

IMMERSION WEEKEND

The Arkansas AATF Chapter was able to host a French Immersion Weekend thanks to a Small Grant of \$500, matched by the Chapter.

The weekend took place in April 2009 at the secluded wilderness retreat, Ozark Natural Science Center (ONSC), located in Forum, AR. Weekend organizers, Jennifer Deacon and Jennifer Corbin, made arrangements with the Center and planned the entire weekend with the help of Joan Wright, who is the long-time coordinator of a similar Spanish Immersion Weekend. It was Joan's encouragement for several years that finally got the French project off the ground when she was able to recruit "the excited Jennifers" to take the plunge. There were eleven participants, including six experienced classroom teachers, two new teachers, two native speakers, including Amandine, an AMITY intern, and a classroom teacher-turned-administrator from Belgium who is also very active in the AATF, Michel Hallot; plus, we had an adult intermediate speaker.

Activities and workshops included campfire chats, teaching with songs, skit preparation and performance, painting in the Impressionist style (with the beautiful Ozark mountain woods as a backdrop), hiking, a presentation by Amandine of her native Rhône-Alpes region, building vocabulary by playing games, a documentary about WWII survivor Poumy, viewing of last year's hit movie *Molière*, and a *dictée*, of course. Participants also enjoyed excellent meals together. The kitchen staff at ONSC went out of their way to make sure they served the kind of food that was needed to make the French weekend complete. Using Jennifer Corbin's planned menu as a guide, the talented cooks there provided excellent French meals.

The Arkansas Chapter thanks the AATF for supporting this project which allowed it to offset the cost of renting the facility so that the price could be lower for our inaugural participants. We plan on doing another weekend retreat on a fall weekend in 2010. It is our aim to make this an annual event.