

Environmental education through action

KIDS for the BAY

Newsletter

Spring 2009

www.kidsforthebay.org

A Project of Earth Island Institute



KIDS for the BAY Receives Third National Award

On October 18, 2008, KIDS for the BAY was presented with a prestigious and competitive national award from the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE). The NAAEE recognized KIDS for the BAY for "Outstanding Service to Environmental Education" by an organization at the local level.

The NAAEE hosts a professional development conference every year that brings together environmental educators and professionals nationally and globally with the purpose of promoting excellence in the field of environmental education.

KIDS for the BAY Education Director Shefali Shah attended the conference to receive the award and was recognized at a luncheon award ceremony.

Since 1992 KftB has partnered with 44,000 students and 2,000 teachers. Our programs turn school students on to science, empower students to take environmental action and create a lasting impact through our unique Teacher Training and School Wide Impact models. Our commitment to best practices inspires our commitment to multicultural environmental education and diversity.

Through our ten environmental education programs, KftB students are empowered to take action and change the environment one neighborhood at a time. ♦

"Receiving this award on behalf of KIDS for the BAY was not only an honor for me, but an incredible recognition of our organization's work over the past 16 years. I was happy to have been chosen by KIDS for the BAY to receive this national award that acknowledges KIDS for the BAY as a leader in the field of environmental education."

— Shefali Shah, Education Director,
KIDS for the BAY



Shefali Shah accepts the NAAEE award for KIDS for the BAY.

KIDS for the BAY Action Project in Fifth Grade Inspired Felix Ratcliff, Now a Field Biologist!

"I remember two things from fifth grade: a tall, English lady coming into the classroom to teach us about nature, and taking a trip to the Bay to help the Least Terns."

— Felix Ratcliff, Field Biologist

Felix Ratcliff grew up in Berkeley, California and attended Malcolm X Elementary School. Malcolm X Elementary is set in a highly urbanized neighborhood just a few blocks away from the KIDS for the BAY office. As a fifth grader fifteen years ago Felix had the unique opportunity to participate in a program with an innovative new organization called KIDS for the BAY (KftB). Executive Director and Founder Mandi Billinge taught Felix's fifth grade class about local ecology, pollution and the importance of a healthy watershed environment. Felix had few environmental education opportunities as he grew up and KftB was the only program that came into the classroom and brought science to the students. "As a child, I explored nature with my family, but KftB was such an eye opener into studying nature in a scientific way," said Felix.

A key component of KIDS for the BAY programs is that the students participate in an action project where they have a direct, positive impact on their environment. Felix and his class created a new habitat for Least Terns and Snowy Plovers. In the classroom, teachers and students created Least Terns out of wire and paper maché. The students then traveled to the Hayward Shoreline where they spread oyster shells on an island and proudly placed



Felix Ratcliff working as a field biologist in 2008



Felix in fifth grade

their Least Tern decoys in their new homes. Any Least Terns flying by could then see other birds of the same species on the island and the decoys would help attract the birds to nest there.

"I have a vivid memory of the field trip out to the Bay and the Hayward interpretive center. As a kid, I really got the idea of the project. I remember thinking that the birds would be flying overhead and look down and say, 'Hey look, there are more terns over there.' The combination of the hands-on projects with KIDS for the BAY and the trip to the Bay really stuck with me."

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Ricardo Torres Shares Why He Gives to KIDS for the BAY

"My good friend Lani Alo (President of the KftB Advisory Board) declared herself an environmentalist many years ago, before it was common – let alone fashionable – to care for the Earth. I remember thinking it a little wacky, but we were young and appropriately idealistic back then. So I humored her by vaguely voicing my approval and telling her I too cared about the issues for which she so passionately lobbied.

In truth I didn't really get this whole environmental business. But Lani kept at it, and kept working on converting her friends and this heathen in particular. The one organization she worked tirelessly to promote over the years

was a group called KIDS for the BAY. She knew its founder, Mandi Billinge, personally and in due time Lani cast all of her eggs in the KftB basket and joined its board of directors.

Eventually Lani approached me to consider a charitable gift to KftB. I'm a research analyst by training so I did a little bit of digging, looking into their history, their founder, their mission and values. On all counts it was clear to me that KftB did great work, and fit nicely with my own values and criteria for my charitable giving.

