

# 4-H Exploring Our Environment NYC



Critter care at Camp Bristol Hills

## Camp Bristol Hills

Cornell University Cooperative Ext 4-H Youth Development sent twelve New York City students to 4-H Camp Bristol Hill, Canandaigua County NY. Here are a few of their stories:

### Sonia Owens, 6<sup>th</sup> grade

My favorite experience about the camp was how structured the activities were. I love all of the different activities they had for me to explore. I was able to challenge myself in **critter care**, I never held a pet rabbit before or a snake and I was able to do this. The counselors made me feel comfortable and safe as I stepped outside my comfort zone with some of the activities. I really felt as if the counselors really enjoyed having us there at camp and made us feel welcomed.... Thank you so much for the opportunity to go to camp and experience things that I have never experienced before!!



### Elijah Ramsay:

My experience at 4-H camp was great! I didn't really want to go at first but after a few days there, I got used to it & then started to like it. It was a good experience meeting new friends. The classes were good too, like air rifle & sports those were my favorites. I played sports & games that I never played before & was pretty good. The

made up sport called "gaga" was really fun & for a little kid sport it was very competitive. Ultimate Frisbee seemed to be a popular sport up there also. I was pretty good at that too. I saw insects that were very strange but I didn't mess with any of them! The food there was really good too. It was better than the food at my school. Camp was a great experience for me & I would love to do it again.

### Karlid Crompton

On my first day at the camp I made friends on the bus with Oswald, Adonis, Isaiah, the other Isaiah, & Alex. Most of us were separated into different cabins. Two friends came in the same cabin with me, Xavier & Khalid, Oswald & Isaiah, Adonis little brother. My leader & counselors were Scarecrow, Gadget, Sci-Fi, & the Cit. After making more friends in the cabin I had swimming test & I was in the second lowest group of tadpoles. I remember what I had for my first dinner, because I took a picture & it was very good. I had a garlic pizza & a pepperoni pizza. Then we had camp fire where we sing songs & after we had to go to sleep. In the morning we had to "hop". Hopping is when you set up each table in the cafeteria before any time we eat. & that morning we had pan cakes & bacon, after we got our schedules for our activities. I first had air rifle shooting

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Special thanks to:



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
New York City



Special thanks to our sponsors  
Disney, Cornell Cooperative Ext  
& National 4-H Council  
for supporting programs  
such as  
"4-H Exploring Our  
Environment" & Camp.  
These experiences introduce  
urban youth to environmental  
conservation, stewardship and  
the great outdoors.



## Exploring Our Environment

### Thomas Reber, Hunter College HS

Over the course of 5 weeks 4-H teen instructors worked with one hundred 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders in an 8 part summer environmental education course. Students covered everything from carbon footprint & invasive species to cartography through hands on curriculum "Exploring the Environment – Earth's Capacity". Preceding the start of classes each teen instructor was handed a chapter from the curriculum and was charged to grow it into an hour long lesson. After rigorous planning, review, peer teaching and feedback the instructors were ready to go. Lessons were adapted to the needs of each site to

accommodate varying age groups. The teen instructors gained valuable experience while putting their 4-H public speaking skills to use. Students worked in pairs and had to manage the classroom while working together to effectively educate the students about their role in their environment and how they could be stewards. As teen leaders the lessons we learned from the experience include:

- Working with youth AIN'T easy
- A new respect for the lesson planning process.
- Patience is important! We were once middle-school kids ourselves
- Make connections with the kids, you both can learn so much.



**MOST WANTED**  
Students from Grand St Settlement @ PS 196, Bushwick, Brooklyn, create wanted posters for "invasive species"



**SKILL-A-THON**  
Students work on skill-a-thon tasks.



### Marquez Hurlston, Forest Hills HS 4-H

Being a part of the 4-H environmental program has allowed me to connect with children. It is important to understand the conditions of the environment, especially in urban societies. My responsibility is to correct the illusion in youth that mass deforestation is required to live and thrive. During the exploring the environment program students discussed, debated and argued, about their ideas for creating a park map. Outstanding! They came to understand that each had to take a little portion of the area. I was impressed, even if it was for only 15 minutes, youth, and staff put aside their electronics and worked together. I enjoyed my internship, because we're able to have outdoor activities. We were able to play icebreaker games that related to the lessons, which provided more clarity. The ice breakers were important, because every student learns differently.

