

*Nominate an outstanding teacher for the
Margaret O'Neill Early Childhood
Nature Educator Award!*

BACKGROUND

Established in 2013, this award's namesake honors Margaret (Peggy) O'Neill, former Executive Director of Irvine Nature Center. She spearheaded the launch of The Nature Preschool at Irvine, which was licensed in 2010. Under her guidance The Nature Preschool as well as countless early childhood education programs and professional development for early childhood educators flourished and continue to grow today. This award commemorates her dedication to nature-based learning for young children and her support of early childhood educators in this endeavor.

GOALS

- To honor an outstanding early childhood educator who facilitates nature-based learning and provides meaningful programming for children age birth through eight years old.
- To publicly recognize the contributions of early childhood educators and encourage others to choose this field as a career.
- To inspire other educators to infuse nature-based experiences into early childhood education.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Educators including administrators, naturalists, classroom teachers or outdoor educators must be:

- Early childhood educators who demonstrate creativity, enthusiasm, talent and compassion as facilitators of nature-based learning;
- Educators with a creative and inspiring presence that motivates students, families, colleagues and the greater community;
- Educators who demonstrate potential for leadership in the field of early childhood environmental education; and
- Accomplishments that go beyond job requirements and provide models of excellence in the field.

Two awards will be given: one that honors an early- to mid-career educator and the other to honor life-time leadership in the field of early childhood environmental education.

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

The award recipient is notified during the annual Nature Preschool Conference at Irvine Nature Center or, if unable to attend, at another appropriate public gathering.

BENEFITS OF AWARD

In addition to public acknowledgement, the recipients receive complementary attendance to future attendance to the Nature Preschool Conference and a feature story in The Understory.

NOMINATION PROCESS

1. Submit a one-page letter describing why this person deserves this award. Please include the individual's name, title and organization they represent. Be sure to fully describe the accomplishments that make this individual a worthy candidate.
2. Submit the names of two other references that could speak to this individual's talent as an educator or administrator in the field of early childhood environmental education. This might include previous students, their families, a colleague or supervisor.
3. If available, please submit the nominee's resume and/or any other information that might help the committee learn more about why the nominee should be considered.

NOTE: We are not able to return any materials, so please do not send original copies.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: April 31st.

You may submit information via fax (410) 902-8210, email **Monica@ExploreNature.org** or by post:

O'Neill Award Committee
Irvine Nature Center
11201 Garrison Forest Road
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Please direct questions to Monica Wiedel-Lubinski, Director of The Nature Preschool at Irvine Nature Center by phone at 443-738-9213 or via email at **Monica@ExploreNature.org**.