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Summary & Results for Environmental Education Mini-Grants Awarded in FY17

Total Projects Funded in FY17 - 13
FY 17 Mini-Grant Budget - $10,000.00
Total Funds Awarded - $6,335.00

Committee	Name of Project	Number of Students	School/Facility	City/County	Awarded
R & B	**Art in the Park**	25	Western Branch Middle School	Chesapeake	$500.00
R & B	**Cradock Community Care Project**	120	Cradock Middle School	Portsmouth	$500.00
R & B	**KinderGarden**	100	Strawbridge Elementary School	Virginia Beach	$500.00
R & B	**Lafayette High School Beautification Project**	1000	Lafayette High School	Williamsburg	$500.00
R & B	**Learning/Vertical Palette Garden **FY16**	550	Newtown Elementary School	Virginia Beach	$500.00 *FY16
R&B/Water	**Lower School Children's Learning Garden**	128	Walsingham Academy	Williamsburg	$500.00
R&B/Water	**Native Habitat – Pollinators, Pathways, and Prevention**	650	Spratley Gifted Center	Hampton	$500.00
R & B	**Reading to Save the Earth**	494	Oakland Elementary School	Suffolk	$500.00
R & B	**Recycling Plastic in the Classroom**	500	Ghent School	Norfolk	$475.00
R & B	**Red Mill Community Garden**	110	Red Mill Elementary School	Virginia Beach	$500.00
R&B/Water	**School Learning Garden**	425	Booker T. Washington Middle School	Virginia Beach	$500.00
Water	**To Our Schoolyard Watershed and Beyond!**	400	Gloucester County Public Schools	Gloucester	$500.00
R & B	**Willoughby's Flower Garden**	204	Willoughby Elementary School	Norfolk	$500.00
R & B	**Wolfgang Goes Green**	400	Saint Patrick Catholic School	Norfolk	$360.00
	Total Students	**5106**	**Total Funds Awarded FY17**		**$6,335.00**

Art in the Park – Western Branch Middle School, Chesapeake – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

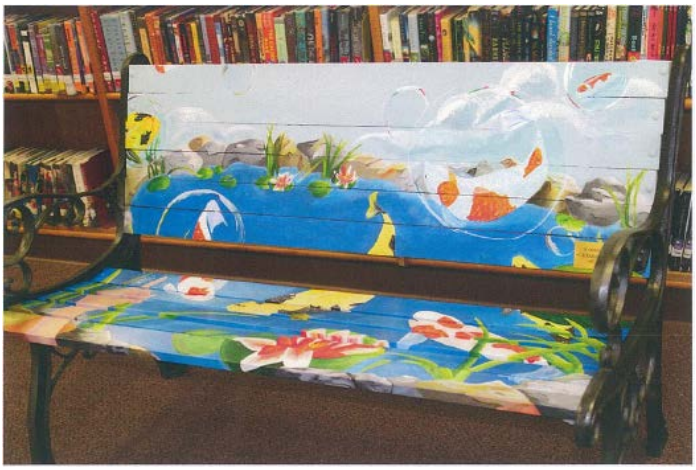
Project Description:
Students will learn how to use old materials to up-cycle into a new and fuctional wooden park bench. Students will refurbish or replace all boards, remove any rust, refinish the cast iron frame, and reassemble the park benches. Finally, students will paint creative and unique art work on the wooden parts of the benches. Each bench will reflect a different art genre.

Project Outcome:
Students were able to refurbish four park benches and paint murals on each of the benches.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students worked on the project for nearly three months. The sense of accomplishment of seeing the completed mural on each of their benches was the highlight. They had a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Mayor of Chesapeake and other special guests. Each artist was able to discuss their inspiration and vision for their bench.

How could a similar project be improved?
This project could be turned into a scholarship opportunity for the art students. Perhaps a silent auction of each bench could take place and the artist would be awarded the proceeds to further their education. Many people showed interest in purchasing the benches. This would be an amazing opportunity to give the kids the chance to accrue a college nest egg while being creative and artistic.






Cradock Community Care Project – Cradock Middle School, Portsmouth – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
Students will investigate and understand public policy decisions relating to the environment. The goal of the program is to actively engage students as nature stewards whose focal point will be two-fold: to make Cradock a better place to live and to be educated by identifying those areas in need of caretaking through community cleanup; and to foster a greater appreciation for their community and its environment. Goals will be accomplished by providing education that denotes understanding of human impact in the environment; discussion of the cost/benefit/tradeoff of environmental conservation; and giving students an opportunity to take an active leadership role in issues that directly affect their future.

