KIDS for the BAY

A Project of **Earth Island Institute**
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Mandi Billinge, Executive Director/Founder

August 18, 2022

Rex Delizo, P.E.
District Manager
Stege Sanitary District
7500 Schmidt Lane
El Cerrito, CA 94530-0537

Dear Rex,

I am excited to share with you that we have completed the Watershed Action Program in El Cerrito, with Fairmont Elementary School. Our students graduated from the program with a deeper knowledge of the San Francisco Bay watershed and their role in its stewardship. The enclosed report highlights some of the successes we have had educating and inspiring El Cerrito students, teachers and families to be empowered environmentalists through our interactive lessons, Environmental Action Projects and field trips to the Berkeley Marina.

Please find enclosed:

- 2021 – 2022 School Year Final Report
- Photo documents of our students in action
  (Please note these pictures are for internal use only, as some families have requested their child's picture not be released to the general public)

I hope you will enjoy reviewing these materials and please let me know if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

Mandi J. Billinge

Mandi Billinge
Executive Director/Founder

Watershed Action Program
2021 – 2022 School Year Final Report

PREPARED FOR
STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT

KIDS for the BAY
1771 Alcatraz Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94703

Introduction

KIDS for the BAY (KftB) has completed the Watershed Action Program (WAP) with two classes in the City of El Cerrito during the 2021-2022 school year. This program reached forty-six students, their families, and two teachers. KftB Educator Alix Martin worked with the students at Fairmont Elementary School in El Cerrito. The students of El Cerrito were engaged in hands-on learning and were empowered to take action to protect their local watershed. The third grade teacher partners, Karley Umoro and Jennifer Kelso, were passionate about learning and teaching this meaningful curriculum throughout the program.

Summary of 2021-2022 Environmental Action Projects and field trips

The KIDS for the BAY WAP this year was delivered through engaging, hands-on watershed lessons, an Environmental Action Project, and a bus field trip to a local creek, bay, or delta habitat. In the interactive lessons and Action Projects, students gained important knowledge about their local watershed and how to protect it. They also shared their knowledge with other classes of students, teachers, and family members, and inspired environmental stewardship throughout their school community. The program culminated with a bay field trip to Berkeley Marina where students had the special opportunity to investigate the intertidal zone of the rocky shore, search for crabs and other bay organisms, do belly biology, and bird watch along the water's edge using binoculars.

The teachers at Fairmont Elementary were very thankful for the teaching support provided and eager for their students to engage in activities in the classroom and in the outdoors. Partner teachers learned exciting, hands-on approaches to watershed science education. Students were excited to become environmentalists by connecting with nature, engaging in scientific experiments, and taking environmental action in their own neighborhood and school community.

Waste Reduction Action Project

Environmental Action Projects provide students and teachers with the opportunity to become leaders in their schools and families and have a positive impact on the health of their watershed. The two third grade classes from Fairmont Elementary selected the Waste Reduction Action Project. In this project students learned about the negative impact of plastic pollution in our landfills, bays and oceans. Students identified solutions to this issue, made pledges and taught others about how to use the Five Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot/compost and Refuse) to reduce plastic pollution.

<u>Action Project Preparation</u>
Fairmont students were very excited to help make a difference at their school. To introduce the Action Project, Ms. Alix brought a picnic sorting activity with lunch components that were very wasteful, somewhat wasteful, and low waste for the class to investigate. Many of the groups observed that ‘Lunchables’ created a lot of plastic pollution, and compared these to the metal,

reusable 'Bento Boxes' which did not create any waste. In groups, the students discussed alternatives that created less waste and how to reuse single waste items. Ms. Alix showed the class a video about a young environmentalist who helped fisher people reduce the number of fish nets that pollute their waterways in Florida. "I remember that picture from the plastic pollution lesson where the sea turtle was tangled in a fishing net," shared Kai.

