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Youth Resilience Expo



Students Take Action to Combat Sea Level Challenges

Sixteen student groups on Saturday presented the results of action projects they completed this year to create a more resilient community in the face of rising seas and related changing climate conditions.

Tom Clynes, a photojournalist contributor to *National Geographic*, congratulated the students as keynote speaker for the Elizabeth River Project's first annual Youth Resilience Expo at Nauticus. Clynes spoke about environmentalists around the world who have acted with audacity and said the more than 100 participating students had done so as well.

"We see things in the world that we want to change. Most of us are like, well, I can't do things like that. Others are willing to take risks," Clynes said. *"That's audacity... The things you guys are working on are just incredibly important."*

Woodrow Wilson High School and **Waters Middle School** in Portsmouth and **Maury High School** in Norfolk took top honors from "expert mentors" who evaluated the student projects in the Expo hall. Students were required to document

projects that either reduced the carbon footprint; alleviated flooding or spread relevant messages for their schools and communities.

At Wilson High, students sold out twice in a project to sell solar phone chargers to students, parents friends and the community. At Maury, the students are working to install stations for filling water bottles to reduce litter in flood waters. And Waters Middle tested and determined the most effective solar oven, not only to reduce energy use but to help people be prepared to cook and boil water in disasters.

“You are doing something here today that could help our Earth and our people... You created something here today that will bring joy to the lives of others,” the Hon. Mamie Johnson, Norfolk City Council, told the students. A member of Elizabeth River Project’s board, she served as co-mistress of ceremonies.

All participating schools were recognized as Resilient River Star Schools by the Elizabeth River Project, with banners and awards funded by the Rotary Club of Norfolk. Additional participants included Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1; Blair Middle School; Chesterfield Academy; Churchland High School, Deep Creek Middle School, GA Treakle Elementary School, IC Norcom High School, Madison Alternative Center, Ocean View Elementary School and Young Life.

Nauticus donated use of its facilities as well as help organizing the event. Additional funding for the Elizabeth River Project’s youth resilience education efforts comes from a NOAA Environmental Literacy Grant, the Dollar Tree Foundation and the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, which has just awarded new funding to continue the Expo for the next three years.

Want to learn more or get involved with next year’s event? Contact Mindy Carbonneau, 757-399-7487 X218; Robin Dunbar, 757-399-7487 X220, Marjorie Mayfield Jackson, 757-399-7487 X211.

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