Do the Extra-ordinary!
by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

Do you remember those little gift books you used to give as a kid? You’d spend hours, carefully creating hand-made “coupons” for someone special. The promise was to take an ordinary experience and add a little extra. One might say you’d do the dishes without complaining. Another would say you’d give your parents a hug or plan a movie night. They were fun to make and even more fun when redeemed ... well, except for the chores, but even those would change ordinary activities into extraordinary experiences as grownups would often join in to help.

We can all add a little extra to our ordinary lives. At the Urban Ecology Center, ordinary walks in the woods can become peaceful moments of reflection. A Friday off from school can become a family outdoor adventure on cross-country skis. We can help turn a cabin fever-filled Saturday into an afternoon of sledding followed by hot chocolate. Or an average evening into an extraordinary time of learning how to cook or brew beer with your best friend. Spend time together creating something extraordinary out of the ordinary. It’s just a matter of adding that little extra.

During this holiday season, I challenge you to do something extraordinary with someone you love. Notice I didn’t say buy, I said do. I guarantee that your recipient will remember the excitement of seeing a fox on a snowy hill as you explored together much longer than any material gift you give. To help you get started, please turn to page 3, where you’ll find some “experience coupons” that you can share. I think you’ll like them. And I know you’ll like the experiences that will result. ❤️

Let’s Be Real: Building Authentic Engagement
by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

“An oasis in a city to learn about nature and teach kids about nature.”

This is what one community forum participant said about our Menomonee Valley branch when asked how he would describe the Urban Ecology Center to a friend. Another said “It is a place to have fun and laugh.” And when asked about challenges we can help address in the neighborhood, we heard that we should continue to “increase safety along the bike path,” provide more “options for kids in the neighborhood,” and perhaps add programs to help address “balanced nutrition … Kids eat unhealthy foods.”

These are just a few of the hundreds of comments provided through community forums at each of our branches – conversations with our friends and neighbors that help us to stay real and relevant.

Over the past couple years, the Board and Leadership staff at the Center have created a number of structures and processes aimed at providing authentic, timely guidance from our members, neighbors and constituents. These structures are designed to complement the feedback we already receive through our school partners, the citizen science advisory board of research institutions and surveys that we do for individual programs.

As the Center has grown, we have worked deliberately on building a team of board and committee members with experience and expertise to navigate complex governance issues and support increasing fund development goals, while at the same time ensuring that constituents have influence in program, mission and leadership decisions. In order to provide opportunities for engagement, each branch now has an advisory committee made up of board, staff and neighbors. These committees advise the decisions of the
“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” - Benjamin Franklin

The Washington Park community is calling for YOU! Tell a friend, a co-worker, a relative, or an organization. Tell everyone, at the top of your lungs. Tell someone about the great partnership opportunities at the Urban Ecology Center in Washington Park.

Recently we have been partnering with more and more youth-serving agencies, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee for example, across the entire city and have really enjoyed the opportunity to actively work with and teach our young people about the environment and being responsible stewards. The challenge has been and will continue to be fun and rewarding. Studies have shown that being out in nature helps teens to become calm. Being outdoors reduces stress. What’s more, the Center provides a safe, welcoming place where kids can just hang out after school. My hope is that more organizations that work with young people will become involved in outdoor science education and expose our young people to a more active lifestyle.

I invite you, your organization, or family and friends to stop in and learn about our environment and how you can get involved at the Center. The stories and memories are enough to keep you coming back.

The Urban Ecology Center in Washington Park is one of the best kept secrets on Milwaukee’s north side. Let’s not keep it a secret anymore! 😊

Thank You to Our Contributing Members

Many thanks to the local foundations, corporations and individuals who have donated to the Center. The complete list of contributing members who have given within the last two months can be found on our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org/thankyoulist.

Credits:

The Urban Ecology Center Newsletter is created and distributed through a team effort by the following people: Lianna Bishop, Carijean Buhk, Matthew Gnas, Judy Krause, Jeff McAvoy and Pat Mueller.


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Experiential Gift Coupons!

Use the gift coupons below to give a unique experiential gift to someone special in your life!
Want to give more than we have printed here? Find these coupons on our website at urbanecologycenter.org/giftcoupons

Redeemable for...

- One amazing high five
- An epic bear hug
- A hearty back rub
- A board game match (at the Urban Ecology Center)
- My best joke
- A Secret Handshake
- A game of hide & seek
- ____________________

from ____________________

One XC Ski Adventure!

