

KIDS for the BAY

Environmental education through action

Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2002

A Project of Earth Island Institute

Celebrating Our Ten Year Anniversary

By Mandi Billinge

When I first started Estuary Action Challenge, ten years ago, it was just a lot of ideas on environmental education and many bags of equipment that I was carrying on the bus!

learning. I will always remember Kaya, age five, who stood up in front of her kindergarten class and said, "Mandi, I have excitement in my tummy because we are going to the creek today!"

who said, "My favorite part of Kids for the Bay was when I went to the fishing pier to inform people of what can happen if you eat too much fish from the bay because I felt like I saved some people's lives!"

We deliver education through action that empowers children to work toward solutions to environmental problems in their own back yards.



Bay Fish Cooking Demonstration

Every year, our children learn about pollution problems in their neighborhoods, that affect the air we all breath and the food we eat from the San Francisco Bay. Our students interview local politicians and let them know the changes they would like to see, that would help to make our environment clean and healthy for every-



Creekside Planting

Now we have a large equipment storage space and offices in Berkeley. We are a part of Earth Island Institute and we have a great Advisory Board and three wonderful Program Directors. Over the past ten years we have worked with 21,000 children and 750 teachers in six different programs. Every year our students adopt, clean up and restore urban creeks in their school neighborhoods. They study creek ecology, plant creek-side trees and wild-flowers, raise and release tree frogs and organize community creek clean-up projects. Creeks become living laboratories, empowering our children to make changes in their community, and stimulating their love of

one. They teach their families how to safely prepare and cook bay fish. They go on field trips to study bay ecology and to educate fishing people on how to more safely consume food from the Bay. This experience was so empowering for Shannon, age 10,

The reason we are celebrating ten years of successful programs is because of all the incredible support we have from the community of teachers, parents, principals, funders, donors and volunteers that partner with us. And of course, none of this would be possible without the heart-warming excitement and enthusiasm of the children we teach for exploring, protecting and restoring the world around them.



Interviewing People Fishing

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KIDS for the BAY collaborates with teachers to inspire environmental consciousness in children and cultivate a love of learning. We are committed to education through action and to restoring a healthy environment for all communities.

KIDS for the BAY Programs

Our programs focus on urban creek restoration, reducing urban runoff pollution, addressing issues of pollution and environmental justice and teaching safe bay food consumption practices. We provide the opportunity for teachers to learn alongside their students in our unique professional development model. Field trips and classroom presentations integrate learning around the theme of the San Francisco Bay Estuary. Programs are designed for kindergarten through sixth grade classes. Call (510) 985-1602 for information and application, or visit our web site at www.kidsforthebay.org.

Staff News

Program Director, Sheela Shankar is beginning her third year with Kids for the Bay. Sheela's love for the environment extends into all areas of her life. She has just purchased a diesel engine car and is in the process of converting it to run exclusively on vegetable oil.

Development/Program Director, Brenda Salgado is beginning her second year with Kids for the Bay. Candice Camp, a teacher at Hawthorne School in Oakland had this to say about her experience working with Brenda last year: "Brenda is my heroine! I really appreciate the huge amount of care, energy, enthusiasm, vigilance and idealism that it takes to



EAC Staff, left to right, Brenda, Mandi, Shefali, and Sheela.

teach your programs. We were blessed to have you in our classroom!"

Program Director, Shefali Shah is beginning her third year with Kids for the Bay. Shefali has just completed her Teaching Credential at New College in San Francisco. She begins a Masters Degree in International and Environmental policy this fall.

Executive Director/Founder, Mandi Billinge is celebrating ten years working with Kids for the Bay. She is excited about the new work Kids for the Bay is doing to build and expand our community of support.

KIDS for the BAY Staff

Mandi Billinge, Executive Director/Founder
Shefali Shah, Program Director

Brenda Salgado, Development/Program Director
Sheela Shankar, Program Director

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Karin Foust, Manager, Chiron Corporation

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Steve Manning, Former Naturalist, Discovery Channel

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The Kids for the Bay Legacy

- ◆ 21,000 elementary school students, 750 teachers and over 2,000 parents have worked on KftB habitat restoration, pollution reduction and safe bay food consumption projects
- ◆ 750 teachers have been trained to continue teaching KftB environmental education programs



Investigating Bay Food Chains

- ◆ 250 community creek clean-up projects have been completed
- ◆ over 3,500 riparian plants have been planted along creeks by KftB students
- ◆ over 3,500 Pacific chorus frogs have been raised in classrooms and released into creeks
- ◆ over 4,000 student-designed posters, brochures and T-shirts about reducing urban runoff pollution have been displayed and distributed in school communities
- ◆ 1,500 student letters about reducing pollution to the bay have been sent out to politicians
- ◆ 60 classes of 30 students have interviewed people fishing on bay piers and passed out informational flyers on safe bay food consumption in seven different languages

- ◆ 60 creative student presentations to families about reducing pollution to the bay and taking precautions in fishing for, cooking and eating bay fish, have each been attended by an average of twenty parents for each presentation.

