

## Horizons Kids take on a CMC Youth Partner Challenge

On Wednesday, July 10th, I watched as three busloads of kids pulled into Hooker Falls parking lot at DuPont. CMC member Bev McDowell was driving one of the buses. Twenty-eight kids, six volunteer teens, and five teachers all piled out of the buses in three organized groups.

Earlier in the year, Bev asked me if I would lead a hike for Horizons kids. "Sure", I thought, not knowing anything about Horizons, but I love the idea of CMC getting kids on the trail.

First stop was to the brand new bathroom facilities at the parking area. After a short activity to teach what to bring in a daypack, (and what NOT to bring) we started towards Triple Falls. For many of these kids, it was their first time out in the woods. They marveled at the river, the smells, and of course the falls. After a snack at the shelter, we headed up to High Falls shelter for lunch. After learning a song about the earth's water, we headed back down to the parking lot and a splash in the water.



I learned that Carolina Day School, where Bev works, offered its school building to host the new Horizons Program during the summer beginning with fifteen rising first graders last year. The same fifteen children, now rising second graders arrived this year along with a new group of first graders. Each participant will return every summer through 9th grade. Horizons, a nonprofit funded by donations, offers six weeks of academic work, music, art, swim lessons and great field trips like this one at Dupont. CDS also offers the use of their busses aiding the transportation of participants to and from field trips.

It is a gift to see the children's joy of being outdoors, to see them feel proud of themselves when they have accomplished a two to three mile hike, and to see youth volunteering and sharing their time to help guide these children on new adventures. I have to agree with Bev's statement, "It's some of the most demanding & yet most rewarding work I've ever done."

Horizon's Mission Statement:

*Changing the life trajectory of low-income students by instilling in them the joy of learning, the skills for success, and the inspiration to realize their dreams.*

What better way to build success and inspiration than to learn while outdoors? I am proud that CMC is encouraging more young people to get out on the trail.

If you would like to be involved in CMC's Youth Partner Challenge and want to learn more, check out our website under Challenge or contact Jan Onan.

CMC Education Committee

