



Earthplace

The Nature Discovery Center

Warming Up To Winter A Celebration of Winter Inside & Out January 21, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. \$20 per family

Celebrate the fun of a real New England winter at our January Winter Warm-Up.

12 Noon: Woodland family hike with naturalist Miss Becky. Learn how our local wildlife survive in the cold weather. Look for tracks and signs of wild animals and possibly spot a hunting hawk. Guaranteed to be brisk and entertaining.

1:00 p.m. Enjoy a roaring bonfire with hot chocolate and s'mores. Maybe the wild turkeys will come by.

2:30 p.m. Drum-N-Dance with Randy Brody. Get your kids up and dancing to the drum circle beat. Fun, interactive program for families and kids of all ages. Drums and other percussion instruments provided.

3:30 p.m. Nature walk to learn how the plants withstand the wintery blasts and frozen ground. From the tiniest mosses to the largest trees, winter's cold bites them all.

All Day Activities: Make Inuit snow goggles, a crystal snowflake and a snowflake catcher. Our Animal Ambassadors, the ferret, the rabbit and the snake, will help explain how the local wildlife copes with winter. Outdoors, make a colorful ice creation from ice blocks while enjoying some hot chocolate. Explore our collections of local rocks and crystalline minerals in Natureplace. The Firehouse Hot Dog cart will provide lunch. Snow or no snow, this will be one FUN day!



News

Winter 2012

From the Executive Director's Desk



The things you see when walking down the street...

Many of you know that I live on the Earthplace property. But many of you may not know that I love to walk and try to average 10 – 15 miles per week "on the hoof" so to speak - with aspirations to significantly increase that average in the not too distant future.

While some of these miles are indoors – most are outdoors along some favorite routes to the Saugatuck train station, downtown Westport, Winslow Park, Willowbrook Cemetery and a number of locations in between.

Usually these treks begin just before dawn - a time that affords me quiet, carless streets and opportunities to see what the wild things that share our space are up to.

There is magic when a great horned owl glides silently in front of me from one side of Woodside Avenue to the other; when the albino white-tailed deer that many Earthplace neighbors know darts past me like a ghost; or when the red fox watches me from a driveway I'm passing by.

continued on page 2

A Night Out for Nature

Saturday, November 12 was a magical night of nature and butterflies. Over 150 friends of Earthplace gathered at Brooklawn Country Club to honor long time trustee and tireless volunteer Julia Mally, as the 2011 Environmental Advocate. David Mally and Katie Blackburn were honored as Junior Advocates.



*Honoree Julia Mally
with Board President,
Carolyn Trabuco*



*Earthplace Trustee,
Mark Hawkins
with Kim Beaumont,
Down Under Kayaking owner*



*Camp Director
Becky Newman and Andrew
Wiles toasting with
Earthplace inspired
honey cocktails.*

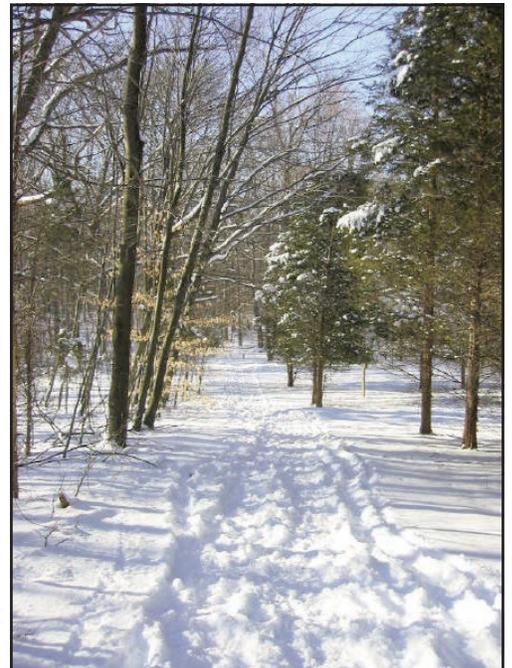


*Trustee Sean Timmons
and his wife Mary Alice
with Executive Director
John Horkel.*

Seen Around the Sanctuary

Winter is showing itself on the Earthplace property. The ground is hard; the leaves are dry and brown. But no leaves means a better view. Now is the time to see into the woods and fields. Look for old bird's nests.

White-footed mice use them as winter homes by pulling those fallen leaves over the nest as a roof. With a layer of snow on top, it makes a cozy retreat. The Great Horned Owl is hooting at sundown in the pines by the entrance field. It's mating time for these birds. They will be sitting on eggs in a nest made by a hawk last spring. Talk about recycling! The woodchuck holes will have a rim of frost crystals around the entrance. The moisture comes from the sleeping animal's breath. It may seem quiet and lifeless, but as John Muir said " Most people are on the world, not in it - having no conscious sympathy or relationship to anything about them..." It's a great time to open the eyes and ears and dive into the natural world around you!



