

the watercolumn

SUMMER 2010

A Newsletter of the New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences

A Look Back

Here at the Academy would like to share with our friends and supporters a “look back” at the 2009-2010 year, with some of our significant accomplishments over the past twelve months. A big thank you to all who have supported the New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences’ efforts with time, talents, and financial gifts! Your generosity gives us the opportunity to further our mission of “*promoting the understanding, appreciation, and protection of aquatic life and habitats through research, education and youth development programs.*”

Here are some of the highlights from this past year:

- Once again, 100 % of our CAUSE (Community and Urban Science Enrichment) Program seniors graduated from high school and all have been accepted to college with scholarships. This year’s five graduates will be attending The College of New Jersey, Stockton College, and Rutgers University. Congratulations to Marlenna Franqui, Jessica Munoz, Angelique Nieves, Francisco Santos, and Christina Torres!
- The Explorers component of CAUSE, focusing on eighth graders, had 8 students complete their year. Most of them will be applying to the CAUSE high school intern program.
- This year’s CAUSE Summer Science Camps had 211 elementary and middle school students attend camps during July and August. The CAUSE interns wrote and taught all of the curricula and activities for the camps, assisted by the Explorers. The theme for this year’s camps was “Global Climate Change Around the World.”
- The Academy’s wonderful TrOutreach program visited 199 schools and organizations, reaching 16,333 children and adults in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, bringing wonders from the aquatic world to see and touch in a uniquely creative approach to teaching. In addition, TrOutreach got involved with the summer library’s theme of “Diving Into Reading.” For that program, our staff visited 66 libraries and presented programs to over 5,225 people of all ages, from the pre-school set to the senior set. TrOutreach certainly made a tidal wave throughout the Delaware Valley!
- We had 204 active volunteers in our program. These volunteers have the opportunity to assist with interpretation, husbandry and diving activities at Adventure Aquarium, enhancing the visitor experience for all who attend. In doing this, the volunteers amassed 18,548 hours of service – we are so grateful for their commitment, enthusiasm and energy!
- Educational programs that the Academy offers had a great year as well. Our Deep Sleep program had 2,450 scouts and families participate in overnights at the aquarium. We are now offering dates throughout the year for this incredible overnight adventure. 12 Distance-learning classes were given on various aquatic and ecological themes for students around the country. Our staff delivered a total of 334 aquatic classroom programs to 8,362 school children who participated in our classes and special tours at Adventure Aquarium. Our Summer Sea Camp had 39 campers learning about global climate change and biodiversity. The campers enjoyed field trips to the beach, salt marsh, and kayaking in the Pinelands.
- Our research scientist, Dr. Alex Vagelli, had another eventful year. Dr Vagelli published articles in four different publications on Banggai cardinalfish. He also made presentations at conferences in Mexico and taught a two-day intensive course on the theory and practice of production of marine ornamental species. He continues to teach Ichthyology for Rutgers University’s marine biology graduate program. Currently he is finishing up a book he wrote that will be published later this year by Willey-Blackwell. The title is “The Banggai Cardinalfish – Natural History, Conservation, and Culture.”



New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences Fossil Fuel Conservation

I am sure that everyone has been deeply touched by the tragic news coming out of the Gulf of Mexico relating to the oil spill over the last several months. It is sobering to think that the actions of relatively few individuals can have such a catastrophic impact on such a huge area including untold environmental impacts as well as social and economic impacts on residents of the gulf region.



If nothing else, this tragedy is a reminder of how careful we as people need to be when it comes to our stewardship of this earth, which we rely on for all of our needs. As the world population grows, our continued reliance on finite resources drives us towards an escalating series of shortages and more and more desperate efforts to obtain materials needed to supply our way of life.

What has happened in the gulf is beyond imagination and it points to another statistic that is equally unbelievable. By the most liberal estimates, in the 100 days since the explosion and fire that started the oil leak occurred, over 200,000,000 gallons of oil have leaked into the Gulf of Mexico. This is a huge number but it represents less than six hours of oil usage by the United States alone. The United States uses about 868,560,000 gallons of oil per day. This unrelenting demand for oil is there day in and day out, year after year, with all of its attendant risks, costs and environmental impact. About 71% of US oil consumption goes to transportation uses. Add to this the fact that just the US burns about 5.5 billion pounds of coal per day. This adds up to almost three gallons, or 21 pounds, of oil and 18 pounds of coal for each US citizen each and every day. It is hard to imagine anyone would feel that it makes sense to continue along this path without working toward as many ways as are possible to reduce the use of oil and coal through conservation and development of alternative energy resources.

Everybody can take part by being conscious of the problem and participating in whatever individual conservation activities they can. Small actions taken by all individuals in a large population can have significant impact. All it takes is for everyone to take advantage of conservation opportunities that are available to them. It doesn't mean the end of life as we know it. It just means looking at our lives and identifying those things we can do that make a difference. No one person has to shoulder the entire responsibility. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Drive less by combining trips and organizing errands.
2. If you are buying a new car, make fuel efficiency one of your choice criteria.
3. Turn out lights when you are not using them.
4. Wash your clothes in cold water.
5. Don't use disposable plastic water bottles.
6. Get in the habit of taking reusable bags with you when you shop.
7. Get involved with your elected officials so they know that you care about these issues.
8. Support education programs that teach kids to make good choices for the environment.

Visit www.njaas.org to find out how.

Take the time to learn, evaluate and pursue the changes that can make a difference even if they are small. You will feel proud of your actions and will know that you are working toward becoming part of the solution rather than a part of the problem. That's good for the earth and it is good for all of us.

Brian DuVall, President and CEO



The Academy's volunteer divers have had some opportunities to take their enthusiasm for the undersea world beyond the aquarium walls. In May, volunteer divers, Philippa Ratcliffe and Dave Townsend did a presentation for two classes of 5th graders at Hartford School in Mt. Laurel. They demonstrated basic dive equipment, shared photos taken during their diving adventures, discussed the impact of the oil spill and answered students' questions.

In June, the Directors of Volunteers in Agencies for Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties, NJ sponsored a Volunteer Recognition Breakfast. Keeping with the volunteer experience theme, two NJAAS volunteer divers were asked to present the program for the event. Jen and Travis Stitt, who dive together on a Friday dive team, showed a video that Jen filmed while diving in the Ocean Realm Exhibit. Their narration and enthusiastic responses to questions made for a fascinating program.

The New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences wishes to thank all those who supported our programs and operations from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

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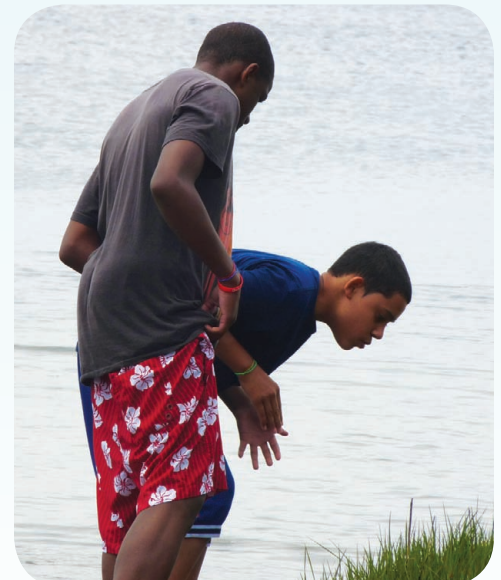
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