

## *In Memory of Valerie Eichman*

*By Robin Goettel*

In May, 2004, Valerie Eichman, a dedicated IISG education staff member, passed away. We will always remember her quality work, attention to detail, and educational wisdom.

From 2000-03 Valerie served hundreds of teachers and thousands of students by co-coordinating the *Exotic Species Compendium of Activities to Protect the Ecosystem (ESCAPE)* Project and *Exotic Aquatics on the Move*. These award-winning education resources could not have been developed without her expertise and dedication.

As a former classroom teacher, Valerie had a clear understanding of the realities of the classroom and teachers' needs. Her most significant contribution was reviewing and editing the 36 *ESCAPE* lesson plans so they would be easily understood and enjoyed by students. She took great pride in the final product as did the rest of the collaborators; this education product earned the "Outstanding Professional Skill" award for instructional design by the Association for Communication Excellence.

In my role as education specialist, I couldn't have had such successful teacher workshops without Valerie's able assistance in preparing materials and co-teaching many of them. She had a great aptitude for setting agendas for these programs that would excite teachers.

Valerie's outstanding organizational skills were critical as she coordinated the loan programs and evaluation of the Zebra Mussel Mania Traveling Trunk Lending Network of 30 zoos, aquaria, museums, and nature centers.

To honor Valerie's many contributions to the program, we are dedicating the new education Web site, "Nab the Aquatic Invader!" in her memory.



*Valerie Eichman helped students learn about aquatic invasive species during University of Illinois' Water Camp in 2003.*