



MAGIC OF THE WOODS PODCAST

Episode Three Transcript

Synopsis: *Welcome to Episode Three of our podcast and the first in our Partner Feature series. In this episode we sat down with Tim Weber, the Lead Teacher for Hamilton Heights, after completing our very first school program of the year on-site at Hamilton Heights and Koteewi Park in Noblesville, Indiana.*

Script: INTRO – Music by DarkMoloko called Adventure

Bailey (00:00)

Hey, all you Woodland creatures. Welcome back to the podcast. This is Bailey

Nich (00:07)

and I'm Nich.

Bailey (00:09)

And today we are having a chat with a lead teacher from Hamilton Heights, Tim Weber. This was our first environmental education program of 2020, which is wild to think about because it's mid to end September and this is the literal first group of 2020.

Nich (00:25)

It's been really wild. And again, we're well, Tim's going to let you all know where we are, but it's definitely a very different experience from what we're used to for, you know, programs like this. Cause it's just 2020 in a nutshell.

Bailey (00:43)

It is, anything goes, there are no rules in 2020. So Tim, tell us a little bit about where we are set the scene kind of...

Tim (00:53)

Well, I'll just start off by telling you who I am and then a little bit about Hamilton Heights, middle school and, and we'll go from there. Sound good.

So my name is Tim Weber. I'm a sixth grade social studies teacher at Hamilton Heights middle school. We're located just North of Indianapolis, between Noblesville and Tipton off of State Road 19. Class size, I'd say it's average about 160 or so, not in the class, but as a class, as a whole is about 160. As far as Hamilton County is concerned, that's what we were one of the smaller schools in comparison to like your Hamilton Southeastern or your Fishers or Westfield and Caramel we're the smaller area of that. But we've been attending Bradford



words for about 30 years or 30 years, plus not sure to be exact. I, me personally, I've been here.

I've been coming to Bradford woods for about 23 years straight. Wow. There was one year that I did not come. And that was because of the birth of my son, who is now a junior in high school. All three of my kids attended Bradford Woods. And I've been doing it for many years, like I said before. And he's yeah, like I said, he's a junior in high school and, and we've actually loved my entire family, loves it. My wife has gone with, with my kids and so on when they go and when she helped chaperone, but I absolutely love Bradford Woods.

Bailey (02:11)

Awesome. Yeah. And I remember actually my first school program last year was Hamilton Heights because I was brand new to Bradford Woods. So get a lot of firsts with Hamilton Heights. This is awesome. We also know that things look entirely different this year. So typically we would have Hamilton Heights out at the woods, but this year is a little different. So Tim, tell us a little bit about what's different this year and wow.

Tim (02:41)

Yeah, the difference right now is COVID 19 and 2020, man. Attending Bradford woods in the fall. It's been a huge obstacle after brainstorming with Amran and Melanie Wills at Bradford woods. We came up with a compromise. We believe was the best situation and the circumstances we've been lucky enough here at the middle school to avoid and what we call it an internal school epidemic and having a, maintaining a regular schedule with that a majority of our students attending class while others have chosen to do off-site learning and by cleaning our classrooms and consistently wearing masks understanding the consequences of not doing these things. We've been able to somewhat maintain a regular classroom setting and schedule.

And since going to Bradford was not an option for us because of the numbers and social distancing difficulties. We decided to bring Bradford Woods to Hamilton Heights Middle School.

So we are blessed to have a small woods behind our building and a local park, just 10 minutes away from us at Koteewi, that we use for our resources. We did a quick walkthrough when they visited Melanie and Amran visited this, this just before the school year. And so we did a quick walkthrough and agreed this was easily doable for a skeleton staff, such as yourselves to attend here and then do some modules. So, but we are so it's like having Bradford Woods in our own backyard, literally.

Nich (04:13)

Yeah, it is. It's awesome. So as Tim said, you heard that right folks, we are at Hamilton Heights! We're currently sitting in a little pod room here recording this with Tim after our couple of days doing programs outside. I spent some time yesterday at the park and here



shadowing and following around, getting videos and stuff for our social media and then taught today in the little woods that you have in the back of your school, which is pretty awesome to get a little walkthrough and see that there's actually a pretty nice trail out there and that space that we can do that stuff here.

school bell rings

Tim (05:00)

And our bell system works here at school. Bell works, That's the, that's the teacher's escape number....

