

To my community,

Nadia Amirmokri

I want to thank the community for giving me the opportunity to go on my eighth grade trip to camp with Deer Hill Expeditions. It was an amazing experience I will always remember and look back on throughout my life. You have given me so many new memories I can and will cherish forever, some of which were very embarrassing, such as when my class and I first went on the river and I chose to go on a ducky, a two person kayak sort of boat, with Jimmy. We were doing actually pretty well in the beginning, which was pretty surprising to me, until I knew it was too good to be true when we lost sync, rhythm, and control and started doing 360 turns almost every two minutes. To make things worse, and more hilarious and fun to be apart of, there was a shallow part of the river and of course, we got stuck. Jimmy had to get out of the ducky, push us towards the deep end, run and jump back into the boat to get back and catch up to the group. To be honest, I think that was a great start to extravagant trip I was starting. Another memory I am grateful for that was on the river, even though I humiliated myself in front of the majority of the group, was when two paddleboats, fitting about nine people each, one including me, had a very intense war. Buckets of water thrown at each other, hostages kept on the opposite ship, and oars being stolen one way and flung outside of the boat, was just a little of the description of what was happening, and when it was my time to shine and actually attack on the enemy was when I could try to dump a whole bucket loaded with water on the opposite ship. I guess the boat started rocking and the bucket was a "little" on the heavy side, that was when I brought the bucket up and instead of it pouring on the opposite ship, I dunked myself with freezing cold water all over myself. The war ended up stalemate, but in the end everyone had a great time that will never be forgotten.

Learning how to make Navajo tacos was an amazing cultural experience also, not to mention they were very, very delicious. The last day on the trip was awesome, we got to reflect on everything we did at the Deer Hill lodge, and got to shower! (After seven days of using wet wipes as mini showers, it was very fulfilling, even if it was for a short while.)

Overall, the trip was so vivacious and so much more fun than I thought it would be, and I thought it would be super fun, meeting and creating great friendships with the camp leaders, such as one lady, Hattie, who braided my hair and it looked perfect, and when I cut my finger, she was right by my side making me feel better.

I am utterly thankful for all your support,
Nadia A.

Dear Waldorf School,

Andrew Bell

I had an amazing 8th grade trip thanks to y'all. My favorite moment was when I was on the river, it was an amazing experience and I'd love to do it again.

Hana Bermejo

The best experience on our 8th grade trip for me was when we were riding the rapids on the river. The rapids were a joy because the boat bouncing over the water felt like we were in the air — like floating in the clouds. It was an all natural, rubber-and-life-jackets rollercoaster that went and down and upside down! I would like to thank the wonderful Waldorf community for making that rollercoaster trip possible. Who knows, without you, it could have been a rollercoaster that just went up . . .

Jimmy Brown

The highlight of my trip was spending time with all my friends and getting to be in nature.

Maya Byrd

I'd like to thank the community for all that you've done to make this year's eighth grade trip possible. There were so many highlights during this trip, but one that stands out for me was the service portion. We went to Navajo Nation and helped our host family, Orlando and Arlene Pioche, weed and paint fences on their property. Not only was the work fun, but also it really helped the Pioche family because of the amount of work that had to be done. The best part was to see the smiles on the whole family's faces when we had finished all the work. It was an amazing feeling, knowing that we were the cause of those smiles. But it wasn't just our class that was to be thanked. Without your generous contributions to our eighth grade trip, it wouldn't have been possible to assist the Pioches with their everyday lives. Thank you so much for making this life-changing experience come true.

~ Maya Byrd ~

Caitlin Camastral

The highlight of the 8th grade trip was being out in nature and being away from unnecessary chaos, commotion and drama. Like I said in one of our Circles, my "snapshot moment" was sleeping under the stars with beautiful surroundings. I don't get to do that as often as I'd like, so doing that was a good and refreshing change.

Anne-Brigitte Castro

The highlight of the trip was the boat ride with Kevin and Navajo tacos and sharing a tent with Hattie.