For me two things are critical in a non-profit, aside from its mission. First, the organization should not re-invent the wheel; in other words if

another non-profit is doing the same thing well then why waste resources by duplicating the effort? Secondly, an organization should employ a model that will prove itself durable and sustainable over the long term.

In my view KIDS for the BAY fits these criteria perfectly. To my knowledge no one is doing as much to educate low-income school kids in the Bay Area about their environment. KftB recently celebrated its 15 year anniversary and I suspect KftB and Mandi (and Lani, too) will be around 15 years from now as well, doing all the great stuff they do. Frankly I'm just thrilled to be able to help their efforts via my charitable giving." ♦

Thank you so much to Ricardo for his lead gift to KIDS for the BAY in 2008 at the Watershed Activist Level.

Felix Ratcliff, Field Biologist! Continued from page 2

As a result of the hard work of Felix and his classmates, a new habitat was created which became the home of not only Least Terns but also the endangered Western Snowy Plover.

Felix later graduated from University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) with an Environmental Studies Degree and an emphasis in biology. He went on to refine his skills as a field biologist and ornithologist by working at the UCSC Natural History Museum, and the University of California Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. Currently Felix works for Condor Country Consulting, Inc. where he is a field biologist working on animal tracking and wildlife identification and monitoring.

"What really got me more focused on biology was learning about birds. Birds are such a great animal example for working with kids and getting them excited about science. They have feathers and they fly. They are just amazing! The KftB program was my first experience with birds which became an important aspect of my interest in field biology."

Felix's story is an example of KftB's success and our dedication to our three key goals: turn children on to science, inspire environmental action, and create a lasting impact.

"Being exposed to nature and caring for our environment at a young age is super inspiring. When else are you going to instill in someone a nature ethic than when they are still forming their personal ethic?"

Fifteen years later, as Felix reflects on his experience with KftB, he recognizes the positive and important impact it has had on his life.

"Going to the Bay and helping the birds introduced me to conservation and restoration. It showed me that as a kid you can have a positive effect on the environment with clear and consistent results. That is a pretty powerful thing for an eleven year old to experience." ♦

Interview with Felix by Deborah Zierten,
Program Coordinator, KIDS for the BAY.

KIDS for the BAY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The KIDS for the BAY 2009 Strategic Plan was created over an eight-month period of consulting with staff and Advisory Board members and with reference to our in-depth program evaluation reports, which provide extensive feedback from our program participants. A staff retreat and many Leadership Committee meetings were dedicated to the development of the plan as well as a series of meetings between the administrative staff of KIDS for the BAY.

Mission Statement

KIDS for the BAY collaborates with teachers to inspire environmental consciousness in children and cultivate a love of learning.

Vision Statement

KIDS for the BAY is striving to create a world in which:

- ◆ all children:
 - have direct access to nature and to meaningful, educational experiences in nature
 - learn hands-on environmental science in the classroom and in the outdoors
 - are engaged and active environmental stewards, who make a difference in their environment, make positive environmental choices in their lives and understand environmental justice issues.
- ◆ all teachers feel supported in teaching environmental education and have all the resources they need to effectively teach and engage their students.
- ◆ all schools strongly value environmental education and it is integrated into the school wide curriculum and culture.

Values Statement

KIDS for the BAY is committed to:

- ◆ being a model organization in the field of environmental education
- ◆ diversity
- ◆ place-based environmental education.

Core Strategies

Four core strategies were developed during the strategic planning process, which will guide our work and define our program and administrative priorities over the next three – five years.

ONE: Optimize the efficiency of all KIDS for the BAY operations.

Background

There is a pressing need to ensure organizational and fiscal stability and to increase cash flow in the current challenging economic climate. In order to achieve this we will need to increase service revenue, individual donations, foundation and corporate funding and to increase the efficiency of our government invoicing process. We will need to assess the administrative staff needs of the organization and ensure the maximum efficiency of our administrative staff plan with the resources available.

Through the strategic planning process we have identified the programs we will focus our resources on over the next three to five years. There is a need to ensure that all projected expenses for these programs are in-line with actual costs and that these programs are most efficiently staffed to ensure the highest quality and the maximum return on funders' investments.

Check our website: www.kidsforthebay.org!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY continued

TWO: Develop a Governance Strategy for KIDS for the BAY

Background

As a project of Earth Island Institute (EII) the EII Board of Directors is legally and fiscally responsible for KftB. Therefore KftB does not require an official Board of Directors. KftB has managed an Advisory Board/Leadership Committee for the past eight years, which has advised on and assisted with important leadership issues over the years. As a result of discussions in strategic planning the need to more clearly define the role of the Advisory Board/Leadership Committee and to determine how it can be most helpful to the organization has arisen as a high priority.

