

Wantagh Students Become Horseshoe Crab Farmers

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Inside a fish tank at Mandalay Elementary School are 500 tiny horseshoe crab eggs that are being observed and researched by Horizon's program students.

Provided through Molloy College and the Center for Environmental Research and Coastal Oceans Monitoring (CERCOM), the students will not only wait to see if the eggs hatch in captivity, but will perform daily testing of the tank's pH levels, dissolved oxygen levels and check for ammonia, nitrates and nitrites.

Horizon's program teacher Renee MacDermott explained to the students that CERCOM is the only lab that has been successful in breeding horseshoe crabs in captivity, and Dr. John Tanacredi and lab assistant Kyle Maurelli are encouraging students on Long Island to assist with the raising of the babies. "We will be assisting them in very important research," she said.

The students learned that horseshoe crab populations have been declining due to the use of their legs as bait for fishermen, coastal development and the use of their blood in the medical field. When the eggs become translucent, the students will observe the crabs' development until they are returned to CERCOM in June.

Photos: Wantagh School District

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