

2013

ANNUAL

REPORT



The uncommon collaborative is a critical ingredient in our recipe for effectively engaging young people in their communities. We have committed ourselves to becoming well versed in bringing together diverse groups of people - some of whom might never have thought of connecting - to ensure that young people live in communities that challenge them to be problem solvers and leaders.

This report celebrates a few of our many uncommon collaboratives. As we move into the 20th year of Earth Force and the 25th anniversary of GM GREEN, we embrace the potential of this work, the power of our partnerships, and the prospect of being part of building a world where young people are actively making positive change to the environment at their schools, in their neighborhoods, and in partnership with their communities.

Lisa Bardwell
Earth Force President/CEO





EARTH FORCE PIONEERS HYPER-LOCAL URBAN WATER EDUCATION

We all care about our local waterways — city agencies invest in meeting clean water standards; media outlets tell us to pick up dog poop so it doesn't pollute our streams; our storm sewers have markers reminding us that what goes down the gutter ends up in the river.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE PUT YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTER OF THIS EFFORT?

We get KIC-NET (Keep It Clean Neighborhood Environmental Trios), a program Earth Force launched in partnership with the City of Denver Public Works with funding from the EPA Urban Waters Small Grants Program. KIC-NET links a school with a nearby body of water and the local parks and recreation department. Using the Earth Force Process, students meet city officials and investigate water quality issues firsthand, collecting data on the South Platte River and in their community. Then, the young people create projects that address the issues they discover and that help improve Denver's water.

Bora Simmons, Director of the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education, says KIC-NET "will make a difference in the quality of the environment and the quality of the lives of people in the Denver region. It is serving an essential need, is grounded in sound pedagogy, and builds long-lasting partnerships."

The success of KIC-NET comes from an uncommon collaborative of students, city staff needing to meet federal mandates, and educators addressing education standards. Through KIC-NET, students become stakeholders in their city's future and work alongside city officials helping to satisfy the city's MS4 permit requirements (established to prevent harmful pollutants from being dumped into local waterways). It supports educators in meeting state and district standards, and ensures that youth develop STEM and civic skills using real issues in their neighborhoods. The result is a community-owned model that meets diverse needs and produces real on-the-ground water quality improvements.

Currently, over 20 core partners and 700 young people participate in the Denver KIC-NET. We will be adding two new cities in 2014.

YOUTH TESTIMONIAL



Students at Noel Community Arts School wanted to learn more about Parkfield Lake, a local body of water behind their school. After doing a storm drain inventory, students slipped on waders to observe macroinvertebrates and used BioPaddles to test for coliform. To inform their community of what they found, students created a water quality guide. "It was really fun to work outdoors to learn about the lake and the things that live in it. I liked going in the lake and working on the project indoors and outdoors. I learned about what makes water healthy or unhealthy for a community. I didn't know that temperature played such an important role. Since I did the project I think more about keeping water clean and how important it is to take care of my community," said 7th grade student Luis Perez-Parades.

EARTH FORCE INVESTS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE STEM EDUCATION



Earth Force has provided professional development around our six-step Process, an award-winning instructional model that combines the best of action civics and service-learning, since 1997. Our Next Steps Institute takes that professional development to the next level by engaging diverse groups of stakeholders in a three-day Institute that promotes hands-on, minds-on learning in STEM education.

THE INSTITUTE PUTS PARTNERSHIPS AT THE CENTER OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE.

With the help of a collaborative planning team, including Clemson University, South Carolina Afterschool Alliance, S2TEM Centers, South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics and Science, the STEM Center of Excellence at the Citadel, and STEMconnector, Earth Force hosted the Next Steps Institute in Charleston, SC in September 2013.

The Institute design featured pathways, each with multiple sessions and topics that helped participants to take action on their learning. This structure challenged the 400 participants to choose one pathway for the entire 3 days, and to make deep, lasting connections with fellow learners. Over 84% of participants reported the Institute expanded both their knowledge of STEM and how to build partnerships to support STEM.

PARTNER TESTIMONIAL



“The Next Steps Institute was one of the most organized, broad-based, efficient, and quality professional and learning conferences I have attended in the past six years. The organization into pathways was a creative way to group professional interest and target the learning of the participants. The broad-based and even eclectic mix of topics, presenters, sponsors, and exhibitors addressed a high degree of diversity – so much so that one left with a feeling of ‘there wasn’t enough time to take it all in.’ It is said that a conference is a success if there is one take-away from the morning and afternoon of each day. This Institute provided so many takeaways that even four months [later], I find myself still following up on networking leads.”

Rob Siegel, Coordinator STEM Initiatives



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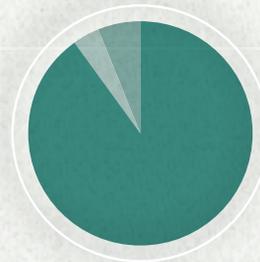
* Dr. Essoka participates in Earth Force in his individual capacity, and not as a representative or employee of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

2013 REVENUE



- 81% Contributions, Grants, and Contracts
- 4% Earned Income and Other Revenues
- 15% Cash from Reserves

2013 EXPENSES



- 6% Fundraising
- 4% General and Administrative
- 90% Program Services

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