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Photo: A group of "soon-to-be" River Explorers get training by
the Farmington River Watershed Association

River Explorers Needed *Park River conservation project begins*

June 2, 2008 (West Hartford, CT)... Making a difference for the environment can be fun. The Children's Museum, Farmington River Watershed Association, and Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative Agency launch the Park River Assessment Program on June 21 to involve families in exploring streams and rivers in local neighborhoods. The project looks for aquatic insect life in order to determine water quality. Said Sandy Weiss, program coordinator at The Children's Museum, "This is a great way for families to think globally and act locally while having fun working together."

As a River Explorers families will survey and assess water quality. Water quality assessments consider the ecology of a watercourse and the condition of pollution-sensitive organisms. The information collected is used to identify problems and plan conservation projects. Aquatic insects, algae or plants growing in the water, vegetation along banks, the appearance and smell of the water, the depth and width of the watercourse, barriers to fish passage, evidence of erosion, and the condition of stream beds are all part of diagnosing the health of environmental health of streams and rivers.

River Explorers are needed in Hartford, New Britain, and West Hartford. The program will be assessing streams in the Park River Watershed, including the North and South Branches of the Park River, Trout Brook, Bass Brook, Piper Brook, and smaller year-round watercourses that are part of the watershed. A free training workshop will be held in two parts. Stream Survey training will occur on Saturday, June 21, 2008 and River Explorers will have the summer to complete the survey. Water Quality Assessment training will take place on Saturday, September 20, 2008. Participants must register for both sessions, volunteers must be at least 8 years of age and volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, contact Sandy Weiss, Program Coordinator, Park River Assessment Program, 860-231-2830 ext. 48, sweiss@thechildrensmuseumct.org. Visit www.TheChildrensMusuemCT.org for more details.

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