**PRESERVE
OPEN SPACE:**

GIVE THE GIFT
OF EARTHPLACE

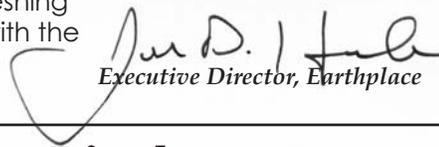
From the Executive Director's Desk, continued from page 1

There's more than a bit of aggravation when I'm bombarded by tree nuts and bits of branches dropped by hordes of squirrels feeding high in the trees that overarch many of the streets I visit.

There's humor and an appreciation for wildlife survival skills when a piece of a bagel drops out of a tree in front of me on Main Street followed quickly by the hungry gull that dropped it. And then to see that one of the bags of baked goods that had been delivered to the entrance of a local coffee shop had been raided by that very gull. There's tragedy when a pair of very, very aggressive robins chase and fight each other in the middle of Imperial Avenue, pay no heed to an approaching SUV and pay the price.

And there is military-like drama as red-winged blackbirds rise like fighter jets from each of their well-defined territories along the banks of the Saugatuck River to intercept, challenge and ward off a passing hawk.

Walking is a certainly healthful thing to do but for me walking quietly along the streets and across the bridges in Westport at early dawn is also a mentally and spiritually refreshing experience that reconnects me with the nature that is all around us.



Executive Director, Earthplace

Report from the Nursery School: Nature-based education teaches kindness



At Earthplace Nursery School we enjoy all aspects of the wonderful world of nature. Whenever we read an article about how being outdoors helps children, we appreciate that our school is part of a nature center. Research demonstrates that children who spend more time outdoors are better able to focus on learning activities. Bullying was substantially reduced at a school in Scotland where they transformed a playground to an interactive nature space. We have always known that the kindness we model and learn about with the animals that live around us at Earthplace translates to learning to be kind to one another in the classroom.

Native Amphibians Display Coming to Animal Hall

The Animal Hall is happy to announce some exciting new changes that will be happening in 2012. Among these will be the unveiling



A salamander and an American Toad



of a brand new display showcasing some of Connecticut's native amphibians. Visitors will be able to get an up close look at these amazing creatures which will include an American toad, spotted salamander, and Green Frog.

Ever wonder how to tell the difference between a male and female Green Frog, or why amphibians feel slimy? Be sure to talk to our animal specialists in the Animal Hall to learn the

answers to these questions as well as all kinds of other fascinating facts about amphibians and the other wildlife ambassadors that reside at Earthplace. If you visit the Animal Hall at the right time, you might even be lucky enough to watch the Green Frog munching on his favorite food – live crickets! Be sure to check the Earthplace website for other news from the Animal Hall and visit often so you don't miss any of the fun!

After-School Program JUNIOR ANIMAL CARE TECHNICIAN



A behind-the-scenes look at a day in the life of an Animal Care Technician.

Attendees of this four-week after-school program will participate in the care and upkeep of a live animal collection. At the conclusion of the program, participants will have the opportunity to present newly acquired skills and knowledge during a Saturday presentation at Earthplace.

Learning experiences will include: snake handling, raptor feeding, mammal grooming and more.

THURSDAYS:
JAN. 19 & 26, FEB. 2 & 9,
4-5 P.M.

SATURDAY, FEB. 11,
1:30 - 4 P.M.

\$100 members, \$140 non-members
Pre-registration required

Youth Programs

All About It Tuesdays at 4 p.m.

Nature programs for preschool aged children.
January 17 - Animals in Winter
February 28 - Clouds
March 20 - Animal Tracks
Please register.



Nature Fun

Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

Grades K-5

January 18 - Mammals
February 29 - Amphibians
March 21 - Trees and Flowers
Please register.

Science Fun

Tuesdays, Wednesdays
& Thursdays at 4 p.m.

Grades K-5

Week of 1/10 - Magnetism
Week of 2/7 - Fiction
Week of 3/13 - Airplanes
Please register.

Together Time Saturdays at 2:30 p.m.

Join us for a trail hike, a music for kids program, or a live animal meet and greet. Each week we promise something fun for the whole family. No registration required. Free for members.

February Vacation Fun, 2/21 & 2/22

Drop-off morning program for children age pre-K through grade 1. See website for details and to register.

February Vacation Together Time, 2/21 - 2/24

Nature and animal programs at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. each day.

EARTHPLACE SUMMER CAMP

One-week sessions
June 18 through August 10

Our 62-acre wildlife sanctuary is an outdoor classroom. Trail hikes, live animal visits, group games, field trips, canoe outings and overnights are all part of our program. See website for details.

Fun for 1's & 2's

Children and caregivers play together and participate in a variety of art, science and nature-oriented activities. Themes and activities change from week to week. Maximum of 8 children per class.

1's Group:

Mondays, 9:10 - 10:10 a.m.

Spring 2012:

Monday, 1/9 - Monday, 5/14
Child must be 1-year-old to attend.

2's Group:

Two class sections: Wednesdays or Fridays, 9:10 - 10:10 a.m.

