The Outdoor Education Program can be one of the most beneficial and memorable experiences in your child’s school career. The Trailblazers (Mrs. Piecuch) will be attending from April 23rd - April 25th at Skycroft in Middletown, Md. The Pathfinders (Mrs. Wallace) will be attending from April 25th - April 27th at the same facility. It is a three day, two night program.

The staff for the camp will include teachers from your child’s team, four additional teachers from Briggs Chaney, the MCPS outdoor education specialist assigned to Skycroft, several student counselors from Springbrook, Paint Branch or Blake High School, and an administrator. Teachers and high school counselors will be assigned to each cabin area. The male and female cabins are separate facilities.

The role of the high school student counselors is to provide assistance to the teachers during the instructional program, and to help supervise students during cabin time, at meals, and during structured recreation time. In addition, the high school counselor will refer all discipline concerns to the teacher in charge of the group or cabin. A Briggs Chaney staff member will meet with the high school counselors on a daily basis.

There is a nurse on duty at the site during the day (from approximately 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.). Briggs Chaney staff members take care of any health concerns or issues during the evening, consulting with the health technician and with parents when necessary.

Your child may appreciate receiving a note from home while at camp. If you would like to write, please mail the letter a few days before your child leaves for Skycroft so it arrives before your child returns home. The address is:

Briggs Chaney Middle School
c/o Skycroft Conference Center
9621 Frostown Rd
Middletown, Maryland 21769

In case of an emergency, the phone number for Skycroft is 1 800 536-6759. Please, only call in case of an emergency. Students are not permitted to have cell phones. Your child will be very busy at outdoor education and will rarely be near a phone. If your child reacts like many 6th graders, he/she may be embarrassed to receive a non-emergency phone call.

To give you a more specific idea of why we expect this week to be so profitable, here is a brief listing of some of the things your child will be studying:

* map orientation and usage
* wildlife studies
* aquatic / watershed studies
* simulation activities
* ecological activities
* local history activities
* forestry activities
* nature poetry
We will make every attempt to allow each child to experience all of the course offerings, but this may not be possible because of the limited number of instructional periods available during this three-day time period. Evenings will be devoted to craft, musical, campfire, and game activities. There will also be a chance to study the stars if the weather permits.

We feel that these activities can be a vehicle to achieve all or part of the following objectives:

a. To cultivate students’ awareness, knowledge, appreciation and concern for the natural environment.

b. To motivate students to develop positive attitudes toward learning through varied experiences in the natural environment.

c. To provide students with many direct experiences in using scientific processes, such as observing, measuring, classifying, hypothesizing, and predicting.

d. To make the students’ school program more meaningful by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to real-life situations beyond the classroom.

e. To help the students learn to live democratically and responsibly for the welfare of the total group.

f. To improve human relations among students and between children and adults.

g. To promote students’ physical fitness and wellness.

h. To instill a sense of responsibility to the environment and promote positive actions toward it.

Group living in the cabins, the dining hall, and elsewhere adds to the valuable experience of living, playing, learning, and working together. Working together to care for the camp is also important.

Your child’s clothing and possessions should be confined to one piece of luggage, which he or she can carry. Each child will have his/her own bed but should bring blankets, bedroll, or a sleeping bag, which can be in addition to the suitcase. All possessions should be clearly identified/labeled with a sturdy nametag. It is not necessary to purchase new clothing. In fact, old, comfortable clothing is more appropriate for most outdoor activities. Clothing should be adequate for a large variation in temperatures as April can range from 40 degrees to 65 degrees. Rain gear of some type is a must.

The cost of this program is $80 per child. Four dollars of this amount will go towards craft supplies and extra activities not covered in the $76.00. A check for this amount, made out to Briggs Chaney Middle School, should be sent to the school at this time. If this fee imposes a financial hardship on any family, please send a confidential note to either your child’s administrator (Ms. Ard-Gales-Pathfinders; Mr. Jackson-Trailblazers) or team leader (Mrs. Wallace-Pathfinders; Mrs. Piecuch-Trailblazers). No child should be deprived of this valuable learning experience for financial reasons.

We are planning to leave school as soon as the buses arrive and are loaded on the day of departure. When arriving at school, students should leave their luggage under the covered overhang in the front of the school and proceed to their first period class. Luggage will be transported to the outdoor education center on a separate bus. Students will leave their bus one to three miles from the center and hike in. They should wear shoes that are sturdy and
comfortable. They should dress for weather conditions that morning. It’s better to have an extra layer of clothing than not enough in cool weather.

The first meal served will be dinner on the day of arrival. Therefore, it will be necessary for all students to bring a bag lunch with them on the day they leave. Names should be written on the bag as lunches will be boxed and transported on the luggage bus. A beverage will be provided for this meal, but make sure your child has a bag lunch for the first day. The last meal will be lunch on Wednesday for the Traillblazers and on Friday for the Pathfinders. We expect to arrive back at school at about 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday for the Traillblazers and on Friday for the Pathfinders. The students are expected to leave upon their arrival and you need to pick them up at this time. You may need to arrange carpools in advance so your child has a ride home on arrival. It is critical that your child be picked up at this time because there will be no one to supervise them.

The attached permission form, with a check made out to the school should be filled out and returned no later than March 24th. In addition to the above information, please read over the attached list of things your child should or should not bring to camp.

If you have any questions about the outdoor education program, please call either Mrs. Wallace(Pathfinders) or Mrs. Piecuch(Trailblazers) @ 989-6000.

PLEASE RETURN THE PERMISSION FORM, MEDICAL FORMS (IF NEEDED), AND MONEY ($ 80) TO THE DESIGNATED PERSON ON THE TRAILBLAZERS AND PATHFINDERS TEAMS BY March 24th.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Wallace, Pathfinders  Deborah Piecuch, Trailblazers