



Environmental education through action

KIDS for the BAY

Newsletter

Spring 2011

www.kidsforthebay.org

A Project of Earth Island Institute

To the Sea!

KIDS for the BAY's work was recently recognized by world-renowned singer-songwriter and activist, Jack Johnson! Jack has sold over 8 million albums worldwide and was recently chosen to receive the 2010 Humanitarian Award at this year's Billboard Touring Awards, which recognizes the philanthropic efforts of a touring professional. Jack chose to support KIDS for the BAY (KftB) because of our commitment to environmental education through action. KftB was showcased at the Village Green at his Greek Theater Concert in Berkeley in October 2010 during his "To the Sea" Tour. A wonderful slide show of KftB students was shown during the concert. Jack also provided KftB with a \$2,500 matched donation. We appreciate the support that Jack Johnson has shown for KftB in this exciting partnership.

Program Director Deborah Zierten was thrilled to meet Jack during the concert. She said, "It was such an inspirational and exciting experience being a part of the Village Green at the Jack Johnson concert. It gave me the unique opportunity to meet diverse members of our community



Jack Johnson and Deborah Zierten, KftB Program Director, at the "To The Sea" concert

who want to learn about and support our efforts to inspire environmental consciousness. It is obvious that Jack Johnson, his family, and everyone who works for him understand the importance of community support, education and caring for our environment." ♦

4,230 Inspired Environmentalists!

Last school year, KIDS for the BAY provided programs for a total of 4,230 school students and 120 teachers. Over 1,000 additional school peers and 400 parents also participated in our programs as well as many community volunteers and collaborators. Our environmental education programs engaged elementary school students in active learning and

critical thinking in the classroom and in the field. For most of our students this was a rare opportunity to experience science and to connect with and care for their local environment.

In 2010, 4,230 KIDS for the BAY students improved their local environment by taking action to:

- plant native plants beside creeks
- test creek water quality and share findings with local officials

- make safe bay fish consumption presentations to families and school peers
- complete creek, bay, ocean and neighborhood clean-up projects
- stencil storm drains with the message, "No Dumping: Drains to Bay!"
- make natural pesticides for use in school gardens
- paint informative watershed murals on school walls
- create and present a newscast video with the superhero "Water Boy"!

"My students never had science and environmental education come alive so much! This experience was so wonderful!"

*— Melissa Williams, Fourth Grade Teacher
Civicorps Elementary School, Oakland*



This school year 4,200 more students are becoming Inspired Environmentalists with KIDS for the BAY. By our 20 Year Anniversary in 2012, our goal is to celebrate the efforts of 60,000 students to protect and restore the environment we all share. ♦

Message from Mandi Billinge, Executive Director/Founder

Volunteering your time and expertise for a cause that you believe in is one of the highest levels of commitment a person can make to their community. In 2010, KIDS for the BAY was honored to have ten outstanding people join our new Advisory Board and make that commitment to our organization. Our strategic planning process helped us to identify the need to move from a Leadership Committee to an Advisory Board structure. Our new Advisory Board President Leilani Alo helped me to recruit our new members and I am very thankful to Leilani for volunteering for KIDS for the BAY over the past ten years and providing thoughtful and inspiring leadership.

Our Advisory Board includes experts in education, environmental justice, personnel, communications, governance, fundraising and many other fields. This group of professionals is helping to guide and support our work as we continue to implement our Strategic Plan over the next few years. Each of them has shared their inspiration for volunteering for and donating to KftB on our website.

I am truly inspired by the commitment and time that each of our Advisory Board Members gives to KIDS for the BAY and I am dedicated to working with our board to benefit our organization. ♦

"I am excited about being associated with an organization that delivers quality programs, raises environmental concerns, and educates our children about their responsibility to protect and preserve their natural habitat. I appreciate the opportunity to work with an exceptional executive director and staff that have created a thriving organization."

