



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Mitchell students study saltmarsh**

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**Charleston, SC** – Students at Mitchell Elementary School recently hosted a community exhibit to showcase what they learned about the saltmarsh near their school. Hundreds of family members, friends, and school supporters attended. The “Saltmarsh Gallery Walk” was led by student-ambassadors so that visitors could ask questions and have an interactive tour.

This collaborative event was the culmination of learning about saltmarsh ecosystems across all grade levels and all classes throughout the year. Margeaux Coyne, Mitchell’s science lab teacher, helped coordinate the curriculum.

“We learned the science standards using the saltmarsh as a key focus for studying weather, storms, flooding, and how storm drains worked or did not,” explained Coyne. “Students focused on plants and animals, and the saltmarsh in collaboration with science educator and author Dr. Merrie Koester.”

The saltmarsh idea started last year with the creation of the book *Us and the Creek*, written by Dr. Koester and illustrated by scholars in Chak Or’s second grade class. This year, Koester provided a copy of the book to every Mitchell student.

Coyne invited students to use their *Us and the Creek* books as personal journals. They took notes in them throughout the year about what they were learning, such as high and low tide, marine animal sketches, and maritime maps.

Art teacher, Mary Beth DiNunzio, was given paints and canvas by Dr. Koester, and the students painted landscapes of Gadsden Creek. Students took photographs that were then used as inspiration for the paintings.

In the school library, pre-k and kindergarten students did research to write a song about periwinkle snails.

“Scholars were fascinated to learn that a snail can live its entire life on one blade of spartina grass,” said Edie Crook, teacher librarian.

The learning didn’t stop there. In music class, with teacher Darvin Harvey, students practiced their songs that they later performed during the event.

Fifth grade students learned about the saltmarsh by playing the Estuary Keeper game. They then worked in teams to create their own board games to deepen and demonstrate their understanding of the saltmarsh.

"The event was wonderful," added Coyne. "There were paintings, photographs, video, and interactive 3-D multi-sensory creations thanks to our gifted and talented teacher, Jessica Smith."

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.