



Environmental education through action

KIDS for the BAY



Newsletter SPRING 2014

www.kidsforthebay.org

A Project of Earth Island Institute

The Power of our School Wide Watershed Action Program

Can you imagine getting to touch bay organisms while learning science? Would you think a science class could take place at the rocky shore of Alameda's Crab Cove? Can you picture anything more fun than spending a day at the ocean? That is just what our students and teachers do at Mira Vista School as part of the KIDS for the BAY School Wide Watershed Action Program. This is an exciting opportunity for the school community to learn about the entire watershed, from storm drains in the school neighborhood to the local creek, the San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. We make science fun and accessible for students of diverse backgrounds and foster environmental stewardship and activism.

Funded by the Dean Witter Foundation and NOAA B-WET, the program reaches the entire elementary school including Principal Gabriel Chilcott, 360 students, their families and fourteen teachers from kindergarten to fifth grade. It provides a combination of activities and classroom lessons that spans three school years and builds on concepts and skills learned from one grade level to the next.

Mira Vista School teachers are benefiting from the training provided by KIDS for the BAY. They are inspired to engage their students in classroom lessons, Action Projects and field trips and to teach the program themselves, after their training with KIDS for the BAY.



"Science is the lost subject in elementary schools because we are so focused on math and reading. It is very valuable to have KIDS for the BAY come in and help us not only teach science but take it to another level by giving students meaningful hands-on experiences with their local environment and ensuring that they become part of preservation efforts."

— Principal Gabriel Chilcott,
Mira Vista School, Richmond

A BIG THANK YOU

Thanks to all the donors who made it possible for us to receive a matching grant from the Footprint Foundation! Please read the insert for a detailed list of donors and funders.



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Program Highlights

During the current 2013-2014 school year, KIDS for the BAY is partnering with 148 teachers to deliver experiential environmental education to 4,590 elementary school students. Our programs are:

Turning Students on to Science

Building three-dimensional models is a central component of our classroom lessons. It allows students to develop science process skills including prediction, observation, hypothesis testing and reporting results. At KIDS for the BAY we use models to recreate watershed ecosystems and demonstrate the effects of pollution. Students with diverse learning styles benefit from this teaching strategy and become very engaged in active learning.

Our student scientists at Prescott Elementary School in Oakland built a model of their neighborhood and local creek and predicted what would happen when "rain" fell on the red "pesticide". A fourth grader named Douglas wrote, "I predict that the rain is going to wash the pesticides down into the creek." When they confirmed their predictions, concern and urgency set in and students made important connections between the model and real life. A student named Tai Zair exclaimed, **"The pesticides started to trickle into the creek and the whole creek got polluted. This probably will kill fish in the creek."** (See the story on page four to find out what you can do to reduce pesticide pollution.)



Connecting Students with Nature

"The creek smells so clean and I can hear all the birds!"

Nayelli, a fifth grader at Coronado Elementary School, had the time of her life during her field trip to Wildcat Creek in Alvarado Park. The day began with a sensory investigation activity called "Meet the Creek" in which students touch the plants, smell the earth and listen to the sounds of the creek. Students excitedly made observations, as they felt the water with their fingers. "Wow! It feels so cold and clean," remarked James.

A highlight of the field trip was the opportunity to investigate aquatic invertebrates, and learn about their adaptations. Students used nets to catch, observe and release water striders. "Look how they hop around all over the place!" remarked Isabella.

Students identified, drew and described various organisms including stonefly nymphs, caddis fly larvae, mayfly nymphs and aquatic snails in their journals. A student named Jonni wrote, "A water strider is a space-needing, fast-moving organism!"

After this experience everyone felt more connected with their local environment, even the parent chaperones. One parent shared, **"I learned so much about nature today and I didn't know how close this park is to where most of us live. We will definitely bring our family back here."**



"The training with KIDS for the BAY increased my knowledge of strategies and ideas for how to present my science instruction."

— Connie Cobb-Zunino, Fourth Grade Teacher,
Prescott Elementary School, Oakland

Program Highlights



Empowering Students to Take Action for the Environment

One group of students will never forget the day they spent planting and restoring their local creek.

Third graders at Cox Academy

Elementary School in Oakland had the opportunity to take action as real environmentalists. They spent a day at Sausal Creek and learned all about the creek habitat, including the plants and animals that live there. They planted native plants with our partner organization, Friends of Sausal Creek, to enhance the creek habitat. The students were very proud of their work helping the local environment.

"We had a great time on this trip and the students were thrilled to be out in nature. They learned about many different types of plants and were proud to be able to contribute to their local park."

— Lisa Perloff, Third Grade Teacher, Cox Academy, Oakland

Creating a Lasting Impact KIDS for the BAY Guardian Awards

REDWOOD HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, OAKLAND

Every year for the past six years, third grade teacher Madhuri Ream has taught KIDS for the BAY's Watershed Action Program to her students at Redwood Heights Elementary School in Oakland.

Ms. Ream has taken a lead in encouraging her grade-level partner teachers to participate and to learn to teach the program as well. Every spring she organizes an exciting bay field trip for all the third grade classes to explore the rocky shore and study plankton and birds.

"I wouldn't be able to run this program without the support of KIDS for the BAY."

— Madhuri Ream,
Third Grade Teacher,
Redwood Heights
Elementary School,
Oakland

NILES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, FREMONT

Many students at Niles Elementary School in Fremont are proud to report that they now take "army showers" to conserve fresh water and that they clean up around neighborhood storm drains to prevent garbage from polluting the San Francisco Bay Estuary. This is thanks to two special teachers, Codel Frydendahl and Lisa Gilbert, pictured here, who have taught the KIDS for the BAY Storm Drain Rangers Program for the past five years to more than 300 students as an integrated component of their third grade curriculum. A favorite part of the

curriculum is building models of the San Francisco Bay, which allows students to witness how salt water and fresh water combine in an estuary. Every year the two teachers and their students take action to reduce storm drain pollution by conducting a clean-up around Perk Ponds, inspired by the Storm Drain Rangers Program.



Say "NO" to harmful pesticides!

Americans use approximately 2.2 billion pounds of pesticides every year. Seventy-three different kinds of pesticides have been found in groundwater, which is a potential drinking water source. Concern stems from the fact that pesticides are suspected of causing cancer, birth defects and genetic mutations. You can help reduce everyone's exposure to pesticides by using organic methods of pest control and growing wildflowers that attract beneficial insects. Our students at KIDS for the BAY inspire their communities to use alternative, homemade green recipes to avoid pesticide pollution.



2014 KIDS for the BAY Summer Camp: Register Now!

Summer is the time to get in touch with the environment and have fun learning more about science and nature. KIDS for the BAY invites children aged 5-12 to spend a wonderful summer with us!

For our younger scientists aged 5-9, we have three great themes:

- Aquatic Science Adventures
- Animals, Animals, Everywhere!
- Ecology Adventures



Our young environmentalists will participate in community-building activities, nature-based games, art and journaling. They will discover their local creek, lake and bay habitats, use their senses to connect with wildlife and become scientists!

Our older explorers aged 8-12 have four amazing new camp themes to choose from:

- Estuary Explorers
- Watershed Explorers
- Bay Explorers
- Girl Scientist Explorers (*Girls Only*)

Campers will take the ferryboat to Angel Island, kayak on the bay, visit the ocean, take a BART ride to experience the Exploratorium, hike up a river and many more exciting science adventures.

To learn more about our 2014 Summer Camp Program and register online please visit:

www.kidsforthebay.org/camp

If you have any questions or want more information about our summer camp contact Aislinn or John at the KIDS for the BAY office: **510-985-1602**.

