

Kid's KOrner

Kids Explore The Deeps On Maryland Farm

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NEW WINDSOR, Md. — The wagons pulled into the gravel lane and came to a rest under the trees and around the barn.

"Here they come," I called to my husband.

No, we weren't under Indian attack, and the wagons were not the Conestoga variety.

As the doors to the station wagon and vans were opened, out came two dozen visitors from the Montessori School of Westminster, Maryland. We greeted the young visitors in the yard in front of the house where three-year-old

Rachael Schuster's great-grandparents had lived. "Welcome to The Deeps, our home, where your classmate, Rachael, is fourth generation to live on the family farm."

The three-, four- and five-year-old students came to our farm in New Windsor, Maryland, to take a nature hike through the trees and meadows.

A few precautionary statements were in order before we set out on the trail. "Never touch a wild animal, look out for fences, stay with your buddy, and don't cut your foot!" That's what my father used to tell me when I was a little girl,



The children perched on a tree that had been uprooted in a storm many years ago. From left, top row: Laura Benigni, Cheri Isles (teacher), Ashley Zombro, Aaron Wingert, Rob Augustine, Danny Sullivan, Grace Donaldson, Eille Camlin, Krista Webb, Samantha Drogue, Jason Nelson, Rachael Schuster, Susan Aldridge, Matthew Seldler, Ashley Walker, Sara Fan, Shiloh Frye, Hilary Barkin, Laura Augustine. Bottom row: Linda Felker (aide), Ann Webb, Katherine Barkin, Linda Donaldson, Sharon Nelson, and Chuck Schuster.



Four-year-old Ashley Zombro found a good seat in the grapevine.

hiking along the very same trails, when I accidentally stepped in cow dung.

We pointed out the date on the side of the huge red barn — 1868. "That is the home for our cows," we explained. "They come here to eat and sleep and to spend the winter."

Our first stop was at the pond, about a half-acre in size, and home to thousands of fish. As one small fry examined another, I told them the kinds of fish that inhabit our swimming hole.

"We stocked the pond with Blue Gill, Crappie, Large Mouth Bass, Silver Channel Catfish and Goldfish." Each pair of kids took a turn coming onto the dock to throw pieces of bread to the fish.

"They're really hungry," they exclaimed, as our little Blue Gills splashed them.

"I liked feeding the fish," said Hilary Barkin.

Laura Benigni shared her classmate's opinion, "I like water."

"Look, they eat out of her hand," said the kids with amazement,



The kids tried out Mother's Nature's balanced beams — fallen logs in the woods.

as I held a piece of bread close to the water's surface, and fish jumped to get a bite. "When Rachael and I dangle our feet in the pond, the fish nibble at our toes," I added.

After feeding the fish, we picked up the cowpath and headed out on our nature hike. It wasn't long before Mother Nature was putting on a show for us.

"The best part of nature hikes are the unexpected surprises, such as the flock of goldfinches," said Linda Felker.

Mrs. Felker, classroom aide, accompanied the students on the trip, along with parents, Katherine

Barkin, Linda Donaldson, and Ann Webb. The brightly colored finches covered a huge tree and were a colorful spectacle when our walking made them take to the wing.

We meandered along the creek and ventured nearer to the edge for a closer look. The aroma of fresh mint filled the air as we crushed the leaves under our feet. "Mint grows all along the water's edge. Rachael and I like to pick the leaves and dry them so that we can use them in our tea in the winter-time," I commented.



Chuck Schuster (on tractor) took the young visitors for a wagon ride around the farm.