

Instructor Spotlight: Molly Dullanty



What is your background?

Originally from Spokane, WA, I went to college at Santa Clara University and majored in cultural anthropology. After graduating, I traveled to Alaska where I met my husband who is from the upstate of South Carolina. I moved to the Southeast in 1999, but continue to live in Alaska for half of the year. I have been teaching at the elementary school level in Henderson County since 2000.

How long have you been a MS instructor?

I became a Muddy Sneakers instructor in 2009.

Why do you like being a MS instructor?

I love spending my day out in nature and sharing that special feeling it gives you. I love teaching children and I find the outdoor setting to be a magical classroom.

What is one of your most memorable moments on a MS expedition?

Laying under a rhododendron thicket with students writing poetry and reflecting in their journals. The creek created peace, the birds provided song, the rhododendron gave us seats, shade, and solitude.

What is your favorite expedition site?

DuPont Forest's amazing waterfalls and granite outcroppings are breathtaking classrooms! I also love the Pink Beds area in Pisgah National Forest.

What do you spend your time doing when not teaching for MS?

During the school year, when I'm not on a field expedition, I work in my fall and winter garden, canoe down beautiful rivers, build campfires, and hike my dog up the mountain. When I'm in Alaska, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to guide river and wilderness trips into America's only Arctic region.

Director's Report

The 2013-14 season is off to a great start with excellent reports from the field and some of the most memorable student quotes in years. One of my favorites came at the end of a recent Brevard Elementary expedition when one student exclaimed, "I would go to school all summer if I knew I'd get to keep doing Muddy Sneakers!" Enhancing each student's excitement for learning is why we do what we do and further evidence that experiential teaching can leave a lasting impact on a child.

I am excited to announce that this season, our sixth year in operation, we have 100% of our '12-13 schools returning along with two new Henderson County schools – Hillendale and Mills River Elementary. These additions more than double our Henderson County participation and again set a new high bar for programming with 18 total schools and almost 1,200 participating students across our four-county program area. We sincerely thank all of our schools, and the Community Sponsors that support their participation, for prioritizing our program amongst a field of competing interests.

It brings me great pride to also announce that Muddy Sneakers has chosen to invest in registering and supporting our entire staff in the nationally recognized NC Environmental Educator certification program. We are committed to having 100% of our naturalists certified in the coming years as we seek to support our state's lead role in developing high standards for environmental instruction. Finally, as we embark on the next chapter of the organization, it remains a top priority to build our donor



bases on all levels and inspire more individuals, families and businesses to consider supporting our students through becoming a Muddy Sneakers 'Community Sponsor'. Our schools work incredibly hard to fund their 1/3 portion of the programming cost and we ask for your support to preserve and grow this program beyond its current reach.

You will also notice that we are now offering more ways to support our work. If you are considering a gift of securities, you can now give to Muddy Sneakers through Ameritrade and E*Trade. We are also well versed in the areas of planned giving as well as receiving honor/memorial gifts and matching gifts should these be of interest to you as a donor. Please contact us anytime at our office to discuss these opportunities in further detail.

Muddy Sneakers has had a tremendous impact in its first five years, not only through increasing science aptitude but also in connecting thousand of children with the natural world that surrounds their community. We ask that you please consider contributing to this important work as we seek to introduce more children to the joy of learning outside.



Camp Muddy Sneakers Returns For Its Second Season!

CAMP MUDDY SNEAKER

the joy of being outside



Camp Muddy Sneakers was so much fun last summer we've decided to do it again and we're growing with the goal of better serving more children around the region.

A collaborative partnership between Muddy Sneakers and the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association (CFAIA), Camp Muddy Sneakers is a co-ed day camp for rising 4th – rising 7th grade students. Our primary goal is to get kids outdoors in a fun and meaningful way to inspire their curiosity, help them connect with nature, promote physical activity and cultivate a sense of stewardship. Last summer, campers spent their weekly sessions exploring and learning about the diverse ecosystems that surround us here in western NC. In addition to



hiking the woods and creeks of DuPont and Pisgah Forest, campers also learned about animal habitats, aquatic ecosystems, mountain bogs, trees and plants, and the geology of the region. Next summer we are excited to announce we'll be expanding our program into Buncombe County where we intend to utilize a diverse mix of urban and rural public and private lands in close proximity to the city center. Registration for summer 2014 will be available online in late November. For additional information and to register, go to www.campmuddysneakers.org.

