



### **Capitalizing on The Ecology School Experience**

Schools are often looking for ways to maximize the time they have at the Ecology School. While of course lots of great learning takes place on lesson and during meals, there is ample time during non-lesson times for classroom teachers to capitalize on the learning and help students make connections between what they are learning at The Ecology School and what they are learning back in the classroom. We have found that the best time to schedule activities like the ones below is during the 4-5:30 break, as it is the longest. This gives you time to do any activities and make sure students have some free time to reenergize or let out their crazy energy/shower etc. before dinner and their final lesson of the day. Below are some ideas for augmenting the student experience at The Ecology School.

### **Journaling or Quiet Reflection**

At school, students are introduced to a journal – in some cases perhaps even designing the cover to personalize it. Once at The Ecology School, students take time each day to reflect in their journal. The journal itself can take many different forms:

- Very open ended – simply asking students to take some time to reflect on each day
- Prompts related to the lessons are included and students are required to reflect on each lesson and what they have learned in each
- Prompts bring in other disciplines such as art, poetry or math. Perhaps there is a book students have been reading that they are asked to make connections to

*The Ecology School would be happy to share with you a sample journal. Please email Alex for a copy.*

### **Homeroom/Classroom or School Team Meetings**

This can take many different forms, depending on what best fits your classroom and student needs:

- Read a classroom book out loud
- Do more traditional team building type activities or group challenges
- A class project
- Group reflection on the experience/time to check in with students

### **Structured Group Activities**

Teachers/chaperones offer a variety of choices from a volleyball or basketball game to a beach walk to quiet time in the dorms. Student have to choose one of the given activities to be involved with for the specified time. A variation on this would be that groups are assigned and the group rotates each day to a different activity.

### **Quiet Reading**

Students are either asked to read a pleasure book or a book for a designated period of time. Amongst the other benefits of this choice, it provides some structured down time during a very busy day which can be very beneficial for students.

### **Letter Writing**

Students are asked to write letters to any number of people:

- Expository letters to students in the younger grade who will be attending The Ecology School in the future telling them what to expect
- A narrative letter to a teacher back at school about what they have learned
- A persuasive letter to a member of the school board about the importance of the trip
- A descriptive letter to a parent about their experiences – reclaiming the lost art of letter writing!

### **Class Project**

Students conduct research or gather ideas about an upcoming school project.