



August 19, 2009

## **Earth Adventure 2008-2009 School Year Summary**

This report is a summary of our outreach activity for the 2008 - 2009 school year, running from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

### **Mission Statement**

Earth Adventure is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve K-12 science, geography and standards based aptitudes and competencies through supplemental learning activities and programs which enhance classroom curriculum.

Earth Adventure provides a unique avenue of exploration and discovery with tools and hands on activities which are innovative in approach, capture the imagination, and engage participants.

Earth Adventure provides a new perspective of our earth and helps students to understand their place in it.

Earth Adventure provides its resources to schools, organizations, and the public everywhere, with a focus on disadvantaged youth and underserved school districts.

### **Overview of Activity**

Earth Adventure had a very successful school year with exceptional growth in 2008 - 2009. Earth Adventure's activities impacted 487,830 individuals in 24 states. This represents a 211% increase in participants over the previous year.

School programs: 51,900 students benefited from Earth Adventure programs this school year. This translates into a 204% increase in students participating in our programs. Earth Adventure was active for 205 program days which translates to 170% growth over the previous year.

Additionally, we were active in Earth Day festivals, International festivals, Environmental and Water Conservation events with 350,000 participants. This represents a 170% increase over the previous year.

## Highlights

- Completed the integration of Whereabouts, Inc. into Earth Adventure. Three instructors from Whereabouts staff were retained as contract instructors for Earth Adventure.
- Established an Earth Adventure contract teacher in the NY/NJ/CT area.
- Established an Earth Adventure contract teacher in the New England area.
- Received a Medtronic Foundation grant to assist underserved students in the Minneapolis/St Paul area. Our partnership with US Satellite Laboratory, Inc. was instrumental in receiving this grant.
- Continued financial support from the Laskowski Family Foundation which allowed us to participate in several state and national conferences.
- Exhibition at 2 PTO Today regional conferences.
- 204% annual growth in *students* benefiting from Earth Adventure programs.
- Participated in 3 major International Festivals introducing 350,000 individuals to our activities. These festivals also had an education component and 58,000 students participated in our Earth Adventure programs during these events.
- 211% annual growth in *individuals* impacted by our programs.
- 100% of participating teachers felt that Earth Adventure's unique method of providing instruction created an opportunity for increased excitement and engagement by students in science and geography concepts.

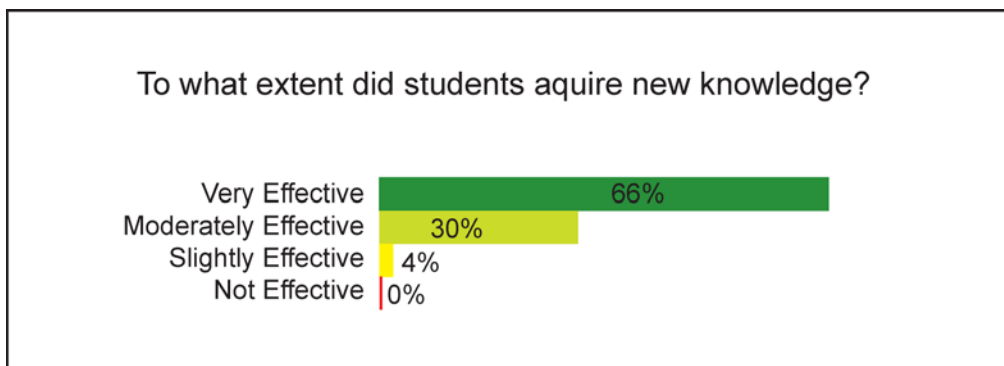
## Earth Adventure Program Effectiveness

### Acquiring New Knowledge

Earth Adventure programs were very effective in assisting students in gaining new geography, earth science and environmental science knowledge. 66% of teachers felt that Earth Adventure programs greatly exposed students to new knowledge, while 30% felt that our programs accomplished this objective to a moderate extent and 4% of teachers felt that Earth Adventure programs exposed students to new knowledge to a slight extent.

