



BALTIMORE ↔ ROTTERDAM

**Operation Trash / Operatie Afval**

Educational Exchange 2017

[harbortraces.org](http://harbortraces.org) / [stichtinglawine.nl](http://stichtinglawine.nl)





A dimly lit classroom scene with several students and a teacher. The students are seated at desks, and the teacher is standing in the background near a whiteboard. The whiteboard has some papers and notes pinned to it. The overall atmosphere is educational and collaborative.

# CONCEPT

Trash serves as the theme for a cross-cultural virtual exchange between Baltimore and Rotterdam area schools.

Remote learning techniques and interactive workshops are used to teach sustainability, trash reduction, recycling – and inspire students to become environmental stewards in their communities.



## PARTICIPANTS IN SPRING 2017 EXCHANGE

### COORDINATED BY



**Kathie diStefano**

Theatre artist & educator from  
Rotterdam-based  
Avalanche Arts / Stichting Lawine



Wolfert van Borselen / Rotterdam



Benjamin Franklin High School (BFHS) / Baltimore



Lyceum Vos  
Vlaardingen

**Bard** High School Early College

Bard High School Early College / Baltimore



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR 2017 EXCHANGE

**WNF**

**Wereld Natuur Fonds**  
The Netherlands Chapter of  
World Wide Fund for Nature  
(a.k.a. World Wildlife Fund)



**BALTIMORE ↔ ROTTERDAM**  
SISTER CITY COMMITTEE / ZUSTERSTEDEN COMITÉ



**Baltimore Office  
of Sustainability**  
People • Planet • Prosperity

Funding also provided by the participating schools

# APPROACH

Students look critically at their own trash behavior and how this affects their communities as well as global waste problems.

Students are encouraged to 'think globally and act locally' to help reduce litter and increase recycling in their communities.

**Een beter milieu begint bij jezelf**





On each side of the ocean, students make video introductions for the students in the other city to learn about each other.



"You can't control where you come from or your family situation, but you can control your future by making smart decisions and furthering your education."  
Torrey Smith



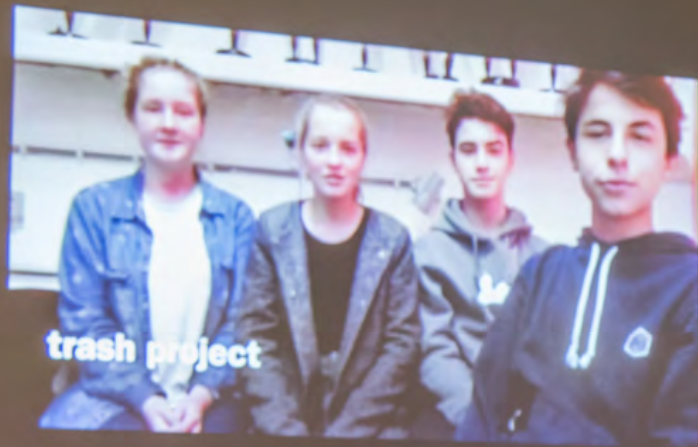
The classes are split up into groups.  
The groups are paired up across the ocean.





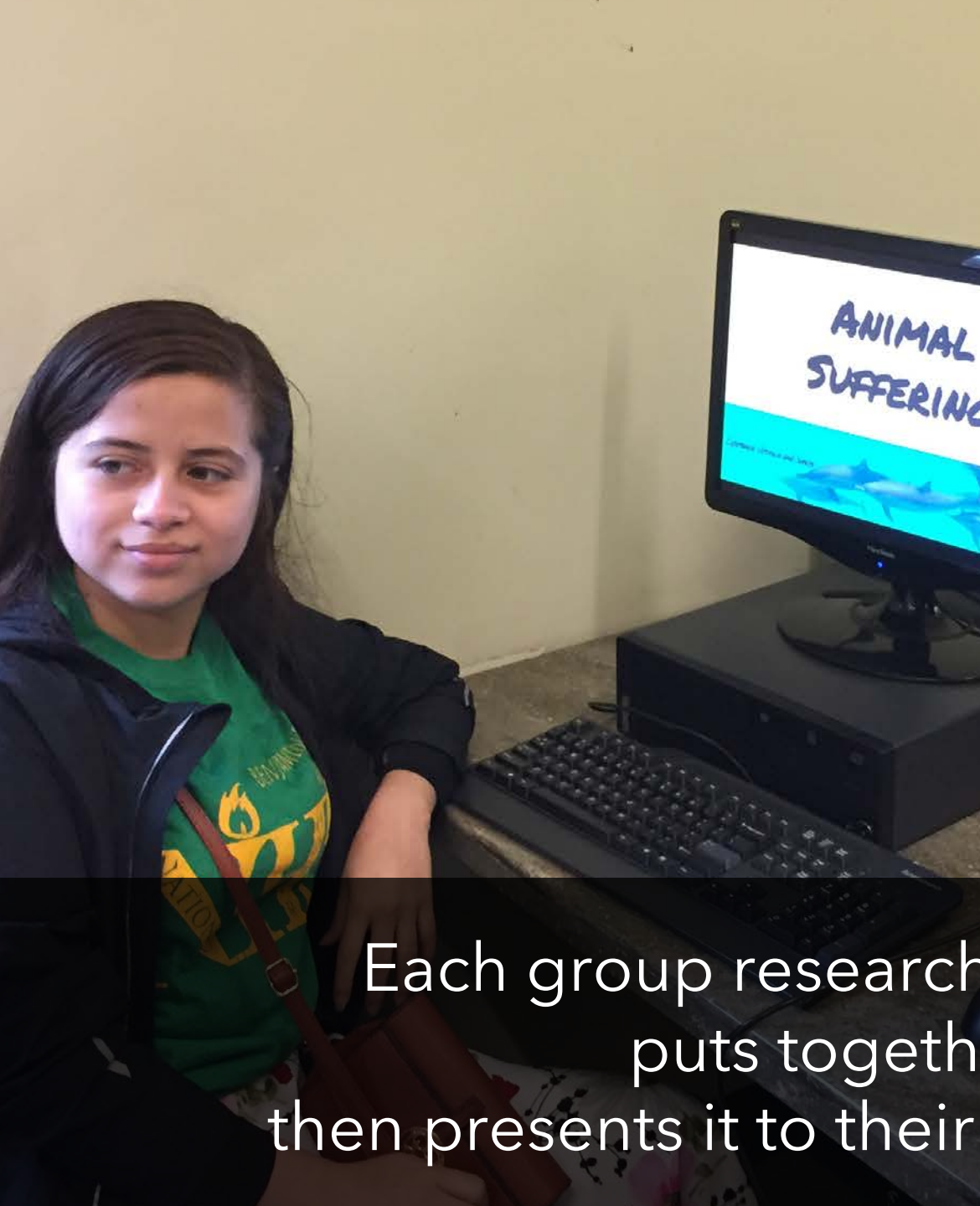
Students share information about who they are, where they are from, and what their schools and neighborhoods are like.





