

Overnight at the Outdoor Lab Nature Camp



Every fifth grader in Arlington Public Schools (APS) gets a special treat near the end of their final year of elementary school: they go on an overnight field trip to the Phoebe Hall Knipling Outdoor Laboratory. The Outdoor Lab is a 210-acre facility in Northern Virginia containing forests, fields, hills, a spring-fed stream, pond, nature hiking trails, and plant and animal identification areas.

The Lab supports the APS science program by providing a place for environmental education for elementary and secondary school children. The facility is staffed by Arlington teachers, but is maintained by a non-profit association—the Arlington Outdoor Education Association.

This year, Abingdon Elementary fifth graders went to the Outdoor lab on March 22 to 23, and the weather was perfect! The students went on an evening hike in the dark, and slept out under the stars with their friends in tents that they assembled themselves. During the day, they went on an animal hunt in the stream, and held snakes, frogs, and turtles in the animal lab. The biggest hit was the fishing and canoeing.

To learn more about the Outdoor Lab, visit the lab Web site at <www.outdoorlab.org>. The Outdoor Lab will also hold a Spring Open House & Annual Meeting for Arlington County School children and their families on May 20, 2007 at 2 to 6 PM.

Musical Achievements

Twenty-eight Abingdon fourth- and fifth-grade students qualified to play their string instruments as part of the South Arlington Pyramid Orchestra concert. In addition, Abingdon fourth graders **Khaela Sanchez, Delcy Alvarez, Mark Baban, Karen Almedras,** and fifth grader **Gabrielle Samuel** played at Strathmore Hall on Sunday, April 15, as part of the Washington Area Suzuki Festival.

A Peaceful World Starts at Abingdon

Abingdon's school motto, "A Peaceful World Starts Here," was the topic of a special school celebration sponsored by Abingdon PTA on Friday, April 27. Students participated in an essay contest, and local pianist **Joshua Rich** performed.

For more information about Abingdon Elementary School activities, please contact Abingdon PTA VP Tina Masciangioli at 703-931-7086 or tina.masc@verizon.net.

"Last Sundays" Playdates

On Sunday, March 25, at the Abingdon playground, current and prospective Abingdon families enjoyed the first Abingdon "Kindergarten and First Grade Playdate."

After getting rained out on Saturday, the Sun-

day playdate was afforded glorious weather. Children played and snacked, while parents had a chance to get to know each other better, exchange information, and catch up on school news. The event was so successful that FANS is planning more playdates throughout the spring and summer. Called "Last Sundays," the playdates will be held on the last Sunday afternoon of the spring and summer months from 3 to 5 PM at the Abingdon front playground. The next one will be Sunday, May 27.

The playdate was designed by FANS and sponsored by the PTA to gather current Abingdon families together with families considering Abingdon for their children. Flyers were mailed out to all that attended Abingdon's kindergarten orientations in February and March, and posters were hung at the Fairlington playground. The event was born from discussions on the FANS listserv e-mail group. Future Abingdon kindergarten parents were interested in getting to know each other as well as other families already at the school.

The playdates are open to all Abingdon families and to anyone who is considering the school for their child. To find out more, visit the Events page of the FANS Web site at <www.friendsofabingdon.org>.

On the Web site, parents can also subscribe to the listserv (on the Getting Involved page) or sign up to receive the monthly FANS e-newsletter.

Contributed by Amy Suardi and Tina Masciangioli.

