

Impact Report 2023



OUR MISSION

Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ) promotes ecological health, environmental stewardship, and community development in Southeast San Francisco by creating urban greening, eco-literacy, community stewardship and workforce development opportunities that directly engage and support local residents in securing a healthier future.

OUR HISTORY

Over the years, LEJ has engaged thousands of volunteers in community action projects that benefit Southeast San Francisco. From local and state level advocacy, to hands on restoration at Heron's Head and Candlestick Point State Recreation Area (CPSRA), to environmental science programming in schools, LEJ has consistently engaged residents of all backgrounds in relevant programming that promotes environmental justice and ecological health.

OUR PURPOSE

LEJ's goal is to help create acres of interconnected, climate-resilient living shoreline and native Baylands habitat in southeast San Francisco parklands over the next years-an unprecedented opportunity to help mitigate sea level rise, while bringing greater park equity and climate justice to southeast San Francisco.



URBAN GREENING

A program of Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ), the Candlestick Point Native Plant Nursery is a vibrant community hub that is at once a living classroom for our educational programming, a center for green workforce development, and a premier source for hyper-local Native plants for habitat restoration in San Francisco.



LEJ grew over 33,785 plants in 2023

LEJ planted over 25,372 plants in 2023 in public spaces.



Completion of Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island open space project in 2023: The project grew over 90 native species from remnant habits of Yerba Buena Island, Angel Island and the county of San Francisco to provide over 7 acres of new openspace and stormwater gardens for the public open spaces as part of the redevelopment of Yerba Buena Island. The project engaged hundreds of volunteers, supported key growth of LEJ's native plant nursery team and supported the paid job training for over 30 LEJ interns. In the winter of 2023 LEJ supplied the last of the plants and closed our largest plant contract in our 25 year history forging the way for new projects at Candlestick Point and Heron's Head Park in 2024.

33 Acres Stewarded



33 Acres of Invasives removed

Heron's Head Park:

Providing the ecological restoration services such as reintroduction of an extirpated federally endangered salt marsh plant *Suaeda californiana* California Sea blite, out planting of over 15,000 wetland plants for the newly created Living Shoreline that provides coastal habitat and localized flood and erosion control of one of San Francisco's only tidal wetlands in the wake of impending sea level rise.



Sunrise Point:

Sunrise Point Restoration is a three-phase, community-based restoration project designed to transform the six-acre Sunrise Point peninsula from a dusty, invasive species-dominated, wildfire-prone landscape into a biologically-diverse, climate-resilient mosaic of native perennial grasslands and native trees that will better serve the public and wildlife.



NATIVE NURSERY EXPANSION PROJECT

LEJ completed the Candlestick Point Native Plant Nursery and Garden Expansion in the Fall of 2023. The project included building an outdoor community gathering area, building 18 new garden boxes for community gardeners, creating over 1/4 acre of new native plant demonstration gardens, installed 75,000 gallon stormwater reuse/capture system. Designed and installed new interpretive panels about the importance of the Candlestick Point SRA and the Community garden and of course the new native plant nursery which became operational in Fall of 2023. The expanded capacity reported increased plant production, volunteer engagements and economic workforce opportunities for interns and local open space projects in Bayview Hunters Point.



Eco-Adventures



Eco-Adventures is an environmental education program that offers service-learning and outdoor recreation for youth between the ages of 9 and 18. It is designed to address disparities in access to nature and to offer health and fitness lifestyle choices among youth. Offered in collaboration with local teachers and community based organizations, activities include kayaking, fishing, guided plant walks, environmental justice tours and guided nature walks.

1032

Youth served in 2023



What they learned?

- They learned about restoration practices.
- About native landscape and its history.
- How toxic waste can damage the ecosystem.
- Team-building activities that encourage leadership such as delegating tasks in small groups.



What they loved?

- Nature walk and outdoor activities.
- Kayaking and mulching the plants.
- Connecting with people of diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Listening to the sounds of water and birds.



Eco-Apprentices



Eco-Apprentices are local youth who envisioned a healthier future for their community. Through hands on experience growing native plants, restoring Candlestick Point Park, and participating in environmental justice advocacy, Eco-apprentices gain core competencies and leadership skills for green career pathways. Our program provides a safe and healthy environment for young people to become self-confident and to view themselves as agents of change.



700

Training hours

- Leadership activities for all age-groups.
- Ecological restoration-weed management, native seed collection, propagation and planting.
- Restoration activities in southeast SF area.
- Air, water and soil quality monitoring.
- Garden maintenance.
- Public speaking and community engagement sessions.
- Understanding the need of the community and means to create inclusivity through various outdoor group activities.



"I love that I am able to connect with nature, and imagine the native land. Connecting to these plants and understanding their ethnobotany background, as well as, learning more about the native landscape taps into my interest with acknowledging the indigenous folks who cared for this land. I also appreciate Nina's and the Eco Tech's (Eliz and Alijah) guidance and knowledge. They foster a safe learning space that allows me to connect deeper with the world!"

Corporate Workday Events at Google & Salesforce

Corporate workdays are fun-filled and rewarding experiences for LEJ staff. It relieves the pressure of contract deliverables while providing opportunities for community engagement in urban greening projects that support restoration of local habitats, and preservation of the unique biodiversity of San Francisco.



What they loved?

- They loved the idea of connecting with nature and the people.
- It was a refreshing experience to contribute to the environment.
- Team-building activities helped to develop a bond between people from different departments.



What they learned?

- They learned about native plants, seed propagation and soil sampling.
- They learned about different restoration practices.
- Outdoor activities boosted a sense of collaboration and teamwork.

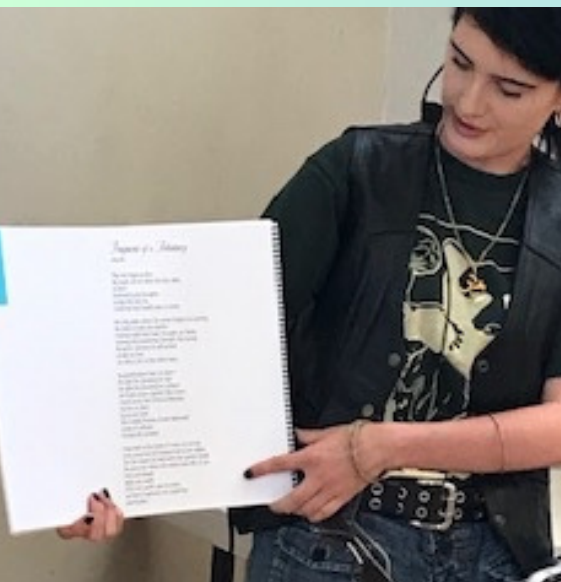


WALC (Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative): Exhibition at Downtown High School and Balboa High School

The exhibition was coordinated by Catherine Salvin who is one of the teachers who has co-created a curriculum of study each year with an environmental focus. This initiative not only encourages the youth to learn about the environment from an educational perspective but also fosters a sense of responsibility towards the local habitat.

What they learned?

- Students demonstrated the theme of the exhibition "The Water Must Break Free: A Watershed Field Guide".
- They learned about local environmental issues and the importance of preserving local habitats.
- They learned about Eco-Adventures and Eco-Apprenticeships.





Acknowledgements

We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

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Or mail a check payable to:
Literacy for environmental Justice
PO Box 882403
San Francisco, CA
94188
Email: staff@lejyouth.org

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