

BALTIMORE LAB SCHOOL

WATERSHED STEWARDS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY & OUTDOOR EDUCATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Our goal during the 2015-16 school year was to ensure that Baltimore Lab School students graduate environmentally literate with the tools they need to make informed choices to protect and restore local environments. Our program pays particular attention to the Chesapeake Bay.

Meaningful watershed experiences with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation are the cornerstone of Baltimore Lab School's Watershed Stewards movement. Through our programming and activities, students and staff return full of ideas and inspiration.

We are sincerely appreciative of the generous support from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and The Giving Circle of the Baltimore Community Foundation. Without this support, it would not be possible for our school to participate in these amazing outdoor education adventures. We are proud to share that *100% of our students participated in the program!*

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Baltimore Lab School's Watershed Stewards of the Chesapeake Bay

Watershed Stewards of the Chesapeake Bay is a program that combines education about the Bay and student-initiated action projects. Education and experiential learning takes place in the fall and action projects take place in the spring. Individual student leaders earn community service hours through outdoor education adventures by serving as program assistants throughout the school year.

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS & ADVENTURES:

- May 15, 2015: Visit to Providence Center, Aquaponics; Floating Gardens built and installed in Severn River (Upper School).
- May 27, 2015: Rawlings Conservatory Community Garden Planting Day (Upper School).
- June 2, 2015: Exploring the Severn River Watershed (Middle School).
- June 9, 2015: Exploring the Severn River Watershed (Lower School).
- June 15, 2015: Exploring the Severn River Watershed (Lower School).
- August 3-7, 2015: BLS teachers Zac Lawhon and Patti Child successfully completed the five-day Chesapeake Bay Foundation's (CBF) "Chesapeake Classrooms Teachers on the Estuary Class: Data Edition."
- August 19, 2015: Nearly 40 BLS teachers met to learn how to connect their subject areas to environmental literacy goals through a meaningful watershed experience, investigative questions, and stewardship.
- September 10-12, 2015: Karen Noonan Center on Bishop's Head Island, Maryland. High School Environmental Science students participated in investigations, learned and practiced conservation behaviors, reflected on all they learned from the trip, and produced a journal of their experience to share with peers, parents, and the school community.
- September 18, 2015: Skipjack from the Annapolis Harbor. BLS 7th grade students learned aboard The Stanley Norman, one of the last of the Chesapeake's famous fleet of skipjacks, providing an authentic setting to study the Bay's resources.

- September 28, 2015: Arthur Sherwood Center, Meredith Creek, Annapolis, Maryland. High School Biology students learned outside using the resources of a fully equipped research vessel.
- October 5, 2015: Arthur Sherwood Center, Meredith Creek, Annapolis, Maryland. BLS 8th grade students learned outside using the resources of a fully equipped research vessel. At the Arthur Sherwood program students gained a more complete understanding and appreciation of the ecosystem.
- October 8, 2015: Clagett Farm. BLS 4th and 5th grade students explored Clagett Farm, CBF's only land-based education center.
- October 7 & 14, 2015: Over 50 BLS staff members attended one afternoon of professional development at Druid Hill Park on Experiential Learning, Environmental Literacy Cross Curricular connections and the outdoors.
- October 10, 2015: Fort McHenry Field Day, part of the International Coastal Cleanup and a National Public Lands Day event. With the help of 150 volunteers, (8 BLS students and teachers) over 12,000 pieces of debris and more than 200,000 pieces of "tiny trash" (measuring less than two centimeters) were collected.
- October 11, 2015 & November 14, 2015: Community Cleanup and Tree Keepers. High School students continued their focus on removing the trash from our streets and storm drains. They also checked on the trees we planted and gave the trees needed water.
- October 14, 2015: Irvine Nature Center. BLS 7th grade students explored the woods, fields, and streams at Irvine Nature Center.
- October 20, 2015: Oyster Project. BLS High School students and teachers performed maintenance to shake, rattle, and roll the oysters. They enjoyed building oyster cages and planting oysters in the Inner Harbor.
- October 27, 2015: Baltimore Harbor, Maryland. BLS 6th grade students boarded the workboat Snow Goose to learn about the dynamic relationship between the Port of Baltimore and the Chesapeake Bay's Patapsco River.
- November 3, 2015: Corn Maze. High School students visited Rodger's Farm to learn about agriculture tourism.
- November 25, 2015: BLS 1st and 2nd grade students visited Real Food Farms to learn about gardening in an urban environment.
- December 14-15, 2015: Lower School students visited the National Aquarium to see the new Chesapeake Bay Exhibits.
- February 10, 2016: High School Environmental Science students visited the National Aquarium to learn more about student action projects.
- March 10, 2016: An aquaponics system was installed in the BLS parking lot as an addition to the growing schoolyard habitat and outdoor learning space.
- UPCOMING: May 25, 2016: High School students will travel on a sunset boat cruise to plant our oysters on the Fort Carroll Oyster Sanctuary Reef.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS:

