



KIDS for the BAY

— Celebrating 20 Years! —

Newsletter

Spring 2012

www.kidsforthebay.org

A Project of Earth Island Institute

20 Year Anniversary

Working Towards Our Goals

2012 marks KIDS for the BAY's 20 Year Anniversary! Since 1992 we have delivered exciting, hands-on environmental education programs to school communities throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. To date **56,000 KIDS for the BAY school students** have:

- restored bay shorelines
- cleaned up tons of trash from school neighborhoods, creek, bay and ocean habitats
- raised and released hundreds of Pacific Chorus Frogs
- educated their communities to reduce storm drain pollution



- taught their families how to safely reduce intake of toxins from bay fish
- monitored creek water quality
- and learned that everyone has the right to live in a clean and healthy environment.

In addition **2,650 KIDS for the BAY teachers** have had the unique opportunity to: learn our programs alongside their students; complete academic credit units in environmental science education; and continue teaching our programs year after year. ♦

60,000 Inspired Environmentalists!

By summer 2012 our goal is that KIDS for the BAY will have delivered programs to **60,000 school students**. These **60,000 Inspired Environmentalists** will be connected with nature, turned on to science and committed to helping take care of their environment thanks to their KIDS for the BAY experience. KIDSfortheBAY Environmentalists keep their local storm drains clean and free of pollution, clean up their school campuses, conserve water at school and at home and practice the Four Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle and rot) on a daily basis. They understand the importance of keeping their watershed healthy and they work with their school community to complete a special environmental action project. **KIDS for the BAY Environmentalists are our future environmental leaders.** ♦

DONATE NOW!

Please join our **20 Year Anniversary Gift Campaign** and make a donation to help us raise **\$60,000** to reach our goal of **60,000 Inspired Environmentalists by summer 2012!** Simply visit our website at www.kidsforthebay.org and click on "Donate".

Any donations of \$250 or more will be matched by the Dean Witter Foundation to double your gift!

John Muir Conservation Award

KIDS for the BAY received the John Muir Conservation Award for environmental education at an exciting ceremony on November 5, 2011. The John Muir Association recognizes four individuals or organizations annually whose work continues the legacy of John Muir in education and environmental preservation. Organizations are recognized in one of four categories: Conservationist of the Year, Environmental Education, Non-Profit or Public agency, and Business. This award was presented to KIDS for the BAY in recognition of our outstanding achievements in environmental education. ♦

"I am thrilled for KIDS for the BAY to receive this recognition for our important work inspiring young people to help take care of the environment we all share."

— Mandi Billinge, Executive Director/Founder
KIDS for the BAY



KIDS for the BAY Executive Director and Founder, Mandi Billinge, accepted the Award for KIDS for the BAY and gave an inspiring speech about our work in environmental education.

Message from Mandi Billinge, Executive Director/Founder

Celebrating our 20 Year Anniversary!

I first started KIDS for the BAY, almost twenty years ago, because I wanted to bring the same exciting, hands-on environmental science projects into schools here in the East Bay as I had taught in my school in inner-city London, England. I was so encouraged by the first teachers who signed up to work with me. They were eager to invite me into their classrooms to work with them and their students. They loved our hands-on science and environmental action projects and they told all their co-workers to partner with me as well! Some of those teachers are now school principals and still support KIDS for the BAY programs in their schools. Some are now donors to KIDS for the BAY and continue to support our work.

As I look back on the last twenty years, I am thankful to all the elementary school teachers and students, school principals and parents who have supported KIDS for the BAY. I am also really thankful for our creative, dedicated staff and Advisory Board and for our donors and funders.

To mark our 20 Year Anniversary, several funders and donors have stepped up to offer amazing support to help us reach our **\$60,000 Anniversary Gift Campaign Goal**. Donors **Ricardo Torres and Nat Damon** have already committed to make a very generous lead gift to our campaign. I am also thrilled to announce that the **Dean Witter Foundation** has committed a **\$20,000 grant** that will **match gifts** from our major donors to help us reach our goals.