— Elaine Miyamori, SPHR

"KIDS for the BAY does its part to ensure that our students have the opportunity to fall in love with the environment and learn important ways that they can protect it. I am honored to be a part of the Advisory Board."— Laura Prival

"By teaching the skills of researcher, scientist, scholar, inquirer, innovator, colleague, environmentalist and friend, KIDS for the BAY is helping to develop passionate, engaged and informed citizens. I love that!" — Ilana Kaufman

KIDS for the BAY Staff

Mandi Billinge, *Executive Director/Founder*
 Sheela Shankar, *Associate Director*
 Jonah Landor-Yamagata, *Program Director*
 Deborah Zierten, *Program Director*
 Jose Luis Martinez, *Program Coordinator*
 Bhavana Mody, *Program Coordinator*
 Evan Wong, *Program Coordinator*
 Zoe Madden-Wood, *Office/
 Communications Assistant*

Advisory Board Members

Leilani Alo,
Advisory Board President

Kalyan Ayloo	Laura Prival
Chris Bazar	Sumana Rao
Marco Gonzales	Shefali Shah
Ilana Kaufman	Natalie Silverstein
Elaine Miyamori	



KIDS for the BAY Advisory Board and staff at the first annual Advisory Board Dinner: left to right Sheela Shankar, Laura Prival, Marco Gonzales, Leilani Alo, Natalie Silverstein, Kalyan Ayloo, Jonah Landor-Yamagata, Sumana Rao, Deborah Zierten, Shefali Shah, Mandi Billinge, Elaine Miyamori.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Environmental Experts

Every third grade student at World Academy School in Oakland can tell you all about their local watershed environment. They are eager to share this knowledge and have made many presentations during the past two school years. "Imagine your hand is a watershed," third grader Gloria explained to her audience of first grade students, with her right hand raised. "Your fingertips are the mountains. When it rains the water goes down the mountains, into the river, and then to the bay and ocean."

"The San Francisco Bay is an estuary. An estuary happens when salt water mixes with fresh water in a partially enclosed area." During a presentation to a large audience of students, teachers and parents in the school auditorium, third grade student Christopher pointed out where the salt water and the fresh water sources are on a map, and located the city of Oakland. The map was a gigantic poster of the San Francisco Bay created by Christopher and his classmates.

Another student, Cheryl, shared her thoughts on the importance of fresh water: "We need water so animals and plants can live and people need water too! You can save water by turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth and flushing the toilet less." Her classmate Elizabeth talked about food chains and the biomagnification of pollution. Pointing to a poster of an aquatic food chain she explained, "Crabs can eat pollution in their food and when we eat crabs we can get pollution in our bodies too."

In fact, at World Academy School in Oakland many of the students' families do catch and eat fish from the San Francisco Bay. Three third grade classes



World Academy School students teach about their watershed



World Academy School students demonstrate how to safely cook and prepare bay fish

made special presentations to their families to teach them important

information about pollution in the bay and safe fishing and cooking practices. Fish in the San Francisco Bay is contaminated with toxins including methylmercury, polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins and pesticides. Consumption of these pollutants increases the risk of neurotoxicity and cancer, especially in children.

The third grade environmental experts educated their families about specific pollutants such as pesticides and mercury, how pollutants enter the bay and the harmful effects on aquatic life and humans when we eat polluted seafood. They called on audience volunteers to help chop and measure ingredients for a

sauce, and then placed a striped bass in a steamer to cook. Students explained which are the safest parts of the fish to eat and served pieces of the fillet to the audience as a snack. To complete the presentation, students answered questions and handed out information sheets explaining safe monthly consumption levels of fish caught from the bay, methods to remove toxins from fish during preparation and cooking, and a tasty sauce recipe.

"My parents wake up early and go fishing in the bay a lot. They didn't know that there is so much pollution in the

bay," said World Academy student Darlene. Darlene's mother and grandmother attended her presentation, and learned how to minimize the potentially harmful effects of eating bay fish.

The World Academy students and their teachers have participated in KIDS for the BAY's Watershed Action Program for the past two years. KIDS for the BAY is thrilled to partner with the entire third grade team of six teachers at World Academy and to have the enthusiastic support of the school principal, Susan Sperber. In the 2009-2010 school year, three third grade teachers — Colleen Hodge, Jennifer Erickson and Sarah Ann LeRoy — participated in our Watershed Action Program. These teachers are continuing to teach the program themselves, using the curriculum guide, equipment

Continued on page 4

KIDS for the BAY Guardian Award 2011

Judy Greenspan is one of those people who always goes above and beyond in her work as an educator. A third grade teacher at Stege Elementary School in Richmond, Judy brings healthy snacks from home for her students every day. She says that many of them have not eaten breakfast and she believes that having healthy food will help them to concentrate on their lessons.

