NATIONAL PARKS OF NEW YORK HARBOR EDUCATION CENTER: PARKS AND PARTNERS MAKE EDUCATION EXCITING

Jeanette Parker: Right here in New York City, we have 23 sites that have wonderful stories, and we hope to offer teachers and students a way to explore their own backyard through the programs that we offer that are curriculum-based for the schools

Shalini Gopie: We are looking at the belly. Right, Washington Monument means it's a male, and the Capitol Building or a dome, right, means it's a female. Ok?

Margaret E. Berci: Rangers have a wealth of knowledge. And they love to give that knowledge and just basically talk about it. I'm hoping to bring to them the techniques, the methodology for creating action-based activities for the children

(Dead Horse Bay): Crabs… Grab 'em Grab 'em. Good job!

Shalini Gopie: We're doing a program called "Marine Invaders," and we're looking at Asian shore crabs, (background: "these all look like male crabs") getting the kids involved. We want them to know that they can be scientists themselves. And they're having fun.

Dan Meharg: When we developed the kite program, we developed it because we heard that there was a need to have interesting after-school programs at the National Parks in the New York harbor area.

The camera takes pictures every three seconds and we're going to stick it right here.

Jeanette Parker: Using aerial photography, attached to a kite that you manipulate, we're able to show a resource from a very new perspective.

Dan Meharg: What's that a picture of? (Oh, it's that!) Yeah, it's the wall of the fort.

Jeanette Parker: The students are looking at the results of their flight immediately on a laptop computer in front of them. They're measuring wind speed, they're measuring angles.

Dan Meharg: OK, let's see what we get this time around

Jeanette Parker: It's a great example of how to engage people in a very hands-on approach to learning science, to learning math.

Shlini Gopie: Ok, ready? Flip that back that way!

Eleanor Miele: One of the exciting things has been the opportunity to work with rangers on developing programs for other sites as well as the education center. I've been privileged to work with the rangers at Sandy Hook to kind of tweak some of the field experience that they've been developing for school children, with the perspective of the National Science Standards. So that at the end of the semester, the teachers can say "our trip to Sandy Hook was fun, but also this was real science."

John Warren: We also design education programs that reflect themes of various National Parks in New York Harbor, themes like immigration. In our partnership with the College of Staten Island we were able to connect with a local high school. We came into the schools, we gave them lessons not just in immigration but in how to read documents, from the Board of Survey, where people were having deportation hearings. They went to Ellis Island and did programs with the staff there.

Kids leave with a new appreciation of their families and what they went through because a lot of New York kids do come from immigrant families, but they never really thought about what their parents went through before.

Jeanette Parker: We hope that they'll become interested in the parks and become stewards of these parks, because the future of the parks really depends on having a really engaged population. Nowhere can we engage a more diverse and large population than we can here in New York City.