



Our Lady of Mercy science teacher, Nessie Galliano, center, and LSU College of Education assistant professor, Dr. Pam Blanchard, right, talk with WAFB 9 News Morning Anchor Diane Deaton about the LSU Coastal Roots Program and the impact it has had on Our Lady of Mercy students. Photo by Monique Frixoux.

OLOM School helps restore coastline

Coastal erosion is one of the contributing factors of the devastating hurricanes in Louisiana over the past decades. Land and vegetation along a coast act as a natural buffer to break the force of the hurricane winds before they reach habitable areas of the state. With the loss of natural plants and trees over many decades, and the subsequent loss of

land, Louisiana has lost much of its natural defense against hurricanes.

Our Lady of Mercy students are doing their part to rebuild the coastline through the Louisiana State University Coastal Roots Program.

In 2001, the Coastal Roots Seeding Nursery Program for Wetland Restoration began as an education outreach project for the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. Following the devastating hurricanes of 2005 the Coastal Roots Program became part of the LSU Department of Education Theory, Policy and Practice and the LSU Center for Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences.

In November last year, all of the OLOM eighth-grade students traveled to Fontainebleau State Park in St. Tammany Parish to help restore the coastline along Lake Ponchartraine. The students planted longleaf pine and southern bald cypress seedlings that

they had grown from seeds in their school's plant nursery.

The field trip to plant the trees was the culmination of work the students began in the spring of 2007. As part of the science class curriculum, the students learned about the ecological restoration needs of Fontainebleau State Park.

The students chose the type of plants that would be needed for that area of the state. They then prepared the seeds of those plants for planting, ensured they germinated properly, planted the seeds and maintained the seedlings and the plant nursery.

The Our Lady of Mercy plant nursery is one of 15 in south Louisiana to be part of the Coastal Roots Seeding Nursery Program for Wetland Restoration.

The Nursery Program teaches students about coastal stewardship while they have a hands-on experience in the restoration of Louisiana's coast and wetlands.



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Our Lady of Mercy eighth-grade students, from left, Jacob Humphreys, Kevin Orr, Christian Marchalava and Garrett Bredy plant tree seedlings at Fontainebleau State Park in November as part of the Coastal Roots Seeding Nursery