

MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

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Starting on Next Year

by Jane Holmes

While the Iditarod Trail Committee and many volunteers are still wrapping up this year's race - returning drop bags and sleds and getting Trail Mail delivered, for example - they are also busy planning for 2024 - the volunteer picnic, musher sign ups, updating forms and documents, evaluating volunteer positions, checking in with the villages that serve as checkpoints, coordinating with authorities in Nome...and the list goes on. Much of the world pays close attention to the Iditarod near race time; it takes an entire year to plan and execute each Iditarod. As a teacher, I remember having a running list of ideas titled "Next Year" that I stuck in the back of a notebook so I could improve my teaching and my students' learning experience. Now is your chance to jot down how you can use the Iditarod in your classroom next school year. View this slideshow: [Starting Line](#) and write down 3 things you want to start your new school year with - engage your students and get them excited about learning from day 1.



May Teaching Ideas

by Heidi Sloan

Time Comparisons Through the Years

Wrapping Up the Current School Year

Diving into review for state testing right now? Here are some engaging math activities that use Iditarod Race archives and cover some of the standards your students need to review.

Prepping for the Next School Year?

Check out Iditarod.com/edu while relaxing during the summer break!

Here are some lessons for your history curriculum enrichment integrating the Iditarod.

Historically Iditarod!

Your students can learn about the Iditarod as well as grammar with these sentences to edit!

Grammar Practice

New to the Race? Here Are Some Helpful Sites

Iditarod 101

New To Teaching With the Iditarod Theme?

Sanka W. Dog's Zoom Lens Photo

Puppies and dogs keep busy all summer. they love to jump on the wheel and take a spin. Alaskan huskies are genetically driven to run - these exercise wheels give them that chance when there are no snow trails.



"About 30 miles from Kaltag, I noticed an old sled near the bank of the river...I dug through the sled and discovered an old pair of calf-skin mukluks...I put them on and left my boots in exchange. I wore those mukluks all the way to Nome, and my feet were warm."

~Myron
Angstrom
in
"Iditarod: The
First Ten Years."

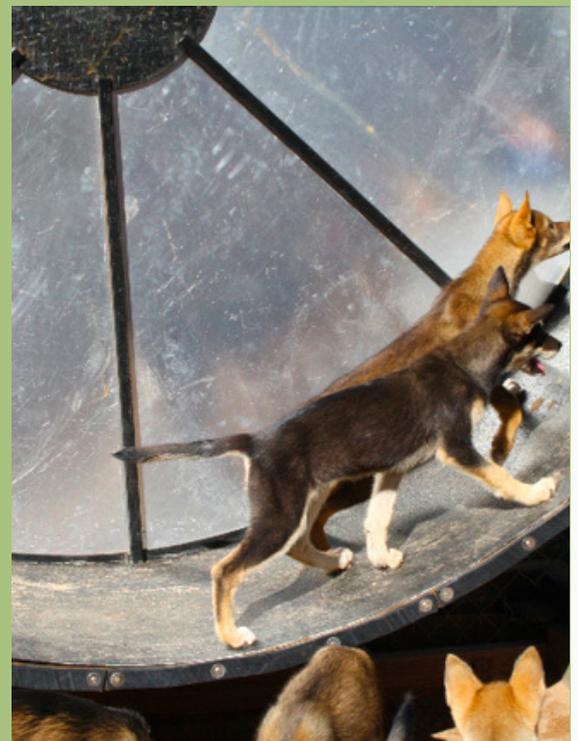


photo: Terrie Hanke

Mandatory Gear

by Jane Holmes

2023 Iditarod EDU Summer Seminar Newberry, MI, located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan June 25 - 27, 2023

Registration will be open soon for the 2023 Iditarod EDU Summer Seminar in upstate Michigan!

We are thrilled to again be offering a Lower 48 professional development experience like no other! With kennel visits, Iditarod educator workshops on using the race to deliver your curriculum and a 25th Anniversary celebration of the Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™, these 3 days cannot be missed. Here is a summary. For more information visit our website: [2023 Iditarod EDU Summer Seminar](https://www.midogtours.com) To be added to an email list for information, email Jane Holmes at: jane.holmes@iditarod.com



Sunday, June 25, 2023

Hear from the pioneer Teacher from the Trail, Andrea "Finney" Aufder Heyde, learn more of the free resources the Iditarod EDU has for you, hear from sled dog veterinarian Dr. Tom Gustafsen - he will share his expertise on racing dogs.

