



SCHOOL DAYS

A RECAP OF 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR AT SOUNDWATERS

"This is how we change the world"



Over 1,000 students are studying the salt marsh to understand the impact of climate change on a vulnerable environment.

"This is how we change the world." This statement is hopeful and forward-looking and comes from a former SoundWaters student. Our students will inherit the planet – with all its beauty and its challenges. SoundWaters trains them for that global responsibility, right here on Long Island Sound.



Westhill H.S. students conduct a plankton study in the Harbor Center lab.

SoundWaters provides students the tools they need to understand climate issues and take meaningful action. It helps them build scientific literacy, problem-solving abilities that empower them to become informed, engaged citizens who can address the pressing environmental challenges of tomorrow.

-Amy Beldotti
Associate Superintendent
Stamford Public Schools

The Places Between

Salt marshes occupy that space in-between the land and the water. Thousands of high school students from Stamford, Norwalk and Danbury are restoring a degraded Stamford Harbor salt marsh and learning that this place in-between, often overlooked, is teeming with life. It is the ideal classroom for learning about biodiversity, climate change and habitat restoration. They are learning how their actions can make a difference.



Students are fascinated by the amount of life in the salt marsh.

My favorite thing is the experiment I designed with a partner to test phytoplankton and their adaptation to temperature. Being able to run an experiment I designed felt very empowering as a young person in the scientific field.

-Reid, Stamford High School
SoundWaters Research Intensive student
Attending the University of Southern Maine
in the fall to study environmental science

Growing Up With Fascination, Not Fear

Many people believe a horseshoe crab is scary and even dangerous, when it is neither. Starting in elementary school, SoundWaters students learn how magnificent and important (and docile) horseshoe crabs are, replacing fear with curiosity, respect and awe for a creature that dates back over 450 million years and benefits Long Island Sound and all of humankind. These students will grow up understanding and valuing these extraordinary creatures.



Want to learn about horseshoe crabs?
Ask a SoundWaters student.

Your First Job, There's No Feeling Like It

Remember how you felt when you started your first job? That feeling is universal. Young people enter **Harbor Corps** to build the skills to get their first job. Over the past nine months, among other jobs, Harbor Corps graduates have pursued their next career step in the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Total Marine in Norwalk.



Jordan and Sheldon picking up kelp farm buoys.

I am prepared to leave Harbor Corps. My time here has taught me how to navigate situations in life and has changed my mindset.

-Denis Denerville
Now employed at Total Marine, Norwalk

Starting From Scratch

What started as eight sheets of plywood, finished as a fully formed boat. When the *Matt & Lilli* launched in May, it culminated nine months of after-school work by a small group of high school students in SoundWaters new **High School Harbor Corps** program. Introducing high school students to trade skills builds confidence and achievement and reveals new pathways to future success.

This experience has given me a lot of background in machinery and mechanics – it's something I never thought I would want to go into, but now that I have a taste for it, it does help me consider doing something like this in the future.

-Lilyani
High School Harbor Corps student



Same SoundWaters, New Mission

*Create a Better World
Through Joyful Learning
on Long Island Sound*

The Sound has been our focus for 35 years and it remains so, but now for a different reason. Once a body of water in crisis, the Sound is much healthier, so today we look to the Sound as a classroom – our million-acre classroom – to teach students about the global issues that threaten their future: climate change and microplastics. These new crises frame our new mission and reinforce the power of fun, hands-on experiences on Long Island Sound.



Joyful learning is powerful learning.

It's Like Paddling Downhill Saturday, July 12

Join the largest paddling event on the Sound. Hundreds of paddlers will paddle across Stamford and raise the money that helps SoundWaters teach all students, regardless of their ability to pay. Don't own a kayak or paddle board? No worries, you can rent one for the day. July 12 will be your best day on Long Island Sound.





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This experience is so valuable for these kids. They have never been exposed to this kind of hands-on science. They don't know that there are people who have jobs doing science like this, let alone that it's something they could do. This is a completely new experience for them, and they are so happy and engaged.

- Westhill High School ESL & Science Teacher



SoundWaters