Poster-Making

On the day of the Action Project, Ms. Alix worked with the students to create posters they would share with their first grade buddy classes to get them excited about joining them for a trash cleanup project. Students worked in groups to make posters about plastic pollution, waste reduction, the Five Rs, and protecting wildlife. Both classes really enjoyed having this time to be creative and reflect on what they had learned throughout the program. While brainstorming a topic and poster design, Greewani told her group, "We learned about plastic being in small pieces and getting eaten by animals." Addie came up to Ms. Alix and told her, "I want to add a message that will really make people think. I can change the world!" Many of the students had similar messages on their posters. They were excited to empower other students to help reduce trash and waste. The first graders loved learning from their third grade buddies about how to help the environment and they were very excited to join them for the trash cleanup project.

Field Trip to Berkeley Marina

It was a bright and sunny day when Fairmont students arrived at the Berkeley Marina for their field trip. They jumped off the bus with huge grins on their faces. "We are so excited to be here! This is the first field trip of the year for many of our students," shared class teacher Ms. Karley Umoru. "Wow this place is so beautiful, I can smell the bay!" exclaimed Aria.

The group gathered for a morning opening circle. They discussed how this special location was part of the San Francisco Bay. "The bay is right there and the water from it ends up in the Pacific Ocean," shared Sean. For their first activity, the group made their way down to the rocky shore to start their bay organism investigation. Ms. Alix discussed low tides and how they expose a very special habitat. The students learned how to carefully and respectfully observe the living creatures, while still leaving them in their homes. "Wow look! This crab looks like the color of sand, maybe that is an adaptation to help them hide from predators," explained Lincoln. Peter discovered a crab molt exoskeleton and flipped it over to get a closer look. "This crab looks different from the ones we studied in class which were males. This tail is rounded, so I think it is a female," he said. Jim added, "I love being a scientist! Studying crabs is so fun!"

Next, the students made their way over to the marina to do 'belly biology' and explore life under the dock. They were thrilled to discover sea squirts, skeleton shrimp, and sea sponges. "Wow the sea squirts are so cool looking, I didn't expect them to be see-through," exclaimed Brooklyn. The students especially enjoyed observing the different types of aquatic life on an abandoned boat buoy. "This boat must have been here for years in order for there to be all of this life here," observed Felix. "The skeleton shrimp are so cool! It's obvious now how they got their name," said Denham.

