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## **Ox Ridge Students Collaborate with Urban Peers While Learning About the Environment**

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**Date :** February 6, 2018

A group of Ox Ridge 4<sup>th</sup> graders took an expedition recently that went beyond just studying forest habitats at the New Canaan Nature Center.

Joining 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Murphy Academy, which is part of the KT Murphy Elementary School in Stamford, Darien students participated in a first-of-its-kind cooperative learning program.

Led by [Domus](#), a non-profit human service organization, and the Stamford Public Schools, the program is designed to increase academic engagement related to environmental science and reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation.

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Principal Luke Forshaw said the Ox Ridge Parent Teacher Organization was a driving force behind connecting the cohort of urban and suburban students at the New Canaan Nature Center. He said the experience for the small group of students was worthwhile.

“They came back and said ‘I have a new buddy’ or ‘we came up with this handshake,’” Forshaw said.

“This is the kind opportunity that allows students to practice kindness, respect, and empathy. They also get to collaborate with people they do not normally collaborate with.”

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— *Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter.*