

## **San Diego Unified Port District- Environmental Services CVESD Coastal Education Program Located at the Chula Vista Nature Center**

**Progress Report: December 2011**

**Sent to: Eileen Maher [emaher@portofsandiego.org] on December 16, 2011**

### **Work Completed to Date:**

On November 1st an Open House was held at the Nature Center for teachers to priority register their classes and put their names into a lottery to win Port funded transportation for their classes to the Nature Center. Twenty-four teachers attended to try and win the free transportation. Thirteen teachers representing 39 classes were able to be awarded free transportation from the Port. The schedule for study trips was almost completely filled that night and in the few days following the open house. Currently there are only 18.5 days that are available for classes through May 31<sup>st</sup> and many are during the California State testing or minimum days. Classes are still being requested daily so it is the expectation and almost all those remaining days will be booked. There is a great demand for the Coastal Education Programs and the major obstacle keeping the students from attending these excellent experiences is the cost of transportation. The desire for teachers to “win” the free transportation is overwhelming.

From October to December, 520 students in twenty-four different classes were able to come to the Nature Center using the Port funded transportation that they won in July. Two SDC K-3 classes came and participated in the Crawling Crabs Program. They learned about crabs from puppets named Carlos Coyote and Crabby Gaby. They also got to learn about the life cycle of crabs and got to touch crabs and a crayfish. Six classes of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders came and participated in the Crustacean lab program. They learned about the adaptations of crustaceans, also learned about their life cycles, got to touch crayfish and crabs and walked down to the beach to see the crabs living in their habitat. Eight classes of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders came and participated in the archeological dig/ Midden program. The students walked out on the trail locating animals and plants that the Kumeyaay Indians would have eaten and used. They also get to see the real Kumeyaay midden (trash can) that is located at the Nature Center. They then became archeologists and dug in “middens” and found bones, shells, arrowheads, pieces of pottery and other biofacts and artifacts, They then categorized what they found and learned more about their way of life when they lived in this area over 700 years ago. One fourth grade class came and participated in the Food Chain Hunt program. The students explored the trail looking for animals and evidence of animals and learned what each one ate. They also got to view one of the smallest consumers, plankton, under the microscope. Two fourth grade classes and one 5<sup>th</sup> grade class participated in the “Geology Rocks” Program. The students got to simulate a variety of weathering and erosion techniques with stream tables and went through the rock cycle as they created edible rocks out of starburst. Two sixth grade classes came and participated in the Watershed Chemistry program. They collected water, plankton

and some environmental conditions at four different sites around the Nature Center. Then they tested the pH of the water and viewed the plankton under microscopes to check the quality of the water. They also watched a presentation of a Watershed model and learned about Point- source and Non-point-source pollution. (Please see photos below)

After the Open House in July there were still 3 schools in the district that had not brought a class to visit the Nature Center in the past 3 years. A special flyer was sent to the teachers of these schools and direct phone calls to the Principals were made to encourage them to come to the Open House and receive free transportation for their classes. (Please see attached flier) At the November 1<sup>st</sup> Open House representatives from each of those schools, Finney, Montgomery and Otay all attended and won free transportation. It was a goal of this grant to be able to get at least one class from every school in the district to attend the Nature Center over the 3 years of the grant. That goal will now be achieved! At least one class from all 44 schools in the district will have attended one of the Coastal Education Program classes in the past three years..

So far all the teachers that won the free transportation have signed up their classes for a study trip. No cancellations have been made from the Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> sign up however there was \$155 available to give away to a very happy teacher, from a cancellation that occurred in the Fall.

### **How effective the project is at benefiting the Bay:**

When students come to a study trip they are given a free pass that allows them and one adult to come back to the Nature Center on another day for free. The Nature Center keeps track of these passes and how many people return. From September- November 2011 74 free passes (2 people per pass) have been collected from the Coastal Education Program. An additional 9 adults and 17 children paid to accompany their family members that got in for free. Therefore a total of 174 people have returned to the Nature Center as a direct result of attending one of the Coastal Education Programs. Not only were the students inspired enough to bring their family back, the family then was able to have the opportunity to become inspired by the exhibits and programs during their visit. Overall the entire local family gains a greater respect for their local environment and the flora and fauna living in it. The data for December 2011- February 2012 will be reported in the March progress report.

All 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students in the district will be taking the California State Science Test in May but the results for that test will not be available until the 2012-2013 school year. The students have already surpassed the goal of this grant to have them raise their test scores by 5-10%. It is a new goal for them to raise their scores this year by another 2%.

The Nature Center is continuing to become a popular site for families all over San Diego to visit. The staff has been working tirelessly to market the Nature

Center and its programs to the local and county-wide populations. Recently the Nature Center has acquired the "Washed Ashore" exhibit and is proud to be able to display these educational pieces that help to promote the Nature Center's mission. It is exciting to watch this treasure grow and give more of our local population the opportunity to learn how to be better stewards of our San Diego Bay.

### **Costs Incurred to Date:**

From October- December twenty-four classes with a total of 520 students came to the Nature Center. Nine classes used 8 single round trip buses that cost \$155 for a total of (8 x \$155= \$1,240) and fourteen classes used 5 shuttle trip buses that cost \$225 each for a total of (5 x \$225= \$1,125). One class was given only \$150 instead of \$155 since they were given some left over money from a class that had to cancel. They paid the remainder of their bus trips and the grant paid the \$150. So the total amount used from October- December is \$2,515 (\$1,240 + \$1,125+ \$150= \$2,515)

Since the three years of funding began for the Winter/Spring Session of 2009, it will end after the Fall Session 2012. The Port's funding of the Coastal Education Program has made it possible for many new teachers and students to have this amazing and eye- opening experience. We look forward to submitting a proposal this year so we can continue to make this experience accessible to all students in the CVESD district. Thank you!

### **March Progress Report**

I am currently pregnant and due on February 4<sup>th</sup>. I will most likely be returning to work on April 9<sup>th</sup>, which is after the March report deadline. It is possible that I might return in March if my baby is born earlier than expected but probably not until April. I am hoping that I can send in the report when I return from maternity leave. Thank you.

## Photos

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Geology Rocks



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Watershed Chemistry





## FREE TRANSPORTATION TO THE NATURE CENTER GUARANTEED FOR YOUR STUDENTS!

Teachers, Principals, PTA members and school representatives don't miss this fantastic opportunity for your students! The Port of San Diego's Environmental Services Department has awarded funds to provide transportation to the Nature Center's Coastal Education Program for CVESD students. Your school is on the 1<sup>st</sup> priority list! In the past three years a class from your school has not attended a program at the Nature Center and therefore is going to be given first priority to the transportation funds.

### Free Transportation Requirements:

- Come to the Nature Center Open House on **Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> from 3-5pm** or send a representative.
- Enter your class or your entire grade level in the lottery.
- Classes from Finney, Montgomery, and Otay and will be chosen first!
- Once your class is selected we can set up a date(s) and solidify your field trip!

Please Contact Karen Quiros for more information at [Karen.quiros@cvesd.org](mailto:Karen.quiros@cvesd.org) or at 619-476-7836



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