What’s inside....

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Nature Heals

The winter was mild, spring came early and here we are, not remembering what we did last week! The Coronavirus has stricken families, changed perspectives, and demolished daily routines in a way that none of us have experienced before, so where do we turn?

At Earthplace, we teach our young charges to find comfort in nature, a sense of place, and belonging. With our new focus on remote online programming and responding to growing financial stresses, it’s been awfully hard to practice what we teach, but nature beckons...

“And into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul.” —John Muir

So for this spring day, I wish us all a chance to daydream about something wonderful found in nature. I miss watching the children do this with ease—making up imaginary scenes and figures just by running a stick through the mud, and then telling their friends a story about what they created.

Maybe for us, images and feelings of comfort are already memorized, waiting to be ignited by a walk outside.

“I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.” —Anne Frank

Nature does have a way to heal us, even in our back gardens. Its healing powers are everywhere: in carefully raked out beds, the smell of freshly turned soil, and the hope of newly planted bulbs. My favorite stress release (between Zoom meetings) is to lie on the grass and gaze at the clouds moving across the sky without earthly reference points. Five minutes can seem like an eternity.

“Nature has the power to heal because it is where we are from, it is where we belong and it belongs to us as an essential part of our health and our survival.” —Nooshin Razani

At Earthplace, we are looking for new ways to bring nature home and us home to nature, brightening our days of social isolation. I am proud of the way our staff and our community have responded for the betterment of all.

“Nature itself is the best physician.” —Hippocrates

As we glide past the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, there is one question to leave with you: when this health crisis is behind us, can we do it again? Can we follow the advice of the scientific community and start to heal and protect Mother Nature itself?

Stay healthy and enjoy the spring!

Tony McDowell
Executive Director
You never know what surprise awaits you while walking the trails at Earthplace!

This winter two juvenile eagles were spotted, much to the excitement of Earthplace visitors. Immature bald eagles spend the first four years of their lives in nomadic exploration of vast territories and can fly hundreds of miles per day.

Adult bald eagles migrate when lakes and rivers freeze in the fall and usually head coastward or to open water. The bald eagle can be found in growing concentrations throughout the United States and Canada, particularly near large bodies of water. This is fantastic news because the 20th century was rough on the bird that serves as a proud symbol of our country.

Victims of trapping, shooting, and poisoning, as well as the pesticide DDT (which thinned their eggs shells and led to reproductive failures), bald eagles were seen soaring our skies less and less often in the mid-20th century as their population fell. With regulations in place and DDT banned, the eagle population rebounded, and we are thrilled to welcome them here in our nature sanctuary at Earthplace.

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Stay-At-Home Activities
New to the Earthplace website!

These days, when staying safe means staying at home, we know you need ideas to keep you and your family entertained and engaged. We are here to help! This brand-new page on our website includes links and information on fun and educational activities for your family including:

- **Indoor crafts**, such as how to build a toad home and make your own shopping bags from old t-shirts.
- **Online home study**, with lots of great read-out-loud books.
- **Outdoor classroom**, with guides to micro hikes and exploring the smaller elements in the landscape and ecology, and how to make your own seed bombs to help pollinators.
- **Online study resources**, including special needs resources and virtual tours of our national parks, and more.

We will continuously add new content; please keep checking back!

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Visit our new YouTube Channel!

Since we are currently unable to welcome visitors to Earthplace for our programs, we are bringing Earthplace to your home!

We have updated our YouTube channel and are sharing short educational videos and storytime videos featuring our Animal Hall residents. We miss you and hope our videos bring you some joy!

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Kids getting restless? How about a Scavenger Hunt at Earthplace!

There’s no better time to get the kids moving and exploring with a scavenger hunt in the great outdoors.

Find the following items and check them off as you go:

- The bear statue
- A hollow log
- A cedar tree
- Something you never knew written on the Raccoon Swamp sign
- A boardwalk
- Skunk cabbage
- Lichen growing on a tree or rock
- A bench for sitting & listening
- A singing bird
- Something you never knew written on the Goldenrod Meadow sign
- Tall grass
- A rock wall
- A giant tree
- Roots growing across the ground
- Something you never knew written on the Frog Pond sign
- A frog or a tadpole in the pond
- A flying bird
- Frogs croaking
- Green moss on a rock
- A stick longer than your arm
- Green ferns
- A maple leaf
- An insect
We are excited to introduce **Naturalist Notes**, a monthly blog by Veronica Swain, our Associate Director of Nature Programs and naturalist expert.

