



Merit Learning Center

Students from Merit Learning Center Finishing their Service-Learning Project at LoveWay on Tuesday, Viewing the Impact on Wednesday

High school students from Merit Learning Center in Goshen have been working on a service-learning project at LoveWay since September of 2016. On Tuesday the 11th of April they will install the grand finale of their service-learning project, four mini environments for LoveWay's sensory horseback riding trail. On Wednesday students and faculty will be coming back to LoveWay to see the trail in use as LoveWay rider's experience the updates for the first time. When the weather was agreeable the students would come and work once a month on cleaning the trail and laying mulch. When the weather turned cold they began working on large art projects, essentially mini-environments that will be installed along the trail.

Merit Learning Center students worked mainly with recycled and upcycled materials to engage the students with the idea that you do not have to have a lot of money in order to create and encourage great change in the world in which we live. You just have to look around, utilize what you have and allow yourself to use your imagination. With the encouragement and allowance from Principal Kristen Watt and the director of the JAG program Brian Warrell and some creative assistance for Suzanne Juday, Merit students have been given a chance to immerse themselves in a project that not only gives back to the communities in which we live, but also to be kind to the environment and to develop their creative abilities and energies in a useful and productive way.

LoveWay's sensory trail is used as part of their therapeutic riding classes for youths with special needs. The idea behind the trail is to engage the students' senses- mainly focusing on sight and sound for now, as they guide their horse along the quarter mile path. The students love the experience and so do the horses. Two groups of students will be coming out on Tuesday the 11th to install the project, one beginning at 9 am and the other at 1 pm. Then on Wednesday Merit administrators and a smaller group of students will be out at 1 pm. This is a great opportunity to see high school-aged students empowering younger individuals with special needs, please do come out and cover the marvelous impact this event is sure to have on both groups of people.

Thank you