Topping this year’s list of accomplishments is the opening of Rocking the Boat’s new building at 812 Edgewater Road in Hunts Point. The former industrial space still maintains its concrete floors and brick walls—now filled with hanging tools, wood racks, and boat plans—but has been transformed into a state-of-the-art learning environment. Walk in on any afternoon and you might see Boatbuilding Apprentices in the huge new shop steam bending oak frames into one of the old Whitehalls; a small group of students gathered in the library loft with the Social Worker discussing stress management or healthy relationships; Environmental Apprentices in the lab analyzing samples of river water; On-Water students feeding the crabs, shrimp, and fish in the huge tidal estuary tank in the lobby; or students just out of school making a late lunch in the full kitchen. The increased connection the building has fostered across programs and among participants has exceeded all expectations.

We’ve been learning Mandarin as we travel around Shanghai. Our current favorite word is “shui” 水 which means “water”. “Shanghai” translates to “on river”. “On-water” translates as “Shangshui”. So, “Shangshui” goes to Shanghai.

– Rocking the Boat in China blog, www.rockingtheboat.org/china

This October, Rocking the Boat was the star presenter at Future Cities, Future Citizens, an international student conference in Shanghai. Alex Severino, an On-Water Program Assistant and Govin Baichu, an Environmental Job Skills Apprentice, joined Dawn Henning, the Environmental Job Skills Program Director to speak on their extensive work to restore oysters in the Bronx River. They made friends with young environmentalists from Kenya, Sweden, and India, among other countries, who were all tremendously enthusiastic about their work and Rocking the Boat.

With wood harvested from a 20-foot length of a 265-year old fallen white oak tree from the New York Botanical Garden, Boatbuilders created three beautiful new boats. The spring project was completed by Program Director Tony Archino and 19 students, three more than the usual roster because program retention has been at an all-time high.  *Audacity* is a 14-foot Whitehall, a standard design in Rocking the Boat’s fleet but with special features that make it more comfortable and easy to use. The Boatbuilders took direction from the On-Water students to incorporate details like foot supports, wider seats, more comfortable grips on the handles of the oars, and a generous amount of enclosed storage space. A Hudson River ice boat, which resembles an oval-shaped sled with a sailing rig, was a real design departure and a tremendously fun summer project. Students are looking forward to launching her during Rocking the Boat’s annual winter trip to The Ashokan Center in the western Catskills. The current boat project, a 19-foot open sailboat perfect for expeditions, will be the sister ship to *Triumph*, custom designed, built, and launched in 2009.