

East River C.R.E.W.: Community Recreation and Education on the Water



Final Report NEIWPC - HEP funding December 2006

Summary:

This year's programs were set for later times in the day to try to reach more participants given the heat of summer. Unfortunately, the heat continued to affect our attendance figures. It is always a bit of a balancing act between when children are most likely to be outdoors with their parents and when we can staff the catch & release festivals. Our best public attendance was one day with a total of ten participants in the fall. In the future, we will consider holding the public festivals in the early morning hours if they are in the summer time, or during fall weekends only.

Our most successful day was a new partnership with the nearby Stanley Isaacs Center where over 80 campers rotated through four of our stations to learn about the river, its fauna, and practice their fishing skills. This activity also involved training twelve local high school camp counselors in administering the festival. Unfortunately, fewer than five of the staff we trained were sent to us on the festival day. It was difficult to do more on-the-spot-training when we had twenty children in front of us. They also came in the middle of the day under full sun with no water bottles or hats.

In the future, we will review the scheduling/supervision of visits with campers so that more counselors can contribute to the instruction of the children at the festival rather than act as escorts and provide water bottles for all attendees. All we had to distribute this year was ice cubes and a couple of water bottles from a cooler that was keeping the staff lunches cool.

This year the addition of 3 interns provided hands-on instruction in baiting and casting a line, helping youngsters when their lines were tangled. They also provided instruction in local geography, and gyotaku. During our fall festivals we had two additional volunteers to help with the fishing lines which got tangled almost as soon as a participant cast the line. These interns made it possible for our festival coordinator to continue to organize these festivals even though she had her one year-old son with her.

As mentioned in previous reports, most of the fish were caught in the fall. The heat and late afternoon hours may have made it less likely we would catch anything significant. See quarterly report from October for an inventory of the actual catch.

Finally, East River C.R.E.W. volunteer staff contributed the equivalent of \$1,250 in man-hours to organize, administer, and report on the festivals and trainings (calculated at \$25 an hour for 50 hours: 21 hours festival (7 two hour festivals, plus ½ hour set up & clean up for each), 2 hour training for camp counselor, 15 hours in outreach and mailing preparation, database updates, 12 hours in reporting and managing budget and reimbursements). HEP funding totaled \$ 3,690.00 to support the Catch and Release Festival program.

Our evaluation of the project was based on participant observation, and feedback from the interns. One email from a parent who joined us just at the end of one of our public festivals is indicative of the feedback we got from many parents over the summer. We have resubmitted the responses at the end of this report below.

When our volunteer webmaster has the time, we will post an updated page of the most recent "Go-Fish" photographs for all to view at www.eastrivercrew.org. You can see photos from our 2004 programs there currently. Also, we recently gave a presentation on our summer activities to three environmental science 12th grade classes from the Churchill School in Manhattan. They were very interested in participating in future events. It seems the most productive use of our time and HEP resources should focus on partnership with community centers and schools so that we have a predictable number of participants for each of our festivals.

Evaluation Feedback:

Feedback from a participant (sic)

"Hi,

Me and my daughter always walk down the FRD drive and I never knew that such a program existed. I think it's a wonderful opportunity for her to get some play and education on different marine life the Hudson (*we were on the East River*) has to offer. I know that I came in at the end of the program for this year but I look forward to bringing her again next year. Thank you so much for sending me those picture. I look foward to seeing you again next year."

~ Alexandra, a young mother visiting festival with her 4 year old daughter

Feedback from the Interns (sic)

"Working with you this summer was awesome. It's too bad we didn't have a load of people but it was still fun. I think maybe if we had advertised more we would have had a better turnout. We did good with what we had so I think that's what counts the most. The others activities were good too I just think our only problem was the promotion." Stacie, youth worker

“I think what needs to improve in order to make it better and have more people come is more ad. we need to let more people know all about it and keep telling them over and over and also get them more time. I also think that there should be a little more activities for the young kid. like making things with lanyard, and maybe educating on the fish and the history so they take more than just learning to fish out of it. I think that it was good the only problem was the lack of kids. the things I've listed are just things that could make it better for the kids and us.”

Michele, youth worker