Project Outcome:
The proposed outcome of the project to foster a greater sense of community pride was achieved tenfold. The students claimed ownership of the area they cleaned/cleared long after the program was held.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students gained an inner sense of satisfaction beautifying the community that many of them live in and all of them attend school in. Knowing they were able to be a part of a solution instead of the problem made many of them rejoice. It was wonderful and inspiring watching them as they disposed of the trash on many streets in the neighborhood.

How could a similar project be improved?
The program could take place more than twice per year. If it were to take place once a month or once every other month it might have a larger impact in the community.

KinderGarden – Strawbridge Elementary School, Virginia Beach – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
The goal of the project is for students to see that as responsible citizens they can make a positive impact on their school community and that ultimately, choices such as recycling, litter reduction, and water conservation are choices we all make , and stretch beyond school to both or home and global community. The community garden will be used to teach the students about recycling, litter reduction, the water cycle, and pollinator-friendly plants and gardens. Beginning in Kindergarten, students start to explore upcycling – for instance, their snack packaging is examined, then saved for use during activities such as the float/sink investigation, then upcycled as building/construction materials for STEM tasks. Students use the community garden as a place to store and manage schoolwide recycling and are responsible for picking up litter around the community garden/brainstorming ways to limit it.

Project Outcome:
All goals of the project were met such as completing the garden's sensory path and various learning stations.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students loved being part of the creative process by sponge painting the pathway's pavers with stenciled letters and numbers. The students also enjoyed helping care for the native plants once they were planted. The students should benefit greatly in upcoming school years as they are able to investigate the flow of water, measure plants for growth, see the changes various plants undergo, investigate with hand lenses, and experience the path's different tactile sections.

How could a similar project be improved?
Breaking down the project into smaller timelines would allow for tasks to be accomplished in stages. Getting ideas and suggestions directly from students to find out what they would like to see in their learning garden.

Lafayette High School Beautification Project – Lafayette High School – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
This is a project taken on by the Lafayette High School Parent/Teacher/Student Association to improve the grounds of the school and provide beautification efforts to maintain the school as a source of pride in the community. This will be accomplished through many volunteer hours of labor and via the purchasing of native plants to Virginia, drought-tolerant plants, and plants that can be repurposed through the community (those otherwise discarded or reused instead of thrown away or moved to a landfill). They also would like to add a recycling can and trash can in the student drop-off area.

Project Outcome:
The Lafayette Beautification Project produced wonderful results and so many positive improvements to the school campus, such as changes to the landscaping.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The physical changes to the grounds made a big difference from the students' perspective – a little more school pride!

How could a similar project be improved?
Seek additional volunteers to identify upcycling opportunities whenever possible.



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Learning Garden/Vertical Palette Garden – Newtown Elementary School, Virginia Beach – $475.00
****FY 16**
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
Students will establish recycled palette gardens and maintain these gardens after they are complete.

Project Outcomes:
The Gardening Club was able to purchase tools to assist students with digging, pruning, and transporting planting supplies. The students collected recycled palette gardens from a local store, then cleaned and prepared the palettes for planting. The students learned how to use burlap and a staple gun to provide support on the palette for the soil and plants, then transported soil bags to the palette gardens and filled the palettes with soil. They selected their plants and designed the layout of the palette. The students have been watering and maintaining their palettes after completion.

What did students enjoy the most about this project?
The students enjoyed selecting their plants and designing the layout of their plants in the palette. Many experienced working with soil and plants for the first time. They are amazed their plant creation is still living and on display for the entire school to enjoy.

How could similar projects be improved?
The project leaders were unaware of the weight of each palette after including two bags of soil, plants, and water. It was extremely difficult for students to assist with assembling the palettes vertically.




Lower School Children's Learning Garden – Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee/Water Awareness Subcommittee

Project Description:
The goal of the initiative is to incorporate project-based learning activities across the Lower School (grades PreK-7) in order to incorporate hands-on environmental activities to create a pollinator garden bed. This project also will serve to beautify a currently unused portion of the school's green space.

Project Outcomes:
Walsingham Academy youth in grades Pre-K-7th (128 students) participated in the project. Older students were paired with younger students to facilitate the learning process and the opportunity sparked numerous conversations and new friendships. An unexpected result was the number of times the older children encountered a plant question or pollinator question that they had to help clarify for the younger students. This learning opportunity afforded the older students the chance to design, plan, and install garden beds. Students learned how to manage budgetary constraints, use plant data to design aesthetically pleasing beds, and practice time management while meeting design deadlines.