Klara Doemer

One of the highlights was the flight back. Although the actual flying part was slightly boring, having the whole experience with my friends was fun. It was, as I had predicted, kind of loud. I almost felt bad for the other passengers. Everyone was talking over each other, getting louder and louder, and having big arguments over card games. Mrs. Whiteley didn't stand a chance. Lots of us bonded together over the course of this past week, and many "found themselves in the middle of nowhere," as the Deer Hill motto promised. Not even when our parents picked us up from the airport did we begin to get tired of each other's presence. It was an experience that will stay with me forever, reminding me of our eight years together as the Class of 2018. Thank you all for making these memories possible!

Sean Don

My favorite part of the trip was the sweat lodge. I want to thank the community for supporting us.

— Sean

Simon Feldman

My highlight of the 8th grade trip was going down the river in a ducky, alone, and lying back to look up at the sky where there was peace.

My Class Trip Highlight

Elise Frisby

This trip was absolutely amazing. We had so many exciting and challenging adventures and it was a time for me to just be with my classmates and enjoy the remaining time I have left with them. My favorite part of the trip was called Circle. In the evenings, after our adventure of the day, we would sit in a circle, and talk about something. The leaders would ask us a question, and everyone would participate. I loved Circle— it was so interesting to hear my classmates' thoughts and everyone was able to open up, which just showed how much we trusted each other. I can think of one particular Circle, where we sat on top of a big mesa and watched the river and the red mountains around us while we talked. It was such an amazing moment, and I'll never forget it. Thank you so much for making this trip possible.

Dear Community,

Ethan Frostig

I want to thank all of you guys for making the Eighth Grade Trip as much fun as possible. You put in a lot of hard work and financial determination for the time of my Waldorf life (so far). It was really a great effort that many others and I put into making this possible. This trip was a great experience. I was a little skeptical about all of this trip at first, like being away from my parents for eight

days, or being physically injured, internal and external. I also in the beginning couldn't grasp the fact that I was going to be with this class of 26 (now 27) for 191 hours, because someday my classmates make me want to rip out my hair from them being annoying. But that didn't happen. A lot of fun happened, that's what. I first heard about this trip in November 2012 from the previous Eighth Grade going on the same trip, and I thought it sounded like a lot of fun and I wanted to meet the Navajos. One year and a half later, I am back from the trip. I have a great experience to talk about. Starting with the train was pretty fun. Going to the observation deck with tables and talking with Mr. Byrd, reading a fun book, and hearing the woman get mad at us for being too loud. I slept badly (2 hours) and got to the Gallup, NM train station to meet our Deer Hill staff. The class drove in two white vans and we enjoyed the beautiful desert scenery. We got to a campground near Bluff, Utah and rafted forty miles or something down the river, sleeping and taking hikes in between. Next, the class goes to the Navajo Nation near Fruitland, NM through a van. I go with Nate, one of the staff guides and we have a fun time. We got to meet the Pioche family and we learned about their culture, which is very interesting. I talked with them and then we did service projects. The class cut down trees and bushes for a new construction thing and painted a water tank and a fence, grey and green respectively.

I just want to thank the community for letting us go on this amazing Eighth Grade Trip. It was a blast!

Sincerely, Ethan

Lori Ghazarian

The highlight of my trip was when Eva, Nate and I were the only ones on the gear boat and we were just hanging out, talking, eating Pringles, taking pictures, and being thrown and carried out of the San Juan River. It was so much fun and I wish I could relive it.

Alexander Hendricks

I had a life-changing trip experience that trip. It taught me to persevere through anything, while immersing myself in a new culture. My favorite part of the trip was floating down the San Juan; it was awesome! I'd like to thank WSOC, my parents and friends for giving me such a great education and experience the past eight years.