Our woods, so this has all kind of new to us because this building we have the middle school was housed in another building inside of our, in town Arcadia. So we recently had some number changes and we decided to that building is our oldest building. That's in Arcadia. We decided to do some tearing down, leaving the gyms and the skeleton school there. And we kind of knew too many of the teachers, at least three grade levels here now, the sixth, seventh, and eighth. So it's been pretty challenging for us trying to get used to everything in the woods. Haven't been quite utilized the way it should be. And so we took some time and, and refurbished a few things, and I think we're setting it up to where we can have outdoor learning areas, which we're excited about.

Bailey (06:00)

Yeah, definitely. And so one we're on location. So if you can't come to us, we can come to you, but not only are we on location, we're on two locations. So half of the kids were at Hamilton Heights one day, and then the next day they would go to Koteewi with myself and Amran and Chad. So very different. Typically we would have our professional outdoor instructors who are seasonal folks, who we do an intensive training with for at least two weeks to understand this curriculum and be familiar with it. And now your lovely and favorite full-time staff members get to lead these programs. So I hadn't ever led a trail group before environmental ed is not my background, but I think being able to work with Omron who's one just brilliant. We all know that, but getting to actually put into practice, what we had been teaching was really, really cool. You know, I'm an educator by nature. So it's who I am. So just learning the different skill, but it was really awesome being with the Hamilton Heights kiddos the last two days, like it was super fun. We had how many different, how many different lessons did we do? What did we do?

Tim (07:19)

When Amran and Melanie came, we talked about what we really wanted to do and so I went back to my sixth grade staff that we have here. I say my sixth grade staff, it's not really mine. It's just the sixth grade staff. So, but since Bradford Woods is more of a science base thing, I went to the science teacher. So, we went to the science department at the middle school led



by one of our teachers. And also she's a chaperone with this. Kara Dungeness, her suggestions were trees, invasive species, aquatics, outdoor living skills, which are part of the science curriculum here at the middle school that she has developed. And so this is kind of like a benefit, how do you say, an extra that she gets to add on to that? And we can refer back to it and look through her lessons and stuff that the kids can relate to.

So on top of that, we've chosen some other teamwork modules, such as some initiatives getting to know you it's good that we're doing at the end of the year trail building. We did a service project, which has been magnificent. We've always done that at Bradford Woods tubing clearing trails and doing mulching and things like that. So this was not new to us as teachers, but the students that's always been a positive thing.

We picked up Atl Atl, which was the ancient spear throwing and as an activity. And this year it's something new to us was the, we added on a feature through Edge Adventure Parks, which is our aerial adventure park, which is located at Koteewi, and so we added that added a fun element to being out in the woods, being out in the trees and having some fun that way. So we really liked that, and we were appreciative towards edge adventure parks.

Bailey (09:07)

For sure. Yeah, they're set up is sick. Like we got to go see it. It was, it was awesome. I, myself learned a lot just by looking at their systems. So it was great for me as a practitioner to be able to see a different site and see how they put folks on lines and stuff like that. It was really cool.

Nich (09:26)

It's a really interesting mix of what we're teaching and what you all are leading at Hamilton Heights, especially with the trail building today doing the trees and invasive species. We walked around in both groups. Today we're like, Oh, we're going to walk by what we did this morning. Let me show you. Or, Oh, this is what we did today and what we did yesterday. So they're really excited for doing those things here and to show people, Hey, this is what we've done. We cleared all this stuff. We put all this small chair. And they're really happy about that here as they would have been at Bradford woods as well. And of course, you know outdoor living skills, aquatic life and trees, invasive species are like their standards and stables at Bradford woods. Like that's what everyone chooses to do. And so it was a lot of fun.

