



Indian Creek School Receives Prestigious Toshiba Grant to Perform Ecological Profile

Indian Creek School Upper School has been awarded a grant for \$3,800 by the Toshiba America Foundation to conduct an ecological profile of its two campuses. The Upper School Campus located at Crownsville Road and Hawkins Road includes 114 acres of woods, previously farmed open space, and ponds along with the improved areas. The Evergreen Campus housing the Lower and Middle Schools and located on Evergreen Road in Crownsville includes 17 acres of woods, fields, and a pond as well as school buildings, athletic facilities, and parking lot. The project is designed to introduce students to research in the STEM field and to exemplify the collaborative nature of science. Students began work on the project this month with chemical and molecular analyses of the two ecosystems. At the Upper School students are using a multidisciplinary approach through chemistry, environmental science, and biology. On the Evergreen Campus, forty Middle School students are conducting tests on that campus.

The Toshiba America Foundation grant is awarded to math and science teachers to improve the quality of math and science education in schools. The grant process is highly competitive and only awards funds to a small number of learning institutions. Due to the recession, this school year was one of the most competitive years in which to earn a Foundation grant.

The grant is administered by STEM program director and biology teacher Tiara Booker-Dwyer. Students are admitted to the STEM program by application only. The STEM program at Indian Creek is designed around small classes, interdisciplinary collaboration, field experience, and research opportunities. For the Ecological profile, students will analyze chemical composition of the soil with Andrew Colley, chemistry teacher. They will study and classify the trees, plants, and large vertebrates with Steve Hammond, environmental science teacher. Booker-Dwyer will work with them on microorganism and microinvertebrate analysis. Lara McCormick will guide Middle School students in the same types of analyses on the Evergreen Campus. Students are framing their own research questions as they conduct the analysis.

