

RACINE ZOO AMERICORPS PROGRAM'S FIRST YEAR

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AmeriCorps Program Member



Third-grade classes participate in Wildlife Explorers. These explorers learn about animal adaptations during animal presentations and creating their own habitat diorama! AmeriCorps member Lilly really enjoys these classes and seeing how the students create their own habitats. Each one is creative and extremely different, even if it's the same habitat! There have been 4 Wildlife Explorers' classes with 104 students.

The Beginning Birders program is for fourth grade classes. The students learn how to identify birds found in our own community through bird watching and hands-on learning. AmeriCorps member Amelia's favorite moment with the fourth graders was when a group of gulls flew over the group while they were bird watching. The group of students erupted in excitement seeing all the birds. Students became so excited over birds they might not have even noticed before the class. Over the past months, the members have reached 447 fourth graders who were taught to notice the wildlife around them, even in their own backyards.

Through AmeriCorps, the Racine Zoo provides high-quality conservation-based educational programming to all participating public school districts in Racine County. We developed five educational programs for students in grades K – 9th. Since the start of the program in August, AmeriCorps members have been in 83 classes and taught 1,888 students!

bug I've ever seen." These moments when students face their fears about wildlife make these classes exciting. The members have reached 364 kindergarteners over 19 classes!

Classification Cadets, for kindergarten classes, dives into the differences between animals through hands-on games, crafts, and live animal presentations. AmeriCorps member Hailey was presenting a Madagascar hissing cockroach to the class, and one student was frightened by the cockroach. She gave the student some space, but he came back and asked to be able to touch the cockroach. After, he exclaimed, "this is the cutest





Habitat diorama made by third-grade student, Lily.

The seventh-grade program is the Guardians of the Great Lakes. These students learn about one of Wisconsin's largest natural resources. Part of this class is discussing conservation issues around the lakes, such as pollution. During the class, the students are a part of a beach clean-up. AmeriCorps member Cadee had a great experience with one class that didn't want to stop cleaning. They filled three full bags of garbage! In 15 classes, the members were able to reach 491 seventh-grade students about the importance of the lakes in their community.

The ninth-grade students become Super Scientists when they learn about what it takes to be a zoologist conducting research. For the students' second class, they visit the zoo to conduct an experiment. One group had a last minute change, and

AmeriCorps member Amy helped them chose the new animal. The students were enchanted by their new animal, an animal they hadn't heard of! Amy helped them research the West Caucasian Turs, and the students' curiosity spiked. When the members went back to the class for the student's presentations, the students' project was the first poster presentation that had been seen. They had many more questions for the members that they had looked up between classes. In 23 classes, the members have taught 482 students!

Each class, the members have the opportunity to make a difference in Racine's community. It is our belief that with access to environmental science-based experiences, our youth will be able to develop understanding and motivation for conservation on both a local and global scale.