Students learn about how trash and recycling is organized in their neighborhood. Then compare their situations, challenges, and solutions with their Dutch/American counterparts.





Each group researches a topic related to trash, puts together a presentation, then presents it to their counterpart group via Skype.





**Research topics include:**

Mountains of trash; where's the recycling?

Plastic bags & plastic soup

Trash and nature; how animals suffer

Sustainable products vs disposable

Economics of trash

Electronic waste

Trash & recycling in school





Teachers in each school conduct the exchanges. diStefano coordinates the curriculum and conducts some interactive workshops at the schools.





The semester also includes a community outreach event or clean up event.





## OPERATION TRASH EXCHANGE

# GOALS

- Teach the concepts of Reduce, Reuse & Recycle
- Inspire participants to help find environmentally friendly solutions for trash pollution locally and worldwide
- Inspire them to become ambassadors for cleaner neighborhoods with increased recycling
- Support community cleanups led by participants
- Compare & contrast trash behavior with kids from another culture



# HISTORY

2017 is the first year of the Operation Trash Baltimore-Rotterdam Educational Exchange.

It leverages existing **Operatie Afval** course materials designed and taught by Avalanche Arts / Stichting Lawine in Rotterdam schools and communities for many years.

This exchange builds on a pilot exchange in 2015 with Baltimore's Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center and IKC 't Palet Holy, an elementary school near Rotterdam.

It also follows environmentally-themed art educational projects with children and community residents in the Baybrook area of Baltimore and Heijplaat area of Rotterdam, entitled HarborTraces (2012-2013).





# FOCUS ON OUR YOUTH, TO INVEST IN OUR FUTURE

**Avalanche Arts designed the Operation Trash program to teach the next generation at an early age how to deal with trash.**

If we instill good trash behavior into our young citizens, they grow up with this knowledge and won't develop bad habits to be unlearned later. It is difficult to alter the "shop 'til you drop" mentality with older teenagers and adults. By increasing awareness of the consequences of our extravagant consumption lifestyle at an early age, children learn to think before they buy, and think before they trash.



# OPERATIE AFVAL IN ROTTERDAM

critically at their own trash behavior. Then the students work actively on ways to help keep their neighborhood clean and design methods to increase recycling.

The program teaches good trash behavior by combining creative arts and games designed to teach healthy group dynamics. Over the years Avalanche Arts has visited many schools in Rotterdam, most of which are located in Rotterdam-Zuid. This 'learning through laughter' approach has booked good results in building trash management awareness in Rotterdam youth.

Rotterdam is a city full of neighborhoods that face many challenges – including the need for cleaner and safer neighborhoods. **Operatie Afval** program (for middle and high schools) and **Spelen in een Schonere Wijk** (for elementary schools) starts by having children and teenagers look



# OPERATIE AFVAL IN ROTTERDAM

Stichting Lawine won the **Leaders for a Living Planet Award** from World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) for its educational projects about trash. The award was presented at Rotterdam city hall during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWF.

WWF is also known as World Wildlife Fund.



Ahmed Aboutaleb (Mayor of Rotterdam)

Kathie diStefano (Stichting Lawine)

Jim Leape (WWF Director General)

7 May 2012, Rotterdam



A young boy with short hair, wearing a grey jacket, is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is holding a black pole. To his left is a large red trash bag. In the background, there is a green hedge and a brick wall.

**Een beter milieu begint bij jezelf**

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