### Teacher Comments:

- *Connecting Standards with classroom goals - interactive approach.*
- *It allowed them more of a hands on approach to understanding science.*
- *The "Wow" effect was great.*
- *The visual! Also the wonderful ability to adapt to our sustainability program. Thank you!*
- *It was so interesting; we could have stayed past our 30 min allotment.*
- *Engaged students 100% - state of the art.*

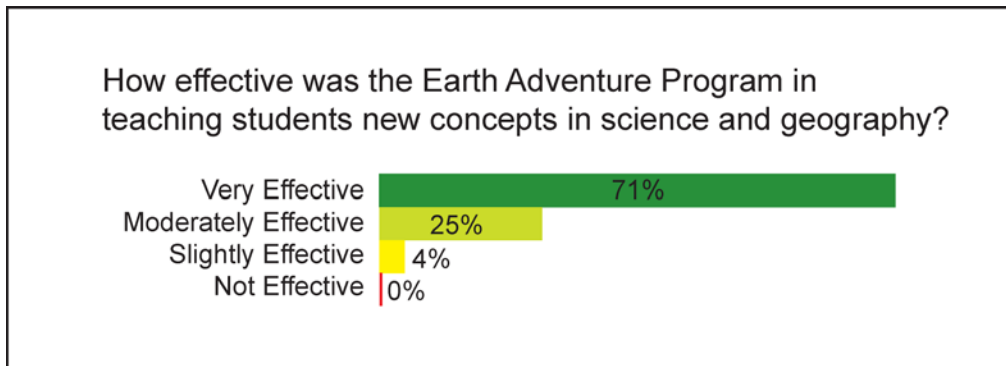


### **Teaching New Concepts**

Earth Adventure programs were very effective in teaching students new concepts in geography, earth science and environmental science. 71% of teachers felt that Earth Adventure programs were very effective in teaching students new concepts, while 25% felt that our programs accomplished this objective to a moderate extent.

#### **Teacher Comments:**

- *The program introduced them to global and geography concepts.*
- *I was speechless at the conclusion. The presentation far exceeded my expectations.*
- *This presentation really showed where the students need re-teaching and it showed which concepts were easily grasped.*
- *The presenter used background knowledge and then presented the students with new information.*
- *Engaging and eye opening while inside the world.*

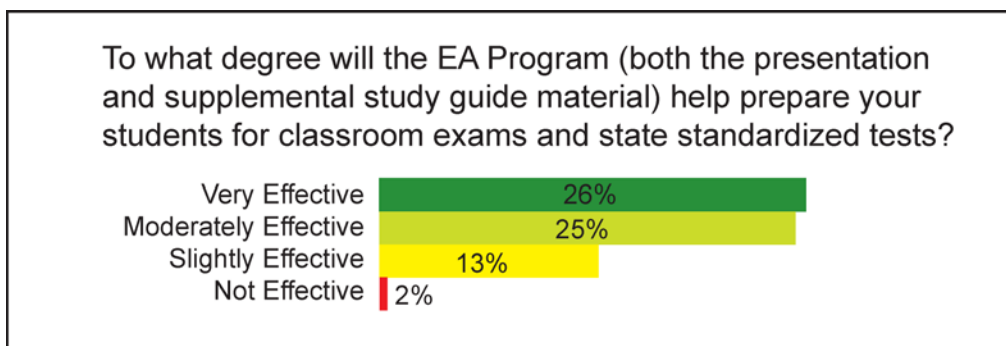


### **Benefits for Exams and Standardized Testing**

Earth Adventure programs greatly assisted teachers in preparing their students for classroom exams and standardized testing. The majority of teachers (51%) felt that Earth Adventure programs were moderately to very effective in assisting students for exams and standardized testing.