- One XC ski adventure on ____________________
  with equipment borrowed from the
  Urban Ecology Center.

from ____________________

One Excellent Day of Sledding!

- One excellent Day of Sledding on ____________________
  with a hot cocoa break at
  the Urban Ecology Center.

from ____________________

A trip to all three Urban Ecology Centers!

- A trip to all three Urban Ecology Centers on ____________________
  where we can...
  - Meet native WI animals (all three)
  - Drink coffee/tea/cocoa (all three)
  - Play board games (all three)
  - Race down the slides (Riverside Park & Menomonee Valley)
  - Visit “Lake Wisconsin” (Washington Park)
  - Just hang out (all three)
  - Borrow skis, sleds or snowshoes (all three)
  - ____________________

from ____________________

Good for one Exploration Hike

- Good for one Exploration Hike on ____________________
  through ____________________
  guided by ____________________
  in search of ____________________

from ____________________

Got another idea?

→ Create your own! →

The amazing gift of ____________________

from ____________________

Cut out the coupon you want to give

Fill in the details

Give your gift!

Have fun with your gift recipient!

Fox Illustrations by Gaby Marván
You DO Live Here
by Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

This time of year always gets me thinking about gratitude (I probably say that in every November/December newsletter article). This year, I want to share a story that perfectly captured for me why I’m so grateful to be a part of this work, and why I’m grateful for the support of so many people that make this work possible.

Last spring, I had the opportunity to teach a 3rd grade Neighborhood Environmental Education Project class at our Menomonee Valley branch. It was a glorious late spring day—sunny with just that faintest taste of summer coming around the corner. To be honest, I can’t even remember what the intended topic was, I think it was “natural resources,” but the heart of the class was really just getting kids out experiencing and enjoying the park. We skipped rocks, we climbed trees, we tasted tart grape vines. It was great.

One of the kids was particularly taken with the grape vines. He jokingly pretended to be a grape-vine-obsessed-Mr. Hyde-like monster every time we came upon some. I love it when nature brings out kids’ silly sides!

This kid was so excited about all of the activities that as we were walking I said to him, “You know, if you came back for our Young Scientist Club, you could do this kind of thing all the time after school.” He said, (and I’m not making this up!) “Whoa...that would be like HEAVEN to me!”

Later, as we were walking through the park he said, “Miss, I wish I lived here.” I laughed, and was delighted to tell him, “you DO live here! This park is right in your neighborhood, and it’s yours! You can come whenever you want!”

I really believe that connecting kids and adults to the nature that’s right in their backyard can be fun, empowering and world-widening all at once, and this kid was such a great reminder of that.

I am so proud and happy to be part of this work every day! And I am deeply grateful to the amazing community of people—staff, volunteers, contributing members and our whole “Urban Ecology Center family” who support the work of creating meaningful and empowering experiences in Milwaukee’s green spaces, and letting kids know that “heaven” can be right in their backyard! ♡

Let’s Be Real: Building Authentic Engagement

continued from page 1

board and staff and are charged with the task of maintaining open communication channels with the neighborhood. Community forums are an outgrowth of this work.

Over the past two years, 134 community members engaged in one of seven forums offered at all of our branches. Participants included neighborhood residents and businesses, people coming to the Center for the first time and long standing members, and ages ranging from toddler to older adult. The hosts take notes, facilitating small group discussions so that everyone who attends is able to participate. Over a snack or meal, the forum participants have been able to dig deeply into interests, issues, assets and challenges faced by the Center and the community. At Riverside Park, we even incorporated a walk and a campfire into our forum this fall. Our spaces have been filled with creativity, laughter, listening, sharing and more listening. Forum feedback is guiding the growth and refinement of our program offerings at all of our branches, is informing a plan for renovation at our Washington Park branch and is ensuring that the Board hears the voice of our constituents. This is the kind of authentic engagement we hope for.

In addition, the Board has instituted a new Impact Committee made up of neighbors, Board members, researchers and staff to ensure that the work happening across the entire organization has the desired mission-based effects. Under the guidance of this committee, the Center has refreshed its 8 year-old impact framework and is in the process of determining the best, most cost-effective approaches for ongoing evaluation.

These committees also serve as a pipeline to board membership. Over 30% of our current board members first served on a Board or project steering committee. Our Nominating and Governance Committee relies upon board committees to nominate community and business leaders who also have the practice and commitment of serving on a committee. This has been one of the most reliable ways that we have been able to build such a strong, engaged and talented board. It is the authentic engagement of Board and committee members through our new structures that leads us to recommend the changes to the Article of Incorporation at the Annual meeting this year (described on page 10). We are aiming to formalize ways that ensure deliberate, informed decision making that reflects our culture of authentic community engagement.

