I cannot begin to explain what a wonderful experience it was to chaperone the Half Moon, Voyage of Discovery trip, during the first week of school this year. Not only was it an exhilarating and fascinating time, but it was a trip full of lessons and learning for all the students involved.

The students from Myers Middle School (Sofia Fasullo, Taelo Sekhobo, Tajbe Starja, and Theotis Johnson) made fast friends with the students from Taconic Hills and Central Park Middle School. Not five minutes after they were introduced were they sitting in small groups, bonding, getting to know each other and laughing and sharing stories. This was wonderful to watch, and also good karma, for it helped lay the foundation for a week long voyage in very tight quarters.

The trip provides umpteen opportunities for learning and growth for all the students and adults involved. Students had the opportunity to learn about ships and sailing vessels and about Henry Hudson’s voyage of discovery. They were required to study new concepts that they learned on board and were tested by the captain in order to earn higher levels of sailors’ credentials. Students also learned to use safety harnesses in order to strap themselves to the shroud of the ship. This is like mountain climbing. Once they learned to harness, and also passed a grip test on the shroud, they had the opportunity to climb the shroud to the top of the mast.

If you have never visited the Half Moon, I highly recommend it.

Mr. Larry Drew
The following are excerpts from the students’ essays

My name is Sofia Fasullo, I am 13 years old, and currently in 8th grade at Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School. Last year I was privileged enough to be picked for the Half Moon Voyage field trip of 2013. I was very excited for this experience because I had heard about it and knew that I would learn a lot.

The Half Moon was smaller than I expected, considering this is a replica of a ship that sailed the Atlantic Ocean. At the top was a wide deck for eating, working and other activities, called the weatherdeck because of its exposure. The front (fore) and back (aft) of the ship had raised decks, foredeck, and quarterdeck. Under those two were rooms called the Folksul, Helm, (steering), and Great Cabin. Three masts with sails that were 50 feet high were on the ship. There were all sorts of ropes hanging from the sails I later learned were called riggings or clew, bunt, and martnet lines.

I think that the best aspects of the ship were the people, the projects, and the food. I enjoyed learning about the ship and working the ship. I also loved the science projects, zodiac expedition, and going aloft (climbing).

The worst aspects of the ship were probably the bathroom and limited sleeping. Honestly, they weren’t too bothersome but they weren’t the most fun either.

I would definitely recommend this voyage to anybody. I learned so much and had a lot of fun. I will remember this for a long time and use these skills in the future.

My name is Taelo Sekhobo. I am in the eighth grade and I attend Stephen and Harriet Myers middle school, which is located in Albany, New York. I was lucky to get the opportunity to live and sail on the Halfmoon ship for a week. It is an experience that I will never forget. I really did not know what to expect before I got on the ship, but I had a really good time and I learned things that I could never learn from a textbook.

A typical day on the Halfmoon involves many different tasks. Some of the work is very hard especially if someone is very weak. Mental toughness helps a lot. We had to wake up around 6:30 depending on the captain’s orders. You can’t just wake up and not make your bed like at home. Since we slept in working space, after we woke up we had to immediately repack our belongings and clear them out of the way so that we can pull up the anchor. The anchor had to be pulled up first thing in the morning so that the ship could continue on its journey on the river. We could not waste time because we had a schedule to keep to. We only got to eat breakfast after the anchor was pulled up. Since this task was difficult the cooks made sure that we ate a hearty breakfast afterwards.