

Birds in My Neighborhood™ Evaluation Plan

Birds in My Neighborhood™



Birds in My Neighborhood™ is funded through the US Forest Service International Programs, with support from Audubon Chicago Region.



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Program Description

Birds in My Neighborhood™ connects elementary school students with the common birds in their local area through inquiry-based education. The program is developed by Openlands, a Chicago-based organization aimed at protecting the natural and open spaces of northeastern Illinois. Openlands oversees land acquisition and restoration as well as various educational programs.

Birds in My Neighborhood™ is in its second year, after a successful pilot year in the spring of 2013. Volunteers are trained to lead three separate visits to select Chicago Public Schools, all designed to teach elementary-aged students about local bird species. The first lesson is taught in the classroom through an inquiry-based approach. The second and third visits are held outside, either around the school garden or in a local park or forest preserve. All participating schools have already participated in the Building School Gardens program, a separate program offered through Openlands.

<http://www.openlands.org/birds-in-my-neighborhood>

Goals and Objectives

The program was piloted in the spring of 2013 and included twelve participating schools and twenty-one volunteers. The pilot year consisted of only two visits made by assigned volunteer teams. During the first visit, volunteers led an inquiry-based classroom lesson on birds and then returned for a second visit to lead a neighborhood bird walk around the school garden. A third visit, a field trip to a nearby natural area, was added this year.

The purpose of Birds in My Neighborhood™ is to connect elementary school students to their natural environment by teaching them about local bird species. Because birds are abundant, even in urban areas, Openlands believes birds can be the entrée to connect youth with a long-term passion for the environment. Connecting students to their natural environment is further strengthened by partnering with schools that already have a school garden through Openlands' Building School Gardens program. The long-term goals of Birds in My Neighborhood™ are:

- Connecting people to their local natural environment
- Creating and nurturing future stewards
- Implementing an ethic of conservation within the school community
- Improving the local area's conservation abilities

In order to achieve these long-term goals, Birds in My Neighborhood™ has created a series of objectives to be accomplished within three years' time:

- Increasing the number of visits made by classes to their local natural areas and school garden
- Connecting school communities to a continuum of access points to nature
- Increasing school participation in stewardship activities both at their school garden and in their community
- Promoting an interest of protecting natural areas within the school community
- Better equipping students to access nature in their neighborhood
- Participants showing and increased connection with nature

Figure 1. Birds in My Neighborhood™ Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs (Activities)	Outputs (Products, Audience)	Outcomes: Short-term (3 months – 1 year)	Outcomes: Intermediate (1-3 years)	Impact: Long-term (3-5 years)
<p>Classrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 2-5 • Eligible through participating in Openlands Building School Gardens <p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Coordinator (1/3 time) • Education Director <p>Programmatic Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audubon Chicago Region <p>Volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and potential volunteers <p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Kits • Student Journals <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Forest Service – International Programs (Past) • TBD 	<p>Volunteer Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment through the Audubon Chicago Region and Openlands networks • Match pairs of volunteers to one or more classrooms <p>Volunteer Trainings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for in-classroom lesson on birds • Training on leading a bird walk <p>School Lessons on Birding</p> <p>Visit I: "Introduction to Birds," in classroom Visit II: "Neighborhood Bird Walk," in schoolyard and school community Visit III: "Birds in my Neighborhood Field Trip," in a natural area near school</p> <p>Continuing Education for Volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars offered through Audubon Chicago Region <p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-round curriculum connections for participating teachers via email and Google Drive • Collaboration and coordination with community groups involved in bird conservation and education <p>Evaluation</p>	<p>12 Schools+ 3 new schools annually</p> <p>Volunteer corps of 17 + 15 new volunteers annually</p>	<p>Students</p> <p>Teachers indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have an increased knowledge of habitats, diets, and behaviors of birds around them • Students are more observant of the natural environment in urban settings • Students identify birds on their own time and report findings to teachers <p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are satisfied with Birds in my Neighborhood • Teachers agree that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Program elements relate to curriculum requirements → In-classroom lesson enhances learning on the bird walks • Classes increase number of visits to natural areas, including the school garden <p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New teachers at participating schools join Birds in my Neighborhood <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are more aware of natural areas in their neighborhood • Participants indicate an increased connectivity to nature 	<p>Classes increase number of visits to natural areas, including the school garden</p> <p>School communities are connected to a continuum of opportunities to access and learn about nature</p> <p>Schools participate in more stewardship projects and activities in their schoolyard and school community, possibly related to the creation of habitat for birds</p> <p>Students, teachers, and families are more interested in protecting and stewarding natural areas</p> <p>Participants are better able to access nature where they live, work, and play</p> <p>Participants indicate an increased connectivity to nature</p>	<p>Connect people to nature where they live</p> <p>Develop and empower future stewards of the natural world</p> <p>Create a culture of conservation in the communities of participating schools</p> <p>Strengthen our region's ability to conserve land</p>

