

UNDERSTORY

THE NEWSLETTER OF IRVINE NATURE CENTER



The Nature Preschool at Irvine has garnered praise by parents for connecting children with the outdoors. Now it has received national recognition, placing it in the group of highest quality early childhood education programs. Photo by Carolyn Bookholt.

Another Victory for Nature-based Preschools:

THE NATURE PRESCHOOL AT IRVINE EARNS NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

By Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Irvine's Director of The Nature Preschool

It is a daunting task to justify the value of nature-based learning despite the enormous body of research to substantiate it. When stacked up against other early childhood education (ECE) programs, how does nature-based learning measure up? Is it really as valuable as other ECE programs?

CHALLENGING EDUCATIONAL NORMS

Since establishing The Nature Preschool in 2010, we have set out to prove just how meaningful nature-based learning

can be. We devote ourselves to helping children build relationships and respect for each other AND the natural world. We buck against developmentally inappropriate practices for early learners (no worksheets, rote memorization or confinement behind desks!). We insist that learning for every child is **authentic**, that is, a series of unique learning experiences informed and led by that child's own skills, interests and ideas.

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Children guide learning in a culture where question-asking, outdoor exploration and idea sharing is embraced. Children are assessed in an individual, non-standardized way based on their own individual progress, not in comparison to others. Children connect with the natural world through unstructured outdoor play. Though our approach aligns with well-documented best practices, it is seldom a reality in typical ECE programs.

Many people believe that a true child-led education like this can't or doesn't really exist. Or if it does, it can't possibly be sanctioned by licensing. It sounds too good to be true. As the founding director, I am here to say that it does exist at The Nature Preschool. We strive every day to make it better and better.

Our belief is that children are wonder-filled beings with their own ideas. In our program, teachers are thoughtful guides in the process of learning. Children are capable of making decisions about learning and play without incessant adult interference or constant narration. Children learn through risk-taking, sensory investigation and trial and error. Teachers ensure the children's safety and model positive attitudes and empathy. We embrace the emergent curriculum that Mother Nature provides. Just as research indicates, we too find that meaningful learning is rooted in experiential, child-led play by which children solve problems, make discoveries, invent and work together.

Given our fervor and passion surrounding child-led learning, we are on a mission to validate the role of nature-based curriculum, not only in The Nature Preschool, but in all ECE programs.

THE NAEYC JOURNEY

In 2011 we began the rigorous process to obtain national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is internationally respected for its high standards and ethical codes for early learners and ECE practitioners. We pondered, "How do we earn this honor without sacrificing The Nature Preschool's identity?"

The intense accreditation process required holding a magnifying lens up to our relatively new preschool. Self-reflection and extensive, honest evaluation of our practices ensued over the next three years.

Ten different aspects of our school were evaluated internally. Some of the ten standards evaluated include Leadership, Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment. In total, there were more than 400 criteria by which we had to provide physical evidence to prove our compliance.

The preschool staff held many meetings to digest NAEYC standards and criteria. We had to analyze and define what each meant for our nature preschool. We reflected upon procedures, policies and practices. Improvement plans followed parent interviews, family and staff surveys. We faced minor tweaks to major policy clarifications, head on. Though tedious, the process forced us to define what's best for teachers, families and our students and act on it accordingly.

To NAEYC's credit, accreditation does not dictate what programs should teach. There is no one right formula. It is about proving how teaching occurs in ways that are most beneficial for students, families and staff. The accreditation did not restrict our

identity in the least. In fact, it validated many of our approaches including writing our own curriculum, outdoor exploration and unstructured play!

Finally we were ready. We submitted our materials for candidacy and waited for our official site visit.

In March 2014, we learned the NAEYC assessor would arrive. During her visit, she observed three mixed-age preschool classes for one hour each. (Imagine her surprise hiking our snowy trails in high heels!) She scrutinized our program and classroom portfolios, both overflowing with evidence of each criterion. She left with her poker face. We anxiously waited.

In May, we were overjoyed to learn that we earned NAEYC accreditation!

There is a small handful of NAEYC accredited nature preschools in the United States. We are the only nature preschool in Maryland with such an honor. With this distinction comes validation that nature-based learning doesn't sacrifice foundational skills that other preschools offer. In fact, a nature-based approach exemplifies best practices for attaining such skills. The added bonus: a foundation for lasting respect and appreciation for the natural world.

TREE TIP

By Stephen Sprague, Safety Director at Carroll Tree Service

Fall is a great time to plant or transplant trees. Match tree species to the planting site. Consider soil conditions, size limitations, hardiness and pest resistance. Don't plant too deeply and keep mulch 1 to 2 inches away from the trunk. Ensure adequate moisture throughout the fall and winter. Happy planting.



Ask the Naturalist

By Steven Mickletz, Irvine's Naturalist & Manager of Public Programs

QUESTION: I know monarch butterflies migrate, but what do moths do in the fall?

ANSWER: Monarchs are famous worldwide for their spectacular migration. Even the White House has finally recognized it with a statement on the importance of this spectacle! But moths have their own special ways to survive the winter.

