A WORD FROM JEANETTE

Dear Educators,

We’re getting ready for another great year of elementary school programs at the preserve! We strive to facilitate engaging experiences in nature which inspire exploration, foster a sense of wonder, and share the joy of discovering new things with you and your students. Our programs are designed to complement classroom curriculum, and take students outdoors to experience what they are learning about in the classroom. Thus, each program we offer is correlated to grade level content expectations, and is designed to be uniquely hands-on and interactive. We also provide pre- and post-visit materials for use in your classroom for most of our programs, which are sent with your confirmation materials and can be downloaded on our website. To learn more about the programs we offer and important information to plan your visit, please visit our website.

Budgets are tight everywhere we look. We strive to keep our program costs affordable for schools. However, after holding the price constant for the past five years, we made the difficult decision to raise program fees to $3 per person, in order to cover our costs and adjust for shrinking budgets. As always, there is no fee for teachers to attend programs, and National Heritage Academy Schools are eligible to attend our programs free of charge (thanks to a funding grant). If the rise in cost precludes your school from visiting, please contact me to discuss additional options.

I hope you enjoy our new seasonal newsletter for educators. In each edition, we will share with you what’s new with our school programs, registration information, and inspiring ideas for your classroom on seasonal topics. Watch your e-mail for future winter and spring editions, and check out our new Pinterest page for more inspiring ideas throughout the year.

Whether it is your first visit or your tenth visit, we look forward to exploring the preserve with you and your students. Together, we can connect children with nature and inspire them to be good stewards of our natural resources.
Blessings,
Jeanette M. Henderson
Program Manager

REGISTER FOR FALL PROGRAMS

Fall program topics for Pre-K to 6th grade include: Sensory Adventures, Amazing Animals, Terrific Trees, and Beech Maple Forest Exploration. These programs provide information about our local ecosystem and the flora and fauna of West Michigan, encourage stewardship, and help students develop a sense of place.

Fall programs run from September 30 - November 15. Programs are 90 minutes in length, and cost $3 per student. Additional fees may apply for longer programs.

For more information visit our website, or contact Julie Wilbourn to register your class. To register, we will need your name and school, desired program topic, grade level, number of students and adults, preferred dates/times, and the best way to contact you.

INSPIRING IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Each newsletter, we will share with you some our favorite ways to
get students outside learning about the natural environment. You do not need to have forests or fields surrounding your school; school yards can work just as well for experiential learning. Our school yard activities are hands-on, require few supplies, and are easily adaptable to meet your students’ needs. We will also share with you some of our favorite storybooks, art projects, and other resources to enhance learning in the classroom. Additional ideas and photos of art projects and storybooks can be found on our Pinterest page.

SEEDS
In this edition, we share with you some of our inspiring ideas for teaching about seeds. Autumn is a great time to learn about seeds and seed dispersal, as bushes are ripe with berries, grasses are filled with seeds, and trees are dropping their nuts. Most schools have some trees, bushes, and weeds on their property which enable outdoor exploration to learn about seeds. Below are some of our favorite activities and resources.

SCHOOL YARD ACTIVITY: Seed Hike & Observation

Materials needed (one each per student): Egg cartons, hand lenses, old socks

As a class, take a walk through your school yard or local park to see how many different kinds of seeds and fruit you can find. Students can use a hand lens to observe the seeds and fruit up close. Are all the seeds alike? Why do different plants have different kinds of seeds? Explain seed dispersal mechanisms to them. Can your students figure out how their seeds move? Do they float in the air (milkweed and dandelion seeds)? Do they stick to the fur of animals (burdock seeds)? Do animals move and bury them (acorns)? Do animals eat and excrete them (many types of berries)?
Students can also wear an old sock over their shoes or on their hands to see how many different seeds are collected on their hike. Students can organize seeds in an egg carton so they can be used for further observations, experiments, and art projects.

**FAVORITE STORYBOOKS**

Storybooks are wonderful tools to introduce students to science topics. Information about these books can be found on our [Pinterest page](#). Many of them have accompanying teacher’s guides on the publisher’s homepage.

Below are some of our favorite storybooks about seed diversity, dispersal mechanisms, and plant life cycles.

- *A Fruit is a Suitcase for Seeds* by Jean Richards
- *A Seed is Sleepy* by Dianna Hutts Aston
- *What Kinds of Seeds are These?* by Heidi Bee Roemer
- *Who will Plant a Tree?* Jerry Pallotta
- *This is a Sunflower* by Lola M. Schaefer

**ART PROJECTS**

**Seed Collage Wreath**

Materials needed:
- Paper plates (one per child), a variety of seeds (may include popcorn kernels, beans, and rice), glue, scissors, raffia or ribbon.

(Before class, cut out the center of the paper plates to create a wreath shape, and punch two holes on the top of the plate for hanging.) Give each student a paper plate wreath, and encourage them to glue seeds onto the paper plate. They can create a collage, pattern, or picture with their seeds. When finished, attach raffia to the wreath and make a bow, then hang the wreath on a door or window.
Traveling Seed Creations

Materials needed: A variety of recycled materials and craft supplies, glue, tape, clay, scissors, etc.

Challenge students to invent or design their own seeds that travel in many different ways. Give them a list of the different types of traveling seeds they can choose to make (helicopters, air passengers, parachutes, hitchhikers, animal express, cannonballs, and boats), and provide them with a variety of recycled materials and craft supplies. Allow them plenty of time to create and test the way their imaginary seed moves. When everyone is finished, have them bring their seeds together and demonstrate how their invented seed travels.