

A Learning Adventure

Boulder-based company uses kayaks, climbing walls, more to bring lessons to life

By Robyn Lydick
Staff Writer

Not many third-graders get to learn about Inuit dietary habits, palindromes and artistic proportions in 15 minutes.

Almost none learn about these things sitting on damp grass next to a well-used kayak.

But second- and third-graders at Northridge Elementary School in Highlands Ranch had a day of outdoor education May 4 and did just that.

Avid 4 Adventure, a Boulder based outdoor education company, brings kayak and canoe pools, mountain biking courses and a climbing wall to schools across the Front Range to give introductory lessons in these sports while also working in school curriculum goals.

Along with how to hold a paddle, bits of geography, sociology and language get slipped in.



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Logan Gardner, a second-grade student at Northridge elementary school, is lowered from a climbing wall May 4.

www.highlandsranchherald.com

Adventure: Lessons fit with state standards

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Kayak is a palindrome, reading the same forward or backward, pointed out Avid 4 Adventure instructor Richard Vercoe to a group of nine students during kayak ground school.

While the discussion didn't get deep — no one offered the palindromes "do geese see God" or "oozy rat in a sanitary zoo" — the students came up with "mom," "dad" and "wow."

Moments later, the group was talking about Leonardo daVinci's Vitruvian Man and perfect proportions. Soon came a discussion of Alaska, Inuits, ice floes and whether polar bears and penguins can live together in the wild. They can't. Polar bears live in the Arctic; penguins in the Antarctic.

Inuit ate raw meat, Vercoe told the students to a chorus of "ewwww."

"Have any of you had raw meat?" he asked. "How about sushi?"

Several hands shot up.

"Sushi is raw fish," Vercoe said.

Several of the children who had hands up looked like they didn't want to believe him.

"How about ceviche?"

Vercoe asked.

"My mom makes it," one boy said. "Is it Mexican?"

Ceviche is a citrus cooked fish dish, popular in coastal communities throughout Mexico and Central and South America.

Crossing boundaries between academic subjects ties the classroom to the world.

Elizabeth Morris, principal at Northridge, has invited Avid 4 Adventure three times.

"They fit with state standards in a lot of ways, with science and PE," Morris said. "It is



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Rachael Zhao, a third-grade student at Northridge elementary school, learns how to kayak in an outdoor pool at the school May 4. Avid 4 Adventure, a Boulder-based company, taught the second- and third-grade students outdoor adventures such as kayaking, mountain biking, canoeing and climbing.

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Elizabeth Morris

Northridge Elementary principal

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Parents can join in at the end of the day, as can younger siblings.

For David Secunda, owner of Avid 4 Adventure, schools are both a chance to expose the most children to lifetimes of outdoor sports and a chance to give them a taste of summer

campers offered by Avid.

The company rents space from Horizon Community Church, 2121 Dad Clark Blvd.

The camp is completely secular. Half-day sessions for children 5-6 years old can be in the morning or the afternoon. Campers with siblings in the full-day sessions can add art camp to even out the day.

For more information on Avid's camps, visit www.avid4.com.

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