Birds in My Neighborhood [™] Evaluation Plan

Birds in My Neighborhood TM



Birds in My Neighborhood™ is funded through the US Forest Service International Programs, with support from Audubon Chicago Region.



Completed by: Lucy Smigiel

May 13, 2014

Program Description

Birds in My Neighborhood TM connects elementary school students with the common birds in their local area through inquiry-based education. The program is developed by Openlands, a Chicago-based organization aimed at protecting the natural and open spaces of northeastern Illinois. Openlands oversees land acquisition and restoration as well as various educational programs.

Birds in My Neighborhood TM is in its second year, after a successful pilot year in the spring of 2013. Volunteers are trained to lead three separate visits to select Chicago Public Schools, all designed to teach elementary-aged students about local bird species. The first lesson is taught in the classroom through an inquiry-based approach. The second and third visits are held outside, either around the school garden or in a local park or forest preserve. All participating schools have already participated in the Building School Gardens program, a separate program offered through Openlands.

http://www.openlands.org/birds-in-my-neighborhood

Goals and Objectives

The program was piloted in the spring of 2013 and included twelve participating schools and twenty-one volunteers. The pilot year consisted of only two visits made by assigned volunteer teams. During the first visit, volunteers led an inquiry-based classroom lesson on birds and then returned for a second visit to lead a neighborhood bird walk around the school garden. A third visit, a field trip to a nearby natural area, was added this year.

The purpose of Birds in My Neighborhood [™] is to connect elementary school students to their natural environment by teaching them about local bird species. Because birds are abundant, even in urban areas, Openlands believes birds can be the entrée to connect youth with a long-term passion for the environment. Connecting students to their natural environment is further strengthened by partnering with schools that already have a school garden through Openlands' Building School Gardens program. The long-term goals of Birds in My Neighborhood [™] are:

- Connecting people to their local natural environment
- Creating and nurturing future stewards
- Implementing an ethic of conservation within the school community
- Improving the local area's conservation abilities

In order to achieve these long-term goals, Birds in My Neighborhood [™] has created a series of objectives to be accomplished within three years' time:

- Increasing the number of visits made by classes to their local natural areas and school garden
- Connecting school communities to a continuum of access points to nature
- Increasing school participation in stewardship activities both at their school garden and in their community
- Promoting an interest of protecting natural areas within the school community
- Better equipping students to access nature in their neighborhood
- Participants showing and increased connection with nature

Figure 1. Birds in My Neighborhood TM Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs (Activities)	Outputs (Products, Audience)	Outcomes: Short-term (3 months – 1 year)	Outcomes: Intermediate (1-3 years)	Impact: Long-term (3-5 years)
Classrooms	Volunteer Preparation	12 Schools+ 3 new	Students	Classes increase number of visits	
Grades 2-5	 Recruitment through the Audubon 	schools annually	Teachers indicate that:	to natural areas, including the	Connect people to nature
 Eligible through 	Chicago Region and Openlands networks		 Students have an increased knowledge of 	school garden	where they live
participating in	 Match pairs of volunteers to one or 	Volunteer corps of	habitats, diets, and behaviors of birds		
Openlands Building	more classrooms	<u>17 + 15 new</u>	around them	School communities are	Develop and empower
School Gardens		volunteers annually	 Students are more observant of the 	connected to a continuum of	future stewards of the
	Volunteer Trainings		natural environment in urban settings	opportunities to access and	natural world
<u>Staff</u>	 Training for in-classroom lesson on birds 		 Students identify birds on their own time 	learn about nature	
Program Coordinator (1/3)	Training on leading a bird walk		and report findings to teachers		Create a culture of
time)				Schools participate in more	conservation in the
Education Director	School Lessons on Birding		Curriculum	stewardship projects and	communities of
	Visit I: "Introduction to Birds," in		 Teachers are satisfied with Birds in my 	activities in their schoolyard and	participating schools
Programmatic Support	classroom		Neighborhood	school community, possibly	
Audubon Chicago Region	Visit II: "Neighborhood Bird Walk," in		Teachers agree that:	related to the creation of	Strengthen our region's
	schoolyard and school community		→ Program elements relate to curriculum	habitat for birds	ability to conserve land
Volunteers	Visit III: "Birds in my Neighborhood Field		requirements		
Existing and potential	Trip," in a natural area near school		→In-classroom lesson enhances learning	Students, teachers, and families	
volunteers			on the bird walks	are more interested in	
	Continuing Education for Volunteers		Classes increase number of visits to	protecting and stewarding	
Materials	 Seminars offered through Audubon 		natural areas, including the school garden	natural areas	
Classroom Kits	Chicago Region				
Student Journals			Schools	Participants are betterable to	
	Communications		New teachers at participating schools join	access nature where they live,	
Funding	Year-round curriculum connections for		Birds in my Neighborhood	work, and play	
US Forest Service –	participating teachers via email and				
International Programs	Google Drive		Other:	Participants indicate an	
(Past)	Collaboration and coordination with		Participants are more aware of natural	increased connectivity to nature	
• TBD	community groups involved in bird		areas in their neighborhood		
1	conservation and education		Participants indicate an increased		
			connectivity to nature		
	Evaluation				

