

BOXERWOOD *Newsleaf*

November/December 2015

Education in Action: A Harvest of Happiness



Another season of Boxerwood school programs are drawing to a close. Over the course of three months, we welcomed more than 57 yellow school buses (and 1,470 children) to Boxerwood and other locales across our county.

Children from ten pre-schools delighted in a new puppet-enriched program, “Leaf Party,” that celebrates the change of seasons. Following Boxerwood educators and volunteers through the garden, the children explore the differences between evergreen and deciduous trees, the fun culminating, of course, in a surprise leaf pile jump!

Early Education students were engaged during their visits. First graders completed the Seed Traveler program, learning about seed dispersal and why it’s important. Second graders focused on the theme of adaptation, learning about how nature changes with the seasons, including insect and animal patterns. Hibernation, migration, and camouflage are all part of the lesson.

Elementary students, meanwhile, traipsed about the Garden mapping our wetland, searching for decomposers, investigating NEWTS and more as part of a careful sequence of 4-hour programs that build ecological literacy plus love of the outdoors.

Older youth worked with us as watershed investigators at river sites across our community including Jordan’s Point, Glen Maury Park, South River, and even the Natural Bridge of Virginia. For the first time, these water monitoring programs also included high school students as part of a new pilot program in Buena Vista.

Afterschool programs at Enderly Heights Elementary—also in Buena Vista—kept us busy leading weekly Recycling and Nature Clubs. So did helping six schools gear up for another year raising brook trout in the classroom, one of several school stewardship projects Boxerwood promotes

Although all our work is focused locally, this fall's harvest of activity also included sharing our work with others. **Boxerwood educators made six presentations** this fall about our unique environment education model. Highlights included hosting a half-day workshop about our early education programs that energized and inspired a dozen environmental education leaders from Lynchburg, Richmond, northern Virginia and beyond. In sum, it was another great harvest of happiness -- thanks to the generosity of our donors.