

E.J. School Students Innovate to Make Marvelous ‘Monstrous Creations’

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By Juliet Kaszas-Hoch



ECO-INGENUITY: (From left) Jack Ventriello, Iris Kosinski, Kelly Ferg, Ava Blumenstein, Gus Calmeyn, Casey Zorda and Cora Esarey are among the creators of the pine monster, while schoolmates constructed a sea creature. (Supplied Photos)

To commemorate Earth Day last month, first- and second-grade students participating in an enrichment activity at the Ethel A. Jacobsen Elementary School in Surf City took recycling in an elaborate, creative direction. The end result? A sea creature and a pine monster made of discarded items and bits and pieces from nature!

For this after-school program, teachers Katherine Holloway, Stephanie Ivancich, Lisa Benjamin and Lisa Boyd intended “to enrich the students’ awareness about reusing materials and encourage them to innovate and build something amazing,” Boyd explained. “Students were asked to collect materials that could be reused, such as cardboard, bubble wrap, plastic bags, bottles and shredded paper, as well as materials found in nature, such as shells, pine cones, driftwood, flotsam and jetsam.”

The 35 participating students were separated into two groups, each of which worked to assemble a fiendish behemoth on the school

stage. “When not working directly on the monsters, students were able to create their own bottlecap art or their own 3D creature, which can be seen in our display case by the office,” Boyd noted.



“It was truly awesome to see the students working together to stuff, tape, wire and engineer the body parts to make these colossal creatures,” she added. “The students collaborated for three afternoons, and our fierce fabrications can be viewed on the stage this week. ... As a group, students discussed how they could help and respect the earth in big and small ways. We were reminded that Earth Day can be every day.”

Boyd, who said she really enjoyed working with the youngsters on this cross-curricular project, pointed out, “We covered social studies with Earth Day concepts, science with the Pine Barrens and ocean habitats, engineering with building and balancing the structures, and art and creativity using unusual materials. I am amazed at how well the students cooperated and how enthused they were to build these amazing creatures.”

Holloway and Ivancich concurred. “Their hard work and creativity made this project a huge success,” Holloway concluded. “Our students are walking away from this project understanding the importance of caring for our planet now and in the years to come.”

—J.K.-H.

