

There is a lot of good news to share from the Environmental Education Program.

This has been an eventful year so far. I can hardly keep up with all the positive developments. I am extremely thankful for all the dedication and support both in the field and in the classroom and also in financial support for the Environmental Education Program. I am proud to be a part of such a wonderful organization.

The Environmental Education Program is 50 years old

http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/ins/environed/ee_history_at_aaps

50 years ago, Eunice Hendrix and Dr. William Stapp began work in the Ann Arbor Public Schools establishing The Environmental Education Program.

We are looking at planning an event to celebrate this milestone.

Financial Support this fall

1) The Bill Browning Fund for Environmental Education has presented the AAPS Science & Environmental Education Endowment Fund with a check for **\$29,429.62**. (Both are funds of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation).

2) The Ann Arbor Public Schools Education Foundation has awarded the Environmental Education Program **\$23,133.00**. This money is to be used to support the 2011-12 Environmental Education experiences for students in first grade and a planetarium experience for students in 3rd grade.

Environmental Education Endowment (A2SEEE) Update

Investments since March of 2011 grew the fund to over **\$169,301.45**

This year we will be allowed a **\$4,679** disbursement to help with program costs. Ten years ago when I started the Endowment, I never imagined we would be this far along. I have been impressed with the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation's management of our fund.

Dragonfly Game

Environmental Specialists Kathy Clafin and John Stahly have worked closely with the UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens to develop an educational online game as part of a \$20,000 James A. and Faith Knight Foundation Grant. Thanks to volunteer naturalist Jennifer Wolf for writing the grant proposal! The game explores pond ecosystems and can be viewed at this link:

http://shannonkohlitiz.com/game1/dragonfly_game1_2.swf.

We expect to pilot the game with students later this school year as an additional resource for the 3rd grade unit "Habitats"

New EE volunteer naturalists

We are excited to have a number of retired teachers joining us as volunteer naturalists this year! The EE program clocks over 1,100 hours of student contact time each year with dedicated community volunteers, without whom running our program would be impossible.

AAPS Environmental Education Program and Green Adventure Camp worked together to restore an abandoned farm. This fall much of the harvested produce has been added to the Farm to School program

Thanks to the Green Adventures Camp, Chartwell's Food Service, Rec and Ed., farmer/land owner Richard Raynor, teachers, and the many adult volunteers for making this "farm to school" project a reality. Over the last four years many students, Green Adventure campers, and adult community volunteers have dedicated themselves to farming the abandoned Raynor Berry Farm on Frains Lake Rd in Dixboro Michigan. For the first time, Chartwells is serving meals made from produce grown at a student farm. Our collaboration has allowed for pick up at the farm, processing at Pioneer High School, and meals made from fresh local student grown produce to be served in lunchrooms across the district. The 4 acres we currently have in use produced an astounding variety and volume of fresh local food. See the Green Adventures Camp website for photos and more information about our progress.

http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/reced.greencamp/green_adventures_camp

Indonesian local government officials learn about the AAPS Environmental Education Program

Matt Naud, Environmental Consultant for the City of Ann Arbor hosted three Indonesian local government officials who were in Ann Arbor this month to learn about our sustainability initiatives. One of the visitors is in charge of environmental education in her city and she asked how we do things here. The visitors were invited to join an EE field trip and the EE program was explained to them in detail. We also provided a tour of the AAPS student farm in Dixboro. We harvested potatoes, tomatoes, tomatillos, raspberries, basil, hot peppers and more!

David Szczygiel