### Kyra Haly, Midwood HS 4-H

Engaging in educational activities is the best way to learn. The games we played allowed the students to voice their opinions on bettering the environment and their communities. After learning about how wasting energy affects their carbon footprints, the students made pledges such as taking less time in the shower, and turning of the light when they leave a room. Along with teaching the students about their carbon footprint I also learned about mine. Sometimes the students become the teachers as when they voice their opinions you see a different point of view. The views of the younger generation are especially important as they will be the future caretakers of the world we live in. The Environmental Stewardship was a great experience and I hope the students enjoyed it as well!



## "BUTTERFLIES I SEE" on Roosevelt Island, Manhattan NY

### Kyra Lee Harry, Medgar Evers Prep HS

I think that St Mark's Day School's favorite lesson was "**Butterflies I See**". In this lesson each student grew their own butterfly from the larvae stage. They got to see the stages of development larva, chrysalis and adult, of the Painted Lady Butterfly. Each day they looked at the progress that butterfly made and was able to understand how to care for it. Butterflies are an indicator species used to diagnose the health of an ecosystem. Each lesson we taught had an activity where they did an experiment. On the last day of class the students set the butterflies free. They loved them! The students were learning, having fun, and the best part they were being environmental stewards.

### Jedrick Yap, Forest Hills HS

During my time as an environmental steward through the Cornell Cooperative Extension Program, I've educated youth from grades 3rd-5th about their surroundings. Along with my fellow interns, I have taught them to become more aware of indicators that define a healthy environment, such as green spaces and indicator species including birds and butterflies. Their newfound awareness of their individual contributions to the health of their environment encouraged them to partake in different ways to lessen their own carbon footprint as well as the rest of their community.

### Teishawn Florestal-Kevelier, Dowling College

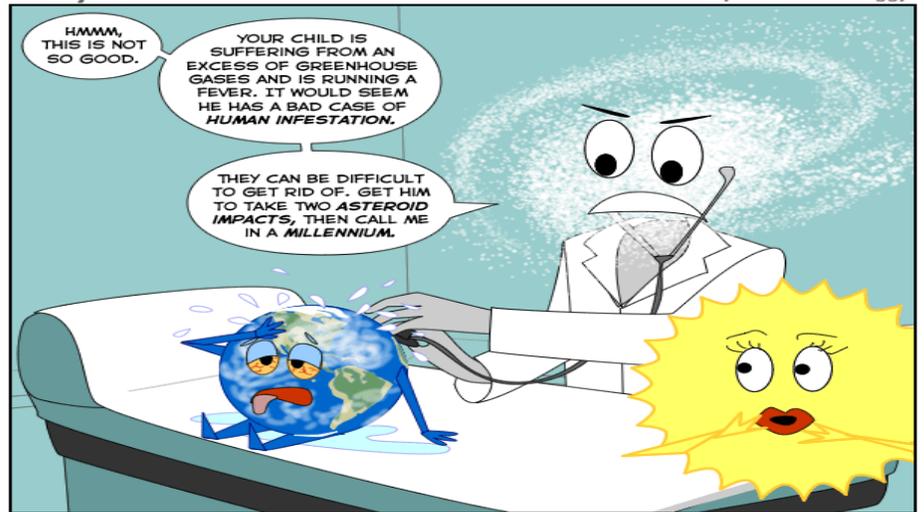
Located just a stone's throw off the coast of the bustling Manhattan city streets is **Roosevelt Island**. At the heart of the island is the Roosevelt Island Elementary School, where I had the pleasure of supervising & teaching this summer. In five short weeks, I and 3 interns were able to teach 60 youth about sustainability of an urban ecosystem, painted urban landscapes, greenhouse gases & conducted medium scale experiments & observations their environment. The youth & counselors, compared to many others I had encountered in the past, were active & knowledgeable about most of the topics we discussed. Working with middle school youth can be a bit challenging and discouraging, especially for high school students (who are so close in age). My role became one of support to the interns. At 6'8" my stature, maturity and experience helped to remedy class discipline allowing the interns to teach. Throughout the challenges faced I can speak for all interns when I say the site was one of the most welcoming.



