

—Slug:.....COMM-0855.guil.winterfest
—Contributor.....Joslyn McIntyre
—Contributor email.....joslyn@outsideeyeconsulting.com
—For section..... News
—Format..... News feature
—Dateline..... Guilford
—Article Number:..... 43241



Notes from editor (not for publication):

This is the heartwarming story we all need this week. Thank you, Joslyn.
I know we talked vaguely about doing more for us. I would like that very much. Let's talk if you're still interested. —
Jeff



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Mush! Hoot!

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Guilford Central School's Winterfest revives traditions
3 and provides kids with a day of connection

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Growing up in Vermont means getting a formal
6 education in appreciating winter.

7 At 1 p.m. on Feb. 19, all 129 of Guilford Central School's
8 elementary students poured out of the school's back doors for the

9 first-ever GCS Winterfest. The sun was shining, the snow was
10 sparkling, and the kids were revved up.

11 Building on the success of the school’s inaugural Farm
12 and Field Day in the fall, Principal John Gagnon asked Farm-to-
13 School Coordinator Sarah Rosow to organize the event.

14 Rosow brought the event to life by enlisting parent
15 volunteers, calling on local expertise, and exploring traditional
16 winter activities through the ages.

17 “Time spent outdoors is so valuable for everyone, and
18 many kids don’t spend as much time outside as they used to in
19 decades and centuries past — particularly in winter,” she says.
20 “It’s so easy to curl up on the couch and play video games, but I
21 love showing children the joy and wonder of the outdoors.”

22 Students were organized into mixed-age groups to visit
23 three stations.

24 At the first station, they met Marla Brodsky and her
25 friendly team of Alaskan Huskies from Hilltown Sleddogs of West
26 Chesterfield, Massachusetts.

27 After the students had an opportunity to pet and snuggle
28 with the friendly dogs, Brodsky regaled them with stories of her
29 years racing her pack throughout New England, the Midwest, and
30 Canada, where the activity dates back centuries, if not millennia.
31 The first evidence of “mushers” driving sled dogs was circa 9,000
32 years ago, in a cold Siberia.

33 Meanwhile, on the soccer field: On one side of the
34 “Snow Fun” station, parent volunteers patiently strapped
35 snowshoes on children’s feet while GCS alum Liam Salisbury
36 ventured into the woods guiding small groups on short snowshoe
37 expeditions (and accruing community service hours at
38 Brattleboro Union High School in the process).

39 Many students had never snowshoed before, and they
40 were at first confused and then delighted to learn that the
41 Abenaki people used ash-frame snowshoes with rawhide laces to
42 travel, hunt, and survive in Vermont’s deep snow.

43 In the middle of the field, children built snow people,
44 snow animals, and snow forts. And on the far side of the field
45 were the Snow Olympics, dominated by a rowdy tug of war
46 where kids pulled with all their might and ultimately triumphed
47 over the grownups.

48 In the tradition of the athletic competitions in ancient
49 Greece 3,000 years ago, groups of kids rotated from the tug-of-
50 war into a snowman-building relay race and a competition to see
51 who could craft the biggest snowball.

52 In the close-by woods, students calmly gathered around
53 a campfire, sipping on hot cocoa as they listened intently to
54 wildlife stories from Anna Caputo, education coordinator of the
55 Vermont Museum of Natural History in Marlboro.

56 Caputo's two assistants — a barred owl and a screech
57 owl — came into human care for rehabilitation after injuries and
58 are now part of the museum's educational staff. Owls have lived
59 in Vermont for thousands of years and, as an animal order, have
60 survived plenty of cold winters thanks to their insulating feathers
61 and their predilection for capturing dense energy sources like
62 small rodents and birds.

63 Lyla, a second grader, described this particular Thursday
64 as the "best day of her life."

65 For students, staff, and presenters, Winterfest provided a
66 unique and joyful experience, a break from traditional classroom
67 learning and an opportunity to connect with students from other
68 grades.

69 It was also a chance to enjoy the Vermont winter in the
70 ways people have for many, many years.

71 "The smiles on the kids' rosy-cheeked faces on Thursday
72 afternoon were so heartwarming," Rosow said. "Many of these
73 kids had never snowshoed before, or seen an owl up close or had
74 a chance to pet a sled dog. I loved seeing older kids helping
75 younger kids when they fell while snowshoeing and hearing them
76 cheer on their peers in the tug of war.

77 "This wasn't just a fun day," she added. "It was a day of
78 connection, learning, trying new things, and exuberantly
79 appreciating and celebrating our roots."

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

80 ####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

81 ####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

82 ####BEGIN LINKS####

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

83 ####BEGIN VIDEO####

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

84 ####BEGIN LOGLINE####

####END LOGLINE####