Externalities: Building School Gardens implementation throughout Chicago Public Schools; Leadership change at Audubon-Chicago Region; Chicago Public Schools' limitations on field trips (none in June, none involving students touching or being in a body of water, etc.)

Purpose and Methods

Although the program has already been piloted, this plan is for a formative evaluation in order to build on volunteer feedback from the pilot year. This will first allow Openlands staff to see how the additional third visit made to schools, due in large part to previous volunteer feedback, has impacted students and teachers. The evaluation is heavily focused on teachers and seeks to determine what kind of learning and stewardship opportunities, if any, happen after the completion of the program.

Evaluation tools will include the following:

- Volunteer survey
- Teacher survey
- Focus group
- Volunteer database maintained by Openlands staff.

Certain volunteers and schools will be selected for interviewing. The Education Coordinator will administer the surveys, lead the focus group, and be responsible for data analysis.

Data Collection

The volunteer survey (Appendix B) will be administered within two weeks of all volunteer teams having completed their last school visit. Both open-ended questions and Likert-scale questions will be used to help Openlands staff make improvements on training sessions, volunteer supplies, and overall program coordination. Select volunteers will be interviewed to gain better insight into their experience as a whole.

The teacher survey (Appendix C) will be also be administered within two weeks of all schools completing the program. Also combining Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions, this survey aims to determine what effect the program had on students and to see if the teachers will continue the program themes on their own. Teachers will also be invited to a focus group (Appendix D) during the summer of 2014 to gain further insight into what effect the program had on student knowledge and interest in themes and to gain feedback on the addition of the third visit.

Appendix A: Birds in My Neighborhood™ Evaluation Plan Chart (sorted based on collection method)

Evaluation Chart: Birds in my Neighborhood				
Questions:	Indicators: <i>How will we measure it?</i>	Sources: <i>Who will have the information?</i>	Methods: <i>How will you collect data?</i>	Managing: <i>When will it be collected?</i>
What were the grade levels of participating students?	# of classes from each grade	database	database	upon completion of program
Were all chosen schools already participating in BSG prior to starting BimN?	# of BSG participants	database	database	
How many volunteers attended training sessions?	# of volunteers	database	database	
How many new teachers were added from existing BimN schools?	# of new teachers	database	database	
How many schools participated in each of the site visits?	# of schools	database	database	
How many volunteers were new?	# of new volunteers	database	database	
How many volunteers were returning?	# of returning volunteers	database	database	
How representative are participating schools of the CPS district?		CPS website		
How do poverty levels and racial background of participating schools compare to those of CPS district-wide averages?		CPS website		
What areas within CPS have we not actively reached out to?		CPS website		
Why do volunteers continue to volunteer in the program?	written feedback	registered volunteers	open-ended survey question	June 2014 Volunteer Survey

