

Hello, My name is Judy Dow I live in Essex. I've been teaching for over thirty years in local, national and international schools. For the last ten years I've included in my teachings the Lyman C. Hunt afterschool and summer program. This is the very school that I went to as a middle schooler. I chose to teach in this particular afterschool and summer programs so that I might give back some of what Burlington teachers once gave to me. This community has always had a revolving door filled with the newest immigrants. These are some of the very children that need to have expanded learning opportunities for many reasons, believe me, I know. I was once one of those children, I spoke a different language, I came from a large poor family, college was never mentioned in my family and I was expected to go directly to work as soon as I became eligible. But against the odds, I became the only one in my family to go to college. I want this opportunity to be there for the children attending school today.

I teach students how to read the land, and how to map out the story of the land from a Native American perspective; we do this by working and learning on the land, something that there is not always time for in the normal school day, but is however, a common way immigrants learn. Manned with GPS's, chrome books and lunch we walk through the forest, wetlands and beaches, marking the points that are critical to telling a story. It might be a story of history, science or math or all of them. We have bushwhacked our way through the forest of Indian Brook in Essex all the way to Colchester Pond. Using the plants as a guide and asking one question (What doesn't belong?) we were able to discovered and identify 10 cellar holes from 1857 to 1869 and one school. We created a digital map that the Division of Historical Preservation is now using to guide them through the Act 250 permit process for a new development in this area.

During another summer program we searched the streets of Burlington trying to find a practice that was sustainable. We thought we found one in the Intervale only to discover the field being used as a farm by the newest immigrants was deemed unsuitable for growing food for human consumption by the state of Vermont's Natural Resource division. The students were outraged. They turned their anger in the direction of education. Creating a power point, they addressed their findings to the entire school and the mayor of Burlington. They were asked by the mayor to share their findings at the Echo center as part of the district wide teacher in-service. To the surprise of the students their teachers gave them extra credit. This is the very school that 60% of the students receive free or reduced lunch and where 89 % of the students enrolled in the summer program tested in May and again in Sept. showed that 89% were at level or increased level- there was no summer slide for these kids.

These are just several examples that have impacted students to become involved in their community while continuing to learn. I appreciate you giving me the gift of your time to listen to these stories, and I would like to make one more request. Please make a financial commitment of 2.5 million dollars to support expanded learning opportunities for all kids in Vermont by allocating funds for the ELO special Fund for fiscal year 2017. Our children need it, our communities need it and our state needs it.

Thank you, Judy Dow