What did students enjoy the most about this project?
The students gave a resounding "This is so much fun!" during the garden installation. Every child was engaged and smiling during the process. Students have already returned to the garden to observe changes in the growth of the plants, look for new blooms, and find new critters that are visiting the garden. Teachers have expressed an interest in developing scavenger hunts throughout the garden, as well as bringing their classes to the garden for reading time and journaling lessons.

How could similar projects be improved?
This activity could be improved by finding a better timeframe for garden installation. The garden project was planned for installation immediately after the school's spring break (the week after Earth Day). There was a great deal of planning over spring break and unfortunately, it rained on our initial installation date and the main event had to be rescheduled.

Native Habitat – Pollinators, Pathways, and Prevention – Spratley Gifted Center, Hampton – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee/Water Awareness Subcommittee

Project Description:
This project begins by adding cinderblocks around a drain in the middle of the habitat area, so the students can see firsthand how they can make a difference. The bocks will prevent debris from entering the drain which flows to the bay. Students will understand the importance of planting native species. They will identify each and create a plant marker to place in the garden. Students will see the effects of erosion and learn ways they can prevent it. Students will reconnect with nature by navigating through a labyrinth.

Project Outcomes:
Students planted a successful vegetable garden and were able to provide a salad lunch to students several times. Pesto also was made from basil grown in the garden and served to students. The pond is flourishing. There was a native plant planting day where students came to assist in planning. The sunflower garden also has been successful thus far.

What did students enjoy the most about this project?
Students loved seeing the growth – especially after a good rain. After lunch, they walk through the garden and try to spy something new they have not seen before. They love the diversity of wildlife attracted by the garden – bunnies, lizards, dragonflies, butterflies, and other pollinators. They also enjoy using the habitat area to have reading time or instruction outside of the classroom.

How could similar projects be improved?
More reflection and sharing of the end results could take place. Fourth grade is hoping to act as tour guides and show the 3rd graders around the habitat area before school ends.

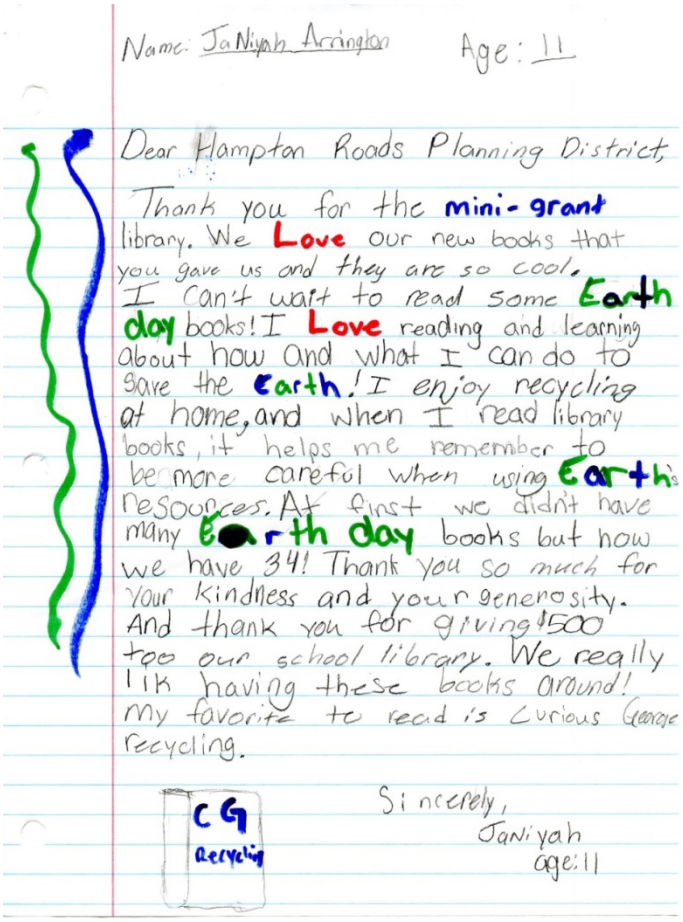
Reading to Save the Earth – Oakland Elementary School, Suffolk – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
Students will investigate and understand materials can be reused, recycled, and conserved. Funds will be used to purchase 31 library-bound books related to Earth Day, recycling, and water conservation to add to the library collection for student, parent, and teacher checkout.

Project Outcomes:
The books arrived in June and were checked out by 1st graders learning about Earth, 2nd graders exploring weathering and erosion, and 3rd graders learning about the water cycle.

What did students enjoy the most about this project?
5th grade has shown the most interest in checking out books on recycling. They are currently learning about the human impact on Earth.

