



**2021**

**THINGS THAT CREEP**

**501(C)(3)ANNUAL REPORT**



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# MISSION

**Inspiring conservation action by creating access to science education and building community connections.**

# ABOUT

Based in Richmond, CA, Things That Creep (TTC) brings hands-on and virtual science programming into Bay Area classrooms. We also engage the community with educational public and private events. Our interactive presentations feature “animal ambassadors,” safe-to-handle live lizards, snakes, and frogs. TTC's original reptile-focused curriculum, crafted by trained biologists and educators, provides an introduction to the biological sciences, opening the door to future careers in STEM fields.



The seeds of TTC were planted over ten years ago when our founder/executive director, Audra Barrios, began bringing reptiles into the preschool where she taught science. Over time, like-minded science educators joined in, developing highly educational and engaging programs. In 2018, TTC achieved 501(c)(3) status. Now bolstered by a board of dedicated educators, biologists and conservationists, TTC continues to grow.

Through education about our native reptiles & amphibians and their vital roles, we actively work to engender enthusiasm and pride in our local ecosystems. Together we can make an impact.



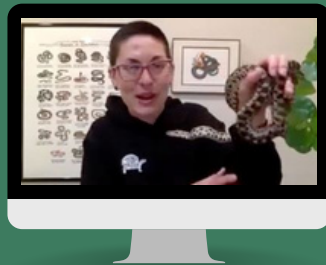
# NEIGHBORHOOD SNAKES 2021

## PILOT SUCCESS

Last year, funded by the City of Richmond's ECIA Grant and the Chamberlin Education Foundation, we delivered our original science program "Neighborhood Snakes" focusing on Bay Area native snakes. The multimedia curriculum was shared with teachers of over 700 Richmond elementary students. Over 500 students participated in live (virtual) interactive sessions with our reptile ambassadors. The program was a success and our ECIA grant has been renewed for another year. We look forward to joining Richmond elementary classrooms in 2022.

## PARTICIPATING RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

STEGE  
GRANT  
OLINDA



VERDE  
NYSTROM  
CORONADO  
MICHELLE OBAMA

WE "ZOOMED" INTO CLASSROOMS!

## PROGRAM ELEMENTS

### Interactive session

- Led by experienced educators and biologists
- Feature live "animal ambassador" snakes

### Pre-recorded videos

- Intro to common Bay Area snakes
- Reptile and foundational biology concepts
- Guided activities

### Written & illustrated curriculum

- Science vocabulary
- Original activity sheets and illustrations
- Descriptions of common Bay Area snakes

### Hands-on activity

- Grade-appropriate
- Educator-guided video instructions

### Meets NGSS & Common Core standards



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## PRESENTATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

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In 2021 our masked and vaccinated educators delivered over 30 engaging science presentations to hundreds of learners across the Bay Area.

These programs offered hands-on engagement plus opportunities to observe and ask questions about our animal ambassadors in a safe and supportive environment.



### PARTICIPATING GROUPS

KidzClub

Hamilton Families

Kids for the Bay

National Night Out

Acta Non Verba Urban Farm

Project

City of Petaluma Summer Camp

Edna Brewer Middle School

Vallejo Reptile Expo

# PRESENTATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

## IN THE CLASSROOM



Science students handle our Florida Kingsnake at Edna Brewer Middle School, where we've been part of the science program since 2015. We reached over 200 students at this school in 2021.

## OUTDOOR EVENTS



Nature Day at Codornices Creek, put on by Friends of Five Creeks. TTC was in attendance with our native animal ambassadors and educator.

## ONLINE



We offer virtual interactive presentations. In 2021, we built a physical classroom space to film virtual visits.

# MEET OUR BOARD



**RACHAEL VAN SCHOIK**  
PRESIDENT

Rachael has worked in nonprofit management for over 10 years supporting missions that aid in the protection of people and the planet. She currently works in the education department at the California Academy of Sciences.



**MARISOL CANTU**  
SECRETARY

Marisol, a Xicana teacher activist, was born and raised in Richmond, CA. After obtaining her Master's in Linguistics with a concentration in multicultural education, she returned to teach ESL at her alma mater, Contra Costa College.



**ESTHER TANG**  
TREASURER

Esther is a Bilingual Educator Specialist at the California Academy of Sciences. Esther earned a Chemistry BS at Washburn University and a PhD in Chemistry & Chemical Biology in the Pharmaceutical Chem Dept at UCSF.



**JASON KNIGHT**  
BOARD MEMBER

Jason is the Night Keeper at the Oakland Zoo. He formerly served as Lead Reptile Keeper at the California Living Museum. Jason has over 25 years of professional experience in animal care and husbandry, primarily with reptiles and amphibians.