Local Saturniid moths, also known as giant silk moths, will spend their entire winter in Maryland. They do not do it as adults, though. Instead, the caterpillars will grow big and fat in the early fall and then change into a pupa. But before entering the pupal stage (chrysalis for a butterfly), the caterpillar will build a protective casing out of silk. This casing is known as a cocoon!

The pupa can stay in the cocoon for over nine months until it is finally an adult moth! The cocoon will protect the pupa from many predators, parasites, and, most importantly, the winter weather. It is often hidden amongst leaves, under a log, or in a cavity. In addition to silk, the cocoon may contain bits of natural materials or even the hair-like spines that covered the caterpillar.



Moths may pupate in a cocoon for nine or more months!



The giant silk moth has an average wingspan of 6 inches. As a caterpillar, this animal can eat 86,000 times its weight in about two months.



Tickets on Sale Now

6th Annual
Pumpkins on the Green

October 24, 2014

Our annual "ungala" is a fun and casual event that celebrates nature!
www.ExploreNature.org

Live Music • Dancing
Catering by Linwoods • Cocktails
Silent & Live Auctions



PumpkinFest!

Join us for Irvine's fall harvest festival! Our PumpkinFest is a fun event for families to celebrate autumn. Alpacas! Live music! Even jugglers! The admission fee is \$15 per child. All activities are included. Free for adults and children under 2.

Saturday, October 11:
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday, October 12:
12 - 4 p.m.





ANOTHER SEASON WITH
The Nature Preschool



By Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Irvine's Director of The Nature Preschool

The end of another year at The Nature Preschool is always bittersweet. In 2013-14, we learned alongside 62 students and their supportive parents. The children made discoveries in every season, in all weather. Our favorite places at Irvine included the "Magic Stream," an intermittent stream we visit in the rain, and the wet woods where skunk cabbage and mud are plentiful.

Community learning took shape through a partnership with the Pearlstone Retreat Center and Farm. Seasonal visits included milking goats, gathering eggs and harvesting potatoes. A visit to the BSO's Carnival of Animals and yoga visits with Miss Jen were also loved by all.

This year the Nature Preschool Parent Group (NPPG) helped with events including our Fall Harvest Campfire, Winter Art Workshop and Maple Magic Pancake Brunch. We owe a special thanks to Jayne Haut for her support as the head of the NPPG for the last two years! Countless others also provided support throughout the year.

The year ended on a beautiful spring day during our Flower Ceremony. Children performed for families and said their sweet good-byes.

Here's what some of our families had to say about the year:

"The teachers are beyond amazing. The appreciation and flexibility with different learning styles was great. Just getting to be outdoors and moving was wonderful!"

"We really liked the blog posts/pictures. My child doesn't tell us much and the pictures gave us a concrete glimpse into what the class was doing."

"We love the emphasis on outdoor play and learning. We love that the kids go outdoors every day rain or shine. We were especially excited to hear about the lessons conducted entirely outdoors. The teachers were proactive and engaged the children...they were kind and passionate about the subject matter and the children."

As autumn approaches, another cycle of students begins. We look forward to more outdoor adventures!



**AUTUMN ACTIVITY IDEAS
FOR YOUR FAMILY:**

- Gather fall leaves and create a huge fairy ring or mandala.
- Build an earth shelter with fallen branches. Line it with cozy, colorful leaves.
- Use spy glasses to watch the birds (decorated paper tubes). Make them wearable with a hole-puncher and yarn.
- Wrap masking tape (sticky side UP) around your wrist and stick leaves and grasses on it for an autumn bracelet.
- Look for something gross. Look for something weird. Look for something beautiful.
- Roll down a hill together.

Virginia Opossum

By Laura Soder, Irvine's Naturalist & Animal/Exhibit Coordinator

Most of Irvine's education animals have scales, shells or feathers – but guests do get to encounter an animal of the furry variety occasionally. This spring we welcomed a new addition, a female Virginia opossum that came from a wildlife rehabilitator.

Like other opossums, she started her life with a mouth full of sharp teeth – 50 to be exact! That's more than any other North American animal, and they help her eat a wide variety of foods. Opossums are omnivores, and will eat berries, plants, roots, mushrooms, insects, small animals and even carrion (dead animals). Unfortunately, our opossum ended up unable to survive in the wild after having some teeth removed due to an infection.

Opossums are unique mammals belonging to the marsupial group. Along with their cousins the kangaroo and the koala, they have a pouch on their abdomen in which they keep their babies until they are old enough to walk. Being nocturnal, they have an excellent sense of smell, but lack well developed eyesight. Opossums spend a lot of time climbing, and their long, "naked" tail is actually prehensile – meaning she can use it to hold onto branches like an extra paw!

Now that the fall is upon us, Irvine's opossum will hopefully wake earlier in her outdoor enclosure near the aviary. Stop by to visit this furry critter!



The Virginia opossum is North America's only marsupial. A marsupial is an animal with a pouch, like a kangaroo or a koala.

NATURE TIP

GARDENER'S GOLD

Often seen as nuisances of autumn, fallen leaves are treasured by gardeners because of their superb soil-conditioning properties.

Left to their own devices, leaves can take up to two years to decompose, but you can accelerate the process. You can shred them with a mower. Or, if you can bear the untidiness, set aside the leaves over winter to shelter pest-eating insects, such as ladybugs and lacewings.



