

# S.T.A.R.S. International Newsletter

February 2010

## Larkin High School, Host with the Most



As of the closing bell on January 16<sup>th</sup>, Larkin High School made good on their commitment to provide an enthusiastic group of teens for the 2010 S.T.A.R.S. program. In all, 46 applicants submitted interest for the program and completed some degree of the assessment process by S.T.A.R.S. staff. This included a 22 question phone interview, 1 hour Discover Scuba experience, and completion of a essay meant to qualify their interest and commitment. During the last week of January, S.T.A.R.S. staff reviewed applications and essays and mailed out acceptance letters to 38 of the 46 candidates who will first meet as a group near mid February. Good luck to all who showed interest and special thanks to the many S.T.A.R.S. staff members and school administrators engaged in the process to recruit these great candidates!

## Upcoming Rogest Painting Clinic (2/17 & 2/18)

As a premier supporting and fund raising event for Larkin High School (LHS) this year, Canadian artist extraordinaire, Ron Steven (aka "Rogest"), will be hosting a painting clinic for 20 very fortunate Larkin High School teens on February 17 & 18. These interested youth will learn Rogest's unique dot style of painting and then have an opportunity to apply it when painting one of the world's treasured ocean critters. Meanwhile world renowned photographer Lynn Funkhouser has graciously supplied some of her award winning critter photos for the teen art students to use as models for their paintings. The final art products from the 1.5 day clinic will either serve as speaker's gifts for the upcoming Scuba Expo (Rosemont, IL) Feb 19-21, or be auctioned off at Rogest's booth at the Expo to raise funds to support the 2010 S.T.A.R.S. program at LHS. There are planned to be many added benefits tossed in for the painting clinic participants who will be painting their future... one dot at a time from here on. We hope this event is enjoyed by all who meet Rogest!





## Discover Scuba Try-outs

(1/9 and 1/23)

Breathing underwater is by no means something we all take for granted, that is unless you are by the side of a skilled S.T.A.R.S. diving professional for a Discover Scuba experience. An estimated 44 teens participated in one of the two Discover Scuba try-outs to “get their feet wet” and validate for themselves that scuba is something that excites them. The most exciting part of the event is taking absolute non-swimmers below the surface on scuba which results in the most ironic student feedback. It is not unusual to hear comments like; “I didn’t know the pool went down on one end”, “I didn’t know that bubbles made noise”, “I didn’t know you could hear underwater”. For anyone that participates in a Discover Scuba it will surely change their opinion of the water forever. Good luck to all that participated! We hope you keep diving.



## Where in the world is John Chatterton?



Although his home is a small town on the picturesque coast of Maine, John just left again for Florida during the middle of January to load some equipment to be shipped for his return to the Dominican Republic. While there he is working on a lengthy project for the Ministry of Culture. In addition, John has been actively working on a project for the NOVA series to be shown on PBS that premiered earlier this month called, “*The Killer Subs of Pearl Harbor*”. It is about the saga and divers who located the 5th midget sub that attacked Pearl Harbor. It is a great story if you can catch it on PBS. What I want to know is how John fits into a midget sub, and I plan to ask him if he uses “wet suit slime” to get in and out of the midget sub once he gets back? In either case “Good Luck John!”

After a quick change in plans, John is now in Kuwait City on his way to Dubai as a representative of another board of a technology company that is looking to establish business ties in the Middle East. What next, planting trees in the Arctic? You go John!”

## Staff Member of the Month: Layne Holter New SDI Assist.

Layne is a high school political science and history teacher and the head boys cross country and track coach at a local high school. He began diving in 2002 and recently finished his assistant instructor certification. Layne plans to become an instructor within the next few years. His favorite dive destinations include Cozumel, Puerto Vallarta, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.

As a S.T.A.R.S. International volunteer Layne works with students in the water during the orientation and training program. He enjoys working with at-risk students as a classroom teacher and looks forward to sharing his love of the underwater world with S.T.A.R.S. students below water. Layne has seen the transformational power of the S.T.A.R.S. program and believes that opening young people up to new ideas and helping them create new dreams and reach for new goals makes all of us better people and the world a better place.





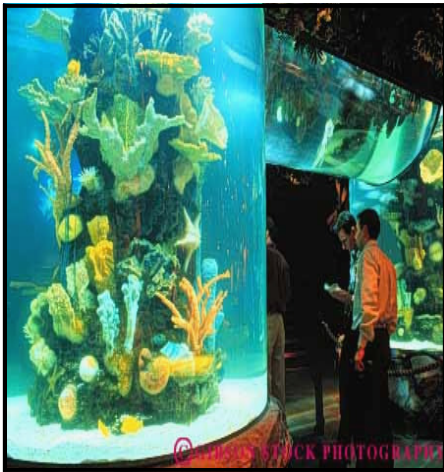
## Boys N Girls Club Update

Although January 23<sup>rd</sup> is the last Discover Scuba try-out for the Larkin High School program, it is simply a warm-up event for the new staff of the Boys N Girls club S.T.A.R.S. program. Dean Nolan and Mark Niewoehner rallied some of the new staff to join the seasoned Elgin staff and gather as much working knowledge as possible while assisting them on January 23. The Boys N Girls program staff has sketched out the 2010 calendar of events and the BnG club Director Sidney Johnson is actively accepting applications from area youth working towards an early February Discover Scuba. A hardy welcome to the interested volunteers to staff the S.T.A.R.S. BnG program; Tomon, Sue, Mitch, Lisa, Tim, Pat, Satrio, Ryan, Mark, Dean, Aaron, Joe.