Want to get involved? We plan to host forums at least once a year at each branch. Next on the calendar is a community engagement session at Washington Park led by Quorum Architects focused on our facility renovation vision on November 17th at 5:30pm. It is sure to be fun, engaging and valuable.

Questions? Please direct them to Beth at bheller@urbanecologycenter.org. ♡
**Candlelight Walk**

Celebrate the Winter Solstice! Join us for a guided candlelight walk through Riverside Park as we listen to poetry and readings of the season. Then warm up inside by the fire while you enjoy cider, snacks and music. Walks begin every fifteen minutes. Registration not required.

**(RP) Sat., Dec. 19 | 7 - 9 PM**
For adults and teens | $5 (Nonmembers: $10)

**Candlelight Walk for kids**

Enjoy the wonder of a winter night with stories for kids on an easy walk through the woods. Then warm up inside with games and treats. Walks will leave every 15 minutes.

**(RP) Sat., Dec. 19 | 4:30 - 6:30 PM**
For families | Adults: $5 (Nonmembers: $7) Children: $3 (Nonmembers: $5)

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**Christmas Bird Count**

Contribute to bird research during your morning hike. Data we collect contributes to an international database of bird population trends. Walk on the east or west side of town! Dress for a long hike and bring money for brunch.

**(RP) & (MV) Sat., Dec. 20 | 8 AM - 5 PM**
For adults and teens
Free - donations appreciated

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**HOLIDAY CLOSINGS & SPECIAL HOURS**

Normal hours (as listed on page 11) apply except for days listed to the right.

- **MENOMONEE VALLEY**
  - November 12: Closed
  - November 18: Closed
  - November 26 - 30: Closed
  - December 22 - 23: Closed
  - December 24 - 25: Closed
  - December 26: Closed
  - December 29 - 31: Closed
  - January 1: Closed
  - January 2: Closed

- **WASHINGTON PARK**
  - November 26 - 30: Closed
  - December 22 - 23: Closed
  - December 24 - 25: Closed
  - December 26: Closed
  - December 29 - 31: Closed
  - January 1: Closed
  - January 2: Closed

- **RIVERSIDE PARK**
  - November 26 - 29: Closed
  - December 21 - 23: 9 AM - 5 PM
  - December 24 - 25: Closed
  - December 26 - 27: Closed
  - December 28 - 30: 9 AM - 5 PM
  - December 31: Closed
  - January 1: Closed
  - January 2: Closed

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**RIVERSIDE PARK**

It is the wonderful time of year when two of my favorite events occur: the Candlelight Walk (one for adults and one for kids) and the Christmas Bird Count. Both events provide unique ways to celebrate this great season with your friends, family and neighbors.

— Jamie Ferschinger,
Branch Manager - Riverside Park

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**WASHINGTON PARK**

Winter is here so come on out and get warmed up with our Home Brewing Basics Series in November and December. For more kid oriented fun, try a new cuisine at Healthy Korean Cooking for Everyone. Then share your vision for our building with Quorum Architects at our Community Forum.

— Terry Evans,
Branch Manager - Washington Park

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**MENOMONEE VALLEY**

Feeling crafty during the holidays? Stop by for Do it Yourself Thanksgving Crafts or Make Your Own Christmas Ornament. Or, if you want to get outside and stretch your legs, join our Young Scientists for a Thursday afternoon Family Hike.

— Glenna Holstein,
Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley
FAMILY PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

Quick Guide

Martial Arts Class
Hosted by Above the Clouds
Learn discipline, physical awareness and self-confidence. No experience needed! To register visit abovethecloudsmilwaukee.com.
(MV) Every Wed. through Dec. 9 | 5:15 - 6:15 PM
For youth ages 9-15 | Free - donations appreciated

Family Hike
Explore the trails with us on a guided hike through Three Bridges Park. This is a perfect way to see the park as seasons change. We’ll conclude with story time by the fire.
(MV) Thu., Nov. 12 & Dec. 10 | 4 - 6 PM
For families with children | Free - donations appreciated

Saturday Preschool Series: Animals Getting Ready for Winter
Bring your 3-5 year-old and enjoy exploring nature together. We’ll have seasonal indoor and outdoor play, songs, stories and crafts.
(RP) Sat., Nov. 14 | 10 - 11:30 AM
For children ages 3-5 accompanied by an adult | Adults: $5 (Nonmembers: $7) Children: $3 (Nonmembers: $5)