Traveling on the bus to our first school partners 20 years ago, carrying arm-loads of equipment and ready to test out new KIDS for the BAY field trips and lesson plans, I could not have imagined how far this organization would come. I am thrilled to be celebrating our **20 Year Anniversary and 60,000 Inspired Environmentalists in KIDS for the BAY programs!** Thank you for your support that has helped KIDS for the BAY come this far and please support our **20 Year Anniversary Matching Gift Campaign**. ♦

KIDS for the BAY Staff

Mandi Billinge,
Executive Director/Founder

Sheela Shankar,
Associate Director

Jonah Landor-Yamagata,
Program Director

Deborah Zierten,
Program Director

Eugenia Clark,
Program Coordinator

Bhavana Mody,
Program Coordinator

Advisory Board Members

Leilani Alo,
Advisory Board President

Kalyan Ayloo

Marco Gonzales

Elaine Miyamori

Sumana Rao

Shefali Shah

Natalie Silverstein



KftB Advisory Board Members and Staff at the 2012 Advisory Board Dinner: left to right - Bhavana Mody, Shefali Shah, Jonah Landor-Yamagata, Leilani Alo, Deborah Zierten, Sumana Rao, Natalie Silverstein, Sheela Shankar, Mandi Billinge, Elaine Miyamori

Newsletter Editor: Mandi Billinge

Graphic Design: Kelly Marquis



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www.facebook.com/KIDSfortheBAY

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Connecting Children With Nature

KIDS for the BAY field trips provide the exciting opportunity for school students to get out of the classroom and into the outdoors to explore and investigate natural watershed habitats. For many of our students this is their first time holding a crab, visiting the ocean, or catching and releasing a mayfly nymph. On trips to creek, bay, delta and ocean sites, students who would not otherwise have this opportunity get to have close-up encounters with nature and make a special connection. They are inspired to take care of their watershed because they see how actions upstream in urban neighborhoods impact the entire ecosystem, including natural habitats. Every class completes a clean-up project and feels really proud that they have helped to keep their watershed clean.

In 2011 KIDS for the BAY led multiple field trips to the following sites:

- Berkeley Marina
- Brannan Island, Antioch
- Castle Rock Recreation Area, Walnut Creek
- Crab Cove, Alameda
- Martinez Shoreline
- Muir Beach, Marin County
- Sausal Creek, Oakland
- Slide Ranch, Marin County
- Strawberry Creek, Berkeley
- Sycamore Creek, Danville
- Wildcat Creek, Richmond.

Wildcat Creek Field Trip

Students from Grant Elementary School in Richmond completed a field trip to Wildcat Creek at Alvarado Park



in Richmond. Activities included aquatic invertebrate investigations, riparian plant identification, and sensory observations of the creek. Students began connecting with nature by sitting quietly by the creek's edge. They touched the water to see how cool it was and looked up into the trees that shaded the water. They noticed rocks, algae and insects in the creek and heard birds calling above them. The students recorded their observations in their field journals. One student in particular was especially curious about a tree that was growing next to the creek. Using his tree identification guide in his journal he identified it as a willow tree.

The students loved investigating Wildcat Creek. A highlight of the trip was collecting and observing aquatic invertebrates and learning about their adaptations. A student named Alfonso wrote in his journal, "I learned about water striders. They have a bubble on their feet that allows them to slide on the water." Students loved feeling the cold water as they searched for aquatic invertebrates under the wet rocks, and were totally engaged with the activity. "This is SO much fun," said one student.

The students also learned about the various native trees that live along Wildcat Creek. They compared the leaf shape of the trees to leaves in a tree identification guide in their field journals. This was an eye opening experience for many of the students. "Before we went on the field trip I did not know anything about the different types of trees or about the leaves they have," wrote a student named Ernie. Another student, Zara, reported, "I liked learning about the different types of tree leaves. I liked the California Buckeye the best." At the end of the day

students found a relaxing place along the creek to complete a chalk pastel drawing on construction paper, which illustrated highlights from their trip.

