

On behalf of Living Classrooms, I am honored to welcome you to the Frederick Douglass – Isaac Myers Maritime Park. This is one of the city's oldest existing waterfront industrial buildings. It celebrates the contributions of African-Americans in the development of Baltimore's maritime industry, and is also the home to our offices and shipboard education programs.

As many of you know, Living Classrooms works to strengthen communities and inspire people to achieve their potential through hands-on education and job training. For over three decades, we have worked to make struggling neighborhoods in Baltimore and Washington, DC, safer, cleaner, stronger, and healthier through diverse programs. Many of our efforts focus on the environment, so we appreciate the work you are doing to help achieve a healthier Chesapeake Bay.

Our experience has shown that one of the most effective ways of engaging the urban community with environmental issues is by reaching the children in local schools. In addition, we know that the surest way to break the cycle of poverty in low-income neighborhoods is to help students succeed in the classroom. So this, along with helping students connect with and care for their local environment, is the goal of our environmental education programs. Our Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences focus on both the natural attractions and the challenges of the urban landscape, and encourage students to examine their own behaviors and find solutions to local environmental problems. By learning about and helping to improve their own neighborhoods, students can become leaders and develop a change in attitude that may grow into a life-long stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce someone who can share more about the importance of environmental education – former LCF staff member, Julian Whitley.