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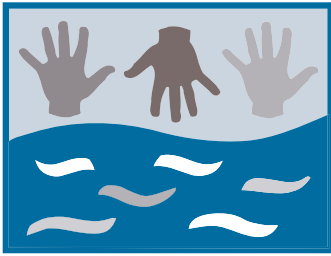
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1771 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703



KIDS for the BAY

Environmental education through action

Newsletter

Spring 2005

A Project of Earth Island Institute

Parents Take The Lead

By Mandi Billinge, Executive Director

Over the past twelve years, KIDS for the BAY has partnered with 25,000 elementary school students, 1,000 teachers and hundreds of parent volunteers to develop innovative environmental education projects. Among all of our volunteers, there is one parent in particular who stands out as someone who can make things happen, get communities working together and really have an impact. This parent is Melody Zavala from Vallemar School in Pacifica.

In September, 2003, Melody sent me an e-mail, asking if KIDS for the BAY would be interested in developing a school wide creek education and restoration program at her children's school. Within a few months, she had a fundraising plan and needed a proposal from me!

I met with Melody and the school principal, Brian Connor, to visit the school and see the creek site. I was impressed by Mr. Connor's "let's do this" attitude! He saw an opportunity to inspire children to take care of their natural environment, and he was ready to take that opportunity.

Callera Creek runs down from the hills above Pacifica and through the school grounds before flowing into the Pacific Ocean. The section of the creek on the school grounds was, at that time, dry, overgrown with invasive plants, and had been used as a place to throw garbage. In order to reach the creek, we had to climb over a gate! Yet I immediately saw the potential for this habitat to be restored and developed into an outdoor classroom!

Together we came up with a plan. Brian's first concern was to ensure that all the teachers were on board, so KIDS for the BAY made a presentation and the teachers were very enthusiastic. We prepared a kindergarten through sixth grade Creek Education Curriculum Guide for Vallemar School and led teacher training workshops for 22 teachers and additional parent volunteers.



KIDS for the BAY Executive Director, Mandi Billinge, and Parent/Creek Program Coordinator, Melody Zavala

Taking the teachers out to the creek, guiding them through the activities and investigations and showing them how to handle the educational equipment, helped the teachers become comfortable with teaching the curriculum themselves.

Melody signed up 56 parent volunteers to help take classes to the creek and support the teachers.

On October 28, 2004, 550 students from Vallemar School planted over one thousand plants beside their creek. This was an inspiring collaboration between Vallemar School, KIDS for the BAY, the City of Pacifica and Go Native nursery. The city prepared the planting area, Go Native provided the plants and Melody coordinated everything! The students arrived in groups of approximately one hundred at a time, and KIDS for the BAY taught and supervised the planting process.

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KIDS for the BAY

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 provides professional development for teachers and academic enrichment for students. Our programs use the local environment as a living laboratory for student's learning and teach the latest state science and social studies standards. Students learn about their local watershed and environmental health and justice problems. They become environmentalists by cleaning up creeks, planting trees and wildflowers, interviewing politicians about local environmental justice issues and teaching their families how to safely prepare fish to eat from the bay.

KIDS for the BAY Staff



KftB Staff 2005 top left to right: Keturah Ashfield, Shefali Shah, Sheela Shankar, Dawn Brown, Kristina Cervantes Yoshida; bottom left to right: Anthony DeCicco, Mandi Billinge, Francis Mendoza



Welcome, New Staff Member Francis Mendoza

Francis joined KIDS for the BAY in September as a Program Director. He is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley with a degree in Integrative Biology and Education.

Francis is a credentialed teacher, and taught high school science and health for two years at James Logan High School in Union City. He was born in the Philippines and moved to the Bay Area with his family when he was five. The past six months working at KIDS for the BAY has been a wonderful teaching and learning experience for Francis. This exciting year has become extra special with a recent addition to the Mendoza family: Francis and his wife, Joann, have a new baby girl named Maya! Congratulations Francis, and welcome to KIDS for the BAY!