Judy participated in the KIDS for the BAY Watershed Action Program three years ago. Since her initial year of training with us, Judy has encouraged four other third grade partner teachers to also become involved with our program. In addition, Judy has continued to teach the Watershed Action Program to her new classes of students each year with the curriculum guide, equipment kit and ongoing support provided by KIDS for the BAY.

We are honored to recognize Judy as the 2011 KIDS for the BAY Guardian. We commend Judy for her efforts to teach hands-on environmental science to her students year after year, and for her work to incorporate the Watershed Action Program as an integrated part of the third grade curriculum at her school. We would also like to thank Judy for showing her commitment to our work by making personal donations to KIDS for the BAY.

"I am extremely thrilled with every aspect of the Watershed Action Program. My students were so engaged in the hands-on science activities. Most of my students live in housing projects around Baxter Creek across the street from our school. They were amazed to learn so much about their neighborhood creek and they also worked hard shoveling mulch, removing non-native plants and cleaning up trash around the creek. I enjoyed watching my students become scientists as they engaged in water quality testing at their creek.

"The Watershed Action Program has made science teaching possible in my classroom and has really supported my teaching. I believe that this program, more than any other, has really turned my students on to science. If I had more time in my life I would organize



Judy Greenspan and her students share the results of testing the water quality of Baxter Creek.

the rest of my curriculum like the KIDS for the BAY program. It is concrete, thematic and project based. It is hands-on and very enjoyable and accessible for my students."

"I am very honored to be selected for the KIDS for the BAY Guardian Award. KIDS for the BAY has been my inspiration for doing hands-on science inquiry and has aided me greatly in bringing exciting and dynamic science curricula into my classroom."

— Judy Greenspan, Third Grade Teacher, Stege Elementary School, Richmond

Congratulations Judy! You are helping to inspire the next generation of environmentalists. ♦

Environmental Experts Continued from page 3

kit and hands-on training that they received from KIDS for the BAY. This school year they have been joined by the three remaining third grade teachers – Carolina Monterrosa, Darlene Smith-Walters and Lucy Schmidt – who are now also enrolled in our Watershed Action Program. This team of six teachers and their principal have made a commitment to integrate the program into their curriculum every year.

Principal Susan Sperber is very supportive of KIDS for the BAY and the Watershed Action Program. She said, "Our students have gained incredible knowledge about the watershed. They do presentations to their families and other classes in the school. Our parents tell us that their children go home and explain what they have learned to others in their household. Parents are

amazed at the knowledge their children have acquired and during the safe bay fish-cooking demonstrations you can see how proud they are of what their child has accomplished."

Ms. Sperber also explained, "Now that our entire third grade team has been trained in the Watershed Action Program, this program is part of our third grade curriculum and is embedded into our teaching and learning. KIDS for the BAY has enhanced our third grade in so many ways: student achievement and engagement is up, our third grade teachers make sure to collaborate on the curriculum in order for our students to be successful, our limited hands-on science program has been expanded and our students are becoming aware of their surroundings and how they need to be responsible for this planet Earth.

"I had a group of third grade students come and ask for gloves and a trash bag one lunch recess so they could pick up trash around the school. I started to congratulate them for being so conscientious, when they reminded me that it was their duty to make certain that no trash entered the local storm drains. My 'Ah-ha' moment came when the students told me that this is what they learned from KIDS for the BAY. I am no longer shocked when third grade students often come and ask me for gloves and a trash bag!"

KIDS for the BAY is so proud of our environmental experts at World Academy School. They not only take action themselves for a cleaner watershed, they also teach others how to care for the environment we all share. ♦

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS continued

A Pond for John Muir School

"I wish a beautiful swan will come and have her babies here!" This was the wish of a John Muir Elementary School kindergarten student as she poured a cup of water into the newly restored pond habitat on the school grounds. As part of our School Wide Watershed Action Program, KIDS for the BAY is helping the school to restore the pond in the area of Harwood Creek that flows through the school grounds. Teachers and students will be able to use the pond habitat as an additional educational resource alongside the restored creek habitat.

