



THE LEONA FAMILY TIMES

An amazing experience



Wildwood Environmental Academy grade 3 teacher Laura Schetter brought some extra special things to school with her this year - new ideas for science inquiry, new methods for exploration, first-hand experiences in conservationism and her enduring passion for environmental sciences.

Schetter is one of 150 U.S. and international educators accepted to the first year of the Global Field Program (GFP) from Project Dragonfly at Miami University. The masters students engage with international colleagues and scientists, working together to bring about local and global change.



This summer, Schetter was among 20 U.S. educators who travelled to Belize to study conservation and marine ecology. The group explored diverse terrestrial, coastal and coral reef communities at the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center, Gales Point and Tobacco Caye. "It was an amazing experience in so many ways - personally, professionally and socially" said Schetter in a recent interview.



Because of established partnerships, the group was able to experience Belize from a local perspective. "Some nights we slept in forest cabanas. The director of the education center arranged a lot of behind-the-scenes opportunities for the group," said Schetter. "We visited two different schools and were able to interview the principal and other teachers in the village. A parade of children followed our bus."

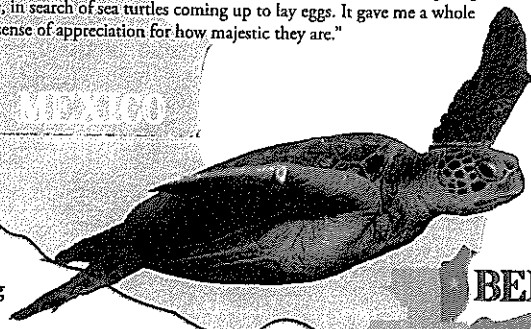
Ms. Schetter brought something extra special with her to Belize, too. Through Project Wild, her grade 3 students created art work last spring to share with Belize what an American summer looks like. She was also able to bring school supplies.

This innovative teacher is already known by many for her creative lessons on the Leatherback Sea Turtle migration. Sea turtles are her favorite animal. Her most memorable experience? A night hike to search for sea turtles nesting at remote Gales Point, where a man who has dedicated his life to protecting manatees and green sea turtles took the group on a rare adventure. "At 8 p.m., we went on two rickety motor boats to a remote, uninhabited beach that is safe for turtles. We hiked by moonlight for six hours through high tide, water to our knees, in search of sea turtles coming up to lay eggs. It gave me a whole new sense of appreciation for how majestic they are."

"It was quite possibly the best 10 days of my life."

"To see a school in a third world country is a humbling experience - 100 degrees, 100% humidity, barely any windows - a fresh set of pencils was a big deal for them."

MEXICO



BELIZE

Guatemala Honduras
Cuba
Nicaragua

By: [Name] and [Name] with [Name] and [Name]