

Spring 2009

Greetings to all our friends! This is our first newsletter, and Bear Creek Academy is eager to share with you all the great things the proud students and staff have accomplished.

On September 2, 2008 we opened our doors to accept our first nine students from Cumberland and Buckingham counties. In our second semester we grew to accommodate 13 students, including our first student from Powhatan county.

We are proud to be located in the Cumberland County Community Center, near the intersection of Route 45 and Highway 60. Our location in the heart of the county means that Cumberland, Buckingham, Prince Edward, and Powhatan counties now have affordable local access to private special education day school services. We believe that as a locally owned, community-based school we can effectively meet the educational, cultural, and economic needs of our community.

Foundations of our Personal Empowerment Program



From left to right: Jordan Whiley, Administrator; Jason Lake, Director of Experiential Education; Erin Lake, Administrative Coordinator; Joan Lewis, Teacher; Ben Montano, Director of Therapeutic Services; Jason Paulin, Principal.

RESPECT FOR SELF
 RESPECT FOR OTHERS
 RESPECT FOR COMMUNITY

Academic Update

Our first semester in the classroom ran smoothly and our focus on filling in missing gaps in learning from previous years has been a success. We have been able to maintain small class sizes and take time to develop relationships between teacher and student. As the year progresses, our students are showing confidence in their ability to learn and beginning to realize how valuable an education is for their future.



Academic Update, cont'd.

Highlights so far:

- Our first student passed his Standards of Learning Test (SOL) for graduation in World History.
- Attendance at school and in class has been a positive aspect to learning.
- Our flexible afternoon schedule has provided students with the opportunity to strengthen writing and math skills.
- Early results from the Reading Program show some students are increasing their reading and comprehension skills by multiple grade levels.
- This April our first student will be transitioning back to the local high school full-time. We wish him luck!
- Students in the character education class visited Moton Museum in Farmville. President Robert Hamlin led them in a history lesson by sending them on a scavenger hunt throughout the museum.



The work in the classroom by students and teachers has been both great and, at many times, a challenge; we look forward to more successes in the coming months. This semester we have added an elective course in Web Design and are planning to offer other courses to meet the needs of our students and to assist with their transition back to school and/or into their chosen career path.

Club Day Exposes BCA Students to a Variety of Skills

Once a month Bear Creek Academy has Club Day, which offers students the opportunity to pursue unique artistic, vocational, and enrichment interests. Regular offerings include instruction in the Culinary Arts, Digital Photography, and Bicycle Repair. In addition, students have engaged in leatherworking craft workshops lead by 4H's Linda Eanes.



Conservation Corps and Community Enrichment

The Bear Creek Academy Conservation Corps (BCACC) has volunteered over 380 hours working at Bear Creek Lake State Park. Once a week we travel down the road to the park, where we actively learn about taking care of the environment and the power of serving the community. We have assembled a split-rail fence, cleaned up debris, built new trails, cleaned campgrounds, and hauled wood.



We are proud of our partnership with the park. The rangers showed their appreciation by lending us fishing rods at our Fall cookout. Another highlight was participating in Bear Creek Lake's Halloween Haunted Trail. Our students were excited to dress up in their scariest costumes! We look forward to a productive Spring working with our friends at the park.



The BCACC has also adopted the Cumberland section of the new High Bridge Trail. This extensive rails-to-trails project offers an enriching and educational experience for fitness buffs, outdoor enthusiasts, and those interested in civil war history.

We value our cultural and historical landmarks, so we volunteered to support the Ellis Acres project in Buckingham county. Ellis Acres is the site of the first African American school in the county and will one day provide a museum, skate park, and beautiful recreation spot for the community. We recognize Diane Holman James, Bill Davis, and Wilbert Dean for their vision and leadership in this profound project.

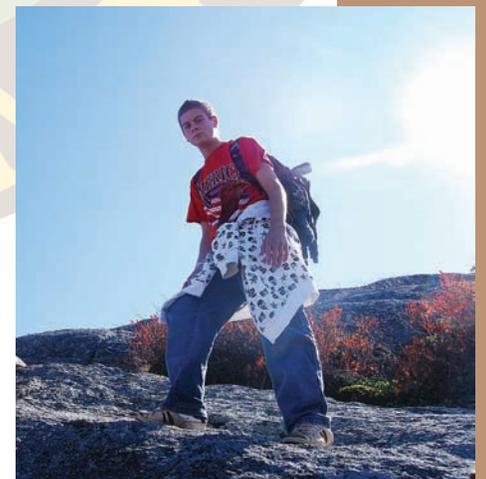


Adventurers with Enthusiasm (AWE) Program



Richard Warren, our mentor and a pioneer in working with at-risk youth, once said, "Be an adventurer with enthusiasm." He understood that life was an adventure filled with many challenges, trials, and tribulations. To see life as an adventure rather than a checklist was Mr. Warren's basic rule of thumb for students and for the adults working with them.

This year's AWE Program has featured two trips to an Alpine Tower to experience high-ropes climbing; day hiking trips to the top of Spy Rock and to Crabtree Falls; several nature hikes through the Cumberland State Forest; fishing at Bear Creek Lake State Park; and learning canoeing skills on Bear Creek Lake. Students at Bear Creek Academy are not only meeting educational goals - they are also re-connecting with the natural world and being prepared for the great adventure called life!



A Very Special Thank You!

We want to thank our volunteer Community Advisory Council for the generous giving of their time, guidance, and support:

Buckingham:

Helen Saxon
Joe Scruggs
Michelle Wright

Cumberland:

Joey Dayton
Pam Kinney
Jackie Sheff

Prince Edward:

Ken Copeland
Dr. Chris Jones
Alecia Daves-Johnson

Powhatan:

Meghan Garland
Dr. Bill Stacy

NEW FOR 2009! Summer Programs Available

Bear Creek Academy will be offering 2 Summer Day Programs for students ages 11-18. These programs will be open to all youth and are not limited to students enrolled in our Day School Program. Our programs will include a variety of engaging activities and educational field trips. Lunch is included. For more information about program dates and tuition, contact us at:

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