

Put a Fish Into the Lake and On Line

Take Part in FishNet: The Great Lakes Craft and Release Project

www.projectfishnet.org

This is a special invitation to Grade 4 teachers of selected TDSB EcoSchools to take part in a unique larger-than-life project — one that will see Toronto school children and artists working together to improve the health and ecology of the Great Lakes, and earn EcoSchool points at the same time!

FishNet: The Great Lakes Craft and Release Project

By combining science and art into one fantastic project Grade 4 classes* and artists engage in a Pinocchio like transformation of a crafted fish into a real one.

How, you wonder? All it takes is three easy steps. First, you combine the creative talents of educators, students and artists to research and craft Great Lakes fishes, then a gallery is turned metaphorically into a 'great' lake and fish hatchery, and finally, thousands of gallery goers release fish through their donations to a Great Lakes charity resulting in habitat regeneration and restocking.

By the time it is over the FishNet team (that's you and us and everyone else involved) will have built a project Web site; engaged in thoroughly intriguing research; taken part in a hands-on fish making event; exhibited work as part of a interactive art installation; released some fish, and extended an invitation to other schools around the Great Lakes to undertake similar projects. But most importantly, we all will have engaged in a proactive collaboration and connected as a community living within the Great Lakes bioregion.

FishNet received a Harbourfront Centre, Fresh Ground new works grant in 2007 and will be exhibited in the York Quay Gallery from May 9 - July 19, 2008.

FishNet involves the following organizational partners:

Harbourfront Centre - Fresh Ground new works

Toronto District School Board EcoSchool and Visual Arts Programs

Inner City Angels

Ministry of Natural Resources - Lake Ontario Management Unit

Grade 4 Curriculum Connections

Craft Phase Part I: Science Curriculum

In addition to being an EcoSchool community project, FishNet has been designed to fit the Grade 4 Science Habitats module and provides educators with an opportunity to achieve teaching objectives and take part in a fun and challenging community project at the same time. The students in your school will be connected with children in other schools via classroom activities and the Great Lakes fishes. Each school's Grade 4 classes* will research a specific Great Lakes fish by looking at its anatomy, habitat, and more generally the cultural, social and historical aspects of the Great Lakes ecosystem. This information will then be given to the FishNet designers to be posted on the project Web site. Each school will have a series of dedicated web pages with their research and project activities.

Craft Phase Part II: Visual Arts Curriculum

The visual arts part of the project introduces students to the textile arts through fish crafting workshops. Artists will be on hand to work with the children during these workshops and introduce them to fabric painting and texturing techniques, three-dimensional soft construction/sculpture and sewing. Research that they have conducted in the classroom will equip the students with knowledge which they can apply in the workshop. Each species will be constructed to scale which will provide children a real sense of how big the fish is when it matures.

**Grade 4 classes include grade splits, 3 & 4 and 4 & 5.*



FishNet: The Great Lakes Craft and Release Project is a two part project comprised of 'craft' and 'release' phases, beginning in September 2007 and concluding in August 2008.

These two phases are made up of discrete parts involving at different moments varying assemblies of students (elementary and college level), art and science educators, artists (three groups), family and community members, seniors, and volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds.

The project will be presented to the public in a variety of forms including:

- A project web site
- Classroom activities
- Artist-led workshops (3)
- A public exhibition/installation at Harbourfront Centre's York Quay Gallery in Toronto, ON
- An invitation to other elementary schools within the Great Lakes bio-region to undertake a similar advocacy project.

Crafting Phase

(Research and Workshop Components)

Involving 40 Toronto District School Board schools within the EcoSchool program, the research component of the project involves each school's Grade 4 classes in preparing information about a specific Great Lakes fish species. The content created by the students will be transferred to the project web site and accessible to the general public. The research prepares the student for the crafting of their fish species in artist-led workshops held at Harbourfront Centre. The fish will be made at one-to-one scale to create a direct representation of their size and physical characteristics.