John Muir School's ten year-old pond sits a few paces uphill from the school's creek. Originally designed and installed by KIDS for the BAY (KftB), the pond has not held water for a number of years. When KftB staff returned to work at the school last year they noticed that the pond was dry and full of wood chips, plant debris, rocks, and mud. KftB, along with John Muir School parent volunteers



KftB Program Coordinator Evan Wong and John Muir School kindergarten students with their newly restored pond

and kindergarten classes, decided to restore the pond as a habitat for plants and animals and as an exciting learning environment for students and teachers.

The two kindergarten classes were thrilled to assist with the pond restoration effort. Students helped clear wood chips out of the pond and clipped back

overgrown plants. When they first saw the habitat they noticed right away that it did not really look like a pond because there was no water in it, so it could not be a good place for animals to live. When asked what animals they would like to see live in their pond students mentioned frogs, ducks, and birds. After the initial kindergarten restoration efforts, KftB Instructor Evan Wong and John Muir School parent volunteers worked on the pond during a Saturday workday. They cleared the area of overgrown plants, patched holes in the pond's plastic liner and put in plants to grow partially submerged in the pond water.

After the workday the kindergarten students returned to the pond to help fill it up with water. The students were so excited to see the restored pond habitat and immediately noticed the improvements. Each student took a cup of water, poured it in and made a wish for their new pond. ♦

Aquatic Science Adventure Camp

"When I turn 18, I'm going to work at KIDS for the BAY's Summer Camp!" This is the vision of Jerimias, a 10 year old camper who has been attending our Aquatic Science Adventure Camp every year for the past 3 years.

During the week-long sessions, Jerimias dissected squid, went crabbing, removed invasive ivy from the banks of Strawberry Creek and toured the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology on the UC Berkeley campus. He explored the San Francisco Bay shoreline, investigated Wildcat Creek, swam in Lake Anza, and even traveled to the Pacific Ocean. Jerimias said, "Everything was awesome, my favorite part was when a crab went down my sleeve!" His mother, Susan-Jane, added, "This is our favorite camp. The Camp Leaders are truly caring, and the program is very well planned."

For the past 10 years children like Jerimias have had the opportunity to explore the outdoors, study science and learn to love nature in our Aquatic Science Adventure Camp.

The winning combination of engaging outdoor activities and well qualified, experienced staff make each session a special experience. "The camp was well organized and run by intelligent, fun,

motivated folks. My daughter LOVED it," commented the parent of seven year-old Willa. And many more families agree with her. That is why children like Jerimias keep returning to our camp year after year. "All the sensory stuff was great – looking, touching, tasting, etc. The counselors were rock solid. We will definitely be doing this camp again," wrote the parent of Jude, age six.

We always enjoy seeing both new and familiar faces on the first day of camp. Sometimes, on that first day, children can be a little apprehensive about meeting new people and being away from their parents. Last summer a five year old boy named Del with bright eyes and an inquisitive mind began his first camp experience ever with us. At the end of the session his mother, Mary, commented, "Del is having a wonderful experience, especially considering this is his first camp of any kind. He tells us about his daily adventures and loves to show off his knowledge of nature and environmental protection – he considers himself an 'expert about nature'."

To encourage a positive group experience we have a maximum of sixteen campers per group, with two KIDS for the BAY Camp Leaders. Our small group size



Catching crabs off the Berkeley Pier

allows us to interact individually with each camper and create a small community. Together we may splash a bit in a local creek identifying aquatic insects, or find whole worlds living underneath rocks at the bay shoreline. Our camp program connects children to this wonderful place we live in and allows them to be as enthusiastic about nature as they want to be. We look forward to providing these important experiences to children for many years to come! ♦

**Written by Jonah Landor-Yamagata,
KftB Program Director**

PARTNERSHIPS

Exploring Through Science Workshops Reach Students All Over the Bay Area

Investigating red wiggler worms in a compost bin, testing the water quality at a local creek, creating a clay model of the San Francisco Bay: these are all exciting activities that engage young scientists at KIDS for the BAY (KftB). In addition to our traditional school based programs, KftB has educated hundreds of students and their families in our Exploring Through Science Workshops (ETSW). For the past three years these workshops have been offered to groups including Scout Troops, Gifted and Talented Education programs, after school and home school programs. Workshops vary in theme, but always include fun, hands-on science activities in which students learn about their surrounding environment. Whether students become Bay Stewards, explore their watershed, or get their hands dirty in compost, the ETSW allow us to reach students from all over the Bay Area and empower them to take action to help improve their communities.

