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Mid-South educator on Antarctic expedition

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By Kym Clark - [bio](#) | [email](#)

MEMPHIS, TN - (WMC-TV) - The Manager of Education at the Pink Palace Museum is off on an excellent adventure.

She's in Antarctica tagging Weddell seals and earning today's Extra Credit while sharing an extra-special lesson with area students.

We caught up with Alex Eilers at Grahamwood Elementary School before she left, showing off her polar gear and sharing her plans for the Antarctica trip.

Eilers is one of 12 Polar Trec teachers chosen for this year's trip to the southern and northern-most points of the earth.

She actually left Memphis Friday January 6, headed to Los Angeles and then on to Auckland, followed by Christ Church, New Zealand.

"Actually, I'll probably spend a day or two in Christ Church getting extreme cold weather gear and getting the computer ready for our trip to Antarctica and then we'll take a flight from Christ Church to McMertel Station," explained Eilers.

Extreme cold weather gear will definitely be needed because, although it's summertime in Antarctica right now, the temperature is still only 20 to 30 degrees, with wind chills the likes of which many of us have never seen, on a continent considered the windiest place in the world.

And she plans to stay there until February 20 tagging Weddell seals.

"They are the southern-most mammal and they all live around Antarctica, in and around the Raw Sea," said Eilers.

She added, "The seal will capture all sorts of data: the temperature, the salinity of the water, how deep the seals dive and the pressure of the water and return that information via satellite and through this tag."

It's hoped that information will lead to a better understanding of ocean climates and seals and raise awareness of what's happening in Antarctica and of the scientific research being used to discover the information.

By the way, Eilers will be keeping a daily journal and invites area students, like the ones she visited at Grahamwood to read along, email her and her team questions and, possibly get a postcard from her in Antarctica.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Polar Trec and [here](#) to visit Alex Eiler's webpage.

Eilers hopes to return to Antarctica in October to retrieve the tags which will allow scientists to analyze the data collected.

The Polar Trec is managed by Arcus and funded by the National Science Foundation.

Got an idea for Extra Credit? Send it to Kym Clark: extracredit@wmctv.com.

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