Animal Tracker
Become an animal detective! We will search for tracks in the Valley and learn how animals prepare for winter
(MV) Tues., Nov. 17 & Dec. 15 | 4 - 6 PM
For adults and children ages 6 and older | Adults: $6 (Nonmembers: $9) Children: $4 (Nonmembers: $7)

Three Bridges Park Scavenger Hunt
There are twelve objects hidden all over Three Bridges Park. Can you find them all?
(MV) Sat., Nov. 21 | 10 - 11:30 AM
For adults and children ages 5 and older | Adults: $6 (Nonmembers: $9) Children: $4 (Nonmembers: $7)

Don’t Yourself Thanksgiving Crafts
Get eco-friendly this Thanksgiving. Create your own decorations made entirely out of recycled items. We’ll bring the raw materials — you bring your creativity!
(MV) Sat., Nov. 21 | 10 AM - 4 PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Make Your Own Christmas Ornament
Make the perfect sustainable gift for friends and family — a handmade tree ornament! Materials provided.
(MV) Sat., Dec. 19 | 10 AM - 5 PM
For everyone | Adults: $6 (Nonmembers: $9) Children: $4 (Nonmembers: $7)

Sledding the Slopes of Menomonee Valley
Join us for snow and sledging followed by Aztec Hot Chocolate. The perfect winter activity! If there is no snow, we will hike.
(MV) Sat., Dec. 12 | 10 - 11:30 PM
For families and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Healthy Korean Cooking for Everyone!
Learn how to make delicious Korean food at this hands-on cooking class for families. Menu items include: Kimchi Pancakes and Braised Tofu with Winter Vegetables. Please register by December 9th.
(WP) Sat., Dec. 12 | 1 - 3 PM
For adults and accompanied children | Adults: $6 (Nonmembers: $9) Children: $4 (Nonmembers: $7)

EcoArt Wednesdays
Join us for nature inspired recycled arts and crafts. Take home your very own creation every week!
(MV) Every Wed. except Nov. 18, Dec. 23 & 30 | 4 - 5:30 PM
For families with children age 12 and younger | Free for Young Scientist Club members (Nonmembers: $5 per child)

Fire Time in the Rooftop Tipi
Warm up from playing outside. Drop in and enjoy the warmth and light of the fire in our rooftop tipi.
(RP) Every Sat., except Nov. 28, starting Nov. 21 | 10 AM - 3 PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Animal Feeding
Help feed the Center’s resident turtles, snakes and more!
(WP) & (MV) Every Sat. except Nov. 28, Dec. 26 & Jan. 2 | 1 PM
(RP) Every Sat. except Nov. 28 | 1 PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Science Saturdays and Sundays
Come try these self-led activities. Theme: “Wonder About Water.”
(RP) Self-led, drop-in program available Every Sat. except Nov. 28 | 10 AM - 4 PM
and Every Sun. except Nov. 29 | 1 - 4 PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Nature Rangers
Investigate animals and plants, learn about science, create research projects and more! Sign up for either the Monday or Tuesday session. Fee covers all sessions in November and December.
(RP) Every Mon. or every Tue. through Dec. 15 | 4 - 5:30 PM
For children ages 5 and older | $10 (Nonmember: $15)

Young Scientists Club
From hiking to gardening to helping with research to caring for our animals, every day is a new adventure.
(WP) Every Tue. - Fri. except Nov. 26, 27 & Dec. 22 - Jan. 1 | 4 - 6 PM
and Every Sat. except Nov. 28 & Dec. 26 | 1 - 4 PM
For kids ages 7-12 | $10 annual membership

(MV) Every Tue. & Thu. except Nov. 12, 26, Dec. 22, 24, 29 & 31 | 4 - 6 PM
and Every Sat. except Nov. 28 & Dec. 26 | 1 - 4 PM
For ages 5-12 | $10 annual membership

Find full descriptions and details about these programs on our website www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar

3 WAYS TO REGISTER:

1 ONLINE: www.urbanecologycenter.org
2 BY PHONE: (414) 964-8505
3 IN PERSON: Just stop by!

(RP) = Riverside Park
1500 E. Park Pl

(WP) = Washington Park
1859 N. 40th St.

(MV) = Menomonee Valley
3700 W. Pierce St.

