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## EcoCenter Park at Heron's Head Recognized for Excellence in Sustainability

Eco Center at Heron's Head Park, the only San Francisco institution to win the 2018 Secretary's Award for Excellence in Sustainability

*The Secretary's Award for Excellence in Sustainability initiated by John Laird, Secretary for the California Natural Resources Agency is conferred by the California Museums Association and recognizes the outstanding achievements in sustainability for California museum projects in two areas: public education and internal operations.*

The EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park is located in San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood (BVHP) and serves youth from this area. BVHP is an ethnically and racially diverse working-class neighborhood. The area has been identified as one of five Bay Area "extreme poverty" neighborhoods. Social, economic, and environmental ills present in the 1950s remain to this day, including: racial segregation and discrimination, substandard housing, poor air quality, dumping of toxics, deteriorating infrastructure, the heavily polluted Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, and high levels of poverty, crime, and violence. Per capita income is less than half that of the rest of San Francisco and 39 percent of residents live in low-income households (as determined by the San Francisco Department of Public Health). BVHP sits in a low-lying area along San Francisco Bay that was built up by artificial fill, adding climate change to the list of threats the area faces.

"A heartfelt congratulations to the EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park for receiving this prestigious award for outstanding achievement in sustainability," said Kimberly Brandon, President of the San Francisco Port Commission. "The EcoCenter's unique internship program provides hands-on jobs for students in the Bayview Hunters Point community while educating them about environmental sustainable systems, environmental justice and empowering young people to maintain sustainable programs in our community."

"We are always proud when a Port tenant and partner receives honorable recognition for the great work they do for San Francisco's waterfront," said Elaine Forbes, Executive Director of the Port of San Francisco. "We are especially proud when a partner connects a Port resource to our City's diverse communities and gives it meaning. The EcoCenter and the students participating in the sustainability programs are an inspiration to us all."



Aquarium  
of the Bay



Bay Model  
Alliance



EcoCenter at  
Heron's Head Park



Sea Lion  
Center



The Bay Institute



Bay Academy

The EcoCenter is a certified LEED-Platinum environmental education center and one of the first and finest examples of sustainable building technologies, demonstrating integration of sustainable water conservation and management strategies, renewable energy, and alternative wastewater treatment systems in San Francisco. The EcoCenter is operated by Bay.Org- the largest watershed conservation group in the Bay Area with 6 branches including the Smithsonian Affiliated Aquarium of the Bay, Bay Institute, Bay Academy, Sea Lion Center and the Bay Model, with a unified mandate of inspired conservation of the Bay Area ecosystems from the Sierra to the Sea.

“The 2018 Secretary’s Award is well-deserved by the EcoCenter. The EcoCenter is an invaluable resource in the San Francisco community because they provide our youth with much needed opportunities to become engaged in advocating for environmental justice,” said President of San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Malia Cohen.

The EcoCenter Internship Program in 2017 offered paid internships to college and high school students interested in sustainability studies. The design of the EcoCenter Internship Program both facilitated students’ exposure to green careers without requiring a high-level science background and provided an ongoing link to professionals pursuing the content of the job training information. Working scientists, EcoCenter staff, and Community College of San Francisco (CCSF) professors were integral to the program.

“With 59 interns graduating since inception, we are deeply committed to serving the neighborhood communities through internships and skill development programs, we are honored and humbled by CAM’s recognition of our continuing work,” said George Jacob, President & CEO, Bay.Org.

*Bay.Org DBA Bay Ecotarium and its six branches are united under one mission to enable conversations on climate resilience and ocean conservation globally, while inspiring actionable change locally by protection and preservation of the San Francisco Bay and its ecosystems, from Sierra to the Sea™.*



Aquarium of the Bay



Bay Model Alliance



EcoCenter at Heron's Head Park



Sea Lion Center



The Bay Institute



Bay Academy