

IDS-CC Students Monitor Lake Lipsey For Florida LAKEWATCH Program

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Tampa, Fla.

When it comes to monitoring Carrollwood's Lake Lipsey, students at Independent Day School - Corbett Campus (IDS-CC) do a "quality" job keeping tabs on the lake's overall health and chemistry conditions.

Water quality testing is part of the seventh grade study of environmental science, which includes pollution, the water supply, and other environmental issues. It's also an opportunity to serve the community by making important monthly contributions to the Florida LAKEWATCH Program.

Coordinated by the University of Florida's Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, Florida LAKEWATCH is one of the largest lake monitoring programs in the nation with volunteers checking more than 700 lakes in nearly 50 counties. For 17 years, it has enabled the public to be involved in a cooperative teamwork approach to solving and managing lake quality problems.

IDS-CC students use professional water monitoring techniques to collect scientific data about the lake's nutrient levels, algae content, and water clarity. The university compiles the data and uses it for the development of lake management plans.

For middle school science teachers Gery Morey and Heather Robinson, LAKEWATCH is a natural extension of the IDS-CC philosophy, which focuses on providing students with practical, real-life learning experiences. School participation is credited to Jim Yost, long-time next-door neighbor of IDS-CC, whose property lies alongside Lake Lipsey. According to Morey, years ago, Yost offered IDS-CC students the opportunity to be the official volunteers to collect the data and water samples for the LAKEWATCH Program.

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Each month, one student and parent boat out to the center of the lake to gather water samples. Every student conducts tests along the shore to determine the water's pH and dissolved oxygen levels, nitrate and phosphate concentrations, and temperature. They practice these tests in class using tap water, before trekking across campus to the lake. Upon returning to the classroom, they add the data to graphs.

"Students now know why they sometimes see dead fish in lakes in the summertime," said Robinson. "It's not necessarily pollution, but low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water."

"This is real life science," said Morey. "They're doing the job of actual biologists."

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School - Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, independent school located in northwest Hillsborough County. It serves 500 plus students in grades Pre-K through 8. At IDS, all children experience learning in a nurturing and highly academic environment focused on excellence and developing a positive self-concept. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 1200 visitors observing and learning from and with IDS-CC teachers. For more information about IDS visit <http://www.idsy.es.com>.

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