THREE: Increase the Visibility of KIDS for the BAY

Background

KftB is well known in the field of environmental education and is the recipient of three national and several local awards that recognize our best practices in the field. We are well known and well represented in local and regional environmental education networks. However, our work and our organization are not well known to the general public. There is a need to increase our visibility in the San Francisco Bay Area to appeal to individual donors and potential new funders and clients.

FOUR: Expand our programs by expanding our operations on a regional basis.

Background

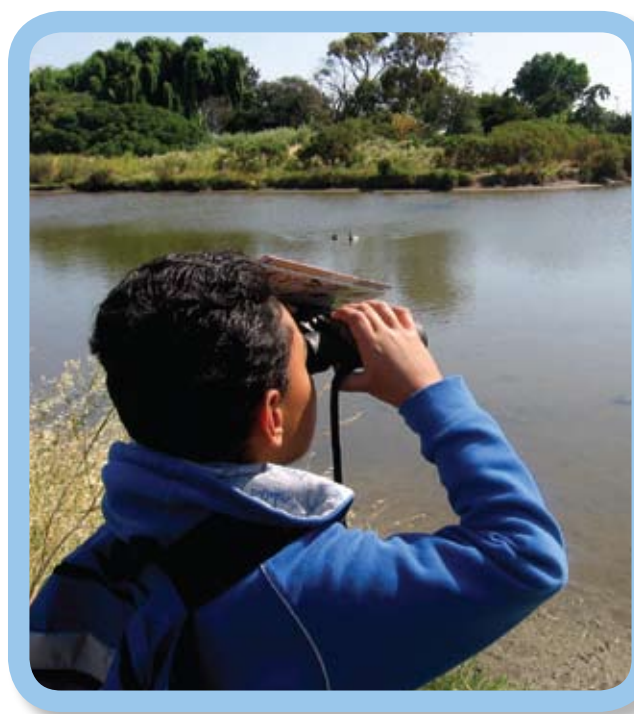
KftB programs have a local, place-based focus. Therefore our funding base is very local. In order to expand our programs, there is a need to expand to new regions to maintain the local, place-based focus of our work and to attract local funding sources. Possible new target regions include: San Mateo County, San Francisco, the North Bay, Silicon Valley and the Peninsula. We often receive inquiries from potential clients for our services from all of these areas. The need for our programs seems

to be as strong in these regions as it is here in the East Bay. There is a need to assess potential funding and fee-for-service income available in these new regions and expand our services as appropriate.

Moving Forward

This is an exciting time for KIDS for the BAY as we move forward to develop and implement our core strategies over the next three to five years. We look forward to the creative work that we will accomplish to fulfill our mission and deliver our high quality programs in environmental education.

Thank you to the KIDS for the BAY staff for their thoughtful input to the creation of the vision and values statements and to the Leadership Committee of the Advisory Board for their participation in developing all aspects of the Strategic Plan. ♦



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Following in Felix's Footsteps – Least Tern Habitat Restoration Project 2008

"I really like birds. Our project helped the Least Terns so that they can protect themselves from predators. The project also made me smile."

— Cole, Third Grade Student, Paden Elementary School, Alameda

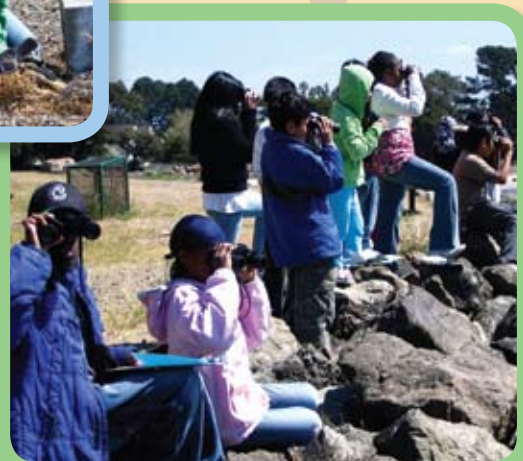
Students in KIDS for the BAY's Watershed Action Program at Paden Elementary School in Alameda had the opportunity to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service on a habitat restoration action project. They placed oyster shells in a special habitat for Least Tern birds to lay their eggs in and to provide the



Students put oyster shells on the beach to enhance Least Tern nesting habitat.

hatched chicks with protection from predators. As the students excitedly spread out the oyster shells, they noted that the shells are similar in color to the Least Tern eggs and babies and so will provide

protection and camouflage for the birds in their nesting habitat. The entire class was inspired by helping their local environment and the creatures who inhabit it. ♦



Students use binoculars to study shore birds.