Grant Elementary School teachers appreciated that their students had the opportunity to study their local creek. Teacher Ms. Paulson explained, "I loved seeing my students learn how to sit and listen to the creek sounds and write about them in their journals." Teacher Mr. Chimezie added, "My students really need this type of education, which is not easy to come by." ♦
Written by Jonah Landor-Yamagata, Program Director

KIDS for the BAY Guardian Award 2012

When you walk into Sequoia Elementary School in Oakland, you are immediately greeted by a large pinball machine and a robot, both made entirely from cardboard and other recycled materials. These art projects were created by Kevin Jeung's fourth grade class and are made from material that would normally be recycled or thrown away. As you continue further into the school many colorful posters are boldly displayed along the walls. "Recycling your daily newspaper saves 5 trees per year!" and "Americans use over 65 billion aluminum soda cans every year!" are some of the messages that Kevin's students have displayed to teach other students to practice the Four Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot).

In 2007, as a first year teacher, Kevin participated in KIDS for the BAY's Four Rs Action Program. "As a child, my mom was big into recycling, but I was not as educated about composting and did not know about urban runoff pollution," stated Kevin, "I never would have been able to put together and teach a Four Rs curriculum if it had not been for KIDS for the BAY." For the past five years Kevin has taught his students about preventing

storm drain pollution, reducing plastic waste, reusing paper, recycling and composting, thanks to the training and support he received from KIDS for the BAY. "I notice my students checking to make sure both sides of a piece of paper are used before they recycle it. The concepts taught during the Four Rs program really stick with them." Kevin makes sure the Four Rs message is taken home by having the students complete reuse art projects and a Four Rs interview with their families. He also takes his class on an annual trip to Camp Arroyo, an outdoor environmental education camp which focuses on the Four Rs.



"I personally think environmental education is extremely important for students to learn at a young age. They need to know how their actions and choices affect their environment. All the support and wonderful lessons KIDS for the BAY has provided have proved invaluable in teaching these concepts to my students."

— Kevin Jeung, Fourth Grade Teacher,
Sequoia Elementary School, Oakland

We are excited to recognize Kevin as the 2012 KIDS for the BAY Guardian. We commend him for all the wonderful work he does each year, engaging his students in hands-on science learning and inspiring them to take care of the environment. ♦ Written by Deborah Zierten, Program Director

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS continued

Taking Action for the Environment

Action projects are an integral part of KIDS for the BAY programs. They provide the opportunity for students to use the knowledge and skills they learn during classroom lessons and field trips and take action to help solve the environmental problems they have been studying. KftB Instructors work with students and teachers to choose and implement their action projects. This approach helps to ensure that students take ownership of their projects and that the work is especially relevant for the school's location and the community's needs.

In 2011, KftB students took action in their watershed to:

- plant native plants beside Cerrito Creek
- test creek water quality and share findings with local officials
- make safe bay food consumption

presentations to families

- complete creek, bay, ocean and neighborhood clean-up projects
- make natural pesticides for use at home and in school gardens
- paint informative watershed murals on school walls
- write persuasive letters to family members to encourage them to change polluting behaviors
- make environmental presentations to the entire school community.

Students' Four Rs Action Projects (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot) included:

- school wide battery recycling
- school wide No Waste Lunch Days
- setting up worm compost bins in the classroom



Susan Schwartz, Director of Friends of Five Creeks, leads KftB students in a planting project beside Cerrito Creek

- a Four Rs mosaic display at school
- school wide recycling
- a science fair presentation
- persuasive letters written to the Mayor of Hercules requesting a school milk carton recycling program for the city.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS continued

Neighborhood Clean-Up Event Organized by KIDS for the BAY Student

After participating in our Storm Drain Rangers Program fourth grade student, Yvette, from Acorn Woodland Elementary School in Oakland, was so moved to educate others in her community that she decided to organize her own neighborhood clean-up on Memorial Day. The event consisted of several families picking up garbage in their East Oakland community and learning about storm drains. Yvette's mother said, "The event was a big hit in our neighborhood and I am so impressed that my daughter was inspired to organize something like this!"



growth of the trees. "It won't be many more years before egrets and herons will be able to find a safe nesting place on the branches that hang out over the water," he said. Mark also shared that the trees the students worked with were planted five years ago by a group of KIDS for the BAY students from Rosa Parks Elementary School!