Spring 2012 -

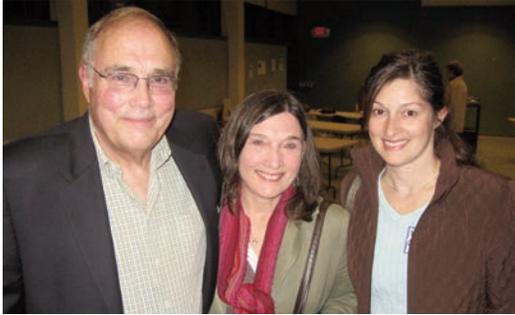
Wednesday, 1/11 - Friday 5/18
Children must be two-years-old by December 31, 2011.



www.earthplace.org

Harbor Watch Volunteer Party

The Harbor Watch Annual Dinner brought together over sixty HW volunteers and guests to enjoy a meal and learn about the HW projects and activities that took place during 2011.



Dick with CT DEEP Marine Fisheries Biologist, Penny Howell and CT DEEP Water Management Analyst, Kelly Streich.



Dick Harris with State Senator and Assistant Majority Leader, Bob Duff.



Student interns and volunteers gather for a shared conversation and lively meal.



Adult volunteers enjoy sharing shories.

New Trustees

Recently our board unanimously voted in three new trustees:

Michael Byrne, Norwalk: Michael lives in the Silvermine area of Norwalk with his wife Karen and son Sean, a recent Earthplace Nursery School graduate. Michael is a real estate professional and he recently chaired the successful Night Out for Nature gala dinner auction. He says of Earthplace "I am proud of our history of preservation. Earthplace is a small organization with large goals. For over fifty years our staff and members have shown resolve to conserve the environment, leadership to act as stewards over land and water and passion to educate our community. I am excited about the future of Earthplace and the role we can all play in protecting our local resources."

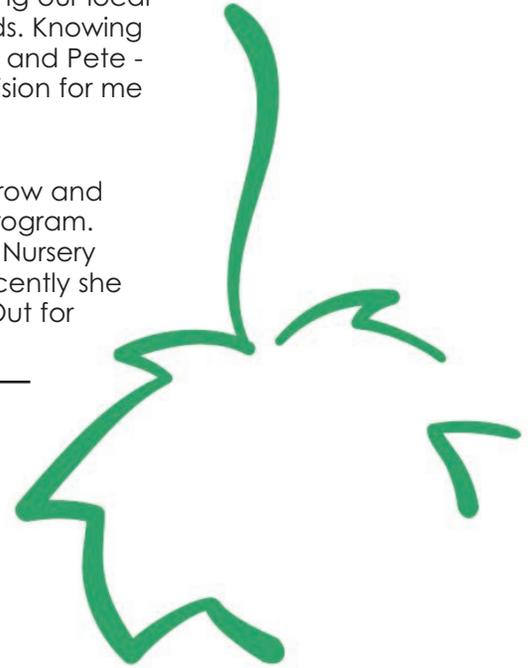
Mark Hawkins, Fairfield: Mark is a longstanding and valued member of the Harbor Watch Volunteer Corps. Professionally he is an Executive Mortgage Broker with William Raveis and he has also been helping Kim Beaumont open her Saugatuck branch of Down Under Kayaking. When asked about joining the Board, Mark said "My interest in Harbor Watch has always been about protecting our local waters, especially the oyster beds. Knowing that these two gentlemen - Dick and Pete - are fully invested made the decision for me to join the board an easy one."

Carolyn Jumper, Westport:

Carolyn watched her children grow and develop in the Nursery School program. She was the former Head of the Nursery School Parent Organization. Recently she worked (tirelessly) on the Night Out for Nature event.



Staff members Becky Newman and Heidi Hanson at "Celebrate the Season of Giving" where hundreds of Westporters gathered to launch the holiday season.



Nature Links We Like

www.birdjam.com

A fun site to help you identify the birdsongs in your back yard.

www.sciencenewsforkids.org

From the Intel Science folks, science news to inspire children and adults alike.

www.photography.nationalgeographic.com

Always breathtaking views of our natural world.



Earthplace

The Nature Discovery Center

10 Woodside Avenue
P.O. Box 165
Westport, CT 06881

PRSR. STD.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #7
Westport, CT

w w w . e a r t h p l a c e . o r g

Animal Care Technician Training Program begins (4th-6th grade) Registration required.	Thursday, January 19, 4 p.m.
Warming Up To Winter: A Celebration of Winter Inside and Out Bonfire, interactive drum circle, s'mores. Activities for the whole family.	Saturday, January 21, 11 - 4 p.m.
Winter Music and Songs with Deirdre and Sean Murtha	Saturday, January 28, 2:30 p.m.
Summer Camp Registration Begins For members	Wednesday, February 1
Vacation Days Daily programs for kids, indoors and out.	February 17 - 24
Nursery School Wine Tasting and Fundraiser	Saturday, March 10 - 7 p.m.
Nursery School Ice Cream Social	Saturday, March 31, 1:30 p.m.

Coming Events