I had, I had a lot of fun doing initiatives especially with the fifth graders just getting to run around or, and you know, do all those fun things. The sixth graders, sixth graders, typically fifth grader, just beginning sixth graders. So just beginning sixth graders, but yes, just having them run around did do all the fun activities. I mean, we played bear attack this morning with Tim's group. We played that for 25 minutes. They just kept wanting to go. I'd be like, okay, he wants to go next half. The group would raised their hand and like, Oh, point where they were looking for square looking no were just moseying in the middle of the circle, just waiting for



people to find a spouse so they could be the next person to go. I was like, I've never, never experienced that before with a bear attack. Typically they're like, I don't want to be in the middle. We've done two rounds. I'm out. I'm done. I don't want to do this anymore. We played it for 25 minutes.

Bailey (11:10)

Awesome. I think that's, that's, what's really special about Hamilton Heights. Again, this is my second year of at least being familiar with Hamilton Heights, but the sense of community here is really, really cool. And I got a neat history lesson about history, about Hamilton Heights, but I think, you know, while we can't be at Bradford woods, I think there is a lot of beauty that comes from being here, especially with that service learning component so that they literally get to be part of creating something at school, which is giving me a little bit of a chill thinking about it. Oh my gosh. That is really moving me

Tim (11:44)

Well, going beyond that though, the, when I was trying to promote that the, you know, we kind of given that rah, rah to me and say, Hey guys, you know, this is when we actually we sacrifice our time so that we can help something else out to make it a better place one way. And this is what our plan is to do. And we, we told them what the plan was of clearing out an area within the woods and then laying some mulch down and creating an outdoor classroom types scenario. And, and then at the end, I think to what the was, the nail in the coffin was like, Hey, you know what they should, we'd like to have you guys, did you guys, the sixth grade class who have out there and named these places. So you guys will officially name these places for years to come, whether it be COVID kids of 2020, or or, or whatever they get to have, they get to say, and what they want to name it, we do a vote on it and stuff. So I think that was a good sell something. So their, their energy was like phenomenal going into that. We just couldn't believe how much work off day one they got accomplished. And we're like, Oh my gosh, we're going to run out of things to do for day two.

Nich (12:49)

Yes. Well, in today I heard that from the teachers, they were like, the kids just love it. Like they didn't want to leave working on trails. They didn't want to come back and do an, it was like, they just wanted to keep doing stuff on the trails and cleaning out and doing that. So that's okay.

Tim (13:01)

There's so much more to do back there too. So that's the best part about it? Yeah. It's just an area that can be improved on improved on year after year. And I love how they get to meet the likes.



Bailey (13:09)

Yeah. It's a generational legacy. It's not just going to stop with this one cohort. That's awesome. So what keeps you coming back in partnering with Bradford woods year after?

Tim (13:22)

Well, you know, you have to, it's been an amazing tradition partnering with Bradford woods team year after year. They they've always been super hosts so glad we can return the favor this year.

Bailey (13:34)

Very well returned, absolutely felt so comfortable and welcomed here

Tim (13:39)

Each year, the kids had experienced something new. They walk away with new perspectives ideas, as well as being extremely exhausted. They create a memory that lasts forever at the same time being part of a longstanding tradition. So this it's just something that the kids take away. And it's funny because I've had kids go through my personal home kids go through and, and some of the greatest memories that they have of their entire school career there, the, the Bradford woods had laid a good foundation with them. They always refer back, Oh man. Remember that time at Bradford woods that we saying you know, the short neck buzzers and stuff like that, or the skits that the, that the breakfast or the, from even the, a moon rock that they chew and sparks in there that it's just this things that they never forget year after year.

Bailey (14:26)

Yeah, definitely. So that's a really great segue because we want to know what is your, your personal favorite camp song or skit?

Tim (14:38)

So many there's so many I would say I can't, I don't know the name of this one, but it was the part of, it was if I were at Bradford woods, if I weren't at Bradford was something that I would be. And then I think the, one of the favorite ones was so the Hong Kong hit the deer with the grill Hong Kong roadkill. And I know it sounds morbid, but the kids absolutely watching the staff, the introductory of the staff from that point going on kind of set the tone. Like these people are so cool and the kids were like, Oh my gosh. And they're, they're singing, they're laughing. They're having such a good time now, I think. And that usually that particular song happens at the very beginning for the interview.



Nich (15:28)

Yeah. That's typically our, one of our first ones that it's to showcase everybody. Yeah.