Release Phase

(Exhibition and Outreach Components)

Student and artist fish will be exhibited together to create a collective art installation conceived as an immersive and interactive work. Fish will be displayed on lines located throughout the gallery strung from the floor to ceiling with multiple fishes arranged on each line to correspond to the depths that they swim in the lakes. Supporting the display of the fish will be wall mounted information graphics including a time line detailing the Great Lakes history and ecology and a matrix of photo portraits of all the children and artists holding their fish.

Visitors interact directly with the installation by helping to turn a crafted fish into a real one by purchasing a 'release license' (all proceeds go to a Great Lakes charities active in fish restocking and habitat restoration programs). This Pinocchio-like transformation occurs when a visitor inputs his or her release license number into a computer which randomly sorts it against the 4000 tagged fish numbers (a serial number that identifies the species, school, class and child). After a match is made the visitor consults the photographic matrix and finds the portrait bearing the same serial number.

A key diagram on the portrait locates the fish in the overall exhibition - in essence the crafter assists the visitor in finding their fish in the overall exhibition.

The "release" of the fish by the visitor executes the remaining creative phase of a transformation sequence providing the bridge between the world of the artist and the world of the biologist/conservationist. Of the 4000 fish created for the exhibit, approximately 40 will be sent as cultural and environmental envoys relaying the project to other Canadian and American schools bordering on the Great Lakes. Printed documentation will accompany the textile fish to provide further information about the project. Finally, each of the participating Toronto schools Grade 4 classes will receive a set of fish crafted by students from another school.

Your Involvement

FishNet will engage Grade 4 teachers and students in the following ways:

1. PROJECT ORIENTATION *(5:00-7:00 p.m. exact location and date TBA)*

Teachers are asked to attend a project orientation event to be held in mid-October, 2007 (date and location to be confirmed) for 2 hours. Lead artists will make a visual presentation explaining the project in detail, followed by a Q & A session. FishKits full of project resources will be distributed and light refreshments will be served.

2. CRAFT PHASE PART 1: Researching the Species *(In the classroom)*

Teachers and children will engage in research on a Great Lakes fish species. Resources will be provided by FishNet to get the project started (FishKits). Each school's Grade 4 classes* will assemble text and images related to three main areas; **anatomy, habitat, and culture, history and society**. Final research (text and images) will be given to the FishNet team for inclusion on the project Web site.

3. CRAFT PHASE PART 2: Crafting the Fish *(Harbourfront Centre, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., exact dates TBA)*

Teachers and children will come to Harbourfront Centre as part of the School Visits Program to craft a three-dimensional textile version of the species they have been studying in the classroom. These sessions will take place from January to March 2008 (dates TBA) and will be approximately 4 hours in length. Students working with artists and volunteers will create their species-specific fish using different textile techniques such as stamping, stenciling, painting, and appliqué. Materials and un-stuffed fish bodies will be supplied. Costs of transportation to Harbourfront will be covered by the school. At the end of the session a photograph will be taken of each student who made a fish. All the fish created by the students will be exhibited in the York Quay Galley at Harbourfront Centre from May 9-July 19, 2008.

For additional information about the project, please visit:
www.projectfishnet.org or contact us at info@projectfishnet.org.

You can also contact the project lead artists:
Claire Ironside 416-364-3960 **Angela Iarocci** 416-532-0238

Registration Form

YES! Our grade fours would like to be a part of FishNet: The Great Lakes Craft and Release

Fill in the information below to identify each Grade 4 class that will be participating in the project. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name of school and phone no.	Date
1. <small>Teacher's name</small>	<small>Number of students</small>
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
<small>Name of Principal</small>	<small>Signature</small>
<small>Email address</small>	

NOTE: Grade 4 Classes include grade splits, 3 & 4 and 4 & 5. TDSB media release forms are required for participating students.

Please FAX this registration form to the TDSB EcoSchool program 416-394-7364 by **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5th, 2007**.