**DON'T SPEND
A DAY OFF SCHOOL
AT HOME
BEING BORED!**

Instead, join the Irvine crew for special animal encounters, strolls through the woods, green games and environmentally friendly crafts.

**VISIT WWW.EXPLORENATURE.ORG
FOR THE SIGN UP FORM.**



Volunteer Spotlight

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Project Clean Stream

By Emily Stransky, Irvine's Group Project Coordinator

In the mid-1970s Irvine began the Jones Falls Watershed Cleanup, which is now known as Project Clean Stream (PCS) and organized through the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Every April, volunteers work to beautify their local spaces through trash clean up, invasive plant removal and tree plantings.

This year, there were 260 PCS clean-up sites extending from Pennsylvania to Virginia with 7,500 volunteers working to clean-up 425,000 pounds (or 212 tons) of trash! This is an amazing accomplishment and improvement for our Chesapeake Bay Watershed – think of how much cleaner the Bay is from just one morning of trash clean-up!

As a PCS coordinating organization, Irvine recruited local groups for clean-up sites. Participants this year included Marriotts Ridge High School, Thornleigh Improvement Association, Reisterstown Kiwanis Club, Friends of Red Run Trail, Kenilworth Association, Pikesville-Owings Mills Rotary Club, Chartley Homeowners Association and Greenspring Montessori School. We collected more than 5,000 pounds of trash as a whole! Throughout Irvine's nine sites, we collected over 800 beverage containers. Some interesting items we found include bed frames, sections of roofing, a toddler swing, an old oil drum, a fire extinguisher and a car battery.

Thank you to all our volunteer groups for their participation and making our local area look its best! If you would like more information about Project Clean Stream, check out www.ExploreNature.org.



Across the state, thousands of volunteers gathered in April for Project Clean Stream. Irvine's volunteers retrieved 5,000 pounds (or nearly 2.5 tons) of trash from our local streams.

SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will assist with preparation of Irvine's annual events. Duties include setup and breakdown, food prep, decorating, etc.

Upcoming Events:

PumpkinFest: October 11 and 12

Pumpkins on the Green: October 24

FALL VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING:

Become a volunteer naturalist at Irvine! This 3-session course will teach you how to lead educational trips for school groups. We'll cover field trip themes, natural history, trail activities and teaching techniques. No experience necessary – just bring enthusiasm for working with kids!

Tuesday, September 16, 9:30- 12:30;

Thursday, September 18, 9:30-12:30,

Saturday, September 20, 9-3

NATURALIST INTERNS

Interns will be trained to lead science-based lesson plans and will learn local natural history, trailside activities and teaching techniques. General duties include assisting with animal care, program materials maintenance, trail and garden work, and exhibit interpretation. Monday-Friday, some evenings and weekends required. 15-30 hours per week.

**If interested in volunteering,
contact Courtney Sagal at
CourtneySagal@ExploreNature.org.**

Monthly Giving: Smaller Payments that Add Up

By Karen Nitkin, Irvine's Grant Writer

Irvine is adding a new tool to its membership and donor program – monthly giving!

Signing up is easy. Just click the “donate” button on the home page of www.explorenature.org, choose “recurring gift,” and specify the amount of money you choose to contribute each month. Donors who give \$10 or more per month will enjoy the benefits of family membership, and will receive additional perks as well.

Robert Hedden, principal of project management firm Synthesis Inc., has been making monthly donations to Irvine through automatic bank account withdrawals since he joined Irvine's Board of Trustees in 2011. “It's just a convenience,” says Hedden, who coordinated the design and construction of Irvine's environmentally sensitive 17,200-square-foot building. “It's easier to budget a lot of smaller payments that add up to something larger, rather than to contribute one lump sum.”



Irvine Trustee, Bob Hedden

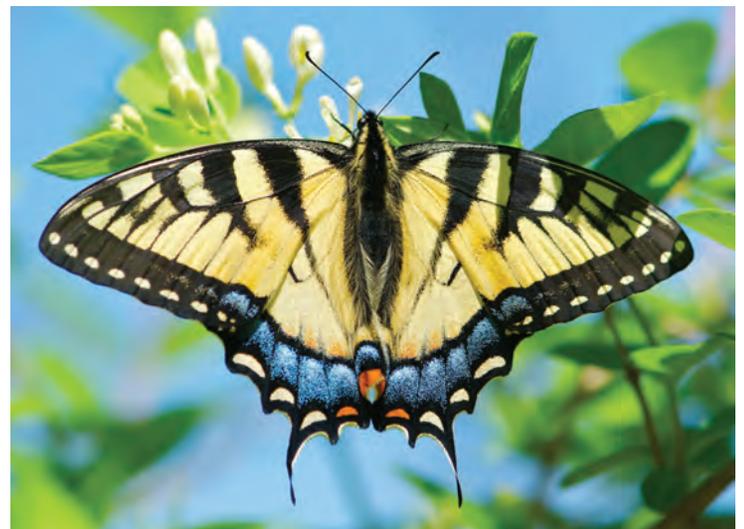
Butterfly House: New Exhibit Coming Soon

By Rob Mardiney, Irvine's Director of Education

In the same way we patiently wait for a caterpillar to miraculously metamorphose into a beautiful butterfly, Irvine staff is watching the slow transformation of our front courtyard into a three-season butterfly house.