Tim (15:33)

And not only are you guys singing it, but you're dressed up and dressed up for that particular thing. It's just amazing. And as far as skits are concerned, Oh my gosh, man, by far every year, the biggest requests that we have is the blue red, or in every year, I know what the ending's going to be, but it's still funny at the end cause we know,

Nich (15:59)

Yeah, that is, I started, I was reading ahead of your little bit and I saw that and I just started laughing inside because I it's, I, yeah, I would say it's my favorite skit. One of my favorite skits to perform. And I'm always the out of luck camper that always don't give away. Don't give it away. Now it's one out of luck camper. One of my favorites to watch just our staff when they start just like belting from the norm and they just scream it all the cameras in life. It is just amazing to experience.

Tim (16:38)

I have to, I know I'd go on and on with my biggest one. Another one that I've always liked is when we do a night hike and this has happened more in the past than it has in recent years, but they always do. They tell a story and the story contains all of the trigger groups in it. And in this story, as they tell it, they start off with that. It's raining and they always like it starts off with, and then the snap you happened, then you got the clap, then the legs and the stop and the feet, and then it reverses now, and then it's dead silent. And that dead silence is when the person, whether it be Omron or whoever's leading tells a story. And in that story, if you hear that your tree, you hear your trail group name, then that's when your trail group gets up quietly and leaves and leaves with the trail group leader.

And then, and then that, that starts the and that starts the night hike. And I think that is, that is a really neat thing to see all these kids that they're into it, they're actually being part of something and they can learn that they can be quiet and then we listen to it and as they call them at night hike they can all the things that are happening in the in the darkness. And, and it makes all that discussion that learning module so much better. And even when we go down to the star gazing area and we had a blind girl last year and and she was mostly blind. So she has her the blind stick and that she works with and, and she wanted to go to Bradford. We took her breath of woods and it was so dark that night that our S our, her teacher that's with her, that's guiding her, they're sitting down and they're laying down on the ground, looking up at the sky.



Tim (18:25)

And, and she goes, she goes, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Hall, this is the first time I've ever seen stars. And that just kinda like, Oh, you know, it just kind of gets you as like, Oh my gosh, you know, this girl, now, this girl, she's an eighth grader now. And it's, it's one of her biggest moments that in her life, and now she's had surgery. She can see better. She's getting glasses. She didn't have to have her stick now. I mean, it's just, you know, like I said, that girl will remember that moment for the rest of her life.

Nich (18:53)

Yeah. Yeah. Definitely those powerful transformative experiences just from being outdoors and being in nature, what really, this is all about you just lay on the ground and look at the stars. Yeah. Yeah. And so we're very happy that we could at least bring a little bit of that. It's not that full experience that you would get at Bradford woods. However, with obviously with the times and the atmosphere around here where it's still just so having to, we were able to come here and give them an experience from not the full experience, but they still have gotten to, you know, run around and do run around and play in the water, run around in the woods and build a tree and, you know, do all these fun things.

Tim (19:39)

I mean, we always, we always don't remember, you know, we always wonder about whether or not they're are they getting anything out of this? It's just, you know, you've been going to Bradford woods for 30 some years. You don't want to be that first class and break that tradition one year. You don't, you don't want that. You want to be able to say, Hey, you know, this is I'm glad, whatever we can do, let's do it. You know, it doesn't matter the price, the cost of it. Let's just get it done. And we want to be part of it and have the kids have experienced. So they're not the ones being left out that one year. We're not gonna let, COVID beat us. You know, we want to make sure that we continue on do what we need to do to survive and, and move on.

Tim (20:15)

And like I said, I think the kids absolutely love it. I know they're exhausted today and tomorrow, they're doing a review of everything that they've learned and talked about and, and having some fun skits. And I know that a lot of the classes are going back out to those areas out in the woods, and they're going to be doing some more stuff and cool, and continuing on with that. And, and hopefully we'll, don't never forgive it just like, even if you just reach one kid, it's well worth it, you know, that's worth it. But I think we've reached more than one. Yeah. Well, and even shameless plug, if you know, folks to make the trip

Bailey (20:48)

Down to Bradford woods, we have two days this weekend that are free and open to the public, you just have to register so that we can monitor our numbers. So they just want to see



the woods there's opportunity for that. And I know that we're growing that as well. So it's not just going to be this weekend.