New Responsibilities for Sheela Shankar

Sheela started working at KIDS for the BAY as a Program Director in 2001 and is now an Education Director. With the New Year came new responsibilities: Sheela began to focus on fundraising, program development and evaluation, and staff supervision. She is extremely excited about this opportunity to gain more experience in organizational and program development. In June Sheela will be finishing her Master's Degree in Environmental Education from California State University, Hayward. She is already applying her studies to her work. Sheela is looking forward to continuing to develop her skills and grow with KIDS for the BAY. Congratulations, Sheela!

Newsletter Editor: Mandi Billinge Graphic Designer: Kelly Marquis

KIDS for the BAY Advisory Board

Tricia Andres, Pixar Animation **Leillani Alo**, Goldman Environmental Prize
Julie Bembow, Consultant **Steve Manning**, The Cheese Board **Brenda Salgado**, Breast Cancer Action

To Contact Us:

KIDS for the BAY is located at 1771 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703.

We can be reached at (510) 985-1602 or via email at kftb@aol.com.

Visit us on the web at www.kidsforthebay.org.

KIDS for the BAY Summer Camp

For students ages 5 – 10 years

Our younger students, ages 5 – 7 years, enjoy fishing for crabs, catching waterstriders, studying damselfly nymphs, experimenting with estuary water, plant art, nature hikes and games. Camp sites include Berkeley Marina, Jewel Lake, Strawberry Creek and Lake Anza.

Summer Camp for 8 – 10 year old students:

In this week long Aquatic Science Adventure Camp students take a boat trip on the San Francisco Bay and study the animals and plants living in the open water. They complete more detailed investigations of bay-estuary and creek habitats, including water quality testing and they learn how to



Children enjoy the refreshing waters of Lake Anza during the KIDS for the BAY Summer Camp

take action to help solve some of the issues affecting their local environment. Camp sites include Berkeley Marina, Wildcat Creek and Lake Anza.

In 2004 our camps sold out very early in the year and we had waiting lists for every session. Please apply early to ensure your place.

5-7 years:
6/13 – 6/17
6/27 – 7/1
7/11 – 7/15

8-10 years:
6/20 – 6/24
7/18 – 7/22

Please call **(510) 985-1602** to receive an application form in the mail or visit our website at www.kidsforthebay.org.



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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Parents Take the Lead ... continued from page 1

One of the most inspiring aspects of the planting for me was the "buddy" system, which paired up older and younger students. The older students helped the younger students to plant and were wonderful role models.

There was a real sense of pride and achievement in the success of this restoration effort. The creek area now has a series of three beautiful wetlands that flow into the creek, and willows and alders along the creek banks to provide shade. Future plans include pathways around the wetlands leading to the creek, a bridge

across the creek and a raised deck to enable creek studies to take place in all weathers.

Melody is currently fundraising for the next stage of the Callera Creek Program, in which KIDS for the BAY will lead creek restoration activities for all the classes in the school.

All of this began with one parent going to her school principal and asking how she could help. What an inspiration to all of us! ♦

"Working with KIDS for the BAY has been critical to the successful initiation of our creekside science curriculum at Vallemar School. KftB developed the standards-based curriculum that we needed and their teacher trainings were hands-on and effective. The KIDS for the BAY staff is collaborative and flexible and they know their subjects (science and environmental education) and their clients (students and teachers) very well."

—Melody Schram Zavala, Parent Coordinator, Vallemar School, Pacifica

"I am thrilled that the KIDS for the BAY Creek Curriculum is very well aligned with our science standards. I am excited to use the guide and our creek. Thank you very much for everything. Your presentation was well organized and positive."

—Kelly Shrives, Second Grade Teacher, Vallemar School, Pacifica

Vallemar School Students proudly show their plant at the creek restoration event.

"Our Creek Program has created a wonderful, unique wilderness adjacent to the school. Since we have planted it with native species, the students are very involved in watching to see how it evolves as the seasons change. Right now everyone is excited about the two Mallard ducks that are nesting just downstream. The other day they were swimming up and riding down the currents from the culvert under the playground!"

