



The Kids Ecology Corps

For Immediate Release
November 1, 2007
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The Kids Ecology Corps takes Northfork Elementary students on a first hand visit to Florida's coral reefs

The local environmental youth group's "Visit to the Reef" Program combines marine science education and ecological action for elementary age school children

POMPANO BEACH, FL (November 1, 2007) – Last week, fifth grade students from Northfork Elementary school experienced their very first marine science snorkeling trip off the shores of Pompano Beach as part of The Kids Ecology Corps' newest ecologically-focused educational program, "A Visit to the Reef". The new Eco-Action program focuses on providing children a close up, real life ecological lesson about the importance of our coral reefs and the dangers our reefs face today from global climate change, pollution and shipping practices.

The Kids Ecology Corps (KEC) worked for two years with Northfork Elementary School in Fort Lauderdale, a marine science magnet school, to coordinate this reef visit and underwater classroom experience. Northfork Principal Rendolyn Amaker and Magnet Coordinator Mary Lou Soucy were very excited about providing this opportunity to their already environmentally focused students. "Seeing those reefs in person makes such an impact on our kids, it's an experience that can't be replicated in a classroom. Many of those students were amazed at just being in the ocean, few of them had swam in anything but a local pool. This was a unique opportunity for all of us." said Mary Lou Soucy.

"So you saw how white the coral reef was ... why do you think it was that color?" Emily Lagerquist, Executive Director of KEC, asked of the students once their boat reached the shore. A number of children chimed in their answers, "It's dying ... it's from global warming ... the ocean is warming up ... too much CO₂ in the air from our cars."

This environmental outreach program was organized by The Kids Ecology Corps and funded by Community Foundation of Broward and The A.D. Henderson Foundation. Recently, Community Foundation of Broward awarded The Kids Ecology Corps the \$10,000 grant for the reef visit and to continue KEC's educational program, "Keep It Cool: Kids Care About Our Oceans".

Due to the program's success, recently The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation agreed to fund a matching grant to The Kids Ecology Corps with the goal of continuing their "Visit to the Reef" program and its "Keep It Cool" eco-educational components.

Funky Fish Scuba and Snorkeling Camp provided the instructors. Funky Fish offers snorkeling tours, scuba day camps and adventurous trips for kid and adults. They can be reached at 954-712-9900 or on the web at www.funkyfishkidsday.com

The Kids Ecology Corps is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization whose mission is to inspire young people to make environmental action part of their everyday lives and in the lives of those around them. KEC has reached over 58,000 young people from pre-k through high school, offering unique hands-on presentations and eco-action programs that educate children and youth about: keeping our oceans clean; the importance of trees; the role re-planting our coastal wetlands play in beach conservation; water conservation; pollution prevention; global climate change and energy conservation; and, protecting local natural habitats for native wildlife. Visit them at www.kidsecologycorps.org or via phone at 954-524-0366 to volunteer or to schedule an education or eco-action presentation at your school.

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Mary Lou Soucy, Magnet Coordinator for Northfork, is available for interviews at 954-309-0874 (after 2pm) or 954-782-4614 (after 6pm).

Photos available of children in water, snorkeling available also.