenger hunt helps kids learn

By Kelly Wooley

Members of the Project-based Learning class at the Lawn Avenue School could not have ordered a more perfect day for the last public event of the 2007 season at Watson Farm. The seventh and eighth graders created a scavenger hunt as their first assignment in the new class, a recent addition to the curriculum, to coincide with the season's end at the local farm. "Project based learning is an authentic learning experience," teacher Jenn Kittredge-Clark said.



Students participating in the Watson Farm quest find the final prize under a scarecrow. Photo by Kelly Wolley.

The students were responsible for implementing the project from beginning to end. A major part of their idea was to create clue boxes for participants to find along the scavenger hunt route.

"By writing and researching information about the clue boxes, the students had to learn about the farm. They collaborated on the boxes and they also had to connect to real life," she said.

Rhyming directions led participants to notable areas of the farm, where the boxes were hidden. The boxes contained student-written information sheets about a particular part of the farm. Each box included a letter that was a piece of a word scramble, which eventually unscrambled to form the word Watson. Areas that were highlighted include the windmill, shoreline, and cattle pastures. "I liked coming to the farm and making clues. We made clues that rhymed, and I liked how I could see people getting excited," said seventh-grader Brooke Doherty.

According to the students, each group was assigned to gather information for one box, for a total of six boxes. For example, the windmill box contained an explanation of how the windmill was important to the farm. The clue

directed searchers to, "Head to the west and rest with a view. Find the box at the bench in the field with a spectacular view." The box in the field was perched on rocks, which were the topic of the third box.

A mystery awaited visitors at the fifth box. It was hidden so well that most searchers were unable to locate it. Using intuition, searchers were able to find the final box situated underneath a scarecrow. Fresh apple cider and cookies provided refreshment to those who finished the 40-minute walk.

Based on the responses of everyone involved, the first project proved to be a great success. "It seems like most people like what we've done. This project was fun because we worked together and got to know each other better," said

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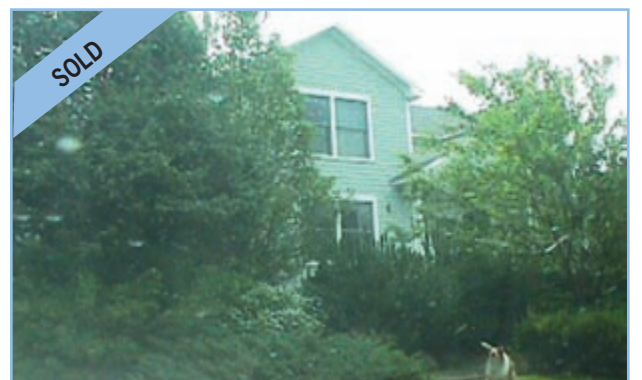
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