

## Apalachin Rock Wall

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Apalachin Elementary students found a fun way to get fit in gym class. As NewsChannel 34's Samantha Hensell tells us, the kids are climbing their way to stronger muscles and better self-esteem.

About 10 years ago, the Apalachin parents group purchased a rock climbing wall and equipment for the elementary school. Recently the parents group donated money to update the wall. Since then the students have been getting quite a workout from climbing.



Gym teacher Perry Silvestri says, "We go over all the safety and the techniques you need to use and we get them up the rock wall. It's very good because if they're afraid, they're allowed to use the horizontal wall just to get them doing something with the rocks."

Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are allowed to use the wall. The students say they always look forward to giving it a try.

5th grader Kaitlyn Lucas says, "I think it's fun climbing the rocks and you feel like you're in the air when he's pulling really hard on your harness."

As much fun as it is to climb, the wall also presents many challenges for the students.

5th grader Jackson Bell says, "The most challenging part is when your arms and feet are shaking and you try to stay on but you can't really stay on and you try to keep going but you can't move."

5th grader Margot Springsteen says, "When you get to the small rocks you can't grip as well."

Gym Teacher Perry Silvestri says the wall does more than just boost the kids physical strength.

Gym teacher Perry Silvestri says, "Just climbing the wall themselves makes them feel good, like they've accomplished something and that's the main things I look to get out of it."

And after they've successful navigated the wall, the students say they really do feel proud of themselves.

