



The Kids Ecology Corps

Inspiring young people to make environmental action part of their every day lives and in the lives of those around them

a program of Partners in Action, Inc.

Fall 2007 Newsletter

The Kids Ecology Corps

1350 East Sunrise Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304
Phone: (954) 524-0366

www.kidsecologycorps.org

KEC Welcomes New Staff Members

Four new staff members joined the ranks of KEC in May. They are Lee Gottlieb, Toby Lopez, Cristina Virsida and Maria Marchegiani.

Lee Gottlieb joins us as Eco-Action Program Manager.

Toby K. Lopez joins us as Volunteer and Community Coordinator.

Maria Marchegiani joins us as the new Program Manager for "Kids Care About Trees".

Cristina Virsida joins us as Development and Media Coordinator.

They join the current staff of Emily Lagerquist as Executive Director and Debra Miller as Presenter Program Manager.

Emily Lagerquist said of her newest staff members "I am thrilled that we were able to find individuals with such diverse talent and capabilities. Each brings a unique perspective to our organization. We look forward to their contribution in helping KEC reach even more young people. They will facilitate youth to become aware and knowledgeable of environmental issues and develop their leadership skills to become activists in caring for our world" ☺

Greetings from The Kids Ecology Corps

From the Desk of:

Emily Nell Lagerquist, Executive Director

Greeting from The Kids Ecology Corps!

We are so excited about all of the eco-action events we have been sponsoring over the past few months. It all started in June shortly after we brought on four new staff members. As a result of their passion, talent and collaborative energy, The Kids Ecology Corps is involving even more members of the community.

We have highlighted in this edition some of our recent major events such as our visit to

The Bonnet House, the massive sea oat planting along the South Florida coast and snorkeling on the reef - plus the premier of our first short film in the upcoming Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival on November 3rd.



Nicole Sklar (front) and Maria Marchegiani (back)

KEC hosted three of its own Sea Turtle Release Programs for eighty-five members of the community with the support of our volunteer Eco-Presenter Danielle Rudisill Zabarsky who in the summer rises before dawn to patrol the beaches for the Broward County Sea Turtle Conservation Program.

Our recent partnership with Tri-Rail features a "Kids Go Green" poster contest, aimed at educating youth and their families about the significant environmental benefits of switching to

public transportation. Middle school students in all three counties are invited to participate. Check out our website for contest rules.

Thank you to all of our hard-working and dedicated volunteers.

We hope to see you at our next Eco-Action Project! ☺

KEC hits the Big Screen with its first short film

Last month, the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival chose KEC's first short film for their prestigious movie lineup. The 37 day-long film fest is in its 22nd year and was recently voted Florida's top rated film fest.

The short film, *Plant Trees: Sturdy for the Birdies* will have its premier on the big screen Saturday, November 3rd at 10am.

Funding for the film came from a generous grant by the USDA Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program administered

by the Florida Division of Forestry.

Our thanks go out to Director Mike Rosinski and Producer/Director John Lemmon for their excellent work and generous in-kind contribution and to NETV (Northeast High School Television) students and teacher Sandy Melillo for their inspiration and collaboration.

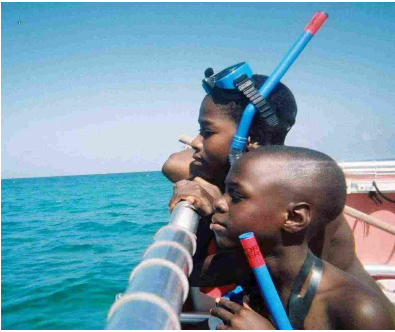
We invite everyone to join us on Saturday, November 3rd at 10:00 am at Cinema Paradiso, 503 SE 6th Street in Downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Admission is **FREE**. We also encourage you to stay for the feature film, *Legend of Sasquatch*.

Come out, celebrate with KEC and **vote** for your favorite short film. ☺



First Visit to the Reef Program makes a big splash with Campers



Justin S and Michael M prepare to dive in!

Carter Park Community Summer Campers got to experience their very first “Visit to the Reef” snorkeling trip off the shores of Pompano Beach this August. For half of the 19 kids ranging in ages from nine to eleven, this was

their first time visiting the beach and swimming in the ocean. For all, this was their very first boat trip and first time learning to use a snorkel mask and fins with the instruction of the Funky Fish diving staff.

Before the trip, kids participated in our “Oceans Blue” interactive educational skit to learn about the reef and how they can help reduce global climate change.

