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College students monitor quality of recreational water

Three college students from Anne Arundel County are working behind the scenes with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health to ensure that local waterways are safe for swimming and other recreational use this summer.

Catherine Hefferin, Allison Jacobus and Nick Zahn are sampling more than 100 waterways through Labor Day as part of the department's Recreational Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Catherine Hefferin of Glen Burnie is a junior at the University of Maryland — Baltimore County. She is participating in the recreational water summer program for the first time. Allison Jacobus of Arnold, a junior at Mount St. Mary's University, has returned for her second year with the program. This is the first year with the program for Nick Zahn, a junior at Towson University and a Severna Park resident.

The water samples are tested for enterococci, bacteria that are recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as indicators of fecal contamination in recreational waters. After the samples are tested, the summer workers enter the results into a database that is accessible to the public online at www.aahealth.org or over the phone at 410-222-7999.

The waterways are sampled weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, based on the EPA's criteria of location, amount of recreational use and pollution sources.

— By Elin Jones,
PIO for Anne Arundel County Department of Health



Photos by Lauren Fletcher
Catherine Hefferin is one of three local college students who is testing water samples for the Anne Arundel County Department of Health this summer.

Nick Zahn and Allison Jacobus.



St. Andrew's earns Green School certification

St. Andrew's United Methodist Day School at 4 Wallace Manor Road in Edgewater is proud to announce its Green School certification.

Maryland Green School programs recognize and support schools that use their campus and local environment as a place to learn, model environmental best management practices, and work with community partners to enhance learning and stewardship.

The Maryland Green School Awards is one of the most comprehensive programs of its kind in the nation. It promotes both ecologically sustainable practices in the schools and encourages authentic learning.

Schools apply to the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education and must document, over a two-year time frame, how they incorporate the environment into their instruction and detail their sustainable landscaping and building operations.

St. Andrew's is proud of its Green School initiative. Its current interdisciplinary curriculum theme is Share the Planet.

St. Andrew's United Methodist Day School is proud of its partnerships with the National Aquarium in Baltimore, Chesapeake Bay Trust and the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute. This is the second year of the school's AquaEcosystem raising rockfish and perch which are released back into the bay. The students maintain the fish tank and monitor the water quality. Bay grasses are grown on campus and replanted in the bay. The



Students grew bay grasses on campus (top) which were moved to their waterfront locations in May (above).

AquaEcosystem project includes a hands-on education of the wetlands and the 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.

The eighth grade raised a terrapin named Squirtle and collected growth data on terrapins raised in captivity. Squirtle was released this spring at Poplar Island. This project was near and dear to St. Andrew's as it won first place in Maryland's Project

Citizen Competition in 2006 with Stop Over-Harvesting of the Diamondback Terrapins.

St. Andrew's has spent the past two years integrating environmental education in every grade from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Students have positively influenced their environment by making bird feeders and building bluebird houses to help resident birds through the winter; practicing recycling and conservation at every grade; studying the rainforest and raising money to protect and preserve 12 acres of rainforest from deforestation; creating environmental art sold in the community; studying the oyster decline in the bay; experiencing first-hand sustainable agriculture through a community garden and the raising of 25 free-range chickens on campus.

St. Andrew's recycled more than 14,000 pounds of paper as well as thousands of ink cartridges and old cell phones. The school also advocates the limited use of plastic bags by selling high quality re-useable bags to the community.

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 information about Green Schools or St. Andrew's United Methodist Day School, call 410-266-0952.

— Submitted by Carol Campbell