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FIFTH-GRADERS from Kelly Lane Intermediate School in Granby recite Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Village Blacksmith" near the blacksmith shop at Old Sturbridge Village during a recent visit. The museum is seeing a rise in field trips, with educational visits up 6 percent during the 2008-2009 school year.

GRANBY FIFTH-GRADERS VISIT OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE

Submitted by Susanna Bonta
Old Sturbridge Village
GRANBY

Fifth-graders from Kelly Lane Intermediate School are among thousands of students who have enjoyed field trips this year to Old Sturbridge Village, which is seeing a resurgence in field trip bookings.

Although much has been reported about the "disappearing field trip" due to shrinking budgets, test prep pressures and transportation worries, Old Sturbridge Village posted a 6 percent increase in education visits during the 2008-09 school year, from 59,211 to 62,846 students, the first such increase since 2001.

To answer the demand, Village educators have streamlined online registration and have added more programs linked to state and national curriculum standards. New programs added this year include history immersions, Village classrooms, self-guided investigations, Village performances, and overnights.

"The field trip increase is proof that despite tight school budgets, teachers still value the hands-on, interactive educational experiences," said Jim Donahue, president and CEO of Old Sturbridge Village, himself a former history teacher. "Teachers know that

during a visit to OSV their students will learn more, remember it longer, and have fun at the same time."

The Village provides field trip funding for qualifying Title I schools with funding provided by the Heckscher Foundation for Children, and provides teachers with information on other field trip funding sources. Old Sturbridge Village historians in costume also take the museum's history lessons to classrooms through its expanded "History on the Road" programs.

"If schools can't come to us, we will come to them," notes Donahue. "We want to give children a history lesson they will never forget."

Old Sturbridge Village celebrates New England life from 1790 to 1840, and is one of the country's oldest and largest living history museums, with more than 40 restored buildings, a working farm with heritage breed animals, heirloom gardens, and more. Field trips start at \$7 per student, and tailored programs are offered for all grades, K-12. For more information, call 508-347-0285; e-mail: osved@osv.org; or register online at www.osv.org.