



VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL

SCHOLARSHIP. COMMUNITY. GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCES

FALL 2020

We are excited to share a sampling of our Fall Encounter Experiences continuing the tradition of learning outside of the classroom. Vermont Common School's curriculum utilizes collaborative, hands-on, and field-based teaching methodologies to develop and inspire intellectualism, practical skills, and pure grit.

ROAD BIKING:

You, your bicycle, and the open road. Fall, crisp weather. Riding through the changing and falling leaves. Stretching your endurance a bit. But also taking time for socializing, reflecting, rekindling old friendships, and making new ones. This Encounter Experience consists of weekly bicycle rides through the back roads of Chittenden and nearby counties, and possibly our big city. Averaging 30-35 miles of riding each week, participants will need a road bicycle and bicycle helmet.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

Your friend borrowed your phone without asking and cracked the screen. Your bike was stolen off the porch. You accidentally rear-ended a car in the grocery store parking lot. You told some friends that your other friend's new haircut looked terrible, and it got back to them. How do you react when you've been hurt? What about when you're the one who has done the harm? How do societies deal with transgressions of social norms and expectations? What do we really need when we've been hurt and what do we owe to those we have hurt? How can we, as individuals, members of the VCS community, and members of larger global communities reframe and reform existing systems of justice? This Encounter Experience will be a hands-on and active dive into conflict resolution and restorative justice. We'll ask big questions, practice new skills through simulations and self-reflection, and we might even start to plan ways to apply what we've learned to the systems of discipline and justice at Vermont Commons. We'll meet outside at Oakledge Park - our days will consist of simulations, discussions, and breaks for outside fun! Open to 7th- to 12th-graders.

AUTUMN WRITING:

To those seeking a thoughtful, nuanced way to engage with this most famous changing of the seasons, consider the Autumn Writing Encounter Experience. We'll jaunt through some local



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green spaces, picnic outside, share some of our favorite stories and poetry, and practice the art of writing under the shifting colors of fall in Vermont. No grammar expertise required -- this week is all about plying the craft of writing in ways that engage you. Whether your thing is stream-of-consciousness, mapping out grand epics, honing sonnets, sharing scary stories with friends, writing plays, or just journaling for yourself, this Experience is for you. Students will participate in various exercises to shake out the Covid-cobwebs, and will have opportunities to share their own creative work in a constructive, encouraging environment.

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY SCULPTURE MAKING IN THE WOODS:

Come! Gallivant in the woods and make art with what we find there. On the first day, we will study the art of Andy Goldsworthy and other sources of inspiration. We will watch clips of films before meeting. Then we will sketch designs for what we'd like to build and model our ideas with clay. On the second and third days, we will enter the woods to gather materials and create individual sculptures. Rain or shine. After practicing giving feedback to each other, we'll plan next steps in our journals. Games may happen. On the final day, we will collaborate (distanced) to create a group design. We hope to photograph and film the process, but we will also learn the beauty of temporary art that might be blown away by wind or washed away in the rain.

FILMMAKING:

Let's make epic movies! This Encounter Experience will meet in Burlington each Wednesday to use the city as our studio. Student filmmaking crews will create, script, shoot and edit short films that tell wild and crazy stories. This is how every filmmaker from Stephen Spielberg to Quentin Tarantino got their start. No filmmaking experience required - all abilities welcome!

MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE:

Understanding changing ecologies absolutely depends on a set of baseline data. We will be building that dataset. Using GPS, GIS, historical documents, and other mapping tools and techniques, we will begin the multiyear process of describing the biodiversity and geophysical properties of an important piece of land. There is a possible collaboration with a University of Vermont Science grant that may come to fruition around this project. We will be outside, on foot, in all weather.

SONGWRITING:

On this EX adventure, we will help you explore and create songs of all types. We will look at your favorite artists and examine the elements of their work; we will write our own lyrics and put those lyrics to music. Guest performers will help us think about composition and style. We will also enjoy relaxing with one another while sharing music. Musical ability is welcome, but is not



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necessary; you only need a desire to join the world of musical composition to enjoy this EX adventure.

MOUNTAIN BIKING:

Are you a mountain biking enthusiast hoping to bomb down some rocky and rooty trails? Or, are you comfortable on a bike, and just hoping to cruise down some dirt trails, enjoying the scenery as you go? Either way, this course is for you! We'll be honing our skills and exploring beautiful VT trails. We do plan to split into a couple of trail groups based on experience and comfort level, so we can accommodate all of our bikers! We'll also be taking a deep dive into mountain biking culture, discussing how to be a responsible, inclusive member of the mountain biking community, and how mountain biking fits into the world. In the spirit of being active community members, we plan to do some trail work as well. We hope to see you on the trail!

CENTRAL VERMONT ADVENTURES:

Whether you enjoy scenic mountain views or flowing waterfalls, Central Vermont has some of the most picturesque landscapes and greatest opportunities for adventure! Join us each day, as we embark on a variety of hiking trails throughout our beautiful mountains. We will also see where our journeys take us, as we hope to explore some water holes for swimming and possibly even take on kayaking and canoeing.

INDEPENDENT DESIGN-YOUR-OWN EXPERIENCE:

This option is for students who are excited and ready to propose a self-designed plan for experiential education on Wednesdays. A supervising teacher will vet proposals and check in with students individually and as a group online throughout the weeks. Each participant will also create a product and present to other students at the end of the Experience.