The blog gives readers an opportunity to learn more about their local ecology. Veronica grew up with a passion for plants and animals and loves to observe the cycles of life here at Earthplace and in her own backyard.

The blog provides fun facts and fascinating info on the plants and wildlife in the area as well as tips for how you can live more in tune with the surrounding environment. **You can find Naturalist Notes under the News & Events tab on our website.**

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**HARBOR WATCH UPDATE**

Earthplace may be closed, but certain activities in the Harbor Watch laboratory are continuing even during this unusual time.

To maintain our state certification, which sets a high bar for the quality of work we perform, Harbor Watch staff must conduct a variety of daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual tests. These tests can range from simple tasks like ensuring all of our incubators are at just the right temperature to complex analyses to confirm that all of our bacteria supplies are free of contaminants and produce highly accurate data.

Here, you can see our Laboratory Director, **Kasey Tietz**, maintaining social distancing while also getting some important science done! By keeping up with these quality-control procedures during our closure, we are ensuring that Harbor Watch will be able to get back into the field for sampling as quickly as possible once it is safe to do so.

We look forward to seeing you on the water again soon!

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**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

**During these unprecedented times**, many small businesses and non-profits are struggling, including Earthplace. Our building may be closed to the public, but we are very active behind the scenes. Our 50+ animals need daily care and our building and grounds maintenance is ongoing. Solo volunteers for outdoor work are welcome. Call (203) 557-4401 to schedule.

We would be grateful for your financial support during these difficult times. **Any donation, no matter how small, makes a big difference.** You can donate online at [earthplace.org](http://earthplace.org) or mail a check. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts!
SUBURBAN SCIENCE:
BUMBLE BEE WATCH

Bumble bees are widely distributed across the country, so the best way to keep track of them is with a group of volunteers equipped with cameras in states across the U.S. With any luck, you, as part of our CT team, might help us to find remnant populations of rare species before they go extinct.

Participating in Bumble Bee Watch is simple. To get started, create an account via the “sign in” tab at the top of the page of the Bumblebeewatch website. Once you have an account, be on the lookout for bumble bees in your garden, in parks (once it’s safe to visit them), or any other natural areas you frequent.

Snap a photo when you spot a black and yellow friend, and then sign in and submit your data via our Bumble Bee Sightings form. Have fun as a field scientist, while learning more about bumble bees and the vital role they play in our environment!

For more information visit: www.bumblebeewatch.org

Bumble Bee Watch is a collaborative effort to track and conserve North America’s bumble bees. This community science project allows individuals to:

• Upload photos of bumble bees to start a virtual bumble bee collection
• Identify the bumble bees in your photos and have your identifications verified by experts
• Help researchers determine the status and conservation needs of bumble bees
• Help locate rare or endangered populations of bumble bees
• Learn about bumble bees, their ecology, and ongoing conservation efforts
• Connect with other community scientists

How to Submit a Sighting

1. Take a photo of a bumble bee
2. Log in and upload your photo
3. Identify your species
4. Sighting will be verified by expert

PRESCHOOL ACCREDITATION & ONLINE SUPPORT DURING CLOSURE

We are proud to announce that Earthplace Preschool has achieved a new five-year term of accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This reflects demonstrated commitment to living out the NAEYC Early Learning Program required best practices every day.

Our preschool program earned perfect scores across all ten standards, and we applaud the efforts of our teachers, administrators, and support staff. We would also like to thank our families for choosing Earthplace Preschool to foster their child’s early childhood education.

During this unprecedented and difficult time, our talented preschool teachers have dedicated themselves to being as supportive as possible by brainstorming on ideas and compiling content to keep our students busy learning. Every week, our preschool teachers send out theme-based, learn-at-home curriculum activities, including short videos (which can be found on our new YouTube channel).

We can’t tell you how much we miss our students during this time!
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
Visit earthplace.org for more information for these & other upcoming events

WOODSIDE BASH &
EARTHPLACE FESTIVAL
SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 3 & 4, 2020
Enjoy a beautiful evening under the stars with craft cocktails, a haunted trail, harvest dinner, live music, camp fire, and open bar.
On Sunday, bring the whole family for a day of nature-based exploration & fun with food trucks, live music, & more.

At Earthplace we envision a community where conscious regard for the natural world guides individual action.