

LSU Coastal Roots Program begins at parish academies

Iberville Parish Math, Science, and Arts Academies are participating this year in LSU's Coastal Roots Program, a School Seeding Nursery Program aimed at providing new trees to the state's marshes and estuarine basins.

Coastal Roots engages students and teachers by exposing them to current critical coastal and environmental issues as well as a variety of geographic and horticultural concepts and skills.

Coastal Roots began in 2,000 with nurseries in six schools along the Louisiana coast, but has expanded to 35 schools in 15 parishes, with more than 2,400 student participants.

Coastal Roots is a multidisciplinary program which allows students to collaborate in earth science, biology, environmental science, agricultural science, geology and horticulture.



HELPING THE COAST... Students at the Math, Science and Arts Academy prepare an area to grow cypress seedlings to help stop the erosion of Louisiana's coast. The project is part of LSU's Coastal Roots Program. The students will grow the seedlings for a year and plant them next fall, learning earth science, biology, environmental science, agricultural science, geology and horticulture along the way.

Students will have the opportunity to oversee the entire growth process from seed collection and germination to transplanting the seedlings along the Louisiana coast. Academy students will nurture the tree seedlings for an entire year until the seedlings are large enough to be transplanted next.

"This is a prime example of the academy's mission to expose our students to real programs that will have a profound influence in their lives," Elvis J. Cavalier, executive director of the school system's special programs and of the East and West MSA academies.

Cavalier added that "the Coastal Roots

Program is a high-level initiative that turns environmental awareness into education and education into action."

Assisting with the program are Dr. Pamela Blanchard, Dr. Ed Bush, Dr. LeBlanc, Camille Talbot and Mary Ellen Day.

Funding is provided through the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and the National Oceanic and Aeronautics Administration's Bay-Watershed Education and Training Grant Program.

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