Externalities: Building School Gardens implementation throughout Chicago Public Schools; Leadership change at Audubon-Chicago Region; Chicago Public Schools' limitations on field trips (none in June, none involving students touching or being in a body of water, etc.)

Purpose and Methods

Although the program has already been piloted, this plan is for a formative evaluation in order to build on volunteer feedback from the pilot year. This will first allow Openlands staff to see how the additional third visit made to schools, due in large part to previous volunteer feedback, has impacted students and teachers. The evaluation is heavily focused on teachers and seeks to determine what kind of learning and stewardship opportunities, if any, happen after the completion of the program.

Evaluation tools will include the following:

- Volunteer survey
- Teacher survey
- Focus group
- Volunteer database maintained by Openlands staff.

Certain volunteers and schools will be selected for interviewing. The Education Coordinator will administer the surveys, lead the focus group, and be responsible for data analysis.

Data Collection

The volunteer survey (Appendix B) will be administered within two weeks of all volunteer teams having completed their last school visit. Both open-ended questions and Likert-scale questions will be used to help Openlands staff make improvements on training sessions, volunteer supplies, and overall program coordination. Select volunteers will be interviewed to gain better insight into their experience as a whole.

The teacher survey (Appendix C) will be also be administered within two weeks of all schools completing the program. Also combining Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions, this survey aims to determine what effect the program had on students and to see if the teachers will continue the program themes on their own. Teachers will also be invited to a focus group (Appendix D) during the summer of 2014 to gain further insight into what effect the program had on student knowledge and interest in themes and to gain feedback on the addition of the third visit.

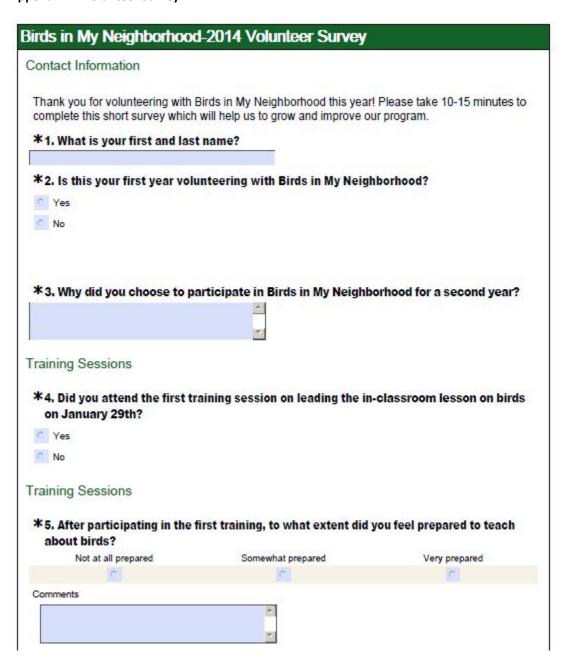
Appendix A: Birds in My Neighborhood [™] Evaluation Plan Chart (sorted based on collection method)