Eva Illes

Our eighth grade trip was absolutely incredible and I am so thankful that you as a community helped and supported us so much to allow our class to go on this life-changing trip. One moment that will really stick with me forever is when I was on a big rafting boat one day, floating down the San Juan River while the sun was shining on me. In the boat with me were Nathan, one of the guides, and Lori. The three of us were just sitting in the boat taking pictures of all of our

surroundings and each other, and we were laughing the whole time. I felt so in the moment and just so happy. I will truly never forget that day and that amazing memory and it is all thanks to you wonderful people.

Chace Jacques

My highlight of highlights of the trip was all the time I got to spend with all the great people in my 8th grade class.

Chace

Estelle Kistner

One of the many highlights from my 8th grade trip was getting to sleep under the stars after a long and fun day of river rafting. Laying in my sleeping bag I could watch all the thousands of bright stars against the dark night sky. Around me I could see the big and tall mountains, they surrounded me like walls. The setting was very peaceful and calm and the only noise I could hear was the noise from the crickets and the faint noise from the river. Here I could let go of my busy life in California and just rest. Sometimes looking up at the sky I could even see a falling star, it was very special. Without the Waldorf community I would probably not have experienced this on my 8th grade trip.

Thank you! — Estelle

8th Grade Field Trip

Nalani Knauss

After each day river rafting, we would set up camp. The first night I decided to sleep in a tent while others slept outside. I was just so tired. I lay down in my cozy sleeping bag. I promised myself the next night I would sleep outside. I woke up to the crisp morning air. I looked up to see the blue sky dotted with fluffy clouds scattered all about. The tent had collapsed. All of our sleeping bags were damp and wet and yet we had spent a night outside. I think I had woken up in the middle of the night and noticed the starry sky. The stars were much more pronounced and defined. I could see the big dipper very clearly. There were many different clusters, and the whole sky was speckled with tiny lights. It was as if I were in a different world. One time we played a game where we tried to spot different animal shapes in the sky, just like the game you would play with clouds except this was even more fascinating. You don't get to see a star brim-filled sky every night.

Isabel Linhares

For me, our 8th grade trip was the highlight of the year. We went to four different states: Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Colorado. Our first four days were spent on the San Juan River in Utah, where we camped and hiked and held extreme water fights. The two days that followed were service days, spent at a

Navajo reservation in New Mexico. We did various service projects, concluding in a potluck on the eve of my birthday.

The next night we spent at the Deer Hill Base camp. The food there was incredible, as it was the rest of the trip. We swam in the pond and slept in cabins, enjoying the breathtaking Colorado scenery. The next morning we flew home, from Durango to Phoenix to John Wayne airport. It felt good to be home but I wish the trip could have lasted longer.

This amazing week has completely changed my life. The towering red rocks of Utah had a rather humbling effect on me, and I feel more confident in myself. It no longer matters what others think of me; the only person I have to impress is myself.

I would like to thank the WSOC community for this opportunity. I have never felt more grateful to be a Waldorf 8th grader than I do now, and I feel like I can leave to high school and be proud to say, "I belong to the WSOC class of 2018."

Zora McPhail

When I went on my trip I made thousands of memories, all of which I will treasure in my heart, but there is only one that changed my life forever. It all started when I met Nate, one of the staff at Deer Hill. Unlike the three other staff members Nate was definitely the craziest adult I have ever met. At the end of the trip Nate said that his goal was to make everyone laugh at least once a day, and he definitely lived up to his goal making me laugh every day. Nate taught me to not thrive so heavily on what others think and that it's what you make of the situation that creates your experience. An example of his craziness was when we were driving to the Deer Hill base camp and he turned on a song called "Push It," by Salt and Pepper. At one point during the song he stopped in the middle of the road and started dancing in the van. I really enjoyed meeting and getting to know Nate and hope he knows how grateful I am to him because he made me a more positive person. Today I look at the world with a greater perspective and more peace and tranquility. I also am inspired to go on Deer Hill's 21-day trip to Costa Rica and maybe one day I might join the staff.

