

A Voice from the Field

One early morning, the Muddy Sneakers instruction team met to carpool in the pre-sunrise darkness, groggy and thankful for the long van ride before meeting the kids at Lake James State Park. We each carried field materials in one hand and sleepily gripped coffee mugs in the other. Polite conversation blossomed as the caffeine took effect. Experienced instructors offered suggestions and insights about the upcoming Forces and Motion curriculum topic, one of our trickier classes for new instructors, as we slowly traveled eastbound on Interstate 40.

The conversation lulled, and the comfortable silence was suddenly filled with a collective synchronized breath. As we looked east from the crest of the mountains, the hills of the Piedmont dropped below us and the sun burst forth. Glorious colors of red, orange, yellow, and pink painted the sky and clouds dappled the landscape to accentuate the beauty of the air. As if not being able to contain herself, one of the instructors said what we were all thinking: “Whoa.”

At once, I felt immense gratitude for the people around me who shared an appreciation for the natural world and then chuckled at the fact that a sunrise had simultaneously taken the breath away from five environmental educators. The moment passed and without saying a word, there was a collective understanding that what we had just experienced -- a connection with those around us and a sheer awe for the natural world— is at the heart of the Muddy Sneakers experience.

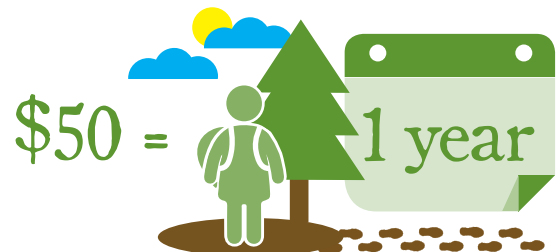
As Muddy Sneakers expands into the Piedmont, we look to our donors, sponsors, and friends to support our efforts to reach students across the state. It is a new day for science education in the state of North Carolina and we need your support now more than ever to ensure the sunrises we see from our peak here in Western North Carolina will flourish into impactful field experiences for deserving students.

Respectfully,



Ruby Compton
WNC Program Director
Previous Muddy Sneakers Instructor

P. S. Thanks to the generosity of a few thoughtful donors, your gift will have twice the impact if made prior to December 31, 2016. Please give today and help us take advantage of this matching gift opportunity! \$50 supports “the joy of learning outside” for one student for one year.



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