Field Trip to Crab Cove

KIDS for the BAY field trips give students and teachers a direct, hands-on experience in a natural watershed habitat. In addition to learning the science of the habitat, students make real connections with nature and develop further reasons to protect and care for their watershed. KftB Instructors meet each class at their field trip site and lead scientific investigations with students while modeling them for the teacher.

A highlight of the field trip for Ms. Booster's class from Hillside Elementary School in Oakland was using microscopes to closely examine plankton found in the Bay water at Crab Cove in Alameda. Students handled the microscopes with care, and rose to the occasion by showing good scientific behaviors, including making careful observations, recording detailed notes



Students conduct a shoreline clean-up during their field trip to Crab Cove.

and creating scientific drawings.

For many students, including those in Ms. Schmidt's class from Sequoia Elementary School in Oakland, the field trip was their first experience observing microscopic organisms. "I never knew there would be so many animals in such a small amount of water," shared Tammy.

The field trip also proved to be the first opportunity to use binoculars and bird identification guides for many students. They used both pieces of equipment to identify shorebirds. They were enthralled with the large number and variety of birds they saw, which included egrets, Great Blue Herons, coots and terns. Students from John Muir Elementary School were especially drawn to the terns. They watched intently as the birds rapidly flapped their wings, hovering in one place above the water before they dove quickly into the water to catch their prey.

Ms. Schimdt was very excited to see how enthusiastic her students were during the field trip. "This is a good opportunity for them to practice using scientific equipment and start thinking about life in a different way," she said. ♦

Thank you

to our generous funders and donors in 2008

Foundations, Corporations, Public Agencies and Other Funders

Alameda County Clean Water Program
As You Sow Foundation
Bernard Osher Foundation
S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
California Bay-Delta Authority Watershed Program
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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/ Bay Watershed Education & Training Program
Rose Foundation
Sierra Club Building Bridges to the Outdoors Project
Town of Danville
Wells Fargo Bank
West Contra Costa County Integrated Waste Management Authority/ Recyclemore

2008 Donors

Environmental Visionaries:

\$10,000 +
Anonymous

Watershed Activists: **\$5,000 +**

Ricardo Torres

Estuary Guardians: **\$2,500 +**

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Mara Flanagan & Tim Asher

Habitat Protectors: **\$1,000 +**

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Pamela Auxter
Mandi Billinge & James Kliegel
Kuppe & Shaku Shankar
Cheese Board
Pizza Collective

Bay Sponsors: **\$500 +**

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Creek Stewards: **\$250 +**

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Susan Wilde
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Carrie Wilson & Wick Pancoast
Dennis & Camra Wolf
Jerry & Gloria Yoshida

What's New in our Ninth Year of Summer Camp?

Get ready for scientific adventure and tons of fun investigating the amazing eco-systems of the San Francisco Bay Area! This year we are excited to offer a number of new additions to our summer camp programs; an expanded number of camp sessions and new activities, including a field trip to the Pacific Ocean for our eight to ten year old camps. Additionally you can now register and pay for summer camp on our website.

In our summer camps your child will explore the outdoors and scientifically investigate four unique habitats while learning how to protect and care for the local environment. To register please visit our website at www.kidsforthebay.org. E-mail jonah@kidsforthebay.org for more information.

KIDS for the BAY 2009 Summer Camp Schedule

East Bay Aquatic Science Adventure Camp

Ages 5-7:

June 15 – June 19
June 22 – June 26
July 6 – July 10
July 13 – July 17
July 20 – July 24
July 27 – July 31

Ages 8-10:

June 15 – June 19
June 22 – June 26
July 6 – July 10
July 13 – July 17
July 20 – July 24

San Francisco Aquatic Science Adventure Camp

Ages 5-7:

July 27 – July 31
Located in the Presidio



Aquatic Science Adventurers fish for crabs at the Berkeley Marina!



A young scientist collects arthropods with a "pooter" in Tilden Park!



1771 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703