Nich (21:04)

Yes. Yeah. I think we're planning on expanding our, expanding our back to nature days, giving those people, just that experience to just come out and get out into nature, whether or not you're doing lessons or, you know, just running or hiking, or just sit down on the field and have lunch there, you know, just out and about then, which is great. Yeah.

Tim (21:24)

And they offer so many things at Bradford woods. I mean, from camping to, you know, I mean, th th they used to do some skeet shooting. I don't even know if they do that anymore, but, but, but they would do, they do have archery. They do Brevard woods is known. I probably one of the biggest known things they have is camp Riley. And that's an amazing thing out there to my brother who is now 60. He used to be out there when he was a teenager and he would help out with camp Riley. And that was one of his greatest memories out there. A former a friend of mine Jay price used to be one of the, one of the curriculum directors out there, you know, and we lost him years ago, but he was the best man in my wedding. And and he brought us out there and I hadn't seen him a long time. And it was, our school went out there like J I worry, you know, but what a great guy. And I surely miss him, but he introduced something to us that at least something to me that has impacted me for 23 years now. Yeah. 23 years. Wow.

Nich (22:25)

The, this is why I wanted to do another shameless plug for this podcast. And I've already ranted about it. It's all the listeners already know. Th this is why Bailey and I really wanted to do this podcast is to get stories like that, that there's just so much that happens at Bradford woods to create just a single program that like no one just understands. They just don't know, because there's so many stories that everyone that comes into Brevard woods has to tell that there's just not enough time. There's not enough means like it just that experience of when people come to Bradford woods and then they leave what they take with them. It's just so broad and amazing. Like, that's why I wanted to do this so we can get hints at those stories and talk to these people and just, yeah. Back the curtain on these experiences there

Tim (23:26)

Last year. I mean, you were there last year and well, you are too. And we had, I remember that you guys had called ahead of time, said, Hey, you know we have this young lady in a local school, who's trying to raise money for, I forget what it was.



Nich (23:41)

Yes, it was the elementary school.

Tim (23:46)

Had some form of cancer and like elementary school was raising money for her and you had called us. And I said, Hey, you know, and then I just threw it out to the kids. Hey, if you guys have changed later on the house, just bring it in what we had that moment where you put the jar right. In the middle of the kids just walked by all the change and money. It wasn't much, but it was, it was, it was \$150. We took it to the school, they loved it. We took pictures there. And got to think even that was just, it just, I think we even had parents chaperones who brought t-shirts and stuff that we had laying around or out. So we gave them to the staff.

Bailey (24:29)

They definitely were those all season. Yeah. That was awesome.

Tim (24:33)

Yeah. Just those experiences.

Bailey (24:37)

Yeah. Yeah. That's what makes the woods, the woods. It does. So it makes it magical. Yes. Well, Tim, thank you so much for sitting down and chatting with us. Is there any like final piece that you have for us, something that you want to share that big takeaway from this year?

Tim (24:54)

No, I just, I would just say, you know, with the help of our administration here and, and Brett Bailey and, and dr. Airwood that we want to continue doing what we do with Bradford woods year in, year out. And we hope we continue this traditional for a long, long time. And if ever we have a situation like we do have this year, then we now have a curriculum base that we can base things off. And then we can always come back to do this. And and the other schools who may be in the same situation just know that there is a way to call on Bradford woods and they'll come run and you don't have to deal with James Taylor song when you're down trouble and you need a helping hand. But yeah, that's, that's, that's kinda what we do.

Tim (25:39)

And I really appreciate what Bradford woods has done. The staff that you've provided this year and the help of Amara with Elmo, Ron and Melanie and all, and you guys, then we got it accomplished, and we're now we're exhausted. And we're to call it a day now, and I'm going to go home and take a lot of ibuprofen and maybe get some good sleep tonight. Yes. Yes. Well,



as Bailey said, thank you. That's all from us for now. You can join us for our next podcast that we'll cover a conversation about wellness and the outdoors.

Bailey (26:13)

Yep. So, per tradition, let us end on one big clap for Tim on three, one, two, three.
Nailed it.

OUTRO – Music by DarkMoloko called Adventure