Once complete, we will start adding wildflowers and shrubs to feed a variety of native butterflies and caterpillars each spring, summer and early fall.

Monarchs, swallowtails, painted ladies and a few other species will be able crawl and fly protected within this house to the delight and edification of our visitors before we release them back to the wild. Many thanks go to Charleton Friedburg for the initial funding and to Mike Klein and his colleagues from WPM Realty; GWWO; Bob Hedden; and Robbie Roach for donating services, materials or advice to help this courtyard conversion.



Irvine's courtyard area (outside the upstairs classroom for The Nature Preschool) will soon have swallowtail visitors!

Look for more details in our coming issues of *Understory*!

Your Irvine at Work



SEE WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING GOING ON AT IRVINE!



As part of Irvine's Growing Green Leaders program, students at John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle in Baltimore City worked together with Irvine staff and volunteers from M&T Bank to build, paint and place bird houses on their campus.



Five-year-old Ethan Lubinski – one of 65 students in The Nature Preschool – celebrated the end of the school year at May's annual Flower Ceremony. It was a moving and fun day!



More than 70 golfers came out for this June's Birdies on the Green event at Green Spring Valley Hunt Club Golf Course.



Hello baby fawn! Some volunteers clearing our trails came across this youngster and snapped her photo before moving on. Remember, if you see a baby fawn alone during the day, it's best to leave it there.



WTOP News' Kate Ryan (right) interviewed Irvine's Executive Director Brooks Paternotte (center) and Audubon Naturalist Society's Executive Director Lisa Alexander (left) about this year's Battle of the Beltways Bird-A-Thon. Irvine was not the victor this year, but did make Lisa's bird's nest crown!



Kids from Baltimore's Ark Preschool for homeless children spent a great day at Irvine.



Thanks to all our members who came out to June's special s'mores night! We loved having you.



Maryland's state flower, black eyed Susans, bloomed amazingly in Irvine's meadow. They covered the hillside in July.

SUMMER NATURE CAMP | JUNE TO AUGUST 2014



All summer long, Irvine's campground was abuzz with activity. Teens in the Mountains 2 Sea camp woke up to a stunning sunrise.



Campers in the Animal Caretakers session learned how to feed and care for Irvine's four terrapins.



In the Buds camp, two- and three-year old children explored the stream for the very first time. All their shorts were soaked, but all their faces were smiling!



It's easy to find amphibians on our trails. These girls, from our Discovery Camp for 6-7 year olds, were totally tickled with this toad.



Spouts campers, ages 4-5, searched their nets for butterflies and bugs. Though most of the kids caught grass and leaves in our meadows, all got chances to see wildlife up close.

3RD ANNUAL NATURE PRESCHOOL CONFERENCE | JUNE 6-8, 2014



This tremendous bug hotel was built by conference participants. You can find it near the bird feeding station closest to the Woodland Garden.



Keynote Speaker Mary Hardcastle lead conference participants through an outdoor activity to express the importance of growing up in nature, especially in urban wild spaces.



About 100 attendees joined Irvine's preschool staff on day 1 of the nature Preschool Conference for activities, insight and best practices.



Teachers from around the country loved "magic as method" where they learned to use natural and household ingredients to make science come alive for young children.



At the conference, The Nature Preschool Lead Teacher Katie Rooney (right) presented fellow educator Stephanie Bozzo with the Margaret O'Neil Early Childhood Nature Educator award. Stephanie is the director of the Audubon Nature Preschool.

Signs of the Season

By Valerie Barbare, Irvine's Naturalist and Manager of School & Urban Education Programs

In fall, leaves from deciduous trees fall to the ground. They change colors to beautiful shades of red, orange, yellow and brown before they drop. This happens every fall. Last year, however, I realized that something as seemingly commonplace as leaves shedding from trees was amazing in a couple of different ways.

Standing in Irvine's meadow, I heard squeals of delight and exclamations of astonishment from my trail group of children as the wind blew leaves that had shed from nearby trees. Countless



A hallmark of autumn, falling leaves occur so that a tree can store enough nutrients to make it through winter.

leaves floated across the sky and danced over the meadow. The children's reactions made me pause. I had never really thought much about leaves falling before because it's so ordinary, but the children's excitement helped me appreciate the sight and ponder how and why leaves fall.

Trees need to protect themselves from winter's harsh weather. They have special hormones that cause them to

stop providing water to their leaves and to reabsorb nutrients from leaves to store for later. No longer receiving nutrients or water, the leaves fall off and a layer of cells grow over the spots where the stems were attached to the branch. This process helps trees survive.

Between the children's amazement and my newfound appreciation, when I see leaves shed from trees this fall, I'll know there's nothing unremarkable about it.



Cardinals and other native birds will come to the same feeders year after year. Make sure you're ready.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE NATURE STORE?

FEED THE BIRDS

By early September, Maryland's resident birds will begin to form small feeding groups at which time winter-feeding grounds will be established.

These birds will locate several areas to forage for the now ripening natural foods they desire. Backyard feeders, if available, will become part of their daily routes and will continue to be one of their many sources of food throughout the fall and well into the winter months.

