

PRESS RELEASE

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Putnam Valley Teacher Receives National Geographic Grant for Taconic Outdoor Program

Students at Putnam Valley Elementary School will be able to take a tailor-made approach to geography education, thanks to a \$4,664 grant from the National Geographic Society Education Foundation.

Ralph Smith and the PVES Fourth Grade Team won a Teacher Grant offered by the National Geographic Society Education Foundation to assist local educators across the US in teaching geography to school children. This marks the 9th year that the Foundation has made such grants directly to teachers and Mr. Smith's project was selected from an increasingly competitive pool of applicants nationwide.

Students in fourth grade classes at PVES participated in a variety of exercises designed to teach them more about the world around them and help them learn the core skills of geography.

Mrs. Beyrer's and Mrs. Pryor's 4th grade classes took a three-day overnight field trip on June 2nd, 3rd and 4th at the Taconic Outdoor Education Center. Some of the activities that the classes participated in included aquatic ecology, map reading, canoeing and a challenge course.

The challenge course presented students with situations that required them to work as a group to accomplish their goal. "Students of all ability levels must communicate and work together for the good of the group" said Mr. Smith, who designed the trip schedule. "These skills are necessary to be fully productive in both the academic and work environments."

Parents of class members were also invited to visit one evening and enjoy a nature show

featuring reptiles, which included lizards, turtles, an alligator, a rattlesnake and a thirteen-foot python. The show received rave reviews from students and parents alike.

"Our young people cannot operate as world-class competitors until they are able to analyze environmental, economic and geopolitical challenges using a geographic perspective," says Gilbert M. Grosvenor, Chairman of the Board of the National Geographic Society. Classroom teachers like those at PVES are essential to making sure our children are geographically literate."

Photo attached: Ralph Smith & students in a canoe.