### Diving at the Rainforest Café... Opportunity Easily Overlooked

As Chicago divers, we can probably name the local diving venues easily on one hand. Looking within a few hundred miles away we also think of a few aquariums that offer diving, and even Epcot Center. But we have all overlooked one venue right under our nose. What, "Diving in the Rainforest?" You bet. Kevin happened to hear about a unique job opportunity that was too good to be true, a diver position to clean tanks for the Rainforest Café at Woodfield Mall. This type of position definitely offers promise to our young graduates in addition to the opportunity for educational tours for our young aquatic students. More on this in the coming months as Kevin dives in for a deeper look.



## Elgin City Schools See Promise

Kevin met with Superintendent Dr. Jose Torres and three cabinet members to review the implementation of the S.T.A.R.S. program at Larkin High School. The group introduced several possible options for raising funding and support within the community. After Kevin introduced the upcoming Rogest fundraiser Dr. Torres initiated a quick redirection for coordination of the event to the senior staff of the fine arts department, and even offered his personal assistance with acquiring supplies if necessary. Kevin plans to keep Dr. Torres and his staff closely in-tune with our progress this year and has left the door open for Dr. Torres to visit the group's activities at his discretion. The key to seeing promise in a relationship is keeping promises in a relationship!

**Upcoming Events**

**OurWorldUnderwater**  
**Stephens Convention Center**  
**February 19-21**

**Orientation**  
**Larkin High School**  
**February 23**

**Maritime Festival**  
**S.T.A.R.S. Presentation**  
**February 27**





## **Marisa Turns Rescuer in Boston** **(Dive Kulture)**

Marissa is a 16-year-old (half African-American half Caucasian) young woman attending a high school in Boston. She was born in Dorchester, MA and comes from a family of six siblings and very much an at-risk teen. She grew up in the Franklin Fields Housing projects, which is one of the most violent areas in Boston. Marissa loves the water and as a result decided to work as a lifeguard at the Blue Hill Boys N Girls Club. Little did she know, a year after her participation in Dive Kulture, how vital her scuba diving training, swimming abilities, good instincts, self confidence, and excellent knowledge of the water were going to be.

On a day last year in late August, Marissa was with a group of young kids on the shoreline of South Boston's Castle Island. A few of the group of kids were wading in the water on a sandbar near the locks when one of the children was swept off her feet by the strong current coming through the locks. The current quickly pushed her away from shore to the middle of the small bay; and although she could swim, she was scared and panicky and in clear need of assistance. A male adult with the group of kids quickly swam out to offer assistance and retrieve the girl. He had the young girl hang onto his back while he fought the strong current back to shore. Just as they reached the sandbar, the young girl reached to a friend on the sandbar to try to stand up but fell down again, this time taking another child with her. They were both swept rapidly back into the bay! This time the adult was too exhausted from his swim against the current to offer further swimming assistance, so he sent someone to run for the lifeguards that were in the chair further down the beach.

Meanwhile, Marissa was watching this whole incident play out. Once the adult established that he couldn't go back in the water, Marissa quickly volunteered to go to the aid of the two young kids. Marissa, a certified lifeguard, swam out to the middle of the bay and pulled the weaker of the two children back to shore while at the same time, calmly talked the stronger child through swimming alongside her back to the shore. Marissa's skills as a new lifeguard helped save these kids from a potentially dangerous and truly life threatening situation. Her knowledge and understanding of the ocean taught her to safely pull the children perpendicular to the current, rather than fight the strong outgoing current.

This was truly a life altering event for all parties involved, but for Marissa, it surely gave her life and being new meaning. A sincere thanks to Laura Medrano for sharing this story with us!

**"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."  
Martin Luther King**

## **GHOST SHIPS FESTIVAL 2010**

It's time to start planning for scuba activities. The Ghost Ships Festival 2010 is scheduled for March 5 & 6 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is Wisconsin's largest trade show devoted to Great Lakes Maritime History. Exhibits, workshops, and presentations cover every aspect of maritime history and Great Lakes scuba diving. Attendees will have an opportunity to listen to and interact with leading dive industry professionals, extreme explorers, maritime historians, and Great Lakes authors!

