

Nature in the City School Year Wrap Up

As another incredible school year comes to an end, we're reflecting on all of the wonderful learning, exploration, and outdoor discoveries that made this year of *Nature in the City* so memorable.

From classroom investigations to outdoor adventures, it has truly been a joy sharing the wonders of nature with students across the Syracuse City School District throughout this school year.

During June, Kindergarten students finished their three *Nature in the City* lessons with meeting an Eastern Box Turtle and explored the characteristics that make something living vs non-living. Through observation and discussion, students learned how living things grow and meet their basic needs.



Third graders wrapped up the program with an off-site field trip to Elmwood Park. Students explored the stream, searched for aquatic macroinvertebrates, and used the organisms they found to determine the health of the water while learning more about how we can keep our water clean by using green and gray infrastructure.



Fifth graders studied urban ecosystems by exploring the important roles animals play in food webs and maintaining healthy ecosystems. Through an exciting game of "ecosystem jenga", students discovered how every animal in a food web contributes to the balance of ecosystems, even the ones right in their school yard!



Katie Robideau
School Programs Manager

As we wrapped up our 24th year of the *Nature in the City* program, we want to thank all of the wonderful teachers who welcomed us into their classrooms and made this year such a success. We are so grateful for your partnership and can't wait to kick off our 25th year this fall!

Have a wonderful summer, and thank you for another amazing year of learning and exploration!



Looking Back: What We've Taught This Year!

Kindergarten

Lesson 1: **Habitat Hunt**

Animals in Syracuse need food, water, shelter, air, and space in their habitat to survive.

Lesson 2: **Animals In Motion**

Animals move in different ways to get what they need to survive in their habitat.

Lesson 3: **It's Alive**

The city of Syracuse has many living and nonliving things that are all important in nature.



1st Grade

Lesson 1: **Pumpkin Circle**

By exploring how pumpkins grow we better understand the concept of a life cycle.

Lesson 2: **Maple Magic**

Maple sugaring is a scientific process with a rich history.

Lesson 3: **Journey of a Seed**

Seed dispersal is when seeds leave their parent plant to survive and grow on their own.



2nd Grade

Lesson 1: Snowflake Bentley

You can learn science by observing the world around you, just like Wilson “Snowflake” Bentley learned snow science by observing snowflakes.

Lesson 2: Breakfast for Birds

Birds with various beaks shapes and sizes forage for different kinds of foods in different types of substrates.

Lesson 3: Bugs, Blooms, and Birds

Insects and birds spread pollen from flower to flower helping plants make seeds.



3rd Grade

Lesson 1: Save the Rain

Water flows across our local landscape, and green and gray infrastructure can help us keep Onondaga Lake clean.

Lesson 2: Creatures of the Deep

Benthic Aquatic Macroinvertebrates have diverse adaptations that allow them to survive in their habitats.

Lesson 3: Elmwood Park Field Trip

Students become stream scientists to evaluate the water quality and diversity of Furnace Brook in the City of Syracuse - water which ultimately flows to Onondaga Lake.



4th Grade

Lesson 1: Biome Blitz

The health of plants and animals is dependent on the unique characteristics of their biomes.

Lesson 2: Bright Ideas

Energy is the ability to work, can only be transformed from one form to another, and is all around us all the time

Lesson 3: From the Bottom Up

Pollution in the environment can affect entire ecosystems in its journey up the food chain.



5th Grade

Lesson 1: Hot in Here

Using the energy in fossil fuels to do work increases the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere, causing noticeable changes to Earth's climate.

Lesson 2: Wetland Wonders

Wetlands are a type of ecosystem that provide important functions and support many species of plants and animals.

Lesson 3: Urban Ecosystem Exploration

Urban ecosystems and food webs illustrate the interconnectedness of nature, the complexity of ecology, and how energy travels through the environment.



Educators' Favorite Moments



While at Elmwood Park, two students kept bringing me rocks that were covered in blackfly larvae. Each time they did this (probably 15 times total), they acted like it was just about the most exciting thing they had ever seen in their lives! It's also just wonderful to hear students say that the Elmwood Park trip is one of the most fun days they've ever had.

- **Anna Stunkel**, Environmental Educator

One of my favorite moments actually happened at Elmwood last week. Amelia and I were working with a class from Delaware and a student saw a garter snake in the grass. Usually when we see a snake, the majority of the class is really scared but most of the class was just excited. One student picked it up and then showed all of her other classmates and so many of them were excited to take a turn trying to hold the snake and take a closer look at it. After we returned the snake to its home, the student who had picked it up yelled, "I love nature and nature loves me triumphantly" while holding her net up in the air in celebration.

- **Kat Resanovich**, Environmental Educator and Volunteer Coordinator

Educators' Favorite Moment Continued

During our Pumpkin Circle lesson, the students play a game that involves the life cycle! They are physically moving and manipulating parts of the life cycle that we continue to build upon the rest of the year. I love seeing them *literally* connect the pieces together and then bring these memories back into later lessons.

- **Katie McLaughlin**, Environmental Educator



In the late winter, when it was warm enough to go outside especially, Breakfast for Birds was very memorable for me and the second graders. Watching them get so excited to see birds through binoculars, even common ones they see every day, was so special.

- **Amelia Gross**, Environmental Educator



I often start a lesson with the hope that I can inspire both students and teachers, but for this lesson, I was definitely the one inspired. The teacher of this 3rd grade class was amazing. She was so excited to get into the stream with her students. I could tell she had a relationship with each of them and passionately wanted them to learn as much as they could. Every time a student would find a creature in the stream, she would get excited and celebrate with them. The more engaged she was, the more engaged her students were. And I couldn't help but be excited too!

- **Rachel Ribaud**, Environmental Educator

Thank You to Our Sponsors and Partners!



The Baltimore Woods *Nature in the City* program is only possible with the support from the Syracuse City School District and local companies, foundations, and individuals who believe in the mission of connecting students to the natural world right here in Syracuse.

Join the growing list of sponsors!



This month, we thank the KeyBank Foundation for renewing their support to fund program delivery at two schools! We are so thankful to ALL the program partners who helped ensure that every K-5th grade classroom received three, one-hour lessons with the Baltimore Woods *Nature in the City* Program this year.

YOU can be part of helping every student explore science through nature and find the joy of discovery with *Nature in the City*! [Email Executive Director Whitney Lash-Marshall](#) to learn more about becoming a program sponsor today, or for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year!