Battery Recycling

Fourth grade students at Harding Elementary School in El Cerrito, were inspired to monitor what was being thrown away in their homes and at school after participating in the KIDS for the BAY Four Rs Action Program (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot). They realized that many batteries were being thrown away. Batteries can leak toxic chemicals into landfills and potentially contaminate ground water. Some students reported seeing battery-recycling boxes in stores and their local library. They thought it would be helpful to provide battery recycling at school. Students created battery-recycling stations on campus and made informational posters to show students, staff, and parents where the stations were located, and to encourage people to recycle batteries. Fourth Grade Teacher Ms. Jamsheed reflected, "Students learned that they could be advocates for the environment and the living creatures that have no voice, by reducing toxic battery pollution. They felt a sense of power when they learned how they could help." ♦



Helping Monterey Cypress Trees

Two first grade classes from John Muir Elementary School went to Aquatic Park in Berkeley to help the habitat of Great Egrets, which they had learned about during their KIDS for the BAY Watershed Action Program. Students worked in pairs, diligently raking wood chips, shoveling them into buckets and spreading them beneath cypress trees. Forty-five minutes later the trees had huge mounds of wood chips under them. Mark Liolios, the Aquatic Park Restoration Coordinator, explained that the mulch will boost the

KIDS for the BAY Teachers

One of the goals of KIDS for the BAY programs is to provide our teacher participants with all the skills and resources needed to continue teaching our programs year after year to each new class of students. In our unique **Teacher Training Model**, thousands more school students each year benefit from an exciting environmental science program that impacts them and their families.

Quotes from KIDS for the BAY Teachers and Principals:

"The KIDS for the BAY program is excellent and has had a lot of support from both teachers and parents. I have heard such positive comments about the program from the parents, and if I hear from the parents it means the message is getting home. The program has also encouraged more interest in science curriculum with the teachers."

— Principal Javier Mendieta,
John Muir School, Berkeley

"Working with the School Wide Watershed Action Program has been a powerful opportunity for me to grow as a teacher. Watching student engagement and understanding grow through these real life exercises encourages me to continue with them in future years."

—Debbie Rogers, First Grade Teacher,
John Muir School, Berkeley

"My experience with the KIDS for the BAY program was very valuable. It is rare to find a useful curriculum that is already laid out for you with lessons and worksheets etc. that you can deploy in your classroom instantly with little setup. Moreover having a facilitator come and model the entire unit for me with my class as a preview is truly a godsend. I don't have to worry about trying to figure out how to teach the curriculum since I was able to observe its teaching firsthand in a real world setting: my classroom."

— Jonathon Adams, Fifth Grade Teacher,
Collins Elementary School, Pinole

"Our involvement with the Watershed Action Program has been the highlight of my students' and my year. I feel confident that my students have increased their knowledge of their community and environment. I have noticed students going out of their way to clean up our school, as well as storm drains, all without being asked. I have had parents say that they are being reminded by their students to pick up trash and conserve water. As an educator, I have found this experience truly rewarding. Our students' knowledge has increased which in turn has increased their love of the environment. This love of the environment has encouraged them to devote themselves to protecting it. I feel like this is the greatest success of the program."

— Lucy Schmidt, Third Grade
Teacher, World Academy School,
Oakland

PARTNERSHIPS

Recyclemore: Four Rs Action Partnership

Since 2006, KIDS for the BAY has had the pleasure of partnering with West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority (Recyclemore) to work towards our common goals of educating the West Contra Costa County community to practice the Four Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot.

KIDS for the BAY's Four Rs Action Program, funded by Recyclemore, educates students, classroom teachers, and the larger school community about solid waste issues. We also provide the tools and support for classes of students to complete Action Projects that effectively reduce their schools' solid waste stream, teach others about the Four Rs, and promote life-long stewardship of the environment in our students.

