



FRIENDS OF SAUSAL CREEK

Friends of Sausal Creek uses hands-on restoration, seed collection and plant propagation activities to grab the attention of its participants: inner-city youth from Oakland, Calif. This method of interactive learning helps it achieve its mission of promoting awareness and appreciation of the Sausal Creek watershed. They seek to inspire action to preserve and protect the creek and its watershed as both a natural and community resource. This is no small feat when you consider that this population is often disengaged from the green movement. “Students like planting and they love working with tools,” says executive director Sara Marcellino.

In addition to the hands-on activities during the education workday, students also learn about careers in science. Sausal Creek participants get exposure to careers in environmental science that go beyond science lab doors. “We’ve had some students talk about pursuing careers in environmental science,” explains Marcellino. “If and when that happens, it is a true measure of success.”

Many students are inspired to return to volunteer on their own after a class trip. After collecting seeds with the group, some students bring a seedling home to cultivate and then return to plant it.

A grant from The Clorox Foundation in 2008 helped Friends of Sausal Creek work with 600 students from Oakland public schools. These students subsequently volunteered a total of 1,600 hours to restore their community.