Alexa Parisi

After a long first day on the river, we settled down on an "island" and pitched our tents. The purpose of these tents was simply to give basic shelter and a storage place for our bags. The set-up process included placing a pole in the center and pulling the tent taught with stakes in the ground. Realistically this was a three-person tent. But, being teenagers who constantly push the boundaries, we claimed six people would fit inside. 6am the next morning I awoke to dew on my face and bugs on my pillow. Someone in our tent had knocked the pole over in the middle of the night, and by the morning all six of us were basically suffocating under a dead piece of nylon.

I'm not sure if this was mere coincidence, but through all of the discomfort of trying something new by force, I realized how much I loved the outdoors. From that night on I slept outside the tent every night I could, and I cannot emphasize how grateful I am for the beauty of the stars and the night sky I saw on this trip.

xoxo,
alexa

Catherine Reynolds

As we beached, the patched rubber bottoms of our boats grated softly against the red, pebble-strewn bottom. Our minds flitted back to the ride we had just experienced. From behind us we could hear the rapids crashing and whispering together, their cascades of foam, sliding over the rocks, to be dashed together into a frothy soup. As we headed off in our separate directions, some to make lunch, while others lounged in the shade, a voice rang out. "All right! Who's ready to try it without the boats?"

- Catherine Reynolds

Emily Ryan

For me, the highlight of the trip was the service work. Our hosts were extremely nice and taught us so much. Working beside them gave me a glimpse into a whole other world, and for that I am extremely grateful. My favorite service project was burning down tumbleweeds. I've always had a fear of fire and therefore I was terrified of this activity. But Orlando (our wonderful host) helped me light a huge fire. It was therapeutic almost, and that moment, when I saw what I created, I realized I wasn't so afraid of fire — and for me that was my favorite moment of our 8th grade trip.

Dominic Tabone

During the 8th grade trip I enjoyed every part. It was great and I loved being with my friends and having fun with them. I want to thank everyone who helped our class make it happen.

- Dominic

Grace Tomblin Marca

At the end of each day, we would find a nice place by the river and gather in a circle. This was where we would close the day with a group discussion. Every evening there was a new topic. We passed a "power object" (something of nature we had found that day) around the circle and when someone had the power object they had the opportunity to say something on the topic. The topics

could range from "What was a unique moment in your life?" to "What super power might you have that reflects your personality?" On the birthdays (there were three), we would go around a second time and each share something special about that person. These circles were a place we could unwind and build our bond and trust as a class.

Thank you, :)

-Grace

Elena Turner

On our last evening on the Navajo reservation, we had a potluck with our hosts, the Pioches. They made and brought fry bread and beans, which were the best beans I've ever had in my whole life. We used the fry bread to make Navajo tacos, and then we sat down and ate with our new friends. I found an antler earlier that day, and I was told stories about what the Navajos used antlers for hundreds of years ago. I was able to take the antler home (which was from a mule deer, I found out), and every time I look or glance over at it, I am flooded with memories of our amazing week as a class together.

- Elena

Malachi Valenzuela-Mier

Thank you for making this trip possible for us!

So I'm not really a camper, I'm what people call an unhappy camper. We're on the river for three days. The first day I wasn't so sure about the whole river rafting idea. As soon as we got on the river and started moving, I really liked it; it was a fun new experience. But then came the camping at the end of the day and "Malachi doesn't do camping!" I set my sleeping bag down on the cold, hard ground and that night I slept under the stars. I saw my first shooting star and not too long after I fell asleep. Honestly I had a really good night's sleep. The next morning we got back on the river and that day the instructors said we would hit some rapids. One of the instructors brought a blow-up alligator and its name was Ali. Later that day on the river we played a game of pirates and the objective of this game is to get everyone else soaking wet with squirt guns and buckets while trying to steal Ali. Sadly, Ali popped that day. This trip was fun; there were obstacles to overcome but overall I am glad I took this trip.