In West Contra Costa County elementary schools, students in our Four Rs Action Program have:

- Started battery recycling programs at their schools to prevent batteries from entering the landfill system and potentially leaking toxic chemicals
- Set up classroom worm composting systems to recycle their lunch scraps into rich compost
- Created and delivered Four Rs presentations to schoolmates and family members to teach others about the importance of reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting
- Started school-wide "No-Waste Lunch Days" to promote environmentally-friendly lunch choices while reducing the schools' solid waste streams
- Created a classroom "Toy and Game Swap Meet" to reuse toys and games instead of throwing them away.



KftB students proudly display the robot they made from "garbage"

Claudia Taurean is the Program Manager at Recyclemore and KIDS for the BAY's grant administrator. Claudia is fondly known as "The Worm Lady" in West Contra Costa County, due to her passion for vermicomposting (recycling food scraps using red wiggler worms). Claudia makes regular visits to KftB classes to share her enthusiasm for worms and composting with students in our Four Rs Action Program.



KftB students investigate red wiggler worms and compost

KIDS for the BAY greatly appreciates our partnership with Recyclemore and looks forward to continuing to spread the Four Rs message in West Contra Costa County elementary schools.

State Farm Company: A Good Neighbor to our Local Schools

"We believe the success of the future lies in the youth of today."

— Edward B. Rust Jr., CEO State Farm Company

You may know State Farm Company as the "good neighbor" that provides home, automobile, and life insurance coverage across the nation. But what you may not know is that State Farm is also a huge supporter of and advocate for educational excellence in our public schools.

In particular State Farm focuses on supporting service-learning and teacher professional development. Since 2007, State Farm has provided funding to KIDS for the BAY to deliver our Watershed Action Program in elementary schools within Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The Watershed Action Program

provides students the opportunity to engage in exciting environmental service-learning projects and also provides much-needed professional development in environmental science education for classroom teachers.

In the Watershed Action Program, students learn environmental issues affecting their watershed community and help solve local environmental problems by developing a service-learning Action Project. These experiences cultivate a deep and personal connection to our natural world and turn our

students into Inspired Environmentalists committed to life-long stewardship of the environment.

State Farm employees put their commitment to community service into action each year by partnering with KIDS for the BAY to help with our school-based creek restoration projects. To celebrate Earth Day in April 2011, a group of State Farm Employees helped to restore a section of Harwood Creek that flows through the grounds of John Muir Elementary School, where KIDS for the BAY currently delivers our School Wide Watershed Action Program. It was inspiring to work with this team to pull weeds and spread mulch in this outdoor classroom, which is a learning resource for 260 students at John Muir School in Berkeley.

Thank you State Farm for your commitment to quality education and service learning in our public elementary schools. ♦

Written by Sheela Shankar, Associate Director



Lonny Haskins of State Farm Insurance Company presents a \$10,000 check to KIDS for the BAY at John Muir School in Berkeley.

Thank you

to our generous funders and donors in 2011

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Altamont Landfill Education Advisory Board
S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
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California Foundation for Community Support
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What's New in KIDS for the BAY Summer Camp?

- Building on our ever-popular *Aquatic Science Adventure Camp* theme, we have added **two new camp themes** – *Animals, Animals, Everywhere!* and *The Wonderful World of Plants!* Sign your children up for all three of our exciting camp themes.
- We also now offer **after-care** in our **Nature Club** from 4-6pm! Campers enrolled in Nature Club will relax in nature and unwind from the day, while playing nature games, reading books, singing songs, journaling, and enjoying a nutritious snack.
- Take advantage of our **multiple discounts**, including discounts for registering early, signing up two or more siblings, and registering your child for two or more camps. Discounts can be combined, so the savings really add up!

KIDS for the BAY is also excited to announce our **new, expanded summer camp website!** We've added information about our themes and camp locations, bios and interviews with our staff and a photo gallery from past camp years. Visit our camp website at www.kidsforthebay.org/camp and sign up for our Summer Camp E-News and Updates list.

Are you ready for a fun-filled summer of hands-on science and nature exploration in the outdoors? Register online, by mail or fax.

www.kidsforthebay.org/camp

We look forward to spending the summer with you!



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