If you want to feed wild birds during the winter months only, put your feeders out by early September. That's when most birds chart their winter-feeding areas. Stop by the Nature Store to check out a wide variety of bird feeders, poles and other accessories. Don't forget to use your Seed Saver card when purchasing 20+ pounds of seed.

Come in for savings! The Irvine Nature Store's Annual Fall Birdseed Sale will be held October 27 - November 3. At that time all seed, suet and seed cakes will be 20% off. Members receive 25% off.

WELCOME TO IRVINE, NEW MEMBERS!

WE'RE THRILLED TO HAVE A GREAT BUNCH OF NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED OVER THE FALL. MEMBERSHIP DUES HELP US CARE FOR OUR TRAILS, PROVIDE QUALITY ANIMAL CARE AND MAINTAIN THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM. THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Ms. Eleonora Bachilava and
Mr. Matt Yergeau
Mrs. Kristin Bibo
Mr. David Bonnicksen
Mrs. and Mr. Kristine Brown
Mr. and Mrs. Jeong Chae
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Compton
Ms. Amy Fine-Dugas
Ms. Amy Frankle
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Galkin
Mrs. Jessica Garland
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Givens
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Gorra
Mr. and Mrs. Ian Gvertin
Dr. and Mrs. Adil Haider
Ms. Vanessa Harris
Dr. Lee Haselhuhn
Mrs. Amy House
Mrs. Courtney Iglehart
Mr. Nitin Jagdish

Ms. Martha Johnson
Mr. Brian Kirk
Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Lazenby
Ms. Marilyn LeMay Patterson
Ms. Dale Meyer
Ms. Yune Meyer
Mrs. Jennifer Rao
Mrs. Elizabeth Reed
Mrs. Christina Schkloven
Ms. Mika Singer
Mr. Robert Strakes
Mr. Jeffrey Suit and
Ms. Avril Warren
Mrs. Ashley Trinh
Mrs. Zineb Truta
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Volker
Mrs. Erica Voso
Ms. Katie Wampler
Mrs. Debbie Zakharin

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING CORPORATE & FOUNDATION PARTNERS, & GRANTS!

CANUSA Corporation
Cecilia Young Willard
Helping Fund
The Clayton Baker Trust
Constellation Energy
DeVito Family Trust
FFO Real Estate Advisors
The Goldsmith Family
Foundation, Inc.
HMS Insurance Company
IKEA
The John Ben Snow
Memorial Trust
KLN Commercial Real Estate,
LLC

Quotient
Robb & Elizabeth Tyler
Foundation, Inc.
T. Rowe Price Foundation, Inc.
The Thomas Wilson Sanitarium
for Children of Baltimore City
The Wells Fargo Foundation
Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice,
LLP

We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you notice any errors, please accept our apologies and contact us at 443-738-9227 or BeckerV@ExploreNature.org.

2014-2015 EAT, DRINK AND LEARN SERIES

Third Thursdays!

Join us for our continued series of fun, educational opportunities for the 21+ crowd! Share a specialty drink with friends, eat a delightful dinner, then adjourn to the Fern Rooms for an engaging discussion. All events begin at 6:30 p.m., with the presentation starting at 7:15. The cost is \$30 per member, and \$40 per non-member.

Bears & Brews

September 18, 2014
Presentation by Harry Spiker

Bugs & Bourbon

November 20, 2014
Presentation by Michael Raupp

Bones & Bohs

January 15, 2015
Presentation by Frank Marsden

Locavores & Lagers

February 19, 2015
*Presentation by Irvine Naturalist
Steven Mickletz*

Climate, Conservation & Cosmos

March 19, 2015
Presentation by David Curson

Wild Flowers & Whiskey Sours

April 16, 2015
*Presentation by Irvine Director
of Education Robert Mardiney*

Pond Life & Pinot

May 21, 2015
Presentation by Middleton Evans

NEW! This year, we'll be offering passes for the entire season of 21+ events at a discount. Members can purchase passes to all 7 events for \$180. Non-members can purchase passes to all 7 events for \$240.*

Visit www.ExploreNature.org to purchase your tickets today!

** There are no refunds for events you cannot attend, however you may transfer your ticket to a friend, colleague or family member by calling us in advance of the event. Offer available through September 17, 2014 only.*

Fall 2014 Programs at Irvine Nature Center



FOR KIDS

CHILDREN'S NATURE SEMESTER

Toddlers explore nature with their favorite adult during a fall semester of outdoor learning. Gentle learning guides facilitate nature-based activities as the season changes before our eyes. Live animal encounters, nature walks and art projects are all part of the fun! This is also the perfect introduction to our approach to learning at The Nature Preschool. Sign up with your little one to discover the wonders of wildlife together! Ages 2-3 (with parent).

Tuesdays, Sept. 16- Dec. 16 (no class on Nov. 25)

Wednesdays, Sept. 17-Dec. 17 (no class on Nov. 26) OR

Thursdays, Sept. 18-Dec. 18 (no class on Nov. 27)

10 – 11:30 a.m.