As a result of our work,

- ◆ school principals have prioritized environmental education as an integrated aspect of the school curriculum and written Kids for the Bay programs into the School Wide Development Plan
- ◆ teachers have been trained to teach hands-on, integrated environmental education curricula



Creek Field Trip

using their local community environment as a resource

- ◆ students understand the importance of their right to live in a clean and healthy environment and have the tools needed to speak out on local environmental justice issues



Rocky Shore Field Trip

- ◆ students understand the unique properties of creek & bay ecosystems and are empowered to help protect and restore these local habitats
- ◆ parents are actively engaged in their children's learning in environmental education.

Over the past ten years I have been truly blessed to work with the following Leaders in the field of Environmental Education on our staff:

Sharon Fuller, Sami Hermes, Natalie Santos, Jocelyn Manuel, Maryiam Diaab, Shefali Shah, Sheela Shankar and Brenda Salgado.

Each one of them has put their own special mark on our programs and our organization.

Our Ten Year Celebration And Reception will take place at John Muir School in Berkeley, November 9, 2002 at 10.30 a.m. We look forward to celebrating with you! ◆

Dover School Students Teaching Their Families

By Brenda Salgado

In the Kids for the Bay Pollution Reduction/Safe Bay Food Consumption program, students and their teachers learn about toxins in the San Francisco Bay. Many of these toxins can cause serious health problems such as cancer and brain damage, and children and pregnant mothers are especially at risk. Two very special classes at Dover School in San Pablo decided to share the important information they had learned with the people closest to them – their families.



Bay Fish Cooking Demonstration

run presentation. They worked in groups to teach about topics important to them. They chose to teach in both Spanish and English so that all their family members could participate.

The evening began with an introduction to the activities planned. The highlight was a demonstration by students about how to safely cook a fish from the San Francisco Bay. Students explained that most of the toxins are stored in the fat, organs, skin and scales. They poked holes in the fish so

that the fat could drain out, removing many of the toxic chemicals. They cleaned the fish and removed the toxic organs, then cooked the delicious striped bass. They ended by serving their guests striped bass with a touch of lemon on crackers.



Interviewing People Fishing

Judy Van Evera and Rosa Chavarria are the 4th grade teachers at Dover School who participated in the Kids for the Bay Pollution Reduction Program. Their students were the experts on March 14, 2002 at a special student

TEACHERS' QUOTES

"Brenda, my sincere gratitude for educating my students about their environment. They are now empowered Latino youngsters that can spread the word about environmental issues. You are a caring, knowledgeable, wonderful teacher. Gracias!"
Rosa Chavarria, Teacher, Dover School, San Pablo

"The Kids for the Bay Program is the most exciting and fruitful program I've ever experienced in the classroom in fourteen years of teaching. I am excited to continue the program with my future students and get more teachers involved."
Pam Auxter, Teacher, Dover School, San Pablo

Student groups made displays on the dangers of pesticides. By using a small fish tank and colored water, they demonstrated how the pesticides we use at home can

get into the groundwater and storm drains, and contribute to the pollution in the San Francisco Bay. They suggested using ladybugs or jalapeno pepper juice as alternatives to insecticides in the garden.

Other student groups created a 3-dimensional clay model of the San Francisco Bay complete with islands, bridges and the various water bodies around us. Using colored water, they demonstrated where fresh and salt water come from, and how they mix in the San Francisco Bay Estuary.



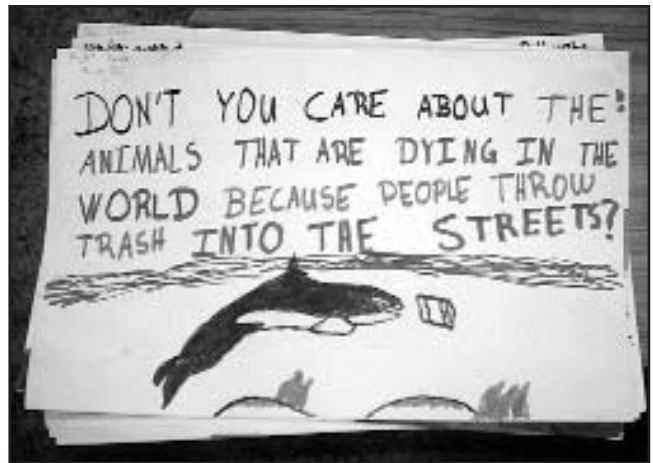
Families at Bay Fish Cooking Demonstration

Another group created a mock oil spill and demonstrated various methods used to clean up these toxic spills. There was also an experiment floating eggs, to demonstrate the density differences between fresh and salt water.

The turnout to the family demonstration was wonderful, and the children felt proud of the chance to teach others about the important things they had learned. They practiced for several weeks, and the preparation paid off in an educational and successful student run presentation.



Pollution Awareness Experiment



Pollution Awareness Poster

Several weeks later, the students went on a field trip to the Berkeley Marina to interview local fisher people. They shared information in seven different languages about the toxins present in San Francisco Bay fish, and how to safely cook them.

