Education Program Fact Sheet 2019

The Education Program at the Ecology Center works to increase development, awareness and access to interactive urban environmental education to all ages. The Education Program is based in the Ecology Center’s Learning Center located at the Fire Boat House inside East River Park, the largest park in the Lower East Side. This location provides proximity to the water, and ongoing restoration and conservation efforts necessary to create an immersive educational experience. The Learning Center provides a space for in-depth investigation and a home to a number of education animals including a collection of insects, reptiles and native fish. Utilizing the accessible waterfront allows workshops on water testing, fishing and the Hudson Estuary. Personal encounters with the education animals helps programming to come full circle, emphasizing that the biodiversity of New York City may not always be readily apparent but it is always present.

Our Educational Approach

The C.O.R.E values of the Ecology Center’s Education approach are: Conservation, Observation, Restoration, and Education. These values are implemented in order to confront modern day environmental issues as we face them in New York City. Programming incorporates C.O.R.E values throughout and makes connections to other Ecology Center programs. Educational workshops offered to schools and community-based organizations emphasize the urban setting and the unique circumstances regarding that setting. This is done so that participants can adopt more sustainable living practices in their lives and communities.

- Conservation - maintaining existing environments
- Observation - observe environmental impacts
- Restoration - enhance existing habitat for native plants and animals
- Education - build knowledge and skills for conservation and advocacy

Up Next: Expand Public Events and Programming

The Ecology Center plans to enter 2020 with a range of events that are open to the public, including those beyond school-age. From happy hour fishing clinics to a community air quality initiative, we will strengthen our presence as a resource to residents of the Lower East Side of all ages and backgrounds. Furthermore, the Education Program will deepen existing relationships with partner organizations, as well as establish new ones. As the Ecology Center is displaced from the East River Park Fire Boat House and the Education Program relocates to Seward Park, these partners will be critical in ensuring an even and effective transition.
Workshops

Animal Adaptations (Grades K-5): Students can view and touch animal specimens and get hands-on experience with our animal ambassadors.

Seed Balls (Grades K-5): Participants will learn about the soil nutrient cycle and the role compost has in rebuilding soils. Students will be able to make their own Native Wildflower Seed Balls by combining seeds, clay, and locally produced compost into small balls perfect for tossing anywhere that needs an extra burst of life!

East River Ecology (Grades 6-12): Explore the estuary ecosystem of the East River. Participants are exposed to the estuary and the historical development of NYC through a lens of sustainability.

Urban Biodiversity (Grades K-8): They will learn about the relationships between these creatures in the urban environment which includes native, non-native, and invasive species.

Urban Water Cycle & Our Sewer System (Grades 5-12): Participants explore the urban water cycle and to learn where New York City gets its drinking water, then try out different ways of measuring the physical and chemical properties of water pollution in the East River.

2019 Year in Review

In 2019, the Education Program conducted 40 school and community organization workshops, reaching over 1,100 learners. Over the summer months, the Ecology Center offered the ever-popular free public fishing clinics, allowing 550 adults and families the opportunity to fish in the East River. In addition, 5 public events allowed us to reach an additional 260 New Yorkers over the course of the year. Thank you to all who participated, donated, and engaged with us in 2019!