After lunch, travel to nearby Nature's Kennels, McMillan, MI, home of Ed, an eight-time Iditarod finisher and both Ed and his wife Tasha have won Marquette's UP 200 Sled Dog Race.

Monday, June 26, 2023

Our meeting place is the Erickson Center for the Arts in Curtis, MI.

Become engaged in sessions led by Iditarod EDU faculty, including our 2024 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™, Kate Newmyer. Then Tasha Stielstra of Nature's Kennel will lead an education session. See an EDU exclusive vet check video. Dig deeper into the "Eye on the Trail" blog with journalist and 2006 Teacher from the Trail™ Terrie Hanke. Additionally, Sara Kimball will share her volunteering experience - "Looking Down Memory Lane" the last 10 years volunteering at the "Last Great Race".

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

This is a full day experience at Laura Neese's MI DOG Summer Sled Dog Center for 8 hours of learning, cuddling puppies, and meeting the individual dogs on Laura's team. Learn of topics such as: year round training, qualifying for the Iditarod, drop bags, her checkpoint routine, what it looks like to go to the Iditarod from the lower 48, etc. Jeri Neese, Laura's mother, will give a very hands-on presentation with examples of how the Iditarod made its way into their homeschool classroom and ways to incorporate the race into teaching different subjects. Katie Kunze is going to talk about how she incorporates real life mushing experiences into her classroom.

The seminar will end after the kennel programming on this day.

Sled Dog of the Month

by Kelly Villar

For the last MUSH ON! of the school year, we hear from Gerhardt Thiart, bib #22 in the 2023 Iditarod. Although this was Gerhardt's rookie finish, this was his second Iditarod. His slogan for this year:

AFRICA TO ALASKA IDITAROD 2023 "UNFINISHED BUSINESS" For Dogs - With Dogs

His unfinished business comes from his 2022 Iditarod run, where Gerhardt ran Mitch Seavey's puppy team. Fifty miles from Nome, his race got cut short by arctic hurricane winds and a broken ankle. Gerhardt finished the 2023 Iditarod in 26th place. When asked about a dog that holds a special place in his heart, this is what he said:

Riot is my dog that holds a special place in my heart. Riot was given to me when I did my qualifiers for the Iditarod in the 2020-2021 season. He was my main leader in all three of my qualifiers. Then, with my first attempt at crossing the Burred Arch in Nome in 2022, he was my boy. Once again, he was leading my pack. This year, this boy was with me when I finished in Nome. I made sure he was in the lead. He deserved it—such a special boy. When I first met him, he was shy and aloof. Now, he's such a friendly boy and playful. Riot runs every position on the team, but he's especially happy if he can run in lead. There has been this special bond between us since we met, and that bond I'll hold dear forever in my heart.

[click on photos to enlarge](#)



Gerhardt is the Executive Director of GAT FOUNDATION Inc. GAT FOUNDATION partnered with TUSK.ORG to support, bring awareness, promote, and raise funds for Wildlife Conservation in Africa with specific attention to the working and tracking canines of the African Wildlife Rangers. Check out Iditarod.com and Gerhardt's website to learn more about his foundation and mushing.



Sneak Peek

Spring has arrived! For many educators this is the time to tie up the loose ends in our instruction and prep students for the summer break! For me it's the time to wrap up my journey as the 2023 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail. In classrooms, as the flowers bloom outside, students everywhere are creating cute cards for Mother's Day. This month the SEL Snack will focus on gratitude - with a "Thanks Mom" theme - that touches on the incredible support of female mentors in our students' lives and the Iditarod. I'll talk about inspirational dog mushing moms!



by Juli Westrich

2023 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™

Click on the images to enlarge.



Mushing on the Yukon River.

As the month comes to an end, and we are one step closer to vacation, I'll take a look at cultural differences in measurement and how that impacts our understanding of distance and cold! A **CRSE** journal post with a touch of **math**!

Mid month the lesson plan will focus on **math** skills related to measurement, distance, and estimation. This lesson also incorporates some **Earth science** as we examine the length of the race in regards to the rivers which are the winter "highways" of interior Alaska!



