



SUMMER  
2019



## Inside

Engagement of youth volunteers, parents, and teachers brought family and community events to new heights.

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Making connections to water takes on new perspectives for our Nature Buddies.

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# ECO-TIMES

## Water Connections

CLE's nature buddies had plenty of opportunities to live out our 2019 theme, "Water Connections," this summer. Young Explorers (grades 2/3) connected hearts and sands to the shore birds of Lake Michigan. Gardenators (grades 4/5) witnessed the power of the water – soil connection while digging into gardens and helping grow plants! Our Water Protectors (grades 6/7) followed the path clean water takes on its way to becoming dirty water. Career Pathways My Pathway (grades 8/9) connected students to the Waukegan Harbor of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

Beyond the water connections, children connected to themselves and each other as CLE incorporated social and emotional learning into our daily routine. Students were encouraged to use their PEACE PAWS to resolve conflicts, build self-awareness, and make good choices. Children also connected to local treasures with visits across Lake County and beyond. During our annual Celebration of Learning, the community was invited to connect with CLE students as they showcased their learning in smart and innovative ways. Students used songs, games, speeches, and visual displays to provide a window into what made this summer experience so cool!

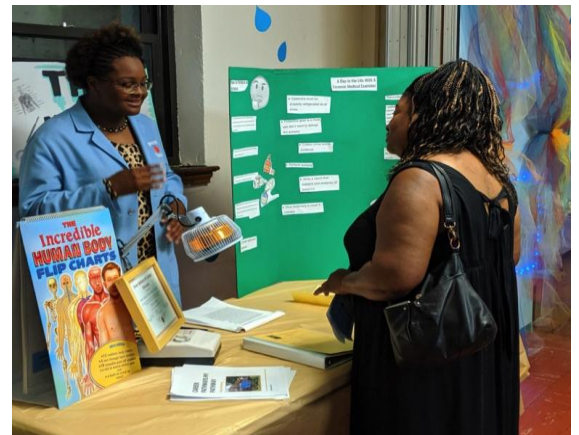




## SUPPORTING FAMILIES

CLE supports families by providing engaging opportunities for both young and old (people of all ages). Families that participated in the inaugural CLE Family STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Night engineered towers, built LED circuit cards, and even enjoyed the chemistry of making ice cream. Our 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> graders skillfully guided the sessions after learning how to lead the activities and create a master plan

Smiles, laughter, and enthusiastic conversation filled the building as children led their parents to meet their teachers and to make things together.



## BUILDING COMMUNITY

Today's learners showed their path to becoming tomorrow's leaders at the CLE Community Fair! Our Career Pathways My Pathway (CPMP) students gave a sneak peek at their future career choices through mini-presentations, such as "A Day in the Life of a Medical Examiner" by Laila El-Amin (pictured above).

How far would you travel to taste a new food? People from across Waukegan "traveled" to over 50 countries to whet their appetites at the sixth annual CLE International Festival. Over 150 guests were introduced to delectable dishes made by our CLE children and their families. Even Waukegan Mayor Sam Cunningham took a seat at our global dinner which was followed by class presentations. At CLE, we introduce children to the world – no passport required!





## EDUCATING CHILDREN

CLE partners from across Lake County provided hands-on experiences to introduce and reinforce some challenging concepts. Experts from across disciplines shared how they examine the human impacts on water sources. Each grade group also learned the satisfaction that comes from being of service through bird preservation, community gardening, food waste reduction, or peer mentoring.



- 1 Modeling nests of the Piping Plover to better understand habitat.



- 2 Examining crayfish at Big Marsh Park.



- 3 Enjoying Fit Fridays at the Waukegan Beach.



## 2/3 YOUNG EXPLORERS

### Protecting the Habitat of the Piping Plover

Our Young Explorers spent part of the summer learning how to protect the habitat of the Piping Plover, an endangered bird species. In the picture above students and their teachers showed off their Plover Pledge certificates and Plover Pal badges. As new Plover Pals, they pledged “to protect the Piping Plovers and the Waukegan Beach habitat where they raise their young”. CLE partner, Lake County Audubon Society (LCAS), guided students as they learned about these migratory birds who have taken a liking to Waukegan Beach, nesting here in past years.



