



**For Immediate Release**  
**CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY**  
**FOUNDATION**  
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## **Inspiration and Instruction: New York teachers learn to introduce sustainability into their classrooms**

**Purchase, NY, August 3, 2011** – The Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELFF) and teachers from across Westchester and Rockland County, Long Island and New York City joined to produce innovative and engaging curricula based on the principles of Education for Sustainability.

The annual CELFF Summer Institute, held July 25-27 at Manhattanville College (Purchase, NY), challenged and prepared individual teachers and school teams to incorporate current and crucial concepts into their curriculum, either by reframing old or building new units or lesson plans for use in their classroom. Participants were invited to use - and contribute to - CELFF’s free online curriculum library.

“It (the Summer Institute) was perfect! I now have a unit plan framework complete and am working on completing the lessons and activities,” said program participant Tina Savin, an eighth grade science teacher at Irvington Middle School.

Participants ranged from K-12 public and private school classroom teachers to curriculum writers and non-profit program coordinators: “What I found most compelling is that I had Sustainability confused with Environmentalism. This opens up an entirely new path for curriculum work and a redevelopment of the courses I am teaching,” offered Tom Hall, a science teacher at both Westlake Middle School and High School (Mt. Pleasant School District). Debbie Wing, of Riverdale Country School echoed Tom’s sentiments, “Sustainability can interface with many more aspects of curriculum than I thought.”

Presenters included: Jen Cirillo, Director of Professional Development at Shelburne Farms (VT); Dr. Sherie McClam, Assistant Professor in Curriculum and Instruction at Manhattanville College’s School of Education; Chris DeMattia, CELFF presenter and science teacher at Fox Lane High School (Bedford, NY); and Katie Ginsberg, CELFF Executive Director.

During the 3-day Summer Institute, participants enjoyed presentations and break-out sessions on topics related to curriculum development and foundational concepts related to Education for Sustainability (EfS) such as creating the sustainability-minded student, systems thinking and new perspectives on the juncture between a vibrant economy, a healthy environment and just social systems. Teachers enthusiastically participated in activities and discussions regarding methods of engaging students in current issues, actively connecting them to their communities and the world at large. EfS students become active learners and studies demonstrate that student engagement produces higher test scores, making it an appealing pedagogical practice for many reasons. “(EfS) will help to energize me to create change in my school,” said Stephen Pesick, a science teacher from Westlake Middle School.

“We were so pleased to partner with Con Edison and the Heineman Foundation to bring the CELFF Summer Institute to schools throughout Westchester County and greater New York. It is thanks to their support and generosity, as well as that of The Edith Winthrop and Mt. Pleasant Teachers Centers, that a great number of educators could participate at little or no cost in the program,” said Katie Ginsberg. “I am confident we will receive creative curriculum units and lessons from the terrific teachers who participated in the program.” Teachers seeking to earn graduate credit through CELFF Summer Institute program partner Manhattanville College School of Education, submit their work for evaluation by a team of CELFF educators. Additional graduate credit during the school year is also available for teachers submitting a curriculum unit or lesson implementation report, along with related student work.

“The materials presented and the vast amount of curriculum and resources made available to all of us will be put to use and shared,” said Ron Aroesty from Junior Energy, a NJ non-profit whose mission is to work in classrooms and schools to help children discover how they can positively impact the planet by engaging their parents, family, friends and neighbors in small, simple actions. Aroesty participated in the Institute to help build his knowledge of EfS in preparation for the programs he runs through Junior Energy. Meredith Kates, of The Blue Rock School in West Nyack added, “I found the hands-on activities that can be done in the classroom to demonstrate sustainability concepts ... most useful.”

### **CELF Blueprint for Sustainability in Schools**

CELF’s **sustainability strategy for schools** encompasses a wide range of efforts, including curriculum and school consulting, student programs, and support to tie in teaching and learning sustainability content and thinking throughout schools’ building and operations. CELF’s annual Summer Institute for EfS in New York and Boston support teacher development across grade levels and disciplines, as do the CELF half- and full-day Staff Development Seminars for schools and districts. This fall, in partnership with the Green Schools Coalition of Westchester, CELF will be holding a **Leadership in EfS Retreat** free of charge for school administrators and teachers interested in learning more about how Education for Sustainability can support student engagement and achievement in standards-based subjects; science, math, social studies and ELS classes, as well as the arts. The Retreat will also include a review of progress nationally and internationally in the EfS movement, with examples of success from around the world.

The **Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF)** [www.celfoundation.org](http://www.celfoundation.org) is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that collaborates with public school districts and individual teachers to raise awareness of sustainable development and to help incorporate related principles into K-12 curricula and programs.

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