Welcoming a new classroom of students in the Fall is like wrangling a litter of sled dog puppies!

June will be here before we know it! Closing out my tenure as 2023 Teacher on the Trail™ will include an SEL post about accepting change, a lesson plan that is perfect to kick off an Iditarod Themed Classroom in Fall 2023, and an opportunity to say goodbye and thanks to all those who made my journey a remarkable experience.

If You "Mush" Know...

by Lynne Witte

original illustration by Jon Van Zyle

What do mushers and dogs do in the off season?



In a classroom, the end of the school year marks changes in daily routines with end of the year field trips, testing, and special events like band concerts. The same transition takes place with mushers and the dogs. Some mushers will head to an off season job themselves with a more intense daily work load to keep their dogs outfitted and healthy for another season.

It is a time to rearrange, rest, relax, and rebuild. The mushers need to rearrange the dog and human winter gear. Harnesses, ganglines, and dog booties and coats are cleaned and organized for the next season. Like all athletes, the dogs need time to rest and rebuild their bodies physically and mentally. Usually the dogs get a break to play, free run, and swim if water is available. Relaxing on a summer day in the sun is healthy and rejuvenating for the dogs. Free running for dogs in small groups is a terrific time to learn to get along with each other, to play and chase. The stretching and workout is fun for the dogs.

Transitioning to an off season of time of running and playing is rebuilding for the dogs. When the temps begin to drop come September, the dogs are excited to get back to running as a team.

Students are excited to end the year in a specific grade with a break to rest and play. But come fall, they are excited to begin a new grade with new experiences.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Next Race 308 00 38 53
Days Hrs Mins Secs

June 24 - Volunteer Picnic/Musher Sign-ups

June 25 -27 - 2023 Summer Educators Workshop, UP Michigan

August - EDU Starting Line online webinar

Zuma's Scavenger Hunt - One Champion, All Winners

Hello Friends,

It's Zuma here! The 2023 Iditarod is a part of history now. In my free time, I keep thinking about how unique the race was. The line on the map is the same but the experience is different every year and for every musher. But there is one concept that is always true - One Champion. All Winners.

So often students are completely disappointed and even downhearted when the musher they've followed isn't the champion. Their interest drops and they don't care about the rest of the teams or even about their chosen musher anymore. The race isn't over until the final musher is presented the Red Lantern, crosses the finish line and extinguishes the Widow's Lamp.

Musher GB Jones is a three time veteran of Iditarod, claiming 52nd, 76th and 45th place. He has scratched in four other Iditarod attempts. Jones wrote a book called, Winning the Iditarod. He's never been an Iditarod champion but as he shares his life with dogs and journeys on the Iditarod Trail, he is living proof that winning occurs for those who don't arrive first.



photo credit: Terrie Hanke

Even Iditarod champions scratch or place far back in the field sometimes. Under "Race Center", use the "Race Archives" feature on iditarod.com to see each race's champion listed. Then open each race year and the champion's link to their full race career to see if that champion has ever scratched and in which other places each champion has finished.

The Iditarod presents a perfect teachable moment (oh, so many teachable moments) for students to think about and embrace One Champion, All Winners. The phrase applies to multiple aspects in life and is well worth discussing or writing about. Why are all the mushers winners? Why are the mushers who scratch considered winners?

Add one more layer to the discussion - "The thrill is not in victory but in the courage to join the race." Why does GB Jones feel that he has won the Iditarod? How does this concept apply to students as they participate in sports activities, music contests, speaking events, school in general and family life?



Musher GB Jones at the start of the 2011 Iditarod.
photo: Jaynette Jones

K9 Journalist Corner

by Libby Little



Who Needs a Musher?

Leaping Libby here: Alaskan husky puppy, living her best life in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, and dreaming of becoming a sled dog.

Now THAT was exciting! Almost two months since the Iditarod, and the kennel is still buzzing with stories. We couldn't make it there this year, but we're friends with Ryan Redington and his team. In fact, our musher started our kennel with six of Ryan's dogs. Colbert, who was born into Ryan's kennel, says they're kind of like cousins, so you know we were thrilled to learn they won the 2023 Iditarod.

