



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Jessica Barnes  
(201) 451-3444

### **Eleventh Annual Urban Angler Program Events Held at The Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor**

*Former military base perfect site for integrating class work with hands-on experience.*

Bayonne, June 3, 2004 – Seventh grade students from #14 School recently rolled up their sleeves, cast their fishing rods and participated in the Urban Angler program.

The Urban Angler program is a watershed education/urban fishing program that aims at educating youth by using local natural resources to create a greater awareness of their watershed.

“The program is a multi-disciplinary approach that teaches students about biology, chemistry, geography and mathematics,” said James Monkowski, who heads up the Urban Angler program and is the City’s environmental specialist.

Piloted in Bayonne, the award-winning program is in its eleventh year. For the fourth year in a row, events were held at The Peninsula at Bayonne Harbor.

“The Peninsula is the perfect setting to host an event like this,” said Nancy A. Kist, Executive Director, Bayonne Local Redevelopment Authority (BLRA).

“It offers students a perfect combination of all the elements they will come across throughout the program,” she added.

Funding is provided by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Bayonne Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA).

The program is broken down into four phases. Phase I is the classroom experience; Phase II is storm drain stamping and waterfront cleanup; Phase III is water quality monitoring and the Eco-cruise; and Phase IV consists of aquatic biology.

The objective of the program is to realize the function and value of the Newark Bay Estuary as it affects animals, plants and humans; identify the six species protected under the State Fish Consumption Advisory; understand the affects of pollution and how to engage in pollution prevention as well as the link between water quality and human activity on land.

In Phase I, students learn background information, key concepts such as estuaries and watersheds, as well as learning to read maps and measure distances. In Phase II, the Hackensack RiverKeeper brings a scale model and explains how to

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conduct a waterfront cleanup as well as how to reduce and prevent pollution. Students then perform a hands-on cleanup experiment and log their findings.

In Phase III students take an Eco-cruise and are introduced to their local waters through a half-day tour of the Newark Bay Estuary. Robbins Reef Yacht Club has been a partner for the past few years, providing access to their dock as well as free lunch to the students.

Students are shown how man and nature meet in an urban waterway and how they can coexist. They perform tests, compare results and discuss why results varied from location to location.

“The Eco-cruise is a big hit with the students because it shows them a perspective they’ve never seen before,” said Monkowski.

In Phase IV students go fishing and learn about aquatic biology as well as ethical responsibilities. They learn catch and release rules, courtesy, safety, fish anatomy and what types of fish swim in different types of water.

“This experience opens the students eyes to the world around them,” said Monkowski. “Some of these students have never even fished before.”

In fact, several students caught crabs while another caught a 21-inch striped bass. All the fish and crabs caught were later returned to the water.

A pre- and post-test is administered to all participants to determine the effectiveness of the program and how much the students learned.

“Besides learning about biology and science, students also learn about the importance of safety. That’s why throughout the days events, we have members of the Bayonne Police Department with us.”

The Urban Angler Program wishes to thank the New Jersey DEP, the Bayonne MUA, the Hackensack RiverKeeper, Robbins Reef Yacht Club, Mayor Joseph V. Doria, Jr., City Council President Vincent Lo Re, Jr., Police Director Mark Smith and Police Chief Robert Kubert, both of the Bayonne Police Department who participated in this year’s program.

For more information please contact Jessica Barnes at (201) 451-3444.

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