

2006 Final Report Urban Waters Environmental Education Program

Summary

The Urban Waters Environmental Education Program (UWEEP) utilizes the South Street Seaport Museum's schooner *Lettie G. Howard*, a sail training and marine education vessel, to help develop young New Yorkers' sense of marine environmental stewardship. 2006 represents the third year that the Museum and the *Lettie* have collaborated with NEIWPC in offering the UWEEP sails.

The 2006 program included four overnight sails for at-risk teens from the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club, a New York City social service organization with whom the *Lettie* has partnered in the past. Eleven teens participated in each sail. The cost per sail was \$1250. The dates were June 3-4, June 4-5, September (fill in). (Note: the attached invoice is for three sails only. The fourth sail was a carry-over from 2005.)

On the first sail, the *Lettie* departed at 3:00 PM from the 79th Street Boat Basin on the Hudson River in Manhattan, sailed around the island, up the East River into Long Island Sound and anchored offshore at Oyster Bay, Long Island. At noon the next day, the teens disembarked at Oyster Bay and were bused home. A second group arrived from New York by bus and boarded the *Lettie* at 3:00 PM for the return trip, arriving at the Boat Basin at noon the following day. During each sail on the *Lettie*, the teens explored the New York Harbor waterways, received hands-on training in sail handling and navigation and performed marine and environmental science activities.

Goals Reached

The goals of the program were:

- 1) To continue to provide social service organizations with scholarships for overnight sail training and environmental education programs in New York City's waters
- 2) To develop an ethic of environmental stewardship among New York City youth
- 3) To help at-risk teens enhance their sense of competence and self-esteem
- 4) To inspire participants to further their environmental education through more intensive programs and internships

Goal #1: With the help of the HEP mini-grant, the Museum was able to offer the overnight sails at a reduced rate. Each group of teens lived and worked on the *Lettie* for 24 hours. They received hands-on training in many new and unfamiliar skills. They also got a crash course in learning to work as a team, and to live and work in close quarters.

Goal #2: Many of the environmental experiments were performed in response to comments or questions by the teens. As a result, their findings were not simply abstract science, but information that was relevant to their lives. This prompted a genuine interest in understanding their responsibility as environmental stewards.

Goal #3: All participants took on new challenges and learned many new skills. By the second day, they were all able to assume many new responsibilities and worked with very little instruction. At the sail's end, all the teens departed with a new sense of confidence and an enhanced awareness of their capabilities.

Goal #4: Following each sail, the teens were informed about volunteer and internship opportunities available at the Museum. Interns have the chance to work aboard the *Lettie* or one of the Museum's other historic ships. They may also choose to help in the Museum's marine life Wet Lab or work with the volunteers who help run many of the Museum's educational and public programs.

Highlights/Unexpected Outcomes

Sail and navigation training included:

- Raising and lowering sails
- Chart reading
- Ship safety procedures
- Knot-tying

Marine experiments and tests included:

- Salinity
- Dissolved oxygen
- Ph level
- Temperature
- Fecal coliform test
- Benthic grab

The teens took samples from both the Hudson and East rivers and then compared the results. They discussed the reasons for any differences and drew conclusions about the effect of humans on the marine ecosystem. These experiments helped spark a greater sense of environmental awareness and stewardship.

Highlights for the teens on each sail were the all-crew talent shows put on after dinner and the opportunity for each one to climb to the top of the mast or out on the headrig of the ship. These were important achievements and huge confidence builders for the participants.

Problems

No problems occurred on the sails.

Evaluations

The Kips Bay Boy's and Girl's Club programs, that have been offered since 2003, are a perennial favorite aboard the *Lettie G. Howard*. These programs offer students (many of whom have never been aboard a boat before) the unique opportunity to experience living and learning aboard a 19th century sailing vessel. Unlike many of the programs that we offer, this opportunity is entirely extra-curricular. The traditional academic curricula that we normally offer aboard is replaced with challenging activities like going aloft, out on the bowsprit and learning how to navigate. Our goals for these programs are to have students try something that they have never had the opportunity to do before and every student rises to the occasion. Students who have returned for several years comment that it is the best experience of the year for them and they can't wait to do it again next year.

HEP Staff Participation

No HEP staff participated in these sails.