Per semester: \$200 members, \$250 non-members

BABY LOVE INFANT AND PARENT SERIES

Nature is magical for parents and infants discovering it together for the first time. Join us for slow sensory exploration during trail walks. Tactile experiences with fur, moss, feathers,

New! Start children on nature early.

leaves and flower petals introduce baby to nature while offering parents ways to connect with one another, too. Remember to bring a baby wrap! Ages birth to 1 year (with parent).

Session 1: Fridays, Sept. 5-26

Session 2: Fridays, Oct. 3-24 OR

Session 3: Fridays, Oct. 31-Nov. 21 10 – 11 a.m

Per session: \$45 members, \$65 non-members

JUNIOR NATURALISTS

Is your child at home on our trails? Junior Naturalists is a great way for them to make friends with other nature nuts and spend time outdoors. Activities include hiking, arts and crafts, keeping a nature journal, and being part of citizen science projects. Junior Naturalists learn to work as a team to explore, respect and protect nature! Different age groups explore outdoors together and receive age appropriate Nature Journals. Ages 5-6 and 7-9.

Saturdays, Sept. 20, Oct. 4, Oct. 18, Nov. 1 and Dec. 6 OR

Sundays, Sept. 21, Oct. 5, Oct. 19, Nov. 2, and Dec. 7

9:30 a.m. – noon

	Members	Non-Members
<i>1 Session</i>	<i>\$15</i>	<i>\$25</i>
<i>3 Sessions</i>	<i>\$40</i>	<i>\$65</i>
<i>5 Sessions</i>	<i>\$60</i>	<i>\$85</i>

EARTH FRIENDS CO-OP

Home-schooled children develop a foundation of skills through weekly interdisciplinary studies. Three class options offer a tailored approach to home school learning. “Science Outside” focuses on natural history and scientific investigations (Mondays). “Creative Arts Integration” explores the intersection of nature and music, visual, art and dramatic play (Wednesdays). “Stories from the Wild” infuses language, literacy and storytelling concepts with reflection in nature (Fridays). Parents join in twice per semester as part of the co-op agreement. Grades K-2 as of September 2014.

Mondays: Science Outside

Sept. 22-Dec.15 (no class 10/13)

Wednesdays: Creative Arts Integration

Sept. 24-Dec.17 (no class 11/26)

Fridays: Stories from the Wild

Sept.26-Dec.19 (no class 11/28)

1 – 3:30 p.m.

Per semester: \$350 members, \$425 non-members

MUDDY BUDDIES TODDLER SEMESTER

Celebrate nature through wild adventures of art and nature play. Offered to caregivers with children ages one to two years, this joyful weekly class is sure to strengthen your love of the natural world in a playful learning environment.



HOW TO REGISTER

THERE ARE 4 WAYS TO REGISTER:

1. Call 443-738-9220.
2. Email Programs@ExploreNature.org.
3. Register on-site at Irvine before the date of the program.
4. Visit www.ExploreNature.org and look for online registration.

CANCELLATION POLICIES

Irvine may cancel programs due to bad weather. If Irvine cancels a program, fees will be refunded. If you cancel your reservation less than one week before the program, no refund will be given.

PAYMENT IS REQUIRED AT TIME OF REGISTRATION.

FOR KIDS *continued*

Please dress for messy art-making and exploration! Ages 1-2 (with parent).

Mondays, Sept. 15-Dec. 15

(no class Nov. 24)

10 – 11 a.m.

Per semester: \$150 members,

\$200 non-members

TALES AND TAILS!

Join Irvine for a few animal stories followed by an up-close interaction with Irvine's animal friends! All ages (with adult).

Every Friday Sept. 19-Dec. 19

(except Oct. 24 and Nov. 28)

10 – 10:45 a.m.

Free!

**DAY OFF CAMP |
ROSH HASHANAH**

No school and no plans today? Explore outdoors with us instead! Expect trail walks, nature games, crafts, stories, animal encounters and more.

Children should wear nature-friendly clothing and bring a lunch. For more information, visit our website. Ages 6-9.

Thursday, September 25

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

\$65 members, \$75 non-members

FUN IN THE MUD

Prepare to dig in the mud to discover the importance of soil and how it provides a habitat for all sorts of creatures. The muddier you get, the more you learn! Ages 3-5 (with adult). Siblings welcome.

Thursday,

September 25

10 – 11 a.m.

Free!

New FREE
program for
preschoolers!

**DAY OFF CAMP |
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

No school and no plans today? Explore outdoors with us instead! Expect trail walks, nature games, crafts, stories, animal encounters and more.

Children should wear nature-friendly clothing and bring a lunch. For

more information, visit our website.

Ages 6-9.

Friday, October 17

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

\$65 members, \$75 non-members

**DAY OFF CAMP | AIMS
CONFERENCE**

No school and no plans today? Explore outdoors with us instead!

Expect trail walks, nature games, crafts, stories, animal encounters and more. Children should wear nature-friendly clothing and bring a lunch. For more information, visit our website. Ages 6-9.

Monday, October 20

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

\$65 members, \$75 non-members

COLORS OF THE WIND

The approach of the cool fall breeze marks the change of colors throughout Irvine's forest and meadow. Enjoy a hike to look at this rainbow of natural color found in the leaves, flowers and fall berries, then create your own work of natural art to enjoy all season long. All ages.

Sunday, October 26

1 – 2 p.m.

