



**NORTHBROOK ACADEMY** students turn **GREEN** learning ecology aboard Captain John's Floating Classroom then. . . "LAND HO!" they learned more at Indianhead Campground and Ellisville Harbor State Park.

**Plymouth, MA, September 18, 2009:** The students of Northbrook, teachers and some hardy souls, (a.k.a. chaperones), braved the cool breezes of the North Atlantic to expand their knowledge of about science (biology and ecology), history (of Plymouth), math (navigation) and art (digital photography). This exciting field trip also brought together the concepts from the assigned One Book One School summer reading of "*Flush*" by Carl Hiaasen, and their classroom experiences with Northbrook's new ecology class. Prior to the trip, students made up "Flush" teams to bond and to compete to win the One Book Trophy. On the trip they wore their "Flush" t-shirts that they designed in art class. The students' teams were *Green Flush*, *Corral Reef*, and *Fuchsia Flush*.

On board, following a harbor tour, there were several stations that the students rotated through: Lobsters and their Habitat, Navigation (with the ship's Captain), Microscopic Components of Ocean Water, and Shark Anatomy (by dissecting a shark). All of the stations were hands-on learning--*no long boring speeches were found in these classrooms! It was all about "roll-up your sleeves and get the briny goo under your fingernails and learn!"* After the learning stations, while the teachers and landlubbers caught a nap on the deck, these intrepid students were busy catching SHARKS. All students fished like pros, however the girls caught more sharks than the boys (38 vs. 36) and they caught the biggest shark. This trip is an excellent example of how the Northbrook Academy curriculum is designed to challenge the students while making learning fun and interesting.

Before the sun set, our seafaring group got safely back to shore. They traveled away from the ocean breeze and moved inland to claim a camp at Indianhead Campground. Our travelers shook off the effects of the ocean voyage and got their land legs under them for a hike through the woods; (perhaps woods where Miles Standish and Chief Massasoit could have met in the 1600's?) Following a waterfront classes on snorkeling, the students and chaperones set-up

tents and hunkered down to cook their own supper and enjoy a pleasant star-filled autumn night in the Plymouth woods.

It is a good thing everyone slept well because after rising with the birds, these environmental do-gooders hiked miles to and through Ellisville Harbor State Park learning about marshes, birds and the harbor before participating in the 2009 Coastsweep Annual Beach Cleanup sponsored by Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management Urban Harbor Institute of UMass Boston. Using the kit supplied by Coastsweep, Northbrook students collected and tallied, categorized and logged over 30 pounds of trash leaving the beach swept absolutely CLEAN. *Way to go Northbrook!*

Teaching with different tools and in changing settings, is a hallmark for a Northbrook field trip and a trademark of a Northbrook education. Being good citizens, contributing to their communities and learning with spirit mind and body is the essence of a Northbrook education. Some people talk about “going green” but **the Northbrook students ARE TURNING GREEN!** They are green not only because it’s their school color but because they are both studying ecology and practicing good environmental habits. Also, they internalize what they learn because they are taught to “be green” while studying outside and enjoying nature--snorkeling in a lake, riding on a boat, gazing at the Milky Way, walking on a beach or trudging through an ocean marsh.