
ENVIRONMENTAL DAY IN THE PARK

Dr. Charles R. Drew Science Magnet School

Buffalo, New York

The location of the Dr. Charles R. Drew Science Magnet School is unique. It is located in the heart of an urban setting, adjacent to a large city park, and attached to the Buffalo Museum of Science. The curriculum followed in the Drew Science Magnet School places a strong emphasis on science. Environmental Day in the Park capitalized on this unique setting and core curriculum.

Throughout the year, students in first through sixth grades participated in cross-curricular projects about the park. They observed and recorded positive and negative effects on the park's environment. At various times, parents accompanied students to the park to help gather and record information. Several classes collected litter at different times during the year and sorted the litter into recyclable and waste materials. They drew conclusions about how people affect the health of the park. Other classes observed the park's wildlife. They recorded observations of animal tracks, sightings of seasonal animals, and their habitats. Parents were encouraged to make connections between classroom projects and everyday life.

On April 26, 2002, all parents were invited to spend the day at school with their children to culminate this yearlong project. Parents accompanied the students to the park and participated in Environmental Day activities. Several classes presented skits that followed the environmental theme.

In addition, students received Reading is Fundamental books on Environmental Day that centered on the theme "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and READ!" Students made individual posters that reflected the theme. After participating in activities focused on environment, all students in first through third grades selected a book to take home. Parents who attended helped their children select books. Integrating books, families, and environmental issues reinforced to students that their daily lives are connected to the world in many ways.

The Buffalo Museum of Science displayed the Environmental Day class projects on its first floor for parents and the general public to view during the rest of the school year. The museum also gave all families who participated in Environmental Day free family memberships to the

Buffalo Museum of Science. The combination of setting, curriculum, and parents created a wonderful experience for students throughout the school year.

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