Baltimore Lab School extends special thanks to the Chesapeake Bay Trust, The Giving Circle of The Baltimore Community Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Irvine Nature Center for providing support for our Fall 2015 Meaningful Watershed Experiences.

Thanks to Janet Felsten, Director of Baltimore Green Map, The Friends of Druid Hill Park, and the Conservancy at Druid Hill Park for our 2015 Team Building Professional Development at Druid Hill Park.

Thanks to the National Aquarium for sponsoring the Fort McHenry Field Day Restoration activities. All students and staff who participated received a National Aquarium membership!

Thanks to Amanda Cunningham, Dan Millender, and Cassie Caleo from Baltimore Tree Trust for providing our Tree Keep buckets and instruction on how to plant and care for our Old Goucher neighborhood trees.

Thanks to Chris Beer and Bridgett Parlato for organizing and asking us to participate in workshops, Baltimore Trash Talk data collection and the SYNERGY Event at Johns Hopkins on Earth Day.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

All: Special Education; learning disabilities
of students: 131
of teachers: 37
Female students: 35
Male students: 96

Other than White students: 34
Financial Aid: 20
Funded: 85
Private: 46

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Baltimore Lab School's Watershed Stewards of the Chesapeake Bay program serves as a way for students and teachers to demonstrate stewardship after gaining valuable knowledge and the skills. The outdoor experiential trips are motivating and students' attitudes change about their ability to create positive change. These trips provide the foundation for meeting environmental literacy goals in each grade level throughout a variety of subjects.

COMMUNICATING OUR PROGRESS:

Students frequently report about environmental news and action projects in Baltimore Lab School's monthly *Lab Ten Newspaper*. New flat-screen televisions display engaging photos of outdoor education and environmental literacy projects in Baltimore Lab's main lobby. Beginning in the 2014-15 academic year, a monthly newsletter was developed and shared with the BLS community and partners. Beginning in Fall 2015, those reports transitioned to quarterly publications.

PROJECT EVALUATION:

Our program is growing in scope and sequence. Environmental literacy about the Chesapeake Bay is starting to thread its way through every subject and grade level. This year's biggest success was 100% participation from all of our students in action projects. Additionally, our list of supporting organizations that help us provide environmental education to our BLS Watershed Stewards is growing.

BLS COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

The Giving Circle of the Baltimore
Community Foundation.
NOAA
MD DNR
Baltimore Trash Talk
Baltimore City Office of Sustainability
Baltimore Tree Trust
Baltimore Green Map
Friends of Druid Hill Park
Masonville Cove
Maryland Port Administration
Maryland Institute College of Art
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

SustainaFest
Watershed Steward Academy
National Aquarium
Blue Water Baltimore
MAEOE
Key School
Living Classrooms
Park School
Oregon Ridge
Irvine Nature Center
Baltimore City Recreation and Parks
National Geographic
Chesapeake Bay Trust

OUR SUCCESS:

Our greatest success is how many students and parents are talking about environmental issues and getting outside to complete action projects. This is because of the outstanding resources and partnerships we have developed over the past four years of this program. We have had so many opportunities for hands-on learning and have extended academic rigor and relevance this past year.

More teachers are excited about teaching their subject material and incorporate topics about the Chesapeake Bay into lessons. Younger students look forward to the CBF boat trips and older students are asking to do more action projects.

"Baltimore Lab School had the faith and desire to create an outdoor education program by giving me a full-time job as the Outdoor Education Coordinator. I would not have been able to grow this program to the level we have reached without the time to do so."

- A Message from BLS Outdoor Education Coordinator, Patti Child

Having a small school bus has greatly reduced our program costs and created a lot of flexibility in scheduling activities and trips. As our enrollment grows and the interest in this program continues, we expect more travel and staff-related expenses.

In closing, Baltimore Lab School's outdoor education program has become an instrumental part of our student experience. BLS is exceptionally grateful for the ongoing support of community partners who make this experience possible.