Written by Steve Frank
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Resident mascot, Sugar Bear and long-time ski patroller Fay Binning visited the Valle Crucis Elementary School with the mission to teach the third and fifth graders the seven points of skier safety. A week later the children spent a day on the slopes. Following their theoretical teaching and on-snow experience the children participated in the National Ski Areas Association's (NSAA) Kid's National Safety Poster Contest. The students created a poster based on one or more of the seven elements of the "Your Responsibility Code" or one of the three elements of the "Smart Style" Freestyle Terrain Safety Program.

Three winners from each of two third and fifth grade classes were identified and awarded prizes donated by Alpine Ski Center, Ski Country Sports and Sugar Mountain Ski Resort. Top three posters from Mrs. Wilcox's third grade class include Ella Nelson, Andrew Smith and Aubrey Flowers. Top three posters from Mrs. Holste's third grade class include Julia Handley, Kate Ambler and Abigail Camp. Top three posters from Mrs. Hagaman's fifth grade class include Olivia Jochl, Luke Drummonds and Liliya Moon Bauer and top three posters from Mr. King's fifth grade class include Noah Pearson, Benjamin Stewart and Lillian Kamp respectively. A 2012-13 Sugar Mountain Ski Resort season pass was awarded to Kate Ambler, who was randomly chosen from the top twenty of the fifty-five submitted posters. Third grader Chase Miller had this to say about the poster contest, "We need safety rules on the slopes, so that kids can have a safe and enjoyable time while skiing."

"The contest not only promotes slope safety but also teaches the positive values of outdoor winter recreation. It serves as one of the many tools which strengthens our bond with the community," said Sugar Mountain Resort President, Gunther Jochl.

The kids can't wait for their posters to compete in the national competition in Lakewood, Colorado and are hoping for a first time-ever national winner from the state of North Carolina. Local winning posters are currently on display in Sugar Mountain Resort's base lodge, online at www.skisugar.com/safety and in the Valle Crucis Elementary School.

The poster contest was developed by the National Ski Areas Association as part of its Heads-Up Campaign; an ongoing safety awareness program. Its mission is to promote skiing safety awareness and education to elementary school children, to support classroom curriculum related to sports, health, and safety, and to give kids a chance to have fun and be creative while learning about slope safety.

For more information on skier safety please visit www.skisugar.com/safety or call us at 1-800-SUGARMT. For additional information on the NSAA Kid's National Safety Poster Contest please visit http://www.nsaa.org/nsaa/safety/heads_up/safety_poster_contest.asp.