

Global Ecology Education Initiative News

Boston school children partner with -- trees!



Photo by Karen Wood, Oliver Wendell Holmes School science teacher

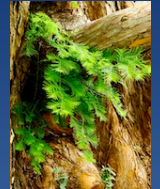
Stepping into the world-renowned living museum of trees, the Arnold Arboretum in Boston's Jamaica Plain, evokes a welcomed uniting with the natural world. Crossing into these greener worlds was enthusiastically embraced by 17 metropolitan Boston elementary/middle school teachers at the week-long, intensive "Nature and Me - Explorations in Ecology" workshop in mid-August. The curriculum and overall program was developed and implemented by biologist and science educator Dr. Douglas Zook and his former SED MAT students Jennifer Reese and Lia Stelljes, now successful middle school teachers and leaders. Assisting the teachers are SED graduate student Julie Slesarchik and CAS senior Mariah Shaw.

The Program focus -- in collaboration with the Arboretum and Boston Public Schools Science led by BU alumna Pam Pelletier -- has children from schools in relatively low-income areas of Boston and nearby communities adopting selecting trees in the Arboretum and then becoming involved in a wide array of discovery activities at their trees and in the classroom during the school year. The idea is for students at young ages to see trees as their friends and to foster a comfort and respect for Nature that can help promote a more earth-conscious citizenry. The Program is financially supported by Henry Meyer Jr. and fostered initially through efforts of Boston University Vice-President Douglas Sears.

SUMMER-FALL 2014

Nature and Me 2014-15 school year program underway with green gusto!

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Nature and Me ecology program becomes part of the curriculum in a Krakow, Poland school
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Trotter School teachers integrate rainforest curriculum unit with GEEI assistance

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EarthCare program with Boston area teachers and Global Ecology course on Fall agenda

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Earth-centered ethics featured in invited overseas GEEI lecture series by Dr. Zook at University of Lodz

NATURE AND ME SCHOOLS!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, DORCHESTER
MISSION HILL SCHOOL, ROXBURY
TROTTER SCHOOL, ROXBURY
MATHER ELEMENTARY, DORCHESTER
GARDNER PILOT ACADEMY, ALLSTON
HORACE MANN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, ALLSTON
MARIA BALDWIN SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGEPORT ELEMENTARY, CAMBRIDGE
TOBIN MONTESSORI, CAMBRIDGE

Middle schoolers in Kraków, Poland enjoy Nature and Me curriculum

Middle school children in the extraordinary city of Kraków, Poland have been immersed in major parts of the GEEI “Nature and Me – Explorations in Ecology” field-based curriculum centered here at Boston University’s School of Education.

I (Douglas Zook) had shared last year with a colleague and friend of mine, distinguished botanist Professor Elzbieta Kuta of Jagiellonian University in Krakow, the essence of the GEEI program and details about how we work to have city children enriched through quality experiences in nature. I told her of our simple but potentially highly impactful goal of having young people see trees as their friends. She heard about how we have the children adopt certain trees in the Arboretum and visit and follow the trees over time with their teachers’ guidance both in the classroom and in the field.

When I returned to Krakow this past June, I was invited to visit the School, the Szkola Podstawowa Number 114. I got to meet many of the students and teachers and saw first hand the inspiring work and nature studies these children are doing. They recited and shared various poems which they had written about their adopted trees over the months as well as sketches and journal stories. We directly visited the nearby garden to view some of the trees, in front of which they shared remarkable knowledge and special feelings they had gained. I met at length with their extraordinary teaching staff and principal, who are committed to continuing collaboration with GEEI.



Pictured at top with her linden tree is Zuzanna Cwik, and below at a maple Maja Baginska and Maria Grochulska



*To the left, educators at Szkola Podstawowa 114, Kraków, Poland
From left to right,
Ms. Mao; Principal Mrs. Bozena Mikos; Mr. Jacek Zadora; Mrs Lucyna Kowalkowska; and Ms. Katarzyna Dykiel with Professor Zook
Not pictured is teacher Marzena Chechelska.*

A Tree-mendous week!



*Snapshots from the
August 2014
Nature and Me:
Explorations in Ecology
workshop at
the Arnold Arboretum*

Trotter teachers develop rainforest unit

Second graders at the William Trotter Innovation School of Boston ventured to the tropical rainforest through a multi-session curriculum unit developed by the teachers with assistance from BU senior Olivia Hathaway and Professor Zook. Both Olivia and Doug have traveled to the northwest Amazon, which allowed an authentic component to the lessons.

The Trotter teacher Team included Sylvaine Lestrade, Trisha Pollock, Karen Loughran and Boston University SED alumna Kelly Majmudar. They brought their outstanding classroom leadership and pedagogical skills to the effort which included the children developing rainforest murals and reading and discussing rainforest related books. Kelly reported as well that many of the students were eager to show off their rainforest art work to their parents during the Schools' art exhibition.



Notes: Former Global Ecology Education Certificate and MAT Science Ed. recipient and key contributor to the Nature and Me effort last year, Jennifer MacDonald, has now completed a quite successful year teaching at Watertown High.....Special thanks to graduating senior Olivia Hathaway for her work with the GEEI effort in the past year. Olivia will be working in environmental education with Americorps...The Nature and Me program also benefited immensely in the past year from the assistance of BU students Annie Lissandrello and Alivia Ashenfarb. Thank you!

GEEI EarthCare program 2014-15



Through generous support of Boston University SED alumna Elisabeth Carter, Boston area science teachers will participate in a Global Ecology mini-course, based on the highly-regarded CAS Bi543 course led by Professor Zook each year. The teachers will become up to date on latest climate change findings, key sustainability actions worldwide, and discover a Humboldtian approach to help make humans a better "fit" with earth.



In case you missed it!

Middle School Teacher Karen Wood of the Oliver Wendell Holmes School of Dorchester/Boston received a national "Outstanding Green Teacher" award in part for her Nature and Me activities with her students. The award was given by the national Green Schools Program at the State House, Boston in May (as shown there with Dr. Zook)

For more info on GEEI, contact Douglas Zook at dzook@bu.edu