#### **Teacher Comments:**

- *It tied directly into our SOL objectives and allowed the students to visualize it.*
- *Very informative and aligned with the TAKS objectives. This is very helpful prior to taking the test.*
- *Great visual learning to reinforce standards.*
- *Very visual and so many applications to science and social studies.*
- *Highly interesting and informative. Correlation was great with our 1st quarter standards.*

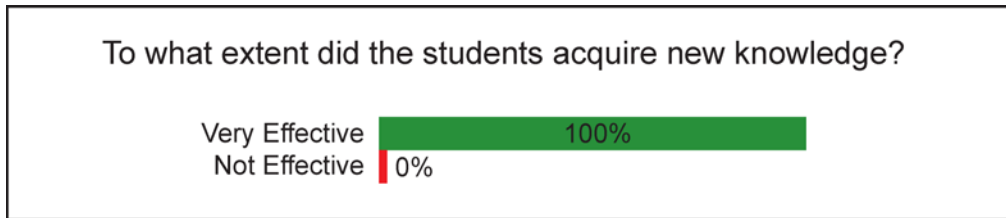


### **Create Excitement and Engage Students in Learning**

100% of participating teachers felt that Earth Adventure's unique method of providing instruction created an opportunity for increased excitement and engagement by students in science and geography concepts.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *Kept the students excited and engaged.*
- *The best part was using hands on materials.*
- *This is a great way to get students excited about science!*
- *The experience definitely encouraged my students to start getting excited about geography.*
- *Motivation for students, hands on, visual presentation creates better understanding.*
- *Instructor kept attention. The size and details on earth globe were easy to use and understand.*
- *Kept Students attention.*
- *This program made students want to learn more. They were extremely interested.*
- *Students were fascinated. This really helped them to see the earth as a sphere.*

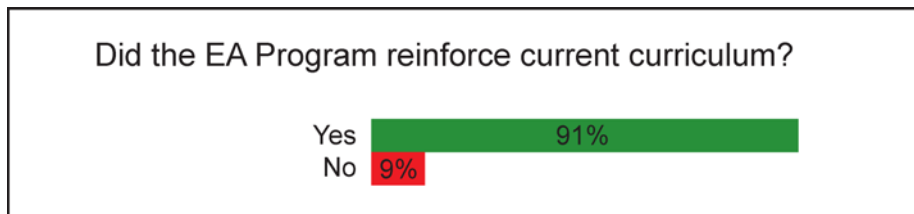


**Reinforce Curriculum Taught in the Classroom**

One of the program strengths of Earth Adventure programs is the value of reinforcing classroom curriculum being taught by teachers. Earth Adventure’s unique method of providing instruction strengthens these concepts in student’s minds in a new and exciting way. 91% of teachers participating in Earth Adventure programs felt that our program reinforced curriculum taught in the classroom.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *Reinforced what we've been learning and expanded vocabulary.*
- *Great recap of our science unit.*
- *Loved it! It went along with our current study of oceans.*
- *Great Presentation. Linked to what we're studying.*
- *Reinforced previous content taught.*
- *It was wonderful for students to see such a wonderful model of what we talked about last year and will continue to learn this year.*
- *My students wrote about what they learned after the presentation and they retained quite a lot.*
- *Supplementing our curriculum in a fun and effective way.*
- *Reinforce learning that we currently are exploring in social studies in grade 3.*
- *The knowledge of the instructor and the excitement of entering the earth balloon. This was a wonderful way to reinforce the map skills we've been studying.*

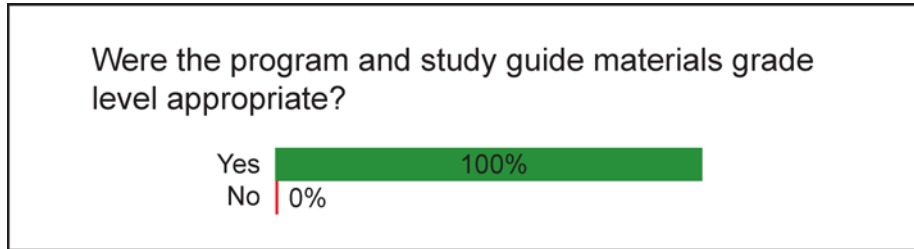


**Program Content is Grade Level Appropriate**

Earth Adventure aligns our program content with state education standards which is reflected by 100% of participating teachers feeling that our programs are grade level appropriate.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *Instructor was wonderful with children, content was perfect for the grade level.*
- *It was visual with content brought to their level.*
- *The program related to grade level, the instructor was flexible, patient, and reinforced curriculum.*
- *He taught the children at their grade level.*