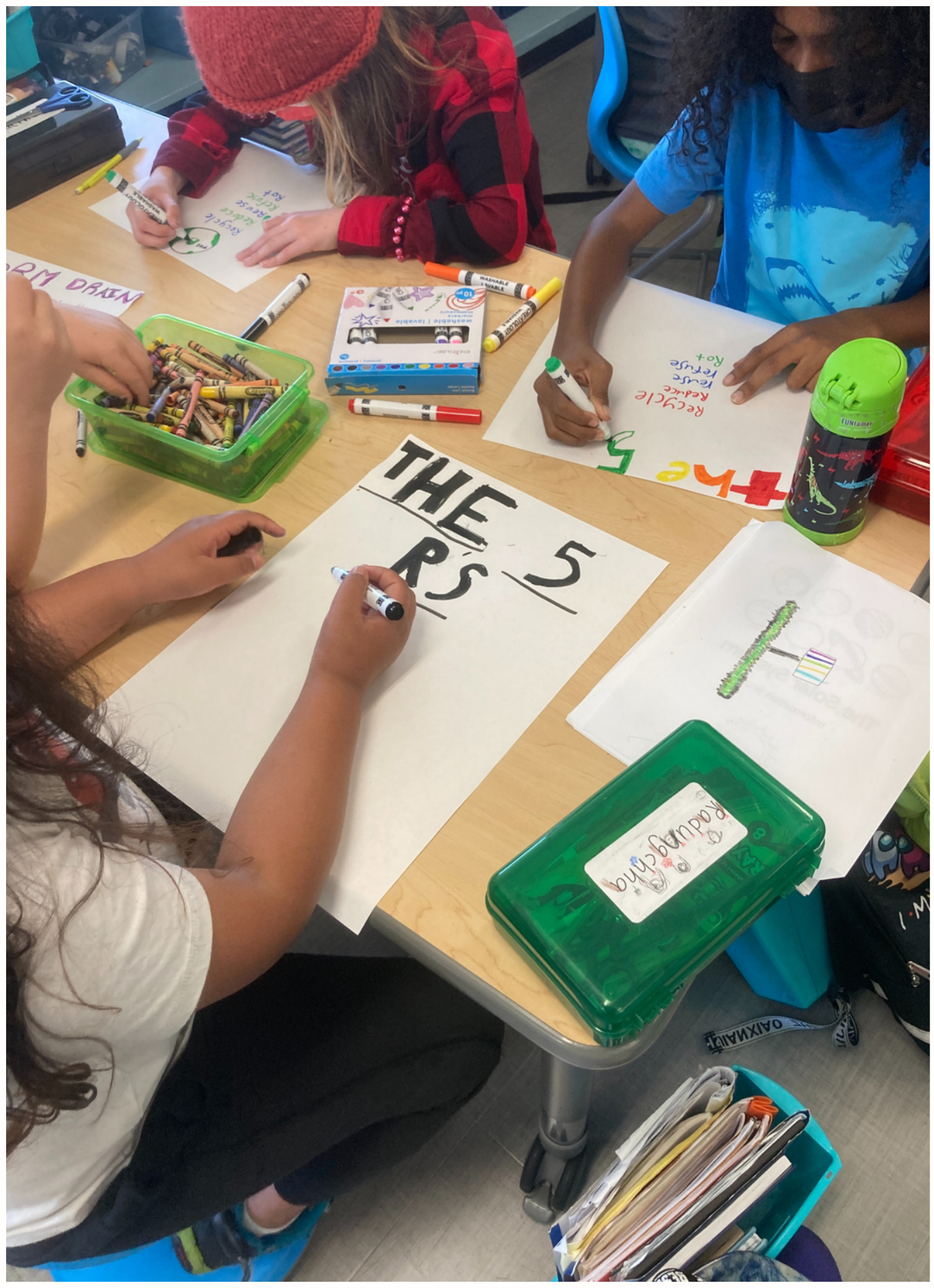
The class also unexpectedly witnessed a circle of life moment with a raven and ground squirrel. During a game of adaptations tag, students noticed a raven swooping in and snatching a baby ground squirrel from its den. The raven and mother squirrel had a brief brawl before the raven won and flew away with the baby. “Woah, I have never seen anything like that in real life before!” said Kai. “It’s like the food chains we learned about in class except this one happened for real,” added Greewani. During the next round of adaptations tag Mikfung decided, “A safe adaptation would be to have no tail, because we just saw that having a tail means you can be taken away by predators more easily!”

Many students shared that they were very grateful for this special field trip day spent out in nature. “This was the best day of my life!” shared Peter.

KIDS for the BAY

*Photos are for internal use only

WATERSHED ACTION PROGRAM
STEGE SANITARY DISTRICT
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR
FINAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



For their Environmental Action Project, third grade students at Fairmont Elementary School worked together to improve the health of their local watershed by making posters to present to their classmates about how to use the Five R's to reduce plastic pollution.

