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Grace Grossman Youth Collaborative

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Grace Grossman Youth Collaborative

Sarah Oktay, UMass Boston, Nantucket Field Station



Summary/Abstract

Each year 5-7 middle school and high school groups from underserved communities across Massachusetts are treated to a 4-5 day all expense paid trip to Nantucket to stay at the UMass Boston Nantucket Field Station and spend the week exploring the island and nature.

MCAS standards are incorporated into this award winning program as students engage in hands-on, placed based experiential learning and document their journey through poetry, journaling, and photography.

Approaches and Methods

Principals are invited to participate by nominating a teacher to lead the group who then selects the students who qualify through essays, class participation, and enthusiasm.

Schools included in the process (e.g. Lawrence, Brockton, South Boston, Dorchester, Worcester) typically have underserved populations, high ratios of ESL speakers, higher rates of neighborhood crime, are located in urbanized areas with limited green space, lower than average income, and have a greater percentage of students without higher education role models in their family.

Topics include ecology, the environment, geology, biodiversity, land management, policy, social and cultural history.

Activities include:

- Stargazing through Maria Mitchell's telescope, seal cruise to Muskeget, visits to a vernal pond, salt marsh sampling, botany walks, museum trips, prescribed burn program demonstration, beach profiling, spider and insect collection, among many other activities.
- Integration with poetry and art; each cohort creates their own chapbook and gives a live performance at the end of the week
- Students visit historical sites including the African Meeting House, nearby graveyards, lighthouses, grist mills, colonial and 17-20th century homes
- Other components: archeology, science and policy, land management (prescribed burns, sheep grazing program), endangered species protection (shorebirds and seals)
- Students create a book of poetry and discuss college options.

Results/Impact



Between 2005-2012, 32 school groups and approximately 400 students have participated:

- 84% have gone on to college (versus 46% of their peers).
- 18% have followed a science based course of study.
- More than ten percent of these students (46) have gone on to UMass and
- 26 students have applied for Field Station internships.
- Schools in the program report higher achievement before (trying to qualify for program) and after the trips.
- Interaction with diverse mentors including young people who have degrees in ecology, wildlife management, fisheries science, and naturalists show students the range of jobs available with a science degree.



Conclusion/Next Steps



Better tracking of these students as they go on through life and have children of their own will allow us to more accurately gauge the permanent Impact of this program.

Each year new teachers and more students should be invited.

Goals and Objectives



Horseshoe Crab counts for State... collecting real data in real time that real people need for managing the health and population of a species

To introduce students to science, help them meet role models in the fields of ecology, biology, land management and marine science and bond with classmates while experiencing the whole gamut of Nantucket's physical, historical, social, and biological nature.

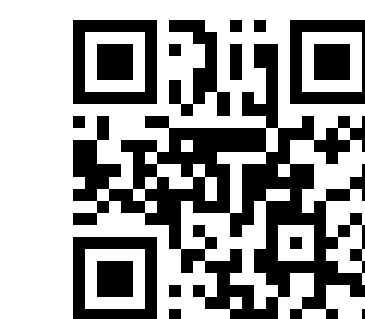


References and Resources

www.umb.edu/nantucket

http://www.umb.edu/nantucket/k_12/grace_grossman_youth_collaborative

Slide show of Excel High School 2009



Poetry and photos



Partnerships and Additional Information

Partners include the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, The African Meeting House, Nantucket Land Council, Mass Audubon, Nantucket Historical Association, Maria Mitchell Association, Shearwater Excursions, Nantucket Land Bank, and the Trustees of the Reservations.

Special thanks go to former Senator for the Cape and Islands, Robert O'Leary and former State Representative Eric Turkington for advocating for 9C state support and to current Senator for the Cape and the Islands Tim Madden for shepherding the citation through the state house.