"The students had a great time investigating the red wiggler worms and learning how to compost today! Thank you for arranging such a rich, hands-on workshop. It feels good to know that we are proactively taking steps to be more green in our classroom."

— Iwei Chen, Fifth Grade Teacher, Windrush Elementary School, El Cerrito



Edison Elementary School students stenciled a storm drain to educate the community about reducing pollution.

Our Exploring Through Science Workshops have also allowed us to partner with many local organizations. These partnerships enable us to deepen and broaden our students' understanding and appreciation for their environment. Partnerships also enrich the programs we offer and allow the KftB staff to learn from experts in the community.



Girl Scouts proudly show off the piles of invasive ivy they weeded out to improve the Strawberry Creek habitat on the UC Berkeley Campus.

Creek and Bay Restoration with Girl Scouts Save the Bay

KftB is currently in our third year of partnering with Girl Scouts Save the Bay to bring environmental education and community service opportunities to girls and their families in the Bay Area. Over the past few years, 100 girls and their parents have cleared creek and bay habitats of invasive plants and mulched bay shoreline habitats, while learning about these amazing environments. Our partners in these exciting restoration projects have included: Friends of Five Creeks, Friends of Sausal Creek, Golden Gate Audubon Society, and the Strawberry Creek Restoration Project. Our Girl Scouts also held and investigated purple shore crabs, looked through binoculars to identify shorebirds, observed aquatic invertebrates using two-way microscopes, and conducted trash clean-ups. In this amazing partnership with Girl Scouts Save the Bay we have reached young environmentalists all over the Bay Area.

Storm Drain Stenciling with the City of Alameda

Last spring the fourth and fifth grade students at Edison Elementary School in Alameda learned about the San Francisco Bay and the types of pollution that enter the bay and move up the food chain. These inspired environmentalists wanted to take action! KIDS for the BAY worked with Patrizia Guccione, Clean Water Program Specialist at the City of Alameda's Public Works Department, to make sure the students had this opportunity. Patrizia provided all the necessary supplies for the students to stencil the message, "No Dumping: Drains to the Bay!" on storm drains around their school neighborhood. Twenty-six students walked around Edison Elementary and stenciled twelve storm drains with this important message. They also hung informational flyers on doorknobs in an effort to educate their community about reducing storm water pollution. Working with the City of Alameda gave the students an opportunity to take direct action in their community.

KftB is excited to offer our Exploring Through Science Workshops to all educational groups in the Bay Area and to provide children with opportunities to become scientists and environmental stewards in their communities.

Written by Deborah Zierten, KftB Program Director



Thank you

to our generous funders and donors in 2010

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**Now Enrolling for the
Eleventh Year
of our Aquatic Science
Adventure Camp!**

Join us this summer to explore and investigate our local creeks, ponds, lakes and bay shorelines. During a fun-filled week with KIDS for the BAY campers will enjoy hands-on activities in the outdoors. We will meet mayfly nymphs at Strawberry Creek, fish for crabs off the Berkeley pier, go bird-watching in Tilden Park, make nature art, play games, and much more!

Older campers will take an exciting trip to The Bay Area Discovery Museum in Marin. We have fine-tuned campers' favorite activities from the past ten years, and added engaging new activities as well. View details and register online at www.kidsforthebay.org under "Summer Camp", or call KIDS for the BAY at (510) 985-1602.

**KIDS for the BAY
2011 Summer Camp
Schedule**

Ages 5-7:

6/20-6/24

6/27-7/1

7/11-7/15

7/18-7/22

7/25-7/29

Ages 8-10:

7/11-7/15

7/18-7/22

7/25-7/29

8/1-8/5



*Campers study shorebirds at the
Berkeley Marina*



Campers enjoy exploring in nature



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