Victory stories are good and all, but my favorite story is about a team that didn't even need a musher! Well, for about 20 miles. It seems their musher, Eddie Burke, fell asleep and fell off the sled. But the team kept on running. When the lead dog, Dudley, heard Eddie calling from way back, he thought he heard "hike!" and "good dogs!" Of course, that means "go faster, you're doing great!" And the sled seemed extra light, so they got to Eagle Island in no time. The checkpoint humans looked at them kind of funny when they arrived. It was only then the team realized that Eddie wasn't on the runners, so they curled up to wait for him.

When I first heard the story, I went to find Flame (another Redington puppy). "Aunty Flame?" I asked, "If a team could run all the way to Eagle Island by themselves, why do we need mushers, anyway?"

Flame looked at me, aghast. She was astonished because she never ever ever wants to be more than a few feet away from our musher, ever. "Oh, Little Leap, you silly thing! Mushers keep us happy!"



Leap and Flame. Photo: Blair Braverman

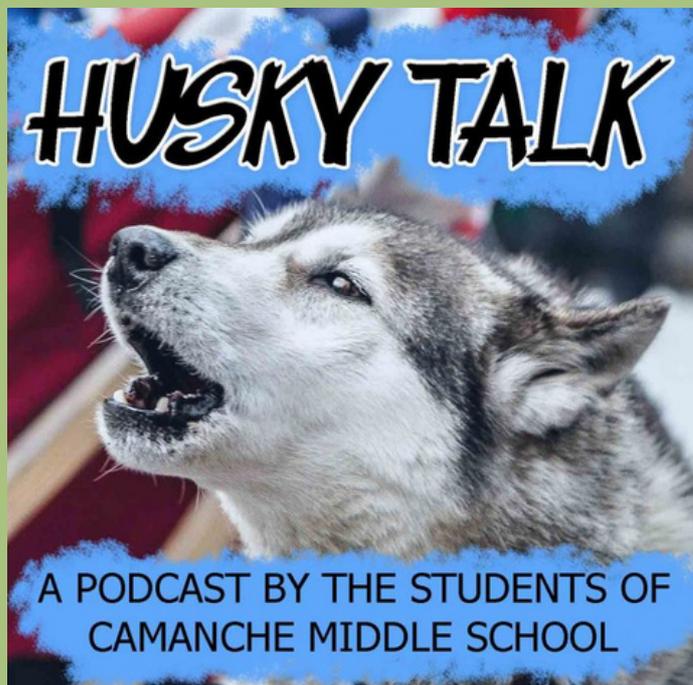
"The rest of the story," said Aunty Flame, "comes from the dogs that helped Eddie get back to his team. After the dogs ran ahead, Eddie started walking slowly toward Eagle Island. After awhile, up came one of the happiest teams of the Iditarod: the Hunter Keefe team. The sled dogs say Hunter is always singing along the trail. They say Hunter is so happy that it just rubs off on them. Well, Eddie got on the runners to hitch a ride with Hunter. Hunter's sled dogs turned around for a second, curious, then cheerfully headed on their way, happy to help out. In fact, they loved listening to the two mushers chatting and laughing almost all the way to the checkpoint."

Aunty Flame continued, "The bond between dogs and their musher is a special thing. Every musher is different, with their own ways to communicate with us. Hunter sings and laughs. Some mushers quietly help their team of sled dogs stay calm with simple "gee" (go right), "haw" (go left), and "whoa" (stop). Many mushers chirp "good dogs" all the way from Anchorage to Nome. All mushers take excellent care of us every step of the way, and make sure we are always happy. Over years of training and running, we get to know each other, trust each other, and love each other. Sure, a bunch of dogs can run together a long way. But without our musher, we wouldn't want to. It's just not a team without our musher!"

Think about "teams" you are part of. Is there someone whose sense of humor keeps the group happy and upbeat? Think about the coaches and teachers in your life: How do they keep group morale positive? How does positive morale help your group?

Team and teamwork are important concepts in Iditarod Education, and in Social-Emotional Learning.

For more lessons and activities about teamwork, check out <https://iditarod.com/zuma/8-traits-of-iditarod-team-work/>



Click on the Husky Talk logo to catch up on Season 6 new episodes which include:

Andy Pohl - Iditarod Trail Invitational cyclist and husband of musher Kristy Berington

Liz Failor - Iditarod Trail race reporter and wife of musher Matt Failor

Ryan Redington - 2023 Iditarod Champion

Liz Millman - Iditarod Trail race return dog coordinator



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