*Roosevelt Island students release butterflies in a local park.*

### Gusmery Ramirez, Midwood HS

Coming into the exploring the environment program, we didn't know what to expect. Now that it is over, we can safely say that our experience was a wholesome and rewarding one. We had the chance to teach students about their environment- ranging from topics such as invasive species to global warming. The lessons were not only fun but engaging. The lesson that seemed to resonate most with our students was the lesson discussing **indicator species**. In this lesson, we introduced the soon-to-be butterflies and our students were excited to see them develop. The stewardship gave us an opportunity to showcase our leadership skills in a new environment; the learning experience was one of a kind.



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**Brandon Mathurin, Midwood HS**

**St Mark’s Day School, Crown Heights Brooklyn NY**, summer students were charged with doing a 4-H inspired **Greenhouse Model project**. The goal of this project was to create a greenhouse model and understand how greenhouse gases can become trapped in the Earth’s atmosphere. Once trapped the gases cause damage to the earth, drought, floods, crop failure and much more. Doing this project enabled students to become catalyst for positive change as they pledged to, use mass transit and to conserve more energy, shrinking their carbon footprint. Being able to share acquired knowledge through 4-H is the best feeling in the world!

**Ronald Balutiu, Hunter HS**

Being part of the Environmental Stewardship program with Cornell Cooperative Extension helped me learn a lot about working in a teaching environment and helped me understand the difficulties that teachers go through in planning effective lessons. During my first week, while I was planning my lesson, I found that there were many challenges that teachers have to overcome. For example, I had to make sure that every activity that was planned was able to be completed at every site, not just my own. Therefore, I had to take into consideration the materials and space at my disposal while trying to make a fun and engaging activity for the students to complete, which was a significant challenge. Also, another lesson I learned right away when working with the youth was that they worked best when doing interactive and exciting activities rather than a more sedentary, school style type of teaching.

**Camp Bristol Hills continued**

which was my favorite & I learned I am left eye dominant. I hit no bull’s eye. Then I had archery. No bull’s eye here either. Later I had swimming, my least favorite because the water was too cold. After swimming we had water sports. Then it was lunch. Then we played “gaga” (a game in a pit when you hit the ball) on every day I had the same schedule. Every day we would do something different in our subjects. I really liked this camp because of the activities and thank you for allowing me to go. I hope I can go back next year

Henry Weng, Hunter College HS

## I am Teacher

I am a student. Being one, it easy to forget the value of education and see school as a daily grind, rather than as a daily opportunity to exercise the mind and explore the world around us. This type of shortsightedness is common among youth; one silent downfall of our society. This is what makes teaching, particularly good teaching, and all the more important.

My initial goals in taking part in this program were fairly simple – to expand my interest in youth education, to grant me exposure to different students and more experience as an instructor. The exposure aspect was certainly useful, as I learned to engage with varied personalities and age groups in the classroom. My work as an educator also helped to develop my own teaching style, reaching a balance of authority and engagement that allows me to maintain control of the class, while still being interesting and fun for the students

However, I would reap even more benefits from this program than I had imagined. The process of creating and adjusting the lessons was a challenge in and of itself for us interns. It required from us a great deal of flexibility, as we learned to adapt to our sites with considerations for class size, available resources, and compatibility with the school's location. Teaching the lessons themselves benefited me as an educator and as a person – they demanded cooperation with my peers and patience with the students. I was forced to listen and listen carefully; education is about fully interacting with students as much as it is injecting new information into their bright minds.

Most importantly, this program strengthened my desire to become an educator, and reaffirmed the value of education. I become excited when kids dive into conversations in the classroom, the gears in their mind spinning vigorously. The lesson engaging their rational and creative sides, the kids' faces exuberant in moments of eureka and "I didn't know that!" And though I have done the teaching, I have been taught the most by this program.



### Think First

Everything we do is connected, just like the "Human Knot" game!"

When I move I can mess somebody else up. We got to think about what we do first. Then do it. Think about where we put our garbage before we make it. - Anonymous

### Urban Landscapes

St Marks Day summer camp students show off watercolor paintings of their Crown Hts neighborhood. Students painted landscapes on the first day of the exploring program.



4-H is a **community**  
of **young**  
**people**  
across **America**  
who are learning  
**leadership,**  
**citizenship** and  
**life skills.**

**For Information about the  
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&/or other  
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