



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
65 McCampbell Road
Holmdel, NJ 07733
tel: 732-946-1800
fax: 732-946-1875

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robert McGarry, 732.946.1800

THIRD GRADE STUDENTS CREATE MONARCH BUTTERFLY WAY STATION

HOLMDEL (June 12, 2017) – “Ms. Bennett, can we help them?” was a question raised by a student in third grade this year after reading a passage about how the Monarch Butterfly population is slowly dwindling. With the district goal of “increasing student engagement, challenge and excitement in the learning process and maximizing the potential of every student,” this question set the wheels in motion which led to all 10 of the third-grade classes at Village School engaging in a hands-on project, combining classroom curriculum and field experience, in order to better understand ecosystems, human activity, and science through the creation of a butterfly way station. “This way station is being created to help our students understand the decline of the Monarch Butterfly population due to human activity and the loss of milkweed” explained Mrs. Campbell, a third grade teacher at the school, “we are giving our students a chance to make a difference, which is making their learning of science so much more meaningful to them.” “They can literally walk outside our classroom doors and be part of what they are reading about!” added Ms. Karen Bennett, another teacher. The Monarch Butterfly Way Station initiative is being led by these two teachers and will be further funded through a grant from the Holmdel Foundation for Educational Excellence.



The project began by developing a partnership with Rutgers and the Master Gardeners of Monmouth County who came to the school and taught the students how to plant milkweed seeds in the classroom. The students watched the seeds grow day by day, and eventually brought the milkweed they grew to the way station on the scheduled planting day of June 15th. The Master Gardeners from Rutgers helped the students plant, teaching them how deep to dig and how to arrange the roots of the plants to maximize their ability to get water and survive the transplant. The Monarch Waystation will be sustained and monitored by the teachers and students; and will be certified by the Monarch Waystation program and awarded a certificate bearing the name and site’s unique Waystation number.

Students at Village School will have the unique opportunity to observe each phase of the life cycle in the school butterfly

garden. They will also have the opportunity to contribute to the environment by protecting monarch butterfly eggs right in their classrooms, watching them in their chrysalis and eventually releasing them to begin their journey. This way station will help to further engage them in the ecosystem unit of study; including, topics such as investigating and understand that ecosystems, communities, populations, and organisms are dynamic and change over time (daily, seasonal, and long term). Students can also explore topics such as the relationships between an ecosystem dynamics and human activity. Cross curricular activities will allow students to read books about the butterflies' life cycle, tagging process, and migration.



With the help of Mrs. Damji, the school's Technology Coach, the school has created an on-line chronicle for the project – a blog that will enable the community to follow along on the journey and find updates on the progress of the school's Waystation. The blog can be found at <http://thirdgradebutterflywaystation.edublogs.org/> and can be accessed using the password "village."