Which Birds in my Neighborhood resources did volunteers find to be useful? (followed by list of kit materials)	volunteers will agree or disagree	participating volunteers	Likert scale survey question
What, if anything, should be added to the volunteer kit for future years?	written feedback	participating volunteers	open-ended survey question
After participating in the training for in-classroom lesson on birds to what extent did volunteers feel prepared to teach about birds? (attitude)	volunteers will agree or disagree	PD participants	Likert scale survey question
After participating in the training for leading a bird walk to what extent do volunteers feel prepared to teach about birds? (attitude)	volunteers will agree or disagree	PD participants	Likert scale survey question
Why did some volunteers not attend training sessions?	written feedback	registered volunteers	open-ended survey question
How many volunteers attended the seminars offered through Audubon Chicago Region? Which seminars?	written feedback	seminar attendees	survey question
Were the seminars offered through Audubon Chicago Region relevant to BimN site visits? If so, how? If not, how could they be more relevant?	written feedback -	seminar attendees	open-ended survey question
How many hours did volunteers spend in trainings, communications, transit, classroom visits, etc?	written feedback	database and participating volunteers	Likert scale survey question

What changes do volunteers notice in student engagement, knowledge, general participation?	written feedback	participating volunteers	volunteer logs/ email follow-ups	
Were the year-round curriculum connections for participating teachers grade-level appropriate?	teachers will agree or disagree	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question	June 2014 Teacher Survey
To what extent do teachers feel students have an increased knowledge of habitats, diets, and behaviors of birds around them? Provide examples.	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question; open-ended survey question	
To what extent do teachers feel students are more observant of the natural environment in urban settings? Provide examples.	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question; open-ended survey question	
To what extent are teachers satisfied are teachers with BimN?	teachers will agree or disagree	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question	
Do students notice birds more after participating in Birds in My Neighborhood? Do they notice other aspects of nature in their neighborhood?	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	focus group	
Do teachers feel that program elements relate to curriculum requirements? How could this be improved?	teachers will agree or disagree	participating teachers	focus group	
Do teachers use school gardens and natural areas more?	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	focus group	

In what ways do teachers think the visits have complemented each other? How could the program's model be improved?	verbal feedback	participating teachers	focus group	
How did the field trip affect the experience of the class? Give examples.	written feedback	participating teachers	open-ended survey question	
What do teachers want to see changed in the future?	written feedback	participating teachers	focus group	
Which volunteers completed ALL of their site visits? If they didn't, what prohibited them?	written feedback	participating volunteers	logs	follow-up emails to site visits

Appendix B: Volunteer Survey

Birds in My Neighborhood-2014 Volunteer Survey

Contact Information

Thank you for volunteering with Birds in My Neighborhood this year! Please take 10-15 minutes to complete this short survey which will help us to grow and improve our program.

*** 1. What is your first and last name?**

*** 2. Is this your first year volunteering with Birds in My Neighborhood?**

Yes

No

*** 3. Why did you choose to participate in Birds in My Neighborhood for a second year?**

Training Sessions

*** 4. Did you attend the first training session on leading the in-classroom lesson on birds on January 29th?**

Yes

No

Training Sessions

*** 5. After participating in the first training, to what extent did you feel prepared to teach about birds?**

Not at all prepared Somewhat prepared Very prepared

Comments

Birds in My Neighborhood-2014 Volunteer Survey

***6. Did you attend the second training session on leading the bird walk on March 11th?**

Yes

No

Training Sessions

***7. After participating in the second training, to what extent did you feel prepared to lead students on a bird walk?**

Not at all prepared Somewhat prepared Very prepared



Comments

Training Sessions

***8. If you were unable to attend any of the training sessions, is there anything we can do in the future to make them more available to you and others?**