The experience of learning to snorkel, traveling three miles off the coast on a glass bottom boat

and swimming with colorful tropical fish had a great impact on these new divers.

“This was the best field trip ever!” said Darrien Mash, age 9.

David Deal, Recreation Program Coordinator for The City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department, joined the kids on their maiden voyage. “This was a great opportunity for the kids to learn about the different types of life that live in the ocean!

We want to thank The Kids Ecology Corps for allowing the kids to go explore. They can’t wait to do this again!”

This environmental outreach program was funded in part by the Community Foundation of Broward and The A.D. Henderson Foundation which provided grants to continue KEC’s educational program “Keep It Cool: Kids Care About Our Oceans” and for the Visit to the Reef.

Due to the success of this new program, The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation just funded a matching grant with the goal of continuing KEC’s “Visit to the Reef” program and its “Keep It Cool” educational components. 🌍

KEC helps protect Florida’s coasts against future erosion

Beginning in late July and running through September, hundreds of volunteers armed with hand trowels and sunscreen returned again and again to Hallandale Beach and Hollywood Beach to plant sea oats along the shore.

These hard working and dedicated volunteers planted over 150,000 sea oats, effectively constructing a stronger and better prepared coast against future storms and erosion.

Because of their extensive system of underground stems and roots, sea oats help reduce beach erosion by gathering and holding blowing sand thereby creating sand dunes which protect the shore

against rising waves.

The county-wide dune restoration and environmental education project was a joint partnership with KEC, Broward Soil and Water Conservation District (BSWD), the City of Hallandale Beach and John U. Lloyd State Park.

Some of the more than 150 volunteers included employees from Best Buy’s local offices, marine science students from Nova SE University and high school students from St. Thomas Aquinas, McArthur, American Heritage, Western, South Plantation and Stranahan High.

Many thanks to Carmelo Duesler and staff at John U. Lloyd Park, Gordon Dobbins, Russell Setti and Canute Malcolm of BSWD, the Mayor and Commissioners of the City of Hallandale.



Hundreds of volunteers enjoyed our “Sea Oats Sundays”

Eco-kids help preserve a historic habitat at the Bonnet House



Vance B. chopping lead trees

In July, KEC volunteers came out to the historic Bonnet House, restored part of the grounds and received a fascinating tour of the museum and surroundings. On the top of the hit list was the exotic invasive *leucaena leucocephala* or lead tree, which was quickly

taking over the native plants and trees.

The main goal of this project was to restore and preserve the natural ecological habitat of Bonnet House - home to frogs, turtles, fish, butterflies, manatees, cranes, foxes, swans and the Great Blue Heron.

The Bonnet House, owned by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, is a designated Ft. Lauderdale Land-

The 35-acre property, located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway, is one of the few remnants of what was once a coastal wilderness in Broward County. Florida State University has identified various endangered environments, plants and animals that exist on the property. Visit them at 900 North Birch Road, Fort Lauderdale or on the web at www.bonnethouse.org. 🌍



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And the “Woman of the Earth” Award goes to ...

Emily Lagerquist with Jean Michelle Garrigue, General Counsel of Groupe Yves Rocher Amérique due Nord in Montreal, Canada



This February, our Executive Director Emily Lagerquist was celebrated as an Internationally recognized environmental activist by winning the Yves Rocher Foundation’s “Women of the Earth” award.

Emily was one of three women in the entire U.S. honored by this prestigious award, which included a \$3,000 prize.

“I see it as a recognition of the work of our entire staff,” Emily Lagerquist said of the award.

Her winnings went directly towards funding a PBS television pilot aimed at

broadening KEC’s environmental and educational programs and highlighting the newly completed KEC film, *Plant Trees: Sturdy for the Birdies*.

The awards honored thirty-five women in eleven countries from North America and Europe for work that benefits the environment.

Winning the French award proved to Emily and the KEC staff the global importance of being environmentally active. “You don’t have to be an expert to help save the planet,” Emily Lagerquist said. 🌍

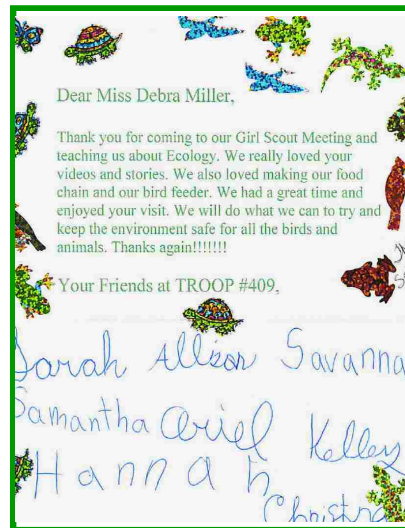
Kids’ Korner

Eco-Cool Things to Know:

- Coral reefs protect our shoreline from harsh weather, provide homes and food for 30% of all ocean fish and provides us medicines to fight cancer, asthma and other diseases!
- Even when a TV, radio, stereo or computer is turned off, it is using electricity! Unplug them or use a power strip cord to ensure no “stand-by” power is being used.
- Invasive species are the second leading cause of loss of wildlife. You can do your part by recognizing and removing invasive plants when they’re small in your neighborhood.

