

Student Ambassadors Play Big Roles at Two Science and Sustainability Festivals

The weekend of April 26-27, 2014, was a busy and productive one for the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation **CELf Student Ambassadors (SAM) Program**. Three SAMs were in Washington for the annual [USA Science and Engineering Festival](#) (USASEF), and five spent that Sunday at the [GreenFestival](#) in New York.

The Science and Engineering Festival is the nation's most important event dedicated to educating America's youth about the STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and math. Its sponsors include many of the leading U.S. corporations, nonprofits, and educational institutions, and its Congressional Host Committee consists of prominent Senators and Representatives. The turnout for the 2014 Festival was equally impressive: some 350,000 people visited the 3,000+ exhibits in the mammoth Walter E. Washington Convention Center.



One of those exhibits was staffed by CELf SAMs – a senior from the Dominican Academy in Manhattan and two sophomores from Eastchester High School in Westchester County. Their mission was twofold: to educate visitors about the world's



growing clean-water crisis, and to demonstrate two of the innovative solutions for developing nations, the [Vestergaard Frandsen LifeStraw®](#) and the [PackH₂O](#). The exhibit included examples of the PackH₂O – which provides a clean, efficient way for villagers to transport water from the source to the home – and a table-top LifeStraw Community, capable of purifying 100,000 liters of contaminated water as well as individual LifeStraws.

The SAMs spent three days running the booth (on Friday the Festival was open to K-12 schoolchildren, on Saturday and Sunday to the general public). The numbers are a good indicator of their success in educating people. They handed out some 1,600 cups of filtered water while themselves drinking more than 100 gallons of murky water.

The booth itself was a mark of the success of CELf's Student Ambassador Program. It was part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [P3 \(People, Prosperity and the Planet\) EXPO](#), held in conjunction with the USASEF, which consisted of 50 colleges that were Phase I winners in EPA's sustainable design competition. Seven colleagues were selected for Phase II funding. The SAMs were the only high school students included.

Meanwhile, that same Sunday in New York City, five SAMs – all students at Westchester County high schools – were staffing a similar booth at GreenFestival, the largest green festival in the nation. The event is a showcase for green businesses and organizations, and its mission is to persuade people – especially young people – on the need to embrace sustainable, eco-friendly solutions that make families and communities healthier. Over 20,000 visitors attended the two day event.



The CELF booth was open only on the second of the Festival’s two days, but as in Washington, the Student Ambassadors were able to reach a large number of visitors to educate people about the world’s growing water crisis and the ways in which sustainable responses, including the Lifestraw and Pack H₂O, can help meet the challenge.

For more on the SAM Program and event calendar, visit celfeducation.org/specialevents.html or contact Patti Bressman at patti@celfeducation.org.