Cedar Mountain Fish-Off Nets Nice Catch for Muddy Sneakers

Piedmont Lake, in Cedar Mountain, NC, was the scene of an exciting fishing contest in early June, with the benefits going to Muddy Sneakers. Board member Ben Keys challenged his friend Billy Hagler's grandson, Christopher Hagler, to a fishing tournament to see who could catch the most fish on a given afternoon. Before long, friends and neighbors started picking their favorite and a date was set.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Keys was unable to participate, but good friend Jim Dunlap was luckily available to step in and take his place on the shoreline. A rather frenetic hour of fishing began and both competitors were tied up until the final four minutes when Dunlap landed his biggest fish of the day - a four-inch bass!

In spite of the fact that Dunlap caught the most fish (if you call minnows fish), since one of Christopher's fish was larger than all of Dunlap's fish put together, the impartial rule committee declared a tie...and Muddy Sneakers welcomed a donation of over \$700!

-Aleen Steinberg, Muddy Sneakers board member and Cedar Mountain resident



Annual Event provides Inspiration and Community Support!



In October, several Muddy Sneakers board members and Cedar Mountain community residents hosted the 4th annual Charleston Dinner fundraiser. The event is intended to raise money and community support to further the Muddy Sneakers mission. The keynote speakers at this year's event were Dr. Gordon Grant, principal of Hall Fletcher Elementary School in Asheville, and former Muddy Sneakers alum, Jesse Rubalcava, now in 7th grade. Both spoke on how Muddy Sneakers translates across disciplines and serves as a critical 'pattern interrupt' for today's public school students. Dr. Grant emphasized how Muddy Sneakers clearly reinforces the seven key attributes of long-term student success, as described in Paul Tough's book, *How Children Succeed: Curiosity, Gratitude, Grit, Optimism, Self Control, Social Intelligence, and Zest*. Dr. Grant also provided insight into why researchers believe experiential programs like Muddy Sneakers will be a key component in the reevaluation of how best to address the needs and development of the 'whole' child.



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JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

Become A Community Sponsor

With ever-increasing school interest, Muddy Sneakers continues to develop a dedicated support base and we need your help! Annual membership funds will be directly applied towards sponsoring increased student participation. Please visit our website www.muddysneakers.org to learn how you can become a Community Sponsor.

Benefits of Sponsorship

- Providing the opportunity for children to connect with nature
- Creating the next generation of environmental stewards
- Access to sponsor hikes lead by Muddy Sneakers naturalists
- Sponsor-only enrollment discount in Camp Muddy Sneakers
- Periodic newsletter/e-newsletter *Pathways*
- Invitations to Muddy Sneakers events



Pathways

notes from the field

FALL/WINTER 2013



MUDDY SNEAKERS EXPANDS ITS REACH THROUGH CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS

It has always been a priority of Muddy Sneakers to keep students in close proximity to their school campus, not only to spend more time learning and less time travelling but also to make sure that they are being introduced to the natural areas that surround their community. While Transylvania County is blessed with significant public lands in close proximity to all of its elementary schools, we have realized through expansion that public land resources will not always be as convenient. As a solution, we have developed a relationship with the land conservation community to explore bringing an educational component to their work while opening up privately protected lands for learning expeditions.



Muddy Sneakers first partnered with Henderson County's Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (CMLC) to utilize their fee and easement lands in Hickory Nut Gorge. CMLC has since provided financial support through grant awards directed towards participating

Henderson County schools. This season we hope to access other CMLC easement properties for our two newest schools, Hillendale and Mills River Elementary. With a growing need for additional expedition sites in Buncombe County, we have recently established another conservation partnership with Asheville-based Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) and we are excited to begin utilizing some of their properties as early as spring 2014.

it to our students to prioritize those properties that have no chance of being developed or degraded in a way that could potentially disturb the memory of their experience.



We relish the opportunity to share with students the concept of private citizens forever protecting land for its ecological values as well as its benefit to future generations. Last season, we decided to further express this commitment by setting a policy that we would no longer use private lands for learning expeditions that were not permanently protected. We believe our program has the potential to provide a powerful experience and that we owe

We urge Muddy Sneakers supporters to learn more about their local conservation organizations and we hope conservation supporters will equally recognize the importance of Muddy Sneakers' efforts to cultivate a generation of 'conservationists' where experts predict one does not exist. Through this partnership, we seek to ensure our future citizens understand, value and support protection of their community's natural resources.