Visit www.livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu for more info.

From the Mail Box:



Congratulations on completing your third grant from the USDA’s Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Program.

It is always a pleasure to read about individuals in our community who are willing to dedicate themselves to benefit those who need it most.

Your organization’s selfless efforts on behalf of children in Broward County’s community are greatly appreciated and admired.

I am thankful that organizations like yours may serve as an example to others.

Congressman Ron Klein

Forestry grant benefits local schools

The Kids Ecology Corps recently completed its third grant from the USDA Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Program administered by the Florida Division of Forestry. These grants helped to fund the Project Manager position for the eco-educational program, *Kids Care about Our Trees*.

From 2004 - 2007, the grants awarded to KEC totaled \$65,000, enabling us to hire Nici Daw, an exceptional volunteer and environmental activist.

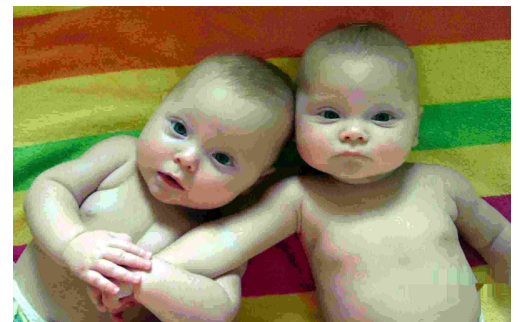
Over the course of three years, Nici was instrumental in developing the KEC program *Kids Care about Our*

Trees which included learning modules tailored for K-12th grades as well as in-depth learning manuals for teachers.

The outdoor learning centers at Cypress Bay High School in Weston and the north campus of Broward Community College involved more than 140 elementary, high school and college students in hands-on planting.

In 40 schools and summer programs in Broward and Palm Beach Counties, volunteers and KEC staff have educated over 5,000 young people about urban forestry and the benefits of native trees.

Nici is currently on a leave of absence taking care of KEC’s newest members,



twins Ali and Lia (above). We look forward to a time when she and the girls will be able to be more active with The Kids Ecology Corps.

In the meantime, we are delighted to welcome Maria Marchegiani, a Broward County Master Gardener and dedicated activist, as the new *Kids Care About Our Trees* Project Manager. **Welcome Maria!** 🌍



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Coordinator
Barbara Lawrence, Administrative Coordinator

Tel: (954) 524-0366

Fax: (954) 524-0368

Website: www.kidsecologycorps.org

Email: kec@kidsecologycorps.org

About Us

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.

As of September 2007, with a small staff and dedicated volunteer Eco-Representers, KEC has reached over 58,000 young people from pre-kindergarten through high school. We present engaging stories and information about current environmental topics such as: global climate change, water conservation, pollution prevention, urban forestation and the condition of our oceans. No other organization in Southeast Florida covers the broad spectrum of environmental issues we offer in face to face presentations with young people. Our programs are tailored to both class size and students' ages. These experiences are fun and compelling! Following are some examples of our live programs:

Nature's Way of Recycling – A stimulating game to learn the basics of reducing garbage and preserving our natural resources.

Wild Things Around Us – Kids learn about South Florida animals and how to protect their habitat.

Oceans Blue: The Mystery of the Reef – An interactive play that teaches young people how our actions on land impact the health of our oceans.

Kids Care about Our Trees – Kids learn about the importance of trees and the differences between native, exotic and invasive plants.

Wonderful Water – Fun, hands-on experiments plus a fact-filled presentation about the importance of water in our lives.

Keep It Cool – Educates young people about climate change, recycling and sources of energy. Kids perform simple audits of their behaviors and surroundings that affect energy consumption.

We touch even more young people in the USA and around the world via our website www.kidsecologycorps.org. In fact, about 50% of those who access our website are Kids Ecology Corps members from countries in Europe, Asia, South America, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. ♻️

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