Earth Day festivities include tree planting

Details Last Updated on Tuesday, 28 April 2015 10:16 Published on Tuesday, 28 April 2015 10:11 Hits: 447

Elementary students watch as Katelyn Dunaway and Brittany Hayes plant an Willow Oak in front of the Colonial Beach Elementary School. The planting was part of the 2015 Earth Day celebration. Students learned about how planting trees can improve air quality and create a cleaner world.

Colonial Beach students participated in two events rolled into one on Earth Day.
Ground was broken for a pair gardens at the First Street School, which will contain Willow Oak and Flowering Understory trees, both native to Virginia.

Students from kindergarten to high school seniors learned about the art of tree planting.
"It's not just about digging a hole and putting it in the ground," said Colonial Beach Green Team Leader Diana Clopton.
She then pointed out that all trees have a flare, which, when planted correctly, grows and spreads out just above the soil. Clopton explained this to high school students Katelyn Dunaway, Brittany Hayes, Collin Blandford and Alexis Johnson before letting them teach other the students as they planted the trees.
Elementary Students gathered in front of their buildings to watch the planting of the new trees and discuss their impact on the environment.
School principals Jennifer Grigsby and Michele Coates, along with Tania Shand, co-founder of Colonial Beach Green, led the activities.
Colonial Beach School Superintendent Dr. Kevin Newman and Town Councilman Mike Looney also attended.
Mike Gray, of Gray Construction donated time and equipment to prepare the planting sites. Walker Sand and Stone donated and delivered mulch to the site.
Members of Colonial Beach Green, which promotes green initiatives and sustainability, treated the kids to educational presentations.
Founder Tania Shand discovered Colonial Beach in 2001 while looking for a property to buy.
"Colonial Beach has a lot of natural resources," she said. "This is a perfect place to try to preserve sustainability and promote green initiatives."

As the group grows, Shand wants it to promote sustainability around the boardwalk, as well as emphasize improved storm water management and smart development.

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