At the end of the school year, students were awarded certificates for their efforts to help save the San Francisco Bay, and educate others about pollution and environmental health issues. One student, Anthony, says when he grows up he wants to work

STUDENTS' QUOTES

"Ms. Salgado I want to thank you because you are the best teacher of science. When I learned how to cook a fish from the bay I loved it. It's fun science because we learn new things. Thank you for coming to our class." Karla, age 10, Dover School

"Ms. Salgado, we are all going to miss you a lot, especially because I was learning and teaching my mom to not pollute and to recycle more. And I was learning how fish breathe and how they get polluted. Thanks for everything Ms. Salgado." Liliana, age 10, Dover School

on developing alternative fuel vehicles and systems that will help us, while causing less damage to the environment. Leslie writes that because of the program, she is teaching her mom not to pollute, and to recycle more at home. Hats off to Ms. Chavarria and Ms. Van Evera's classes for taking the lead in teaching others about how to protect our environment and our health! ♦

Teacher Follow Up Program

The Kids for the Bay model is unique because it provides teachers with the opportunity to learn alongside their students. During the first year Program Directors make multiple visits to each classroom both to plan with the teachers and to teach the students in the classroom and in the local environment. The modeling of lessons and the curriculum guides we provide give teachers all the strategies and information they need to continue teaching programs themselves after their training in the first year. Kids for the Bay does not stop there. At the beginning of the second school year we deliver equipment kits to each school, stocked with everything needed to teach our programs. We also meet with teachers to help them plan how they will teach the lessons themselves and we check in with them throughout the year to see how they are doing and to give any extra support needed. The following example shows how our teachers have implemented and built on our programs:

Sylvia Cordero and Tim Marshall from Melrose School in Oakland taught the entire Urban Creek Action Program themselves this year as a result of their training with Kids for the Bay. The two teachers worked together as a team and taught the program to both their classes at the same time. They went on many field trips together to their



Teacher Gail Harris and students with the Riverside School Creek Mural

local Rainbow Creek and also went to visit a more natural creek to compare the two habitats. They worked with the City of Oakland on a creek clean up program, continuing a partnership that Kids for the Bay helped them to set up. Tim and Sylvia said the lessons that KftB had modelled for them and the equipment provided truly made it possible for them to teach the new program and really engage their students. Thank you Sylvia and Tim for your commitment to teaching environmental education in your school neighborhood. ♦

KIDS for the BAY Field Trip Program

This year Kids for the Bay added a new field trip program to Keller Beach in Point Richmond. The new site was a huge success for the teachers, students and parents who came to explore it with us. Through lessons developed by Program Director, Sheela Shankar, students enjoyed studying the animals and plants that make this



Investigating Creek Wildlife

intertidal area their home and the special adaptations that help them survive here. They also made the most of the opportunity to make sand castles at the beach and play in the safe, shallow bay waters.

"For my urban children, getting to the beach is a real plus! This field trip was a great experience for my class— none of them have ever been to Keller Beach. Several of the children went back the next weekend with their families so this means that we are opening families to new experiences. I look forward to coming on this trip again next year." Anne Todd, Teacher, Franklin School, Berkeley

Kids for the Bay field trips to our other bay and creek sites were also a great success:

"My students enjoyed the creek field trip the most of all our field trips this year. The active, hands-on learning was so valuable. Thank you Kids for the Bay!" Julie Fracchia, Teacher, The Hebrew Day School, Oakland ♦

In Their Own Words

"Your program gives students a purpose for academic pursuit." Marco Gonzales, Principal, Cesar Chavez School, Richmond

"The Kids for the Bay program elevates the children's, knowledge base and opens their eyes. They need to know what is going on around them." Mrs. Mims, Principal, Hoover School, Oakland

"The Aquatic Science Adventure Camp was great! It was well organized, stimulating and nurturing. My son loved it and we will definitely be back next summer." Amy Kurzer, Parent, Summer Camp 2002
(Child Kelin Kurzer-Ogul, age 7)

"The best thing about this program is the hands-on modeling for me. It really prepares me to teach the lessons myself. I will definitely be doing all of this again next year. The environmental justice issues are very relevant to my children." Candice Camp, Teacher, Hawthorne School, Oakland

"The creek program feeds our children internally and builds their self esteem and sense of connection to the world around them. This program has really engaged our children and increased their levels of achievement in language and science. Creating the creek mural was a wonderful opportunity for the children to work together. It really helped to develop our class as a community." Gail Harris, Teacher, Riverside School, San Pablo

"This was an awesome program with Kids for the Bay! The activities were very interesting and hands-on. The field trips were very fun and educational. I have learned a lot about teaching science and environmental issues. My students interacted with Ms. Shankar in a very positive manner." Julio Escheveria, Teacher, Cesar Chavez School, Richmond



If you would like to make a donation to support **KIDS for the BAY** please make your check payable to:

Earth Island Institute/KftB
and mail to:

KIDS for the BAY, 1771 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703

For further information, please call (510) 985-1602

or visit our website at www.kidsforthebay.org

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KIDS for the BAY Teacher Participants, September 2001 - June 2002

We truly appreciate the opportunity to work with the 120 dedicated teachers that we partnered with in the 2001 – 2002 school year.
We look forward to continuing to support your great work.



1771 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703