How could similar projects be improved?
Adding 31 books to the library collection focused on Earth Day, recycling, watershed, and seeing students take AR tests has been perfect.



Name: JaNiyah Arrington Age: 11

Dear Hampton Roads Planning District,

Thank you for the mini-grant library. We Love our new books that you gave us and they are so cool. I can't wait to read some Earth day books! I Love reading and learning about how and what I can do to save the Earth! I enjoy recycling at home, and when I read library books, it helps me remember to be more careful when using Earth's resources. At first we didn't have many Earth day books but now we have 34! Thank you so much for your kindness and your generosity. And thank you for giving $500 too our school library. We really lik having these books around! my favorite to read is Curious George recycling.

CG Recycling

Sincerely,
JaNiyah
age: 11

Recycling Plastic in the Classroom – Ghent School, Norfolk –$475.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
This project will engage students in learning about environmental benefits of recycling through education and involvement. A recycling incentives program will help educate primary children regarding plastic waste disposal and its positive effects on the community and environment. This project will motivate and give children, family members, and staff opportunities to help the environment by reducing waste and keeping many commonly disposed plastic objects out of landfills and the streets. Our aim is to educate and encourage future leaders to change trash disposal behavior. They can learn at a young age that recycling plastics can be easy and rewarding. Individual students, classes, and grade levels who recycle the most each month will be rewarded and receive a prize.

Project Outcomes:
Once the plastic recycling incentives program was started at Ghent, we began collecting large quantities of plastic. Over the course of six months a total of 784 pounds were collected. The kids were excited and enthusiastic to recycle. Many students had to learn what types of plastics were acceptable to recycle. Throughout the year, our designated recycling students had to sort through different recyclables that were placed into the bins. The incentives program not only received participation from the students, but also many staff members began to recycle more as well. The recycling program also gave teachers an opportunity to discuss the importance of recycling with their students. Fourth grade teachers used the large plastic bags to teach measurement lessons for weight.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students enjoyed being able to get playground and recess equipment as a reward for recycling. It motivated students to talk to their families about recycling and start saving plastic bags at home to bring in. The students that were involved with sorting and collecting plastic enjoyed being part of a group that was making a difference.

How could a similar project be improved?
More staff involvement with recycling at the school would help increase plastic bag recycling. The project could include cafeteria plastics as well.

Red Mill Community Garden – Red Mill Elementary School, Virginia Beach –$500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
In September 2016, Red Mill Elementary 1st graders are tasked with solving a problem and conducted a problem hunt to locate problems they could solve in their school community. The students identified the Community Learning Garden area as a problem due to overgrowth and underutilization. Since, there have been weekly lessons integrating the Community Garden across their curriculum. Funding will be used to continue a weekly integrated lesson through the remainder of the school year ending in June 2016. Once the project is up and running with supplies, the Community Garden may extend through all grade levels and for years to come.

Project Outcomes:
The Community Garden was a great success and an entire school effort. Weekly lessons outside in the garden were possible with 1st grade classes with topics ranging from shape hunts, measuring plant growth, plant life cycle, plant needs, recycling, littering, journaling using descriptive writing, observing using senses, and others. Many resources were used in the school to make this successful. The art teacher helped students decorate old bowling balls to look like insects as decorations and kindergarteners recommended plants based on what they learned about attracting bees and butterflies.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students loved getting out in the garden. They would ask nearly every day if today would be a garden day. The students enjoyed planting/cleaning the garden, journaling about plants and how they have grown and changed, and doing partner/group activities that had them searching/hunting around the garden. On an end of year writing sample, half of the students wrote that garden time was their favorite part of 1st grade.

How could a similar project be improved?
Getting this project started sooner would be beneficial to have some elements working in the fall and to begin the garden earlier in the year. There also could be additional school involvement and working in the garden to encourage all students to help take care and ownership of it.





School Learning Garden – Booker T. Washington Middle School, Newport News – $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee/Water Awareness Subcommittee

Project Description:
The school is designing a learning garden/outdoor classroom for students. It will have a seating area, native plants/bushes and pollinator plants, pond, greenhouse, mulch area, and handicapped-accessible areas. The 7th grade science teacher will be incorporating her experiments and SOLs topics by utilizing the space for water tests, projects, experiments, etc. Edibles will be raised in the greenhouse and transferred to in-ground and raised garden beds. The edibles, in turn, will be eaten by the students and also used for experiments. Rain barrels also will be used. The school will be recycling and repurposing items to save them from going in the landfill. Funds will be used to purchase mulch, plants, trees, benches, pond equipment, testing/experiment supplies, worm bin and worms, recycling items, tools, greenhouse equipment, wheelbarrows, shovels, patio pavers, and other supplies. The learning garden and outdoor classroom will be utilized by art students, as an additional sitting area during lunch time, outdoor class for all classes, science experiment space, meeting space, and for edible gardening.