**PATTY DONALD**  
BOARD MEMBER

Patty is a powerhouse in Bay Area Recreation. During 30+ years working for the City of Berkeley and numerous environmental organizations, she developed and expanded recreational and educational programs which thousands benefit from each year.



**SONIA WIERZBA**  
BOARD MEMBER

Sonia has over a decade of experience in informal education at nature centers, aquariums, and museums across the Bay Area including at the California Academy of Sciences where she developed presentations for visitors of all ages.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As a kid, I spent summers at the nature center down the road. We would wade out in the murky bay, our shoes sinking into the thick, dark mud. Using a large screen we would sift mud to find strange creatures with no eyes or bones, like clams and worms. I loved every minute of it. Without this experience, I would have never known there was so much life around us that I did not see nor would I have become a marine biologist. After graduating college I moved to Richmond, where these science programs that I experienced as a kid did not exist. That's when I asked how could I support students from my community to learn about things that creep around us?

It started with mobile animal programs, teaching reptile and amphibian biology in classrooms. I watched the fear melt into curiosity in students' eyes. Through hands-on experiences with animals, a new kind of connection is made. If we understand what is out there, we can empathize, learn, and make small changes in our daily lives to support it. While living in urban environments, it is easy to forget that there is an ecosystem around us struggling to survive habitat loss, climate change, and pollution. The choices made in our own spaces affect the natural ecosystem in our shared home, the San Francisco Bay Area. By creating Things That Creep, I hope to provide access to science education and inspire our community care about and respect the natural world.



**AUDRA BARRIOS**

*Founder and Executive Director*



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## OUR TRAJECTORY

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For over ten years, long before our organization achieved 501(c)(3) status, our mission has been constant: to provide high quality animal experiences and science education. We have dipped into our own pockets, and given freely of our time and energy to provide low and no-cost presentations to schools and organizations across the Bay Area.

Through the generosity of individuals and foundations, we have grown Things That Creep into a formal organization, increasing our reach and the sophistication of our programming. Part of our growth has been adapting to the "new normal", maintaining our commitment to safety in new ways. In 2021 we achieved our goal to build a physical classroom space for filming videos and live virtual interactions.

As we look to the future, we are planning big moves. Our deepest ambition, many years in the dreaming, is to create a science center in Richmond, CA, where students and community members can interact with the marvelous and creepy creatures who are our neighbors. It will be a place to learn and grow, a true asset to the community.

**We thank you for your continuing support.**

Our dedicated team feels privileged to interact with and support bright young minds in our communities. We are opening doors for future scientists, biologists, naturalists and conservationists through education about things that creep, and we feel deeply proud of the work we do.





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# MAKE AN IMPACT WITH US

## DONATE

Through monetary contribution, you can help bring engaging science programs to classrooms and organizations across the Bay Area! Support our continuing good work of fostering curiosity and care for local ecosystems at [www.thingsthatcreep.org/donate](http://www.thingsthatcreep.org/donate)

## VOLUNTEER

Your time and dedication is wonderful way to contribute! We offer training in public outreach as well as animal care and handling. Volunteer at events and at our facility to get hands-on experience with our animal ambassadors! Contact us at [hello@thingsthatcreep.org](mailto:hello@thingsthatcreep.org)

## CREATE

Choices you make in your outdoor space can support biodiversity in our community. Cultivate native plants, incorporate a water source such as a pond or bird bath, and avoid the use of pesticides. Support local efforts in your community to preserve natural spaces. Check out our [badge program](#) for information on how to be a good neighbor to nature.

## TEACH

Our Neighborhood Snakes curriculum is now available for classrooms. Teachers: go to [www.thingsthatcreep.org](http://www.thingsthatcreep.org) to book your program! Parents: advocate to bring Things That Creep to your child's classroom and learn with them.

## FOLLOW, LIKE AND SHARE

Keep up with @thingsthatcreep on Facebook and Instagram and TikTok. Check out our newsletter for tips on engaging with local nature, links to online resources and outdoor events, and more. Sign up for our monthly newsletter at the bottom of our homepage.

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# THANKS TO ALL OUR 2021 SUPPORTERS

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Steffanie Crockett  
Celia Alejandrina Abeiga  
Debbie Abeiga  
Erin Clemens  
Noe Barrios  
Terri Costello  
Patricia Donald  
Annette Lee  
Ed Cruz  
Kristine Barrios  
Alice La Pierre

Annie Pennell  
Liz Blanton  
Sonia Wierzba  
Cory Dominguez  
Anoosh Moutafian  
Vivian Moutafian  
Sean Parnell  
Rachael Van Schoik  
Rashonda Winston  
Maureen O'Shea  
Sara Cantor

CITY HORSE



Canva

chamberlin

education

COBIZ

foundation



CITY OF

*Richmond* CALIFORNIA



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FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS