

## The Research Ambassador Program

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[www.ResearchAmbassador.com](http://www.ResearchAmbassador.com)



National Science Foundation  
<http://www.nsf.gov>  
Informal Science Education Program: NSF  
0322214



National Geographic Society  
Conservation Trust program  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/conservation/index.html>



The International Canopy Network  
<http://www.evergreen.edu/ican>



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# THE RESEARCH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM SOUND SCIENCE



An outreach project by researchers to  
communicate science to public audiences.

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## RESEARCH AMBASSADOR

### What is Sound Science?

Often urban and rural youth have little contact with nature and have had negative experiences with learning science in schools. To provide a positive experience that associates science with activities that



are enjoyable and meaningful to youth, Research Ambassadors collaborated with the "Gear Up" program and "Sound Adventures" to create a unique program - **Sound Science: Gear Up with Music**. In this week-long project, scientists presented aspects of field biology and the study of nature to

urban and rural middle school children and provided them the means to express their experiences in music, mainly rap music and spoken word poetry.

### How does it work?

Research Ambassadors, including a forest ecologist, an entomologist, and a marine biologist, led outdoor activities designed to expose 40 middle school students to the hidden worlds of nature and to involve them in the active scientific study of those worlds. After the field

## WHAT IS THE RESEARCH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM?

A major problem facing our society is the widening gap between humans and nature, exacerbated by the lack of connections among science, scientists and society. The Research Ambassador Program helps bridge those gaps by providing academic scientists with rewards and incentives to do direct outreach to the public.

## SOUND SCIENCE

portion each day, students composed original songs and poems about their experiences in the forest, with thatch mound ants, and on the beach. Professional rap artist C.A.U.T.I.O.N. participated in the field work and guided students in the making of music. At the end of the week, audio engineers recorded the original lyrics performed by the participants about their experiences with science and the natural world.

### What were the outcomes?

The students and sound engineers produced a CD comprised of 12 pieces of music, rap and spoken word poetry. The level of quality was very high due to the guidance of the professional audio engineers. Students evidenced a great deal of pride in the final product, and vocalized their eagerness to share the CD with their friends, family, and schoolmates. At the closing activity, 90% of the participants concurred scientific learning was fun and that they had learned a lot about the hidden worlds of the forest canopy, insect behavior, and marine biology. 85% of the participants stated that they would recommend their friends attend future Sound Science programs.



The Research Ambassador Program, established in 2003, has recruited scientists from many disciplines in academia and trained them to do outreach, especially in non-traditional venues such as churches, prisons, skateboard parks and hospitals. Researchers link their research to the interest of an existing profession, trade or interest group, and give talks or write popular articles about their research as it relates to that public audience. Rewards for scientists include a financial honorarium, a letter of thanks from a high-ranking official and contacts to do outreach in the local community.