JINA was one of three local groups to participate in the first annual “Science for Ambitious Girls” event at St. Patrick’s Park, sponsored by St. Joseph County Parks. This continues a long JINA tradition of partnering with the parks for science education.

35 middle school girls registered for the morning workshop which consisted of 3 activities. An aquatic ecosystem team from Notre Dame and the Environmental Change Initiative determined the impact of water flow in the stream. A biologist from IUSB explored how insects react to color and looked at samples under the microscope.

Based on the success of the flying fish make-n-take during Expanding Your Horizons in 2013, JINA repeated the activity, but with additional focus on the repurposing of household materials. We also focused explicitly on the girls' self confidence before and after the activity. Many were weary of their ability to make the fish without instructions at the beginning. At the end, everyone had a working model and could proudly say, “I made this.”

Some of the students had made a flying fish at last summer's Art 2 Science Camp. We challenged these students to use the materials in a new and different way. Some made helicopters, and one even made a plane with two propellers.

The event will be included in an episode of Outdoor Elements in 2015. A previous partnership with St. Pat Park was highlighted in an episode earlier this year.

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