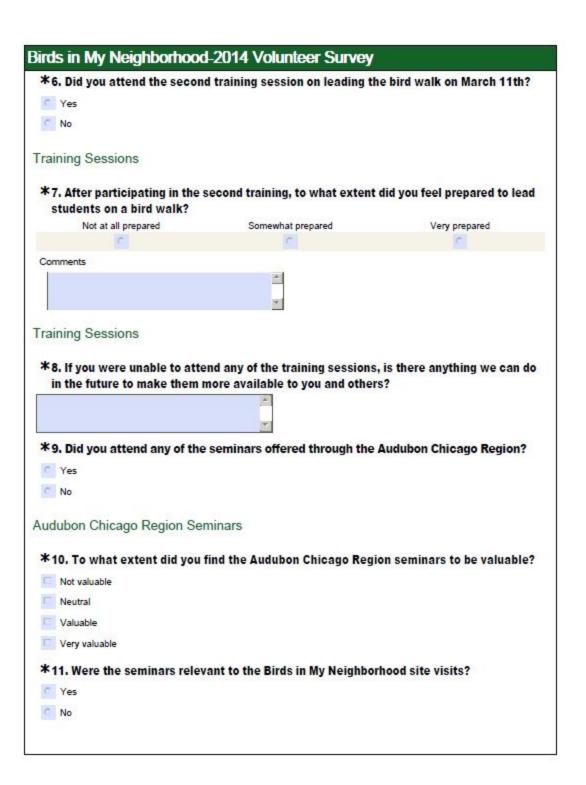
Evaluation Chart: Birds in Neighborhood	my			
Questions:	Indicators:	Sources:	Methods:	Managing:
	How will we measure it?	Who will have the information?	How will you collect data?	When will it be collected?
What were the grade levels of participating students?	# of classes from each grade	database	database	
Were all chosen schools already participating in BSG prior to starting BimN?	# of BSG participants	database	database	
How many volunteers attended training sessions?	# of volunteers	database	database	
How many new teachers were added from existing BimN schools?	# of new teachers	database	database	upon completion of program
How many schools participated in each of the site visits?	# of schools	database	database	
How many volunteers were new?	# of new volunteers	database	database	
How many volunteers were returning?	# of returning volunteers	database	database	
How representative are participating schools of the CPS district?		CPS website		
How do poverty levels and racial background of participating schools compare to those of CPS district-wide averages?		CPS website		
What areas within CPS have we not actively reached out to?		CPS website		
Why do volunteers continue to volunteer in the program?	written feedback	registered volunteers	open-ended survey question	June 2014 Volunteer Survey

Which Birds in my Neighborhood resources did volunteers find to be useful? (followed by list of kit materials)	volunteers will agree or disagree	participating volunteers	Likert scale survey question
What, if anything, should be added to the volunteer kit for future years?	written feedback	participating volunteers	open-ended survey question
After participating in the training for in-classroom lesson on birds to what extent did volunteers feel prepared to teach about birds? (attitude)	volunteers will agree or disagree	PD participants	Likert scale survey question
After participating in the training for leading a bird walk to what extent do volunteers feel prepared to teach about birds? (attitude)	volunteers will agree or disagree	PD participants	Likert scale survey question
Why did some volunteers not attend training sessions?	written feedback	registered volunteers	open-ended survey question
How many volunteers attended the seminars offered through Audubon Chicago Region? Which seminars?	written feedback	seminar attendees	survey question
Were the seminars offered through Audubon Chicago Region relevant to BimN site visits? If so, how? If not, how could they be more relevant?	written feedback -	seminar attendees	open-ended survey question
How many hours did volunteers spend in trainings, communications, transit, classroom visits, etc?	written feedback	database and participating volunteers	Likert scale survey question

