

St. Andrew's Day School's AquaEcosystem

St. Andrew's United Methodist Day School in Edgewater is proud of its third year partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the National Aquarium in Baltimore for the school's AquaEcosystem. The AquaEcosystem is located on St. Andrew's campus in a small building situated behind the middle school building. The building was built by seventh and eighth grader students in the fall of 2007 with the help of parent volunteers. Using reclaimed lumber and insulation made from recycled denim, it is an eco-friendly structure. The fourth and seventh grade students are involved in this project which involves raising thirty rockfish, *monrone saxatilis*, along with over 1,000 plugs of smooth cord grass, *spartina alterniflora*.

The AquaEcosystem includes a saltwater plant nursery and an integrated 210 gallon aquaculture system. In the integrated, closed-loop system, waste generated by the fish fertilizes the salt marsh grasses which in turn filter the water before it is returned to the fish. Goals for the AquaEcosystem include a hands-on education of wetlands and the Chesapeake Bay, active participation in the restoration of damaged habitat and an introduction to a long term project where students collect and analyze data over many months. Harvesting of the plants and releasing the fish will take place each spring, when the students are accompanied by aquarium staff at a restoration site near the bay. This program will instill a sense of stewardship in students as they learn environmental responsibility and begin to understand the relationship between the Chesapeake Bay and the land where they live.



At St. Andrew's, students are being challenged to be aware of their responsibility as stewards of this earth and to hold that in mind and hand as they pursue their individual futures as global citizens.
For additional information about our AquaEcosystem, please call the school at 410-266-0952.