—Brian Connor, Principal, Vallemar School, Pacifica



Changing Habits For A Lifetime

By Sheela Shankar

In our Four Rs Action Program KIDS for the BAY students are learning to reduce, reuse, recycle, and rot (compost) to lessen the amount of waste going to landfills. We are currently partnering with thirty teachers and nine hundred students in the cities of Oakland, Berkeley, San Leandro and San Lorenzo. With every new class of students and teachers, we are seeing a new wave of environmentalists who are committed to making smarter choices. Our students are teaching their families, friends, and schoolmates how easy, fun, and rewarding it is to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost for a lifetime.

Doug Wartenberg, a fourth grade teacher at Dayton Elementary School in San Leandro, was amazed to see his students practicing the principals of "reuse" right after the lesson. His students started to bring in reusable containers and thermoses for lunch, instead of disposable packaging.

Susan Weinberg, a fourth grade teacher at Hillcrest Elementary School in Oakland, said that ever since the recycle lesson her students have been constantly rummaging through the garbage cans at school to pull out items that can be recycled and reused! Other students have committed to using less paper, reusing water bottles, and even eating more fruits and vegetables to feed the scraps to the red wiggler worms in their compost bin.



A student gets up close and personal while investigating red wiggler worms and compost.

"Our students feel empowered by their knowledge of the Four Rs. Many families have changed their routines at home because their children have taken on the responsibility of recycling. We feel that students have learned that they can really make a difference in their community, state, country, and the world. They are proud of the small steps they have taken and they continue to look for ways to use their new understanding." —*Judi Mitchell and Marsha McLaughlin, Chabot Elementary School, Castro Valley*

In Berkeley Arts Magnet School (B.A.M.) in Berkeley, we are part of a commitment to reduce the entire school's waste stream. Last year we partnered with Madhuvanti Khare and her third grade class. B.A.M. has since

incorporated lunch-time milk carton recycling as well as other waste reduction techniques. School staff, students, and families, and city representatives are working together to streamline the waste reduction process. Principal Lorna Skantze-Neill said that the KftB Four Rs Action Program at Berkeley Arts Magnet is, "an excellent compliment to what we are doing here in our school."



Students at Le Conte Elementary School created original posters that teach about the benefits of recycling.

Our students are inspiring change at home too! Many students are teaching their families to reduce, reuse, recycle and rot. A student in Debbie Rundle's fourth grade class at Hesperian Elementary School in San Lorenzo, was inspired to take her new-found information about plastic recycling home with her. She taught her family exactly what should and shouldn't be deposited in the recycle bin. Her family was so impressed that they put her in charge of the weekly recycling duties! Recycling of plastics is especially confusing because the type of plastic that can be recycled varies from city to city and sometimes from year to year.

"The Four Rs are important to me because I don't want to live in a world with smelly waste all over. I can use the Four Rs at home by refilling water bottles, recycling, and making art out of trash. I will use both sides of a piece of paper and then recycle it. Thank you very much for teaching me about the Four Rs KIDS for the BAY!" —*Fiona, Dayton Elementary, San Leandro* ♦



A student from Malcolm X Elementary School in Berkeley proudly displays her reuse art project pieces.



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Mandi Billinge, Executive Director/Founder

Science Adventure Birthday Parties

KIDS for the BAY will help you make your child's Birthday Party into a Science Adventure they will not forget! Choose from the following fun, exciting, learning parties for 5 – 10 year olds.



DINOSAUR DAY



KIDS for the BAY will simulate an archaeological dig in your backyard or sand box. Party guest paleontologists will discover dinosaur bones and create their own dinosaur skeleton, make fossils, hatch baby dinosaurs and enjoy a dinosaur snack.

BAY DISCOVERY FIELD TRIP



Meet KIDS for the BAY at the pretty Berkeley Marina Shorebird Park and have your Birthday Party in the outdoors. Hold a crab, touch a sea squirt and dissect squid or make fish prints in this up close encounter with the San Francisco Bay. Play fun food chain games and learn to take care of nature and return everything to its place.