1		1	•	1
What changes do volunteers notice in student engagement, knowledge, general participation?	written feedback	participating volunteers	volunteer logs/ email follow-ups	
Were the year-round curriculum connections for participating teachers grade-level appropriate?	teachers will agree or disagree	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question	
To what extent do teachers feel students have an increased knowledge of habitats, diets, and behaviors of birds around them? Provide examples.	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question; open- ended survey question	June 2014 Teacher
To what extent do teachers feel students are more observant of the natural environment in urban settings? Provide examples.	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question; open- ended survey question	Survey
To what extent are teachers satisfied are teachers with BimN?	teachers will agree or disagree	participating teachers	Likert scale survey question	
Do students notice birds more after participating in Birds in My Neighborhood? Do they notice other aspects of nature in their neighborhood?	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	focus group	
Do teachers feel that program elements relate to curriculum requirements? How could this be improved?	teachers will agree or disagree	participating teachers	focus group	Focus Group Summer 2014
Do teachers use school gardens and natural areas more?	teachers will agree or disagree and provide examples	participating teachers	focus group	

In what ways do teachers think the visits have complemented each other? How could the program's model be improved?	verbal feedback	participating teachers	focus group	
How did the field trip affect the experience of the class? Give examples.	written feedback	participating teachers	open-ended survey question	
What do teachers want to see changed in the future?	written feedback	participating teachers	focus group	
Which volunteers completed ALL of their site visits? If they didn't, what prohibited them?	written feedback	participating volunteers	logs	follow-up emails to site visits

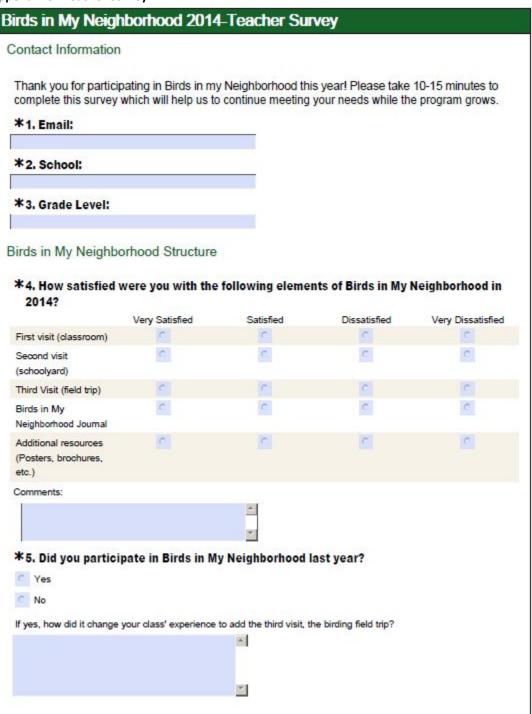




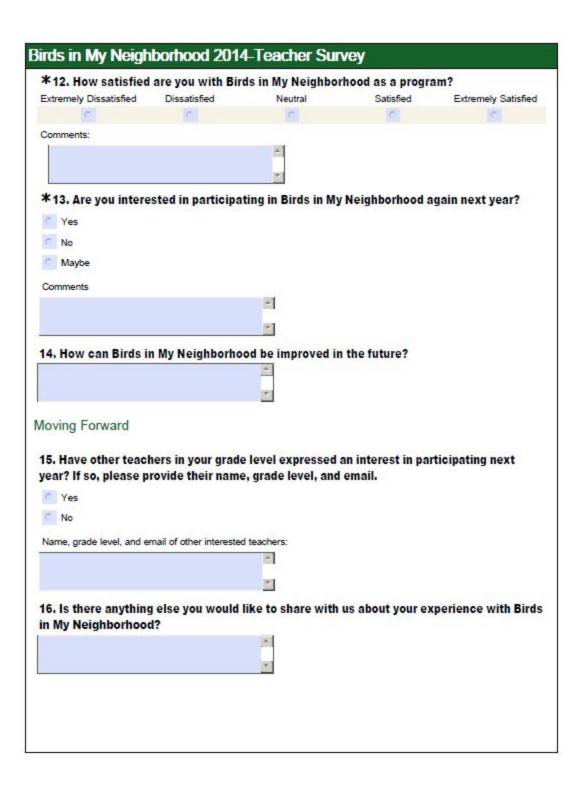
chool Visits					
13. Which Birds in	My Neighbo	orhood resource	s did you fi	nd to be useful?	
	id not use this	Not very useful	Neutral	Somewhat useful	Very useful
dentiflyer	C	0	0	<u>c</u>	C
Books (Urban Roosts and Birds, Nests, and Eggs)	C	C	0		C
W Pellets	C	C	C	c	C
aminated bird photos	C	0	C	c	C
Bird calendar	C	0	C	0	0
lest	C	0	C	C	C
eathers	C	0	Č	C	C
Bird ID pamphlets	c	0	0	C	0
Silhouette Posters	C	0	C	C	C
lametags	C	0	C	C	C
Site Profiles	C	C	С	c	C
oumals	C	0	C	C	0
4. What, if anything 5. If you were unabl oing so?					ot you from
oving Forward 416. Are you intere	sted in volun	teering with Bir	ds in My Ne	ighborhood in the	e future?

