



The only daily newspaper published in the Adirondack Park

Adirondack Daily Enterprise[> News](#) > [People](#)[Print this Page](#)[«--back to story](#)

Lanthier helps educate in and out of the classroom

Friends & Neighbors: EVERYONE HAS A STORY

By NOELLE SHORT, Special to the Enterprise

POSTED: June 4, 2008

TUPPER LAKE — Louise Lanthier has lived in Tupper Lake her whole life, but it wasn't until her adult years that she ventured into the backcountry and gained a new perspective on her home turf.

Lanthier, who is the Tupper Lake Middle/High School English department leader and 12th grade English teacher, leads the school's outing club with the primary help of her husband, Gary, and her colleague, Pam Savard, as well as the Ski Club, with the help of Sheila Larkin, Shawn and Joni Stuart, Robert Gibeault and Linda Sexton.

Lanthier took over the Outing Club six years ago, at a time when she had completed climbing all 46 of the Adirondack High Peaks and the 115 mountains above 4,000 feet in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, giving her the titles of a "46'er" and a "111'er," respectively.

"I took it over so that I could experience the outdoors and help others understand what we have here," Lanthier said. "I started hiking as an adult and never knew the beauty of the mountains when I was growing up here, and now I want to be able to share that with the kids."

According to Lanthier, the Outing Club is funded by the Tri Lakes Prevention Coalition and the Tupper Lake Youth Council, with the mission of providing students with substance-free events to take part in, which often ends up offering participants much more than that.

"We're providing alternative recreational activities that are drug free and substance free through the outdoors," she said. "I love pushing kids beyond their comfort zone because I believe that it helps them to discover who they are. An activity like hiking gives them a goal. It doesn't matter what peaks we climb, once they reach the top it gives them a reason to come back for more. Kids don't get that kind of high anymore."

In the past six years, Lanthier has doubled the events offered by the outing club, with 20 events offered during the 2007-08 school year, including hiking, biking, snowshoeing, skiing, swimming and kayaking. Lanthier noted that the school district provides the insurance, transportation and equipment that make the activities offered possible and affordable for all students.

At the end of the group's most recent trips, which was a hiking, biking and overnight camping trip on the Erie Canal at the beginning of May, Lanthier noted that it does take a lot of energy and enthusiasm to organize and run each of the adventures, but each time she is reminded in one way or another why she continues to take part.

"One of the best comments I've ever heard was at the end of our Erie Canal trip when a mother said, 'This means so much to me. I cannot provide this kind of opportunity for my child and he looks forward to it so much,'" Lanthier said. "I was exhausted at the end of that trip, and that mother reminded of why we do what we do and its importance."

Now that Lanthier has seen faces light up with excitement as trips are announced and taken, she has organized a means of extending outdoor opportunities for students into the summer months. According to Lanthier, this summer students can sign up to do trail work on the Northville-Placid Trail, where the outing club now has two adopted sections, equal to six miles of the trail.

"My goal is for the kids to take three trips in to do trail work and to have anyone that is interested spend

Article Photos



Louise Lanthier.
(Photo — Noelle Short)

a week in July and/or August hiking and camping along the Northville-Placid Trail," she said.

Lanthier explained that this summer event is sponsored by the town of Tupper Lake and the school will provide the transportation. There will be a small fee charged to help with the cost of food for the week, but otherwise there will be no charge to participate. She is hopeful that it will attract a variety of kids who are looking for something to do this summer.

If Lanthier's Northville-Placid Trail program turns out to be anything like the ski club she has led, then it is bound for high energy, excitement and enthusiasm. Lanthier started the ski club for middle and high school students three years ago. Twenty kids signed up in the first year and in the past two years they have had more than 40 participants and have had to turn kids away due to bus space.

The group skis on Friday nights at Titus Mountains and Sundays at Whiteface Mountain, and according to Lanthier, both mountains offer incredible rates for the kids.

In addition, the club has received scholarships from the Tri Lakes Prevention Coalition, which allowed five kids to ski for the season, as well as a \$1,000 grant from Stewarts' Shops to help with funding of the groups end of the season trip to Smugglers Notch in Vermont.

"If we can get one kid to really love the outdoors, then it is really worth it," she said.

To learn more about the Northville-Placid Trail hiking and trail work trips planned for this summer, contact Lanthier at louise@tupperlakecsd.net.

[Subscribe to Adirondack Daily Enterprise](#)