CREEK DISCOVERY FIELD TRIP

Meet KIDS for the BAY at Wildcat Creek in Alvarado Park, Richmond, or at Sausal Creek in Dimond Park, Oakland. Catch and investigate aquatic invertebrates including mayfly nymphs, damselfly nymphs, diving beetles and more. Use two-way microscopes for a closer look and return everything to its home in the creek. Make beautiful plant art and play fun food chain games. Be sure to reserve your picnic table to have a fun party in the outdoors.



LET'S EXPERIMENT

KIDS for the BAY will bring an exciting science festival into your home. Party guests will create exploding volcanoes, experiment with floating rainbows, and create cool lava lamps to take home. We'll finish the party with super exploding rocket poppers!



KITCHEN CHEMISTRY

This is recommended for older party guests (8-10 years old), who LOVE chemistry! Party guests will learn chemical reactions that will be sure to amaze! Young scientists will experiment with endothermic and exothermic reactions, create and explode hydrogen bubbles and design and launch their very own exploding rocket.



Birthday Party Theme Cakes

Please let us know, when we call to confirm your party, if you would like a specially designed Birthday Party Theme Cake. We can put you in touch with our cake lady.



Please complete the application form on the reverse of this flyer. Please apply early to ensure your date and party theme preference.



From The Desk of the Executive Director

Budget cuts in our public schools continue to reduce crucial resources for education and critical professional development opportunities for teachers. Our national government is failing to include environmental concerns on the agenda. In this environment, the work of KIDS for the BAY is more important than ever. We continue to expand our programs, to inspire environmental consciousness, a love of learning and education through action in our communities.

In the 2004 – 2005 school year, KIDS for the BAY expanded our successful new program, the **Watershed Action Program**, throughout Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. Innovative new partnerships with county

government agencies have facilitated this expansion. In Contra Costa County, we signed a new contract with the Clean Water Program. Donald Freitas, the Program Manager, also encouraged city clean water programs to partner with us. We are currently partnering with the cities of Antioch, El Cerrito, Danville, Lafayette and Martinez. We plan to add new cities to the partnership next school year.

In addition, Tonya Redfield, the Program Manager for the Contra Costa County Watershed Project, signed a contract to partner with KIDS for the BAY for the next three years.

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the Watershed Action Program and county-wide contracts have enabled us to outreach to schools that have had little experience with environmental education. At Seaview School in San Pablo, we partnered with Aki Creelman and her fourth grade class. Partnering with KIDS for the BAY gave Aki the confidence to go for it and try out some of her own ideas! Her class chose to adopt Garrity Creek,

which flows past the school grounds. This creek was targeted for development and the students worked with the neighborhood group, Friends of Garrity Creek, to oppose this development. They also completed a water quality testing project for their creek and a creek health assessment to determine if the creek could potentially support a population of Pacific Chorus Frogs. Having identified an appropriate habitat, the students requested an aquarium to set up. They raised the frogs in their classroom and released them into their creek.

In the **Four Rs Action Program**, we extended and expanded our contract with the Alameda County

Waste Management Authority (StopWaste.org) to include new school districts and increase our work on program evaluation. Please see the *Changing Habits For A Life Time* story on page five for more details on the impact of this work.

KIDS for the BAY has a new Science Adventure Birthday Parties program, which brings fun, hands-on science to our families around the bay. See the flyer on page six for more details.



KftB Program Director, Kristina Cervantes Yoshida, and Seaview School students test creek water quality.

As we expand, we continue to attract dedicated, talented and highly qualified new staff. We welcome our new Associate Director, Dawn Brown, and new Program Director, Francis Mendoza, to our staff this year. Please see Staff News on page four.

We invite you to visit our website at **www.kidsforthebay.org** for more news from KIDS for the BAY. We welcome your partnership in our important work.

Mandi Billinge,

Executive Director/Founder