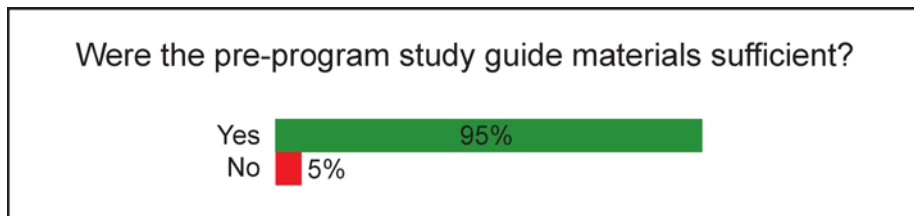


**Pre-visit Study Guide Value**

Earth Adventure pre-visit study guide includes worksheets, activities, maps and other curriculum. 95% of participating teachers felt that the study guide was sufficient.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *Excellent presenter, pre-activities.*
- *Study guide materials were extensive. Visual effects were wonderful.*
- *Knowledgeable instructor, motivational, program guide.*
- *The strong points of the program were the presentation, packet material, organization!*
- *The instructor was well prepared; the handouts were great.*
- *Thank you so much, it was great, lots of info, pertained to our curriculum.*



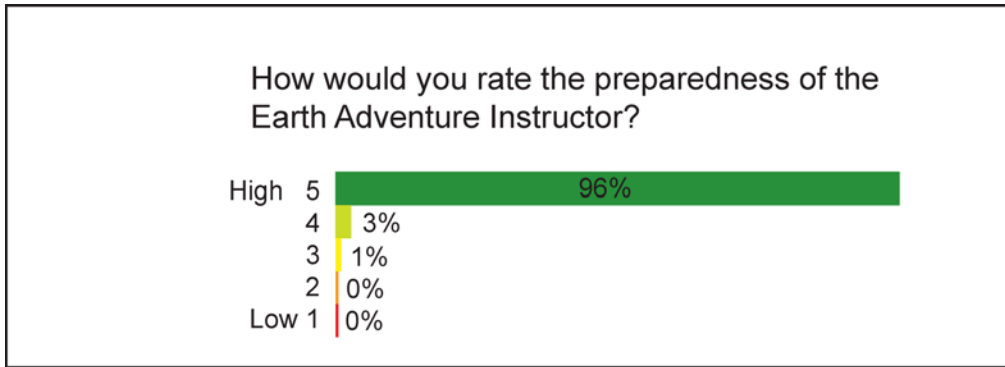
**Earth Adventure Instructor Effectiveness**

**Earth Adventure Instructor Preparedness**

96% of the participating teachers felt that the Earth Adventure instructor was very well prepared with 3% feeling that the instructor had good preparation.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *The instructor kept students engaged. He asked many questions and his explanations were very clear and thorough.*
- *It was great! The instructor was fabulous! She was informative, fun, but most important - she had control.*
- *The instructor was very clear and engaging and knowledgeable.*
- *The instructor was interesting and was well prepared.*
- *The instructor was wonderful.*
- *The programs strengths were that the instructor was very effective and he could keep the students interested.*
- *Outstanding interaction with students.*
- *Fun way to reinforce beginning geography concepts, interactive using students to demonstrate concepts - sun, rainforests, etc.*