Free!

FUR AND FEATHERS

Join us for a stroll through the woods and see how it transitions from fall to winter. During the walk, we will focus on a different part of what makes the forest a special and magical place to explore and how we can help keep it that way! This is a great way for new members or those thinking of membership to find out what Irvine is all about. Come dressed for the weather! Ages 3-5 (with adult). Siblings welcome.

Saturday, November 1

10 – 11 a.m.

Free!



DAY OFF CAMP | ELECTION DAY

No school and no plans today? Explore outdoors with us instead! Expect trail walks, nature games, crafts, stories, animal encounters and more. Children should wear nature-friendly clothing and bring a lunch. For more information, visit our website. Ages 6-9.

Tuesday, November 4

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

\$65 members, \$75 non-members

**DAY OFF CAMP | SCHOOL
CONFERENCE DAY**

No school and no plans today? Explore outdoors with us instead! Expect trail walks, nature games, crafts, stories, animal encounters and more. Children should wear nature-friendly clothing and bring a lunch. For more information, visit our website. Ages 6-9.

Friday, November 14

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

\$65 members, \$75 non-members

FOR PRETEENS & TEENS

SWOOPING SWALLOWS

Are you interested in nature but need more than a kids program? This naturalist-led series introduces youth to competitive and scientific birding opportunities as part of the Youth Birding League. Learn easy identification techniques, find out how to bird on a team and visit new places month to month. You will make new friends, learn to bird and create many memorable moments! Activities culminate in a day-long Bird-a-Thon in the spring. Ages 10 & up.

Saturday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m. – noon
(Finding Fall Warblers)

Saturday, Oct. 25, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
(Hawk Watch)

Saturday, Nov. 8, 10 a.m. – noon
(Feeder Watch)

Saturday, Dec. 13, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
(unofficial Christmas Bird Count – bring lunch!)

\$5 for members, \$15 non-members

FOR FAMILIES

TRASH TO TREASURE EVENT

Like bargains? Just cleaned out the attic? Turn your “trash” into someone’s treasure! Join Irvine for its 2nd annual Trash to Treasure Event! Just \$25 reserves a space. You keep all the proceeds from your sales. Spots are first come, first serve! You must bring your own tables and chairs. Vendors may arrive at 8 a.m. to setup.

Saturday, September 6
9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Free to attend; \$25 to sell



Community yard sales are a great way to recycle!

SO-LONG TO SUMMER CAMPFIRE SING-A-LONG

The days are getting shorter, so let’s celebrate while we still have a sliver of summer. Sing songs, tell tales and, best of all, roast s’mores as we salute a wonderful summer!

Friday, September 19 (rain date Sept. 26)
6:15 – 8 p.m.

\$5 for members, \$15 non-members

PUMPKINFEST

PumpkinFest is a fun event for families and communities to celebrate the delights of autumn. Each October, hundreds of families gather at Irvine to enjoy a wholesome day of music, food and fun. Hayrides, alpacas, jugglers, face painting and more! All activities are including in the fee.

Saturday, October 11, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

AND Sunday, October 12, 12 – 4 p.m.
\$15 per child. Free for adults and children under 2 years old.

CAMPFIRE PUMPKIN PIE

One of our favorite fall treats has been around much longer than you may have thought! Come learn how important the pumpkin was to the first settlers, and discover the original version of pumpkin pie. Guests will get to prepare and taste this campfire cooked dessert! Ages 5 & up (with adult).

Saturday, October 18

5:30 – 7 p.m.

\$5 members; \$15 non-members

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH TRAINING

Project FeederWatch is a citizen science project in which YOU can collect data to send to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It’s fun and easy, and Irvine is looking for volunteers. Participate as part of Irvine’s volunteer team or record data from your own backyard bird feeders. Come to the training to learn more and find out how you can help! Ages 7 & up (with adult).

Friday, November 7, 10:30 a.m. –

12:30 p.m. OR

Saturday, November 8, 10 a.m. – noon
Free!

OWL MOON

Hear the story of a young girl as she goes on a search for owls by the moonlight. Then, enjoy a short walk out to Irvine’s meadow to watch the moon rise as you listen for owls with a naturalist!

Saturday, December 6

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

\$5 for members, \$15 non-members

FOR ADULTS

FALL VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING

Become a volunteer naturalist at Irvine! This 3-session course will teach you how to lead educational trips for school groups. We’ll cover field trip themes, natural history, trail activities and teaching techniques. No experience necessary – just bring enthusiasm for working with kids!

Tuesday, September 16,
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 18,
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 20, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
\$30 deposit, refunded at conclusion of season

MARYLAND MASTER NATURALIST COURSE

This 7-week training course taught by Irvine, Masonville Cove and National Aquarium staff and local environmental specialists covers natural history of Maryland, environmental interpretation and conservation stewardship. Classes alternate between the sponsors’ locations. After completing the classroom training, volunteers must complete 40 hours of volunteer service with Irvine, Masonville Cove or the National Aquarium.