17. Would you like to work al	one or with a partner in the future?
Alone	one of thin a partitor in the fittine.
With a partner	
No preference	
*18. Would you like to work w	ith multiple classes in the future?
C Yes	
C No	
Unsure at the moment	
inal Thoughts	
*19. How many hours do you of transit, and classroom visits	estimate that you spent in trainings, communications, ?
20. Do you have any other sug	gestions for improving Birds in My Neighborhood?

Appendix C: Teacher Survey



	an increased kno Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Bird habitats	C	C	C	0	0
ird diets	C	C	C	C	С
ird behavior	5	6	C	C	C
ther bird topics wh	ere students demonstrat	ted a change in kno	wledge		
		*			
In the space I	oelow, please desc	ribe examples	of students d	lemonstratin	g this
		-			
		100			
8. As a result	ghborhood Structu	participating in			d, my students
8. As a result	of our classroom pervant of the natur	participating in	t in urban set	tings. agree	d, my students Strongly Disagree
8. As a result are more observed Strongly Agree	of our classroom pervant of the natur	participating in al environment Neutral re any example	t in urban set	tings. agree	Strongly
8. As a result are more observed Strongly Agree	of our classroom pervant of the natur Agree below, please shar	participating in al environment Neutral re any example	t in urban set	tings. agree	Strongly
8. As a result are more observant of na	of our classroom pervant of the natur Agree below, please shar	participating in al environment Neutral re any example borhood.	t in urban set	tings. agree lents becomi	Strongly Disagree ing more
8. As a result are more observant of na	of our classroom pervant of the natur Agree below, please sharture in their neight	participating in al environment Neutral re any example borhood.	t in urban set	tings. agree lents becomi	Strongly Disagree ing more
Strongly Agree Strongly Agree In the space I bservant of na	of our classroom pervant of the natur Agree below, please sharture in their neight	participating in all environment Neutral re any example borhood. udents are more started? Whents benefit from	s of your stud	tings. agree dents becomi	Strongly Disagree ing more
Strongly Agree In the space I bservant of na 10. Overall, debefore Birds	of our classroom pervant of the nature Agree below, please share ture in their neighborhoods in My Neighborhoods	participating in all environment Neutral re any example borhood. udents are more started? Whents benefit from	s of your stud	tings. agree dents becomi	Strongly Disagree Ing more



Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

- 1. Do students notice birds more after participating in Birds in My Neighborhood? Do they notice other aspects of nature in their neighborhood? Give examples.
- 2. In what way do you think the visits complemented each other? How could our model be improved?
- 3. What do you want to see changed in the future?
- 4. Do you feel that program elements relate to curriculum requirements? How could this connection be improved?
- 5. Do you think an entire grade level would be interested in implementing Birds in My Neighborhood at your school? Which grade level do you think would be most appropriate, and why?
- 6. Do you use your school garden, or other nearby natural area, more?
- 7. What was your favorite part of participating in Birds in My Neighborhood?