

Salish Sea Expeditions Partners with the TAF Academy in Science Education

Fresh off a four-day expedition aboard *Carlyn*, tenth grade students from Technology Access Foundation (TAF) Academy in Kent have embarked on a new venture – studying their local watershed. And by local, we mean *local* – their research will focus on stormwater on their school campus, giving them direct insight into the health of their local waterways and a deeper understanding into how local runoff affects the watershed.

Over the course of the next two months, TAF students will measure the level of pollutants in the storm water (wells, storm drains walkways, gutters and parking lots) at TAF, to know the mix and quantity of pollutants and toxins around their school and which areas have the greatest concentrations of those pollutants. The students designed their study to explore the effects of particles that come off of parked cars and from the roofs of the buildings. The students are expected to present their findings at the Salish Sea Student Science Symposium on June 4, 2010 at the Woodland Park Zoo.

This spring marked TAF Academy's first trip aboard *Carlyn*, and the students, teachers and administrators were excited about their voyage.

"Experiences outside of our TAF Academy campus such as the Salish Sea Expedition extend beyond the purely academic to include emotional growth, improvements in interpersonal and teamwork skills and insights into the role they play in our community," explains TAF Academy Science and Math Teacher, Christal Lee.



Kendall K & Denise E

For students, the expedition was a unique learning adventure. "You learn more when you're doing things rather than just reading out of a book," says 10th grader Kay G. "The coolest part was when we got to launch equipment off the side of *Carlyn* [to do our experiments]."



Riley T

"Salish's programs give students the opportunity to use their classroom learning in a real-world setting, by conducting scientific research that they themselves design," said Salish Executive Director Stephen Streufert. "We have found that the best way to get students excited about science that can lead to a healthier marine ecosystem, is to empower them to pursue their own curiosity and answer their own questions about our natural world."

“I was extremely impressed with the way that students rose to overcome challenges by working together and by the students who are generally quiet in the classroom, but exploded out of their shells on the trip,” added Lee.

“TAF Academy and Salish Sea Expeditions make natural partners because we both engage young students in middle school and high school with project-based learning focusing on science, technology and math topics,” says TAF Executive Director Trish Millines Dziko. “Our teachers tell us that students who went on the trip are now looked upon as leaders in the classroom as they continue to work on the Salish land-based portion of the project.”



Kendall K & Carlos C

TAF Academy is a 6th-12th grade public school formed through a unique partnership between Federal Way Public Schools and the Technology Access Foundation. Opened in 2008, the school offers a STEM-focused curriculum dedicated to giving all students an equal opportunity to graduate from high school on-time and college-ready to become leaders and innovators in their chosen fields.

Salish Sea Expeditions, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was founded in 1996 to inspire a passion for exploring, understanding and respecting the marine environment through hands-on scientific inquiry. Since then, over 5,000 students (grades 5-12) and nearly 1000 teachers have participated in our innovative 3-5 day programs. 75% of our students attend public schools and over 25% are from schools serving low-income populations. Teachers report that Salish programs support their efforts in the classroom to meet state learning requirements. To learn more about our programs and how to support this growth, please visit www.salish.org, call 206-780-7848 or email info@salish.org.

Technology Access Foundation (TAF) is a Seattle-based non-profit organization with a mission to prepare underserved children of color for higher education and professional success by providing a rigorous and relevant K-12 curriculum. TAF programs empower students to graduate high school on-time and college-ready to pursue degrees in critical STEM fields. <http://www.techaccess.org>