Tuesdays, September 9 – October 21 and
Saturday, October 18

9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

\$250

BEARS AND BREWS

Historically common throughout Maryland, black bears were almost extirpated from the state by the mid-1960s. However, over the last 30 years, the black bear population has steadily increased. Bears are now common in western Maryland and slowly moving east. Learn about current research on bear biology, how Maryland's DNR is managing bear habitat and how to better co-exist with our largest terrestrial mammal. Dinner and drinks provided. Presentation by Harry Spiker, Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Our popular Eat, Drink & Learn series returns!

Thursday, September 18
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
\$30 for members; \$40 for non-members

DUSK WALKS

Each season brings new flora and fauna to Irvine's trails. Be the first to discover what the changes have to offer. This naturalist led 1-to-1.5 mile, slow-paced walk is perfect for amateur birders, photographers and general nature enthusiasts. Be sure to wear long pants (tick protection!). Hikes last about 1.5 hours. Focus topics coincide with our Eat, Drink, and Learn series. Ages 12 & up recommended.

Wednesdays, September 24 & October 22
6 p.m.
Free!

HIVES IN THE CITY

All over North America, honey bees are faltering from a myriad of problems. Interestingly, news about their struggles has caused the emergence of a new kind of beekeeper, one who is often young, female and seeking to provide honey bees a safe home in the city. Author Alison Gillespie spent a year following urban beekeepers in several Mid-Atlantic cities, and then wrote about the experience in her book *Hives in the*

City: Keeping Honey Bees Alive in an Urban World. Bees form an important link for people to the natural world, and do so in many surprising locations. Her talk will include an overview of the current research on Colony Collapse Disorder and ways that all of us – even those who don't keep bees – can help these important creatures thrive in any location. Light refreshments will be served. Books will be available for purchase and signing!

Tuesday, October 14
7 – 8 p.m.
Free for members; \$10 non-members

THE NATURE PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Looking for a nature-based preschool? Then come out to play! Join us for a casual, drop-in open house to discover our natural approach to learning. Our licensed, nationally accredited preschool provides a wholesome foundation for learning. Little ones are always welcome!

Sunday, October 26
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Free!

NATURAL PLAY SPACES CONFERENCE

Join presenters and partners from all over the region for this special professional development workshop. Enlightening speakers and practical how-to discussions will encourage you to get your natural play space underway! A special on-site project is also planned. Please call 443-738-9213 for pricing and complete details.

Thursday, November 6
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH TRAINING

Project FeederWatch is a citizen science project in which YOU can collect data to send to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It's fun and easy, and Irvine is looking for volunteers. Participate as part of Irvine's volunteer

team or record data from your own backyard bird feeders. Come to the training to learn more and find out how you can help!

Friday, November 7, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. OR
Saturday, November 8, 10 a.m. – noon
Free!

BUGS AND BOURBON

Join University of Maryland Professor Michael Raupp for an entertaining discussion on insects. Learn about the important ecosystem services they provide and how bugs 'make the world go around.' Topics will include pollination, integrated pest management, invasive exotic bugs, the importance of diversity for sustainability, and the difference between good bugs and bad bugs. Catering provided by one of Irvine's preferred caterers, Chef's Expression.

Thursday, November 20
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
\$30 for members,
\$40 non-members



TELLABRATION!

TELLABRATION! brings together the world's most celebrated storytellers, to delight, captivate and mesmerize audiences with their tales. Guilds and storytelling enthusiasts all around the globe will share their storytelling talents in concerts held in cities and towns to celebrate the art. Irvine is proud to host some of Baltimore's own great storytellers in cooperation with the Baltimore Folk Music Society. Enjoy crafts, refreshments, dancing and, of course, wonderfully vibrant stories. A children's story and animal encounter room will be open at 2:30 p.m. All ages.

Sunday, November 23
2 – 5 p.m.
Free!

Fall 2014 Programs

Irvine Nature Center



Established as a non-profit environmental education organization in 1975, Irvine Nature Center educates and inspires current and future generations to explore, respect and protect nature. Irvine fulfills its mission through outdoor environmental education programs and events. Program offerings include public nature programs, Summer Nature Camp, school field trips, The Nature Preschool, Nature in the Classroom, teacher professional development, group programs and special events. Irvine features a green building, a trail system with 6 miles of trails, native plant gardens, live animals, interactive exhibits, a kid's corner and the Nature Store. Irvine also serves as a community resource for natural history information.

We are supported by our members and generous donors.

HOURS
Open daily 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

NATURE STORE HOURS
Daily, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Check out
our brand new
inventory!



ADMISSION

Our trails, gardens and exhibits are open to the public free of charge. We encourage you to sign the guest book and consider a donation or membership, as these gifts keep Irvine green and free. Programs and special events often require a fee.

NATURE STORE

The Nature Store at Irvine has something for everyone: handmade lunch bags, Scrabble tile necklaces, and Irvine shirts and hoodies. We also offer our own special mix of birdseed custom blended based on studies by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

DIRECTIONS

Irvine Nature Center is located in Owings Mills, Maryland at 11201 Garrison Forest Road. From the Baltimore Beltway, take exit 20 (Reisterstown Rd.) headed north toward Garrison. Turn right onto Greenspring Valley Road. At the first stop sign, turn left onto Garrison Forest Road. Go approximately 2 miles to Irvine Nature Center's entrance on the right.

To find out more, visit
WWW.EXPLORENATURE.ORG