This project began in late spring 2017. The teacher has asked for an extension until after school begins in Fall 2017. This project will be included in the FY 18 summary.

To Our Schoolyard Watershed and Beyond! – Gloucester County Public Schools, Gloucester - $500.00
Water Awareness Subcommittee

Project Description:
Approximately 400 students will interact with the larger scientific community by contributing their data to citizen science research such as Virginia Wildlife Mapping on iNaturalist and other monitoring networks. The activity conforms to the Virginia Department of Education's "Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE)." The purpose of the program is to facilitate field investigations for 4th grade students to focus on the local watershed and utilize their own schoolyard and the local reservoir. Investigations will be based in recently installed schoolyard habitats and other school site locations. This study will be followed by a day-long investigation at the local reservoir (Beaverdam), allowing children to apply their new skills in a broader setting. Community partners will assist in planning and leading outdoor experiences, such as Gloucester Parks and Recreation, Virginia Tech Extension, the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Virginia Master Naturalists, Gloucester Master Gardeners, Virginia Department of Forestry, Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District, the Virginia Museum of Natural History, and the Gloucester Schoolyard Habitat Pollinator Partnership.

Project Outcomes:
All 4th grade students from each of the five elementary schools in Gloucester County Public Schools visited Beaverdam Park for an outdoor field experience to learn about the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the role of the Beaverdam area (and other regional topography) in the watershed. Students tested water quality and clarity; collected aquatic samples and examined them under a field scope; walked a nearby trail and investigated tree root structures; and modeled the impacts of erosion on local waterways. The $500 donation helped cover school bus transportation costs.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students enjoyed the outdoor learning stations – especially the dip nets and collecting/examining aquatic animals. Students also saw and learned about area reptiles that contribute to the local ecosystem.

How could a similar project be improved?
Increase STEM activities and provide more interactive learning stations associated with this field experience. Plans are beginning for another fall 2017 MWEE later this year.

Willoughby's Flower Garden – Willoughby Elementary School, Norfolk - $500.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
The goal of this project is to educate students on how to protect, preserve, and grow a flower garden that will not only beautify the landscape but provide a food source for certain insects and birds, project the environment and promote environmental awareness at the same time. Each grade level will choose a specific plant/flower to plant. The flower or plant selected will be native to our area and beneficial to the environment. The students will research their selected flower/plant to learn about its origin, how it is beneficial to the environment, and the soil type and water frequency that enhance growth. They will be responsible for maintaining and upkeep of their flowers/plants.

Project Outcomes:
The planting of Willoughby's Flower Garden was a huge success! The students planted over 200 flowers around the marquee and in front of the school. Parents and school guests commented on how attractive it looked. Every student from the school's developmentally delayed classes through 2nd grade planted a flower. The students enjoyed putting their hands in the soil, digging in the soil, planting the flowers and experiencing unexpected earthworms, occasional butterflies and bees, and other insects. This was a great opportunity to teach them that flowers and plants are a food source for certain insects and birds. As the students watered their plants, we discussed the importance of planting drought-tolerant flowers to conserve and reduce water consumption. In addition, the students learned the parts of the plant and other benefits that plants and flowers provide to the environment. As a culminating event, PreK-4 through 2nd grade attended a field trip to the Botanical Garden, provided by the Military through a grant called Operation Thrive.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?
The students enjoyed digging and planting their flowers, seeing the roots of their flowers as they pulled it out of the container, seeing the insects and worms while digging, showing off their flower to their parents, and walking by their flower everyday as they boarded the bus.

How could a similar project be improved?
This summer, custodial staff, military volunteers, and others will be responsible for maintaining the garden. In the future it would be nice to have the students and their families maintain and upkeep the garden during the summer months. Not only would this prolong the life of the flowers but it would encourage and promote community involvement and awareness in protecting our environment.

Wolfgang Goes Green – Saint Patrick Catholic School, Norfolk - $360.00
Recycling & Beautification Subcommittee

Project Description:
The student body government requested twelve 30-gallon recycling bins to be placed throughout the school to increase recycling awareness and to educate students about recycling. The school is hopeful this will filter into the routine of recycling at home. This is one piece of a larger initiative to become Project Learning Tree Green School-certified.

This project began in late spring 2017. The teacher has asked for an extension until after school begins in Fall 2017. This project will be included in the FY 18 summary.