

Student Scientists Explore Marine Sanctuary

Nearly seventy five percent (75%) of the Earth's surface is covered by oceans. Many student scientists have little to no interaction with studying the ecology of the ocean and how human activity, international policy and the survival of marine animals are linked. To dispel the myth of the ocean, a group of student scientists from ECOTEK's Detroit Lab set off on an adventure to explore Sarasota Bay.

The team consisted of students from Detroit Edison Public School Academy (Spencer Sanders, Michael Burnett, Briana Young, Evan Morton, and Amber Young), Detroit Friends School (Angel Hall) and Renaissance High School (Keith Young Jr). Detroit Edison PSA is one of only three partner schools in the State of Michigan that have been awarded an ECOTEK franchise. Detroit Edison PSA is the first and only Charter School in the State of that has won the the prestigious Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Award.

The students traveled to Sarasota, Florida during their winter break in late February to work with researchers at the MOTE Marine Laboratory. The purpose of the project was to understand how the ecology of Sarasota Bay is being impacted by human activity and pollution runoff within the watershed. To prepare for the expedition the students did background research on the history of Sarasota Bay, learned about water chemistry and performed dissections of marine specimens in ECOTEK Lab (i.e. shark, octopus, squid, horseshoe crab).

Once the team arrived onsite, the work was indepth and high intensity. The students learned about the lifecycle of sharks and shark tracking technology. They built ROVs (remotely operated vehicles); visited a marine mammal hospital and a barrier island in Sarasota Bay. At night the students cruised up and down the Gulf of Mexico coastline, looking for and collecting crustaceans and other marine life.

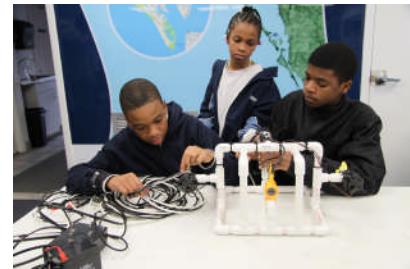
This was an amazing expedition for all the students, but it was especially beneficial to Angel Hall, who wants to be an oceanographer. Through the ECOTEK Science Program, Angel was able to see and touch a wide variety of marine life as well as work with top notch marine scientists. In the coming weeks the team will be sharing their experience with youth around Metro Detroit.



Evan reviewing his notes in ECOTEK Lab before starting his squid dissection



Amber, Spencer, Briana and Angel, investigating marine life at MOTE touch tank



Michael, Amber, Keith, building a ROV that they used to view marine life underwater in Sarasota Bay

About the Ecotek Science Program

Ecotek is a program within the Motor City Model UN Club. It provides students ages 10 to 17 with the opportunity to work on science projects to help them better understand the role that science plays in policy making within international organizations like the United Nations.

About Mote Marine Laboratory

Mote Marine Laboratory is a leading marine research laboratory. It is funded through federal, state and local grants and through the generosity of individual donors and foundations.

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