

HUNT CLUB FARM:

Offering Field Trips for Every Season!

By: Terri Butler, Educational Director & Randi Vogel, Owner of Hunt Club Farm

Do your students know where their food comes from? Have they ever touched a llama's soft fiber or held a baby chick? Have they ever seen honey bees at work in their hive or examined live bullfrog tadpoles? If not, maybe you should consider taking your students on a field trip to Hunt Club Farm.

Hunt Club Farm is a family owned metro-farm in Virginia Beach that has served Tidewater students for over 20 years. Hunt Club continually tries to update programs and make all of their educational field trips both fun and exciting for students, teachers and parents. The farm owes their success to their "seasoned staff," as many of their field trip guides have worked at the farm over 10 years and some even longer. The farm's four seasonal field trips, "Children's Garden" in the spring, "Petting Farm Saddle Up" for summer, "Pumpkin Patch and Harvest Hayride" for fall, and "Winter Wonderland" to end the year, showcase the ever changing life cycle of plants, animals and seasonal events in a safe farm environment.

SPRING: *Children's Garden*

From mid-March into early June, Hunt Club springs to life with an interactive Children's Gardening field trip. This one-hour staff guided program is packed with hands on learning that reinforces the plant and animal units for Kindergarten through 3rd grade students. Students discover how seeds travel, observe maple seeds



whirling through the air, learn what plants need to grow, locate the parts of the plant, dig in the rich soil of worm beds and even plant flower seeds. Visual and auditory skills are enhanced through the use of hand puppets and cocoons for the praying mantis, butterfly and lady bug "life cycle lessons." Giant insects help teach students insect body parts. An observation bee hive is a huge hit for teachers, students and parents; they learn about the bees, the importance of their various jobs while watching them dance around caring for the hive and making local honey. And of course, all of the flowers in the garden reinforce the true importance of bees to our food sources.

Next, students visit the bullfrog pond- where they observe tadpoles in all stages of development. It is not unusual to hear students say, "Wow- look at the legs on that tadpole!" The bullfrog pond gets the students involved and leaves a

lasting impression on everyone. Mrs. Spruill from Lindenwood Elementary raves, "Hunt Club Farm's Children's gardening program is my favorite field trip of the year. My students leave Hunt Club with a hands-on reinforcement of many of the topics we cover in the classroom. I feel this trip greatly improves their understanding of our plant and animal units." Field trip guides receive hundreds of letters per year from students, commenting on everything from the peacock's and baby goats to the bird nesting and weather stations. Hunt Club Farm's Children's Garden is jammed packed with fun learning experiences.

SUMMER: *Petting Farm Saddle Up!*

The learning continues in the summer months as Hunt Club offers "The Petting Farm Saddle Up." Students get up close and personal with farm animals with

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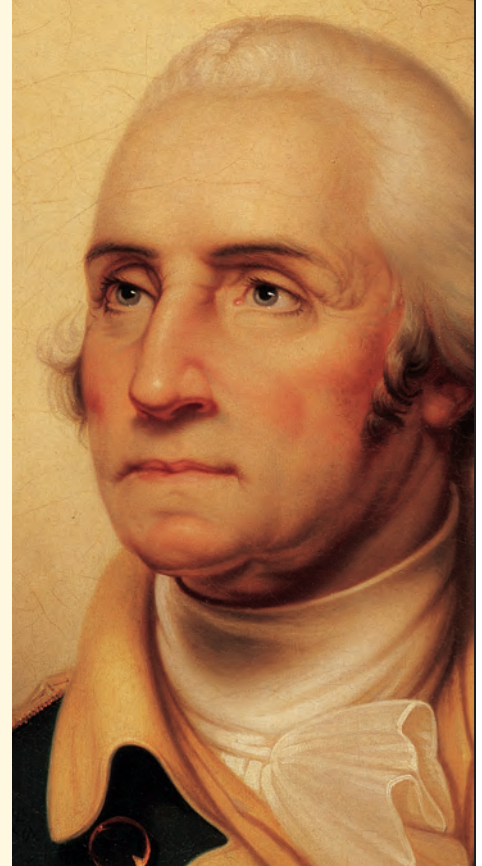
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activities such as brushing goats, going into the chicken coop and learning the life cycle of birds. The kids are amazed by the various egg sizes, colors and getting to actually hold a chicken. A preschooler from Mt. Hermon Elementary asked, "Why did the chicken cross the road?" One of the parents quickly replied, "To get to Hunt Club Farm of course!" which brought

laughter to all around! During their visit students get to meet all of the animal friends such as goats, sheep, ponies, llamas, pigs, donkeys, a cow and many species of birds. Finally, it's time to "Saddle Up!" The children get the opportunity to ride one of the very gentle ponies, creating a memory of a life time.



FALL: *Pumpkin Patch and Harvest Hayride*

Hunt Club's fall Pumpkin Patch and Harvest Hayride is their "foundation field trip" and has become a tradition for schools throughout Hampton Roads. Everyone loves the bumpy tractor pulled hayride that includes a fall harvest educational stop and choosing their very own pumpkin from the giant

pumpkin patch. However, this program also allows students to explore the petting farm, learn about the fall harvest and jump and play in a giant hay pile. Chelsea Moody, who visited the Pumpkin Patches as a child joined her young son Graeson on his first field trip to Hunt Club Farm last fall. She went out of her way to stop by the farm office and thanked them for providing such a memorable day! She said, "You all have really grown over the past 20 years, but I feel so welcome here - almost like a step back in time!"

WINTER: *Winter Wonderland*

As the weather cools, Hunt Club Farm turns into a magical Winter Wonderland. The newest of all of the farm's field trips includes a 5,000 square foot barn that takes students on a journey through a snowy world with over 100,000 lights and over 100 animated characters preparing for the holiday season. Explore the ice cave entrance, squirrels roasting marshmallows and even penguins ice skating. Imagination comes alive along the paths inside Winter Wonderland. Then it's off to the petting farm to visit the animals in their winter habitat and holiday decorations galore. Travel through the maze of lights and listen to a story about winter time. This winter experience on the farm has already become very popular for all grade levels.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about Hunt Club Farm's Field Trips, please visit our www.huntclubfarm.com or call us at 757-427-9520 to schedule your special day on the farm. **T**

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