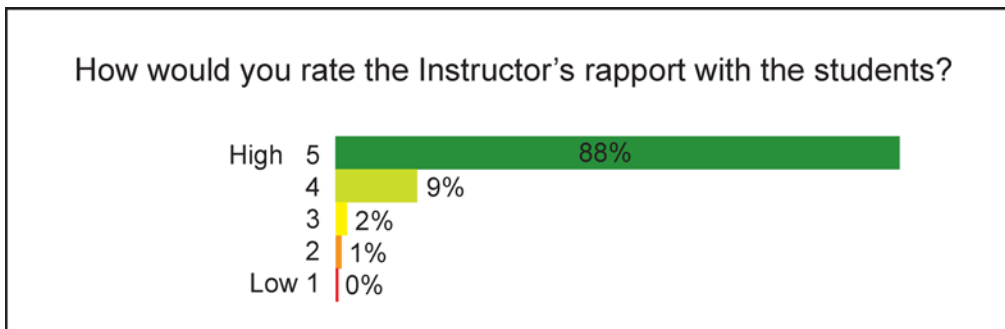


**Earth Adventure Instructor Student Rapport**

88% of the participating teachers rated the Earth Adventure instructor at the highest level and felt that the instructor interacted very well with students.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *The instructor kept the students engaged by asking them lots of questions.*
- *Cool info shared. Antarctica is a desert. Instructors control of behavior for something so exciting and new.*
- *The instructor had great rapport with kids.*
- *The instructor was knowledgeable and engaged the children actively in the content.*
- *The balloon was incredible and the instructor's way with the students was fantastic.*
- *The instructor was skilled and able to flex with a diverse group of students. Outstanding!*
- *The presentation – the instructor did a super job connecting with the children.*

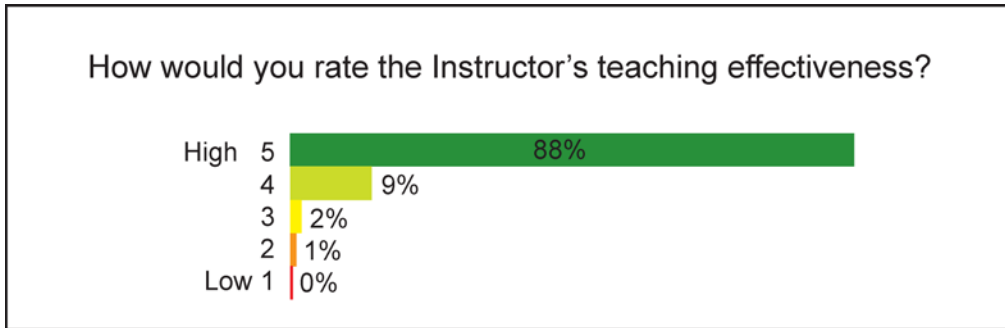


**Earth Adventure Instructor Effectiveness**

88% of the participating teachers rated the Earth Adventure instructor at the highest level and felt that the style of teaching impacted the students in a positive way. The other 12% gave the instructor relatively high marks in instructor effectiveness.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *Did a great job! Very good at re-directing attention! Thanks!!*
- *Presentation clear and concise - easy reference - examples - nice integration.*
- *The guide was engaging and enthusiastic. Customized his delivery for grade 2.*
- *The instructor was a very effective teacher. She encouraged questions, taught new content and maintained respect of the students.*
- *The instructor got the students that would normally not be interested involved in the program.*
- *The program was very organized and the instructor did a great job with the students. He was clear with directions, patient, knowledgeable and interested in student's questions and responses.*
- *The instructor was well spoken and very informative. She was age appropriate with her instructions as well. It was a wonderful experience for the children.*

