



# SCHOOL DAYS

A RECAP OF 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR AT SOUNDWATERS



High school students are taking an active role in restoring a coastal salt marsh.

## It's a Complicated World. They'll Be Ready.

When young people think about the environment and their future, it can be a lot of scary thoughts. They're not wrong. The future of our planet, the future they will inherit, can be fraught, scary and uncertain. From a young age, our students know they are inheriting a complex world.

But fear won't lead to positive change; it will lead to paralysis and inaction so over the nine months of the school year - our *School Days* - our students use Long Island Sound as their classroom to understand our environment in ways that are fun and memorable. Whether it's sailing or science, through the lens of a microscope or in a pair of waders, they want to understand our environment and they want to make it better.

**They'll be ready.**

**17,391**

Pre-K - 8th grade  
student days at  
SoundWaters



**4,875**

High school student  
days at SoundWaters



**1,280**

Harbor Corps job  
training days at  
SoundWaters

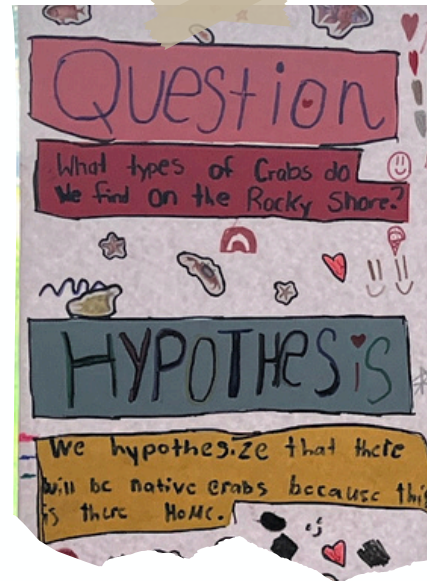


# “Hypothesis” - A Big Word for a Third Grader

Put your third-grade mind to work on this question: Will we find more native or invasive crabs on the rocky shore?



A big part of their project is to present their work in public.



Our third graders studied this question to understand how our shoreline and animal populations are constantly changing. Asking important questions and providing evidence to support their answers are skills they can carry forward and apply to more sophisticated issues.

**They'll be ready.**

Answer: Amy, Jessica, and Alyssa's research on invasive crabs and no native crabs. the shoreline showed that there were only



Students use scientific methods to collect data in the field.

## Joyful Learning Is Powerful



After-school sailing is a great introduction to Long Island Sound for middle schoolers.

What better way to learn and appreciate our natural world than play in it? All fall and spring, many of our students are introduced to Long Island Sound through after-school sailing. No phones and no screens, just outdoors, memorable experiences and new, fun challenges: the start of a lifelong relationship.

**They're getting ready.**

# My Future: I'm Ready

Every young person wants to move forward, to secure their future. Sometimes, they need an opportunity like Harbor Corps. Over the past nine months, our trainees have worked hard to gain the skills and the habits that marine industry employers are looking for in entry-level recruits. They are now in jobs or in the job market, working towards their success.



A new career? Spring Harbor Corps graduate, Joaquin Spruill, discovered a new outlet for his artistic skills in the boat workshop.



State and local officials celebrated achievement with two Harbor Corps graduating classes.

# They're Already Taking Action

Our high school students are already making a difference in a new project on Stamford Harbor. Over the next several years, our older students and the community will help SoundWaters restore a degraded salt marsh. Yes, there are invasive plants to be removed, but this project is more than just pulling weeds. Students have been in the marsh all spring collecting advance data on animals and plants, and collecting seeds to start growing new, healthy salt marsh grasses.



Students are growing the healthy native grasses to be transplanted into the Stamford Harbor salt marsh.

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*I think our students can change the world. They're already being brought up with the mindset that this is something we need to fix; that we need to do better.*

-Tim Abbott, SoundWaters Manager of Adult & High School Education

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# A Caring Community Steps Up...BIG

Nine months. Six different parks. We asked for your help and you responded. **526 volunteers** converged and came away with an astounding (and slightly depressing) **3,017 pounds of trash**. The results speak for themselves.

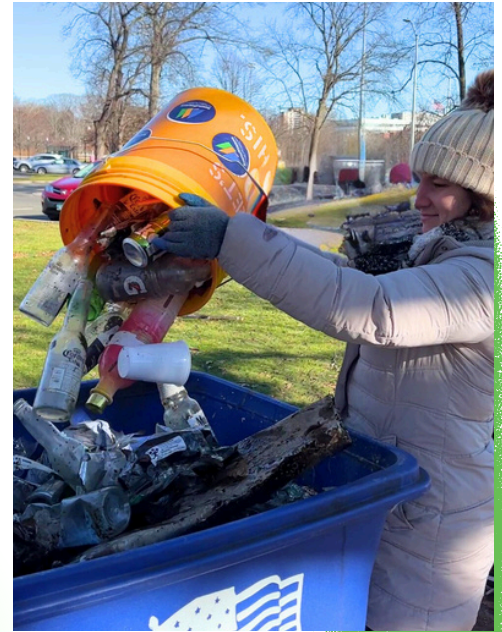
**What did we learn?** In a brief survey to gauge volunteers' feelings about climate change, 66% said they felt "Sad," "Anxious," or "Afraid." We believe taking action to protect our environment offers respite from climate anxiety.

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*We really enjoyed the coastal cleanup and quickly saw how important cleanups are. I remember one friend remarking that the experience was "life-changing."*

-Skye Trimble, Volunteer

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## Community Education: What Can We Do Now?



We teach students with an eye on the future. When we talk with adults, it's about today. To address the question about what we can do today, we hosted a community forum in March on nature-based solutions to the global climate crisis that are taking place right now in the community. From composting to community gardening, to pollinator-friendly landscaping, restoration of wild meadows, help farming and more, we learned there's no reason to wait to repair damage to our planet. **We're ready now.**

## You Paddle There, We Bring You Back

### The Flotilla - Saturday, July 20

It's a sweet deal: Join hundreds of paddlers on a three-mile paddle down to Stamford Harbor, enjoy food, drink and music at the finish and we'll bring you and your boat back to the start. Along the way, you'll enjoy a gorgeous morning on the water. Need a rental? We've got one for you. Check it out at [SoundWatersFlotilla.org](http://SoundWatersFlotilla.org).

You'll love the Flotilla.  
It's like paddling downhill!