## 4/5 GARDENATORS

### Exploring Life in the Garden Ecosystem

For the second year the **Gardenators** used Waukegan's Greentown Community Garden as a learning lab. Students prepared raised beds, sought insects to examine, and even helped harvest produce for a local food pantry. During their visits to the Chicago Botanic Garden Green Youth Farm in North Chicago, Smart Farm of Barrington, and College of Lake County (CLC) rooftop garden, these nature buddies...dug deeper into garden ecosystems and learned the benefits of locally-sourced food. The sites were perfect locations for making soil and water connections. At the end of their visit to CLC's Green Roofs, several students exclaimed; "Do we have to leave? I want to go to college here!"



## 6/7 WATER PROTECTORS

*"Where does our clean water come from, and where does it go once we make it dirty?"* was the guiding question for a class focused on water care. Our **Water Protectors** pondered how to attain and maintain healthy water during their visits to the North Shore Water Reclamation District. Environmental educators from McHenry-Lake Soil & Water Conservation District demonstrated where water drains in our parking lot and used the EnviroScape to better explain watersheds.



A trip to the Lake County Department of Transportation taught students about the impact of salt runoff on our bodies of water. CLE is grateful to Stormwater Management Commission of Lake County for connecting us with new partners who brought cool learning to our **Water Protectors**.



## 8/9 CAREER PATHWAYS, MY PATHWAY (CPMP)



CPMP is a career readiness program designed to build collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking skills. This summer our 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders (teens) practiced all four c's as they worked together to create ArcGIS (geospatial technology) story maps about the Waukegan Harbor. Many thanks to Geographic Society of Chicago intern Julie "Otter" Watkins, Community Volunteer Dave "Buckthorn" Holman, and IT Specialist Ivan "Turtle" Gomez for introducing students to the digital humanities through the story map process. The story maps

are part of an oral history project called *Talking the Wauk*, which highlights Waukegan and its mighty lakefront. If you'd like to support our future professionals on their journey to map Waukegan's past, visit: [bit.ly/cleoralhistory](http://bit.ly/cleoralhistory)

## Taking Teaching to New Heights

### Fresh Ideas

New and returning teachers alike brought a wealth of insight to the team each day.

### Collaboration

Sharing experiences and talents broadened opportunities for Nature Buddies.

### Team Power

Time to reflect on the day brought the team closer as we all learned and grew together.



### 2019 FACULTY & STAFF

CLE Teacher Assistants stepped into leadership roles this summer to experience leading lessons first-hand with young nature buddies and their families. In addition to planning and leading activities for our first Family STEAM Night, Teacher Assistants instructed lessons from the Project Learning Tree curriculum as the Lead Teachers offered support.

The opportunity to lead instruction for four sessions allowed the aspiring educators to experience the demands and rewards of teaching a class. The Teacher Assistants reflected on the joys of connecting with their students and the demands of providing quality instruction to all children in a group setting.

# A Lily In Bloom

We want to congratulate CLE student Lily Botero on winning the first Brushwood Center Environmental Youth Leadership Award. This award is granted to a 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade student who has demonstrated a commitment to nature and service in their community. Lily regularly volunteered at events that Champion Nature and Build Community, two of CLE's core values. She has supported CLE partners, Lake County Forest Preserve and Volo Bog State Natural Area, at events to educate other children about environmental issues. Lily received a monetary educational award at Brushwood Center's Annual Smith Nature Symposium on June 1, 2019 and spoke at this event. The Boteros have been a part of the CLE family since 2016 and we are bursting with pride to see our future cancer biologist shine!



*CLE gives thanks this season to every volunteer who served to make cool summer experiences for our children and their families. We dedicate this simple poem to you...*

## Ode to the CLE Volunteer Champions

Some come early, some come late  
And when it comes to service they take the cake!  
They also take a broom to sweep, the seeds to plant, the  
food to fix and the memories to keep.  
Some clean up, some take down  
Some run errands all over town.  
Rain, snow, sleet or shine  
Our volunteers are easy to find.  
They wear smiles and sometimes offer hugs  
Some even LIKE to play with bugs!  
A few do taxes, some coach sports,  
At CLE we have all sorts!  
Some stay quiet while others roar  
We've got scientists, birders, writers, and more!  
Some are retired, some work all day,  
But they all come to CLE ready to play!  
Cool Learning thanks them all.  
One may never know how far an act of kindness flows  
Around the brain or through the toes  
But our volunteers have that golden touch  
That's why they're all CHAMPIONS to us!



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