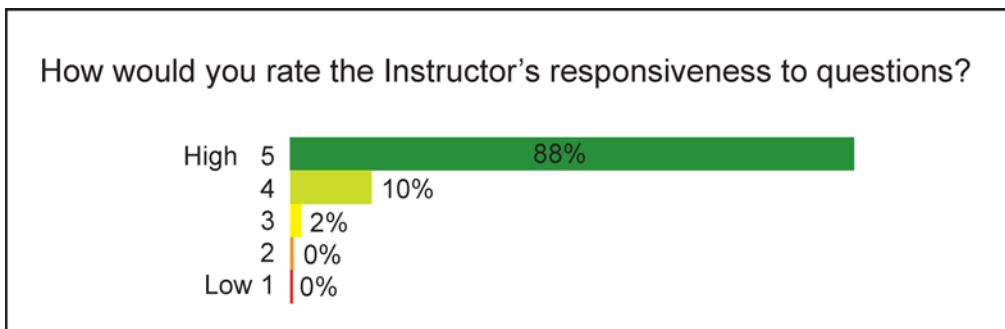


**Earth Adventure Instructor Responsiveness to Questions**

88% of the participating teachers rated the Earth Adventure instructor at the highest level in this area and felt that the instructor was very responsive to student questions.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *The students were actively engaged in the learning process.*
- *It was extremely exciting for students - they were engaged - great questions!*
- *The student's questions were addressed in a respectful manner.*
- *The instructor was clear and the questions were age appropriate.*
- *The guide was terrific in engaging the students and delivering content.*



**Earth Adventure Areas for Improvement**

As demonstrated by this year's data Earth Adventure is a highly successful program. The key areas for improvement are once again things that Earth Adventure does not directly control.

By far, the most common area for improvement was that the sessions were too short. Unfortunately, program length is dictated by the school. The key impact for program length is a financial consideration. The schools strive to maximize the number of students going through the program, while not discerning that the overall value is diminished by shorter programs.

Another common comment concerns the pre-visit study guides. Many times there is a breakdown in communication between the school contact and the school's teachers. In extreme cases we have heard comments that the teacher didn't know about our visit until the day before the program. This occurs even though the pre-visit study guide is typically sent two weeks before the program date/s.

There were also comments that the teacher would like to have seen further discussion of certain topics that were important to them. To meet this need we stress that the EA teacher introduce himself to the classroom teacher as the teacher accompanies their class into the gym and inquire about any special content they would like added to the program.

**Teacher Comments:**

- *I would have loved another 15 minutes...*
- *If there are power points of flipcharts that correlate with EA those would be very useful.*
- *Decide on a presentation ahead of time and present it.*
- *We need more time in the earth balloon.*
- *Use the outside more - the outside was so interesting but we didn't really get to explore it.*
- *Have more student involvement.*
- *Pre-post activities would have been more beneficial if the questions were more basic for beginners.*
- *More time inside globe - "where is" game?*
- *More discussion needs to take place inside the balloon.*
- *More time for questions, more about saving earths resources, environmental awareness.*

**Earth Adventure Data for the 2008-2009 School Year**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>Percentage increase/decrease</b>
<b>School Program Days</b>	120	205	<b>170%</b>
<b>States in which we are active</b>	16	24	<b>150%</b>
<b>Students impacted via programs</b>	25,500	51,900	<b>204%</b>
<b>Teachers impacted via programs</b>	1275	3,010	<b>236%</b>
<b>Conferences attended</b>	8	13	<b>163%</b>
<b>Festival Participation (Earth Day, energy, green, water, etc.)</b>	22	14	<b>-58%</b>
<b>Students served at festivals</b>	40,500	58,000	<b>143%</b>
<b>Teachers served at festivals</b>	705	920	<b>131%</b>
<b>Total attendance at festivals</b>	206,000	350,000	<b>170%</b>
<b>Total number of individuals served by our programs</b>	231,500	487,830	<b>211%</b>

**Summary**

Earth Adventure had a very successful school year with good growth in 2008 - 2009. We will continue to build on our strengths to sustain our rate of growth. We must continue to fine tune program content and delivery to meet our customer's needs. To this end we will introduce new grade level specific programs for grades K-6, in addition to topic-based programs that are appropriate for all ages.

During the year we incorporated Whereabouts, Inc. into Earth Adventure activities in a relatively smooth transition. This greatly increased our teacher experience and provided flexibility in travel arrangements.

We look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the upcoming school year brings and eagerly anticipate continuing growth during the 2009 - 2010 school year.

Sincerely,

David A. Knutson  
Executive Director  
Earth Adventure  
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