

# Outstanding Partnership Equals Outstanding Opportunities and Outstanding Outcomes

Article by LAURI BEVAN, *Executive Director, Imagination Fort Worth*



Macroinvertebrate identification on the Trinity River.



Miss Sippi the story teller.

Two-plus school years, thousands of students and hundreds of teachers have provided data and testimony demonstrating the impact of the evidence-based partnership programs that the Texas Wildlife Association and Imagination Fort Worth continue to provide in North Texas.

Arts-integration has been shown by several rigorous studies to increase student engagement and achievement among youths from both low and high socioeconomic backgrounds with the largest growth in achievement evident in students from the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds. The TWA-IFW partnership programs meet an important need for children in our community—access to high impact, arts-integrated programming that enriches classroom curriculum and enhances children's knowledge of the arts and natural resource conservation.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past two years, our Trinity River program has served, 2108 students, 209 teachers, 22 schools on 26 days, with 84.25

hours of on-site programming. We added a new art component whereby students reinforce learning by creating watercolor paintings of the macroinvertebrates they might catch around the river.

Additionally, during this same time period, the Bobwhite Quail program has served 430 students, 40 teachers, 7 schools, 22.75 hours of on-site programming and 14 hours of in-school programming.

This January, we participated in “Kids Gone Wild.” What a joy it was to engage with 800 kids and their families, while creating bandanas with original brands and wild western themes.

The demographic of our population served ranges from students with identified learning or physical challenges to student athletes from Advanced Biology classes. The programs accommodate ALL learners.

Eighty percent of the students served come from economically disadvantaged households. 63 percent of the students are Hispanic, 23 percent are African American, 11 percent are Caucasian, 2 percent are Asian, and 1 percent identify as other.





We are providing transformative equitable opportunities and closing gaps in opportunity.

Program scheduling has evolved from “hard sell” to “waiting list,” with schools bidding for spots, often 6 months in advance.

**OUTCOMES**

2017–2019 post-program teacher survey data shows that:

One hundred percent of participating teachers believe that the arts-integrated program experience strengthened their required science curriculum; 100 percent of participating teachers stated that students were completely engaged; 100 percent of participating teachers noted an increase in student to student communication during and after the program, and 100 percent of participating teachers stated that the program experience was unique.

**TESTIMONIAL FROM A PARTICIPATING PARENT**

“My daughter has learning difficulties, and this was a hands-on, learning activity that really helped her. She was able to actually see and experience the things she was already learning in school like water and erosion.”

**TESTIMONIALS FROM PARTICIPATING TEACHERS**

“The Trinity River Project was fun and educational for our students. I especially enjoyed the storytelling

presentation about our city’s founder and how Fort Worth came to be. The story came to life as Miss Sippi told her story. My students learned about their city and how to be good stewards of the land. The cross-curriculum aspect of this experience allowed all my students to be engaged. Thank you for allowing us to participate.”

“It was enriching because it covered required AP topics for both AP Biology and AP Environmental Science.”

“This strengthened student understanding of Science, History, Art and Citizenship!”

“Awesome activities. Wonderfully informative. Terrific hands-on demonstrations. Great in showing how water is used, conserved, and its effects on the land.”

“Students were able to see and experience concepts in reality which cannot be duplicated in a classroom only mimicked.”

“We learned so many things from these experiences, not just about birds and I will remember these experiences forever.”

As Leslie Wittenburg, TWA’s Director of Education–Lands Intensive, wrote in 2016: “Through our partnership...we aspire to develop a multi-faceted emotional connection between Texas youths and the ecological community they are a part of.”

Proof positive from 2016 to 2019, we have not only just aspired...we have achieved. Thank you for your continued support, making this so. 🌱

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