***9. Did you attend any of the seminars offered through the Audubon Chicago Region?**

Yes

No

Audubon Chicago Region Seminars

***10. To what extent did you find the Audubon Chicago Region seminars to be valuable?**

Not valuable

Neutral

Valuable

Very valuable

***11. Were the seminars relevant to the Birds in My Neighborhood site visits?**

Yes

No

Birds in My Neighborhood-2014 Volunteer Survey

***12. If so, how? If not, how could they be more relevant?**

School Visits

***13. Which Birds in My Neighborhood resources did you find to be useful?**

	Did not use this	Not very useful	Neutral	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Identifyer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Books (Urban Roosts and Birds, Nests, and Eggs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Owl Pellets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laminated bird photos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bird calendar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feathers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bird ID pamphlets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Silhouette Posters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nametags	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Site Profiles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. What, if anything, should be added to the volunteer kit for future years?

15. If you were unable to complete all three site visits please explain what kept you from doing so?

Moving Forward

***16. Are you interested in volunteering with Birds in My Neighborhood in the future?**

- Yes
 No

Birds in My Neighborhood-2014 Volunteer Survey

Moving Forward

***17. Would you like to work alone or with a partner in the future?**

- Alone
- With a partner
- No preference

***18. Would you like to work with multiple classes in the future?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure at the moment

Final Thoughts

***19. How many hours do you estimate that you spent in trainings, communications, transit, and classroom visits?**

20. Do you have any other suggestions for improving Birds in My Neighborhood?

Appendix C: Teacher Survey

Birds in My Neighborhood 2014-Teacher Survey

Contact Information

Thank you for participating in Birds in my Neighborhood this year! Please take 10-15 minutes to complete this survey which will help us to continue meeting your needs while the program grows.

*** 1. Email:**

*** 2. School:**

*** 3. Grade Level:**

Birds in My Neighborhood Structure

*** 4. How satisfied were you with the following elements of Birds in My Neighborhood in 2014?**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
First visit (classroom)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Second visit (schoolyard)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Third Visit (field trip)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Birds in My Neighborhood Journal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Additional resources (Posters, brochures, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

*** 5. Did you participate in Birds in My Neighborhood last year?**

Yes

No

If yes, how did it change your class' experience to add the third visit, the birding field trip?

Birds in My Neighborhood 2014 Teacher Survey

***6. As a result of our classroom participating in Birds in My Neighborhood, my students demonstrated an increased knowledge about...**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Bird habitats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bird diets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bird behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other bird topics where students demonstrated a change in knowledge

7. In the space below, please describe examples of students demonstrating this knowledge.

Birds in My Neighborhood Structure

***8. As a result of our classroom participating in Birds in My Neighborhood, my students are more observant of the natural environment in urban settings.**

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. In the space below, please share any examples of your students becoming more observant of nature in their neighborhood.

***10. Overall, do you think your students are more interested in birding than they were before Birds in My Neighborhood started? Why or why not?**

11. Did your classroom and students benefit from participating in Birds in My Neighborhood in any other ways? If so, how?

Moving Forward

Birds in My Neighborhood 2014-Teacher Survey

***12. How satisfied are you with Birds in My Neighborhood as a program?**

Extremely Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

Comments:

***13. Are you interested in participating in Birds in My Neighborhood again next year?**

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

Comments

14. How can Birds in My Neighborhood be improved in the future?

Moving Forward

15. Have other teachers in your grade level expressed an interest in participating next year? If so, please provide their name, grade level, and email.

- Yes
 No

Name, grade level, and email of other interested teachers:

16. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about your experience with Birds in My Neighborhood?

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

1. Do students notice birds more after participating in Birds in My Neighborhood? Do they notice other aspects of nature in their neighborhood? Give examples.
2. In what way do you think the visits complemented each other? How could our model be improved?
3. What do you want to see changed in the future?
4. Do you feel that program elements relate to curriculum requirements? How could this connection be improved?
5. Do you think an entire grade level would be interested in implementing Birds in My Neighborhood at your school? Which grade level do you think would be most appropriate, and why?
6. Do you use your school garden, or other nearby natural area, more?
7. What was your favorite part of participating in Birds in My Neighborhood?