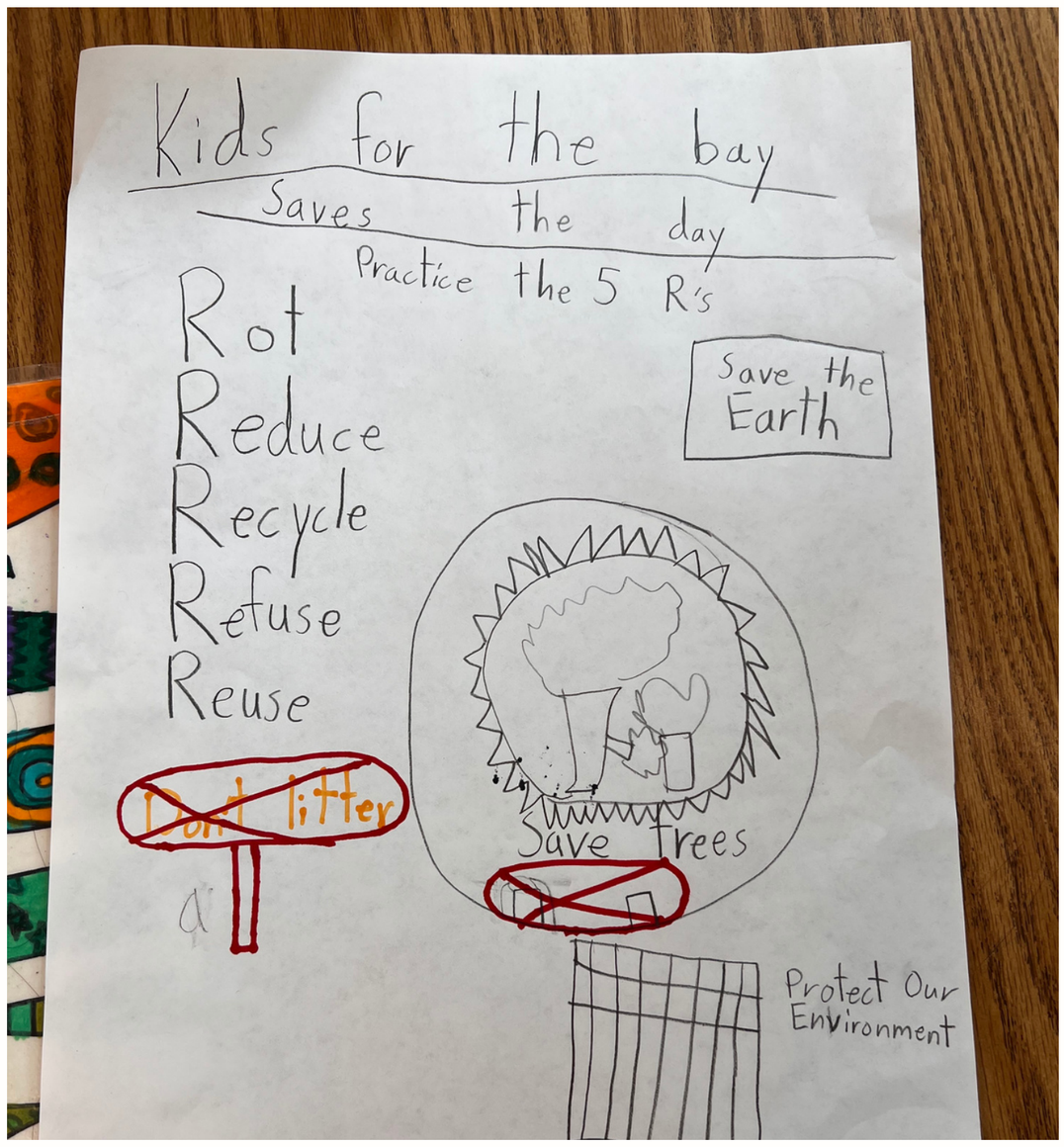


Photo Document, Stege Sanitary District August 2022

"I want to add a message that will really make people think. I can change the world!"

Addie, Third Grade Student, Fairmont Elementary School, El Cerrito

"We learned about plastic being in small pieces and getting eaten by animals. I am going to make my poster about that!"

Greewani, Third Grade Student, Fairmont Elementary School, El Cerrito

FIELD TRIP TO BERKELEY MARINA

The young environmentalists from Fairmont Elementary enjoyed their bus field trip to the Berkeley Marina. Pictured are students investigating the rocky shore for crabs, doing belly biology, and conducting a trash cleanup!

"This crab looks different than the ones we studied in class which were males. This tail is rounded, so I think it is a female."

Peter, Third Grade Student, Fairmont Elementary School, El Cerrito

"Wow! The sea squirts are so cool looking, I didn't expect them to be see-through. I love belly biology!"

Channing, Third Grade Student, Fairmont Elementary School, El Cerrito

Photo Document, Stege Sanitary District August 2022