= Accessible for persons with disabilities
Please call 2 weeks ahead of time
**HOMESCHOOL SERIES**

**Physics of Construction**
Bring your hard hats and work belts and study the physics and concepts behind building structures. Starting with simple machines, we will build up to creating our own towers using what we’ve learned.

**Simple Machines** *(WP)* Tue., Nov. 10 | 1 - 3 PM
**Build it!** *(RP)* Tue., Nov. 24 | 1 - 3 PM
**Physics of Construction** *(MV)* Tue., Dec. 8 | 1 - 3 PM
For children ages 5 and older | Free (donations appreciated)
While learning new skills from our staff.

**Building Basics Series**
In this two-session series, we will explore the natural process of fermentation and brew a batch of ale together. The price includes four bottles of finished beer.

**Session 1: Brewing Equipment, Recipes, Preparation & Fermentation** *(WP)* Wed., Nov. 11 | 6 - 8 PM
**Session 2: Bottling and Aging** *(WP)* Wed., Dec. 9 | 6 - 8 PM
For adults age 21 and older | $15 for both sessions (Nonmembers: $20 for both sessions)

**My Family In the Wilderness**
In 2012, Sarah Moore lived in the north woods of Wisconsin for 11 months as part of a wilderness immersion program. Come hear how families lived in hand made lodges, foraged for food, cooked over fire and learned the ways of our hunter gather ancestors.

**Photo Phenology**
Get out your cameras and watch the valley change over the seasons!

**Walk and Talk Series**
Explore the Menomonee Valley branch and Three Bridges Park or Washington Park on a guided tour.

**Coyotes and Red Fox in the City: The UW Urban Canid Project**
Learn how David Drake and his team are radio-collaring coyotes and red fox in the Madison area to better understand how these competitors are using (and maybe sharing) the human-dominated landscape. Speaker: Dr. David Drake, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin.

**From Beak to Tail: All About the Life of Birds**
Take an in-depth look into bird ecology, conservation and behavior. You can jump into this ongoing series anytime. The program features a dusk walk, Binoculars provided.

**Why I Care About Poo: Global Sanitation, Ecological Vitality and Human Health**
Celebrate World Toilet Day with Gigi Pomerantz of Youthaiti as she covers the importance of proper sanitation throughout the world and its impact on ecological and human health.

**Student Research Symposium**
Students and volunteers of all ages conduct scientific research in our outdoor spaces. Learn their discoveries including an analysis of migration timing changes in birds, results of our park use surveys and more! This program will highlight original research conducted in 2015 by the Young Scientists Club, students and volunteers.

**Ojibwe Language Study Group** *(RP)* Every Mon. until Dec. 14 | 6 - 8 PM
**Community Vegan Potluck** *(RP)* Tues., Nov. 3 & Dec. 1 | 6:30 - 8 PM
**Photo Club** *(RP)* Thurs., Nov. 5 & Dec. 3 | 6:30 - 9 PM
**350.org General Meeting** *(RP)* Tues. Nov. 10 & Dec. 8 | 7 - 8:30 PM
**Friends of Real Food: Potluck Dinner and Program** *(RP)* Wed., Nov. 11 | 6 - 8 PM
**Faith and Ecology** *(RP)* Tues., Nov. 17 & Dec. 15 | 7 - 8:30 PM
**Urban Echo Poets** *(RP)* Thurs., Nov. 12 & Dec. 10 | 7 - 8:30 PM
**Urban Stargazers** *(RP)* Thurs., Nov. 12 & Dec. 10 | 7 - 8:30 PM

**INTEREST GROUPS**
**Transition Milwaukee: All City Hub Meeting** *(RP)* Mon., Nov. 23 | 6:30 - 8:30 PM
**Good Food Book Club** *(RP)* Tue., Dec. 15 | 7 - 8 PM
**Early Morning Birdwalks** *(MV)* Every Tue. | 8 am
*(WP)* Every Wed. | 8 am
*(RP)* Every Thu. except Nov. 26, except Dec. 24 & 31 | 8 am
It Takes a Community to Put on a Great Summer Camp!

by Matt Flower, Environmental Educator

Despite my bias, I can honestly say that the Urban Ecology Center puts together a summer camp experience that even the most pristine and remote wilderness camp could never provide. One consistent comment parents and kids say about our summer camps is that we always do something fun and different every day in ways that showcase our great city.

Milwaukee is a vibrant urban landscape with many gems waiting to be uncovered and part of our summer camp experience is to uncover those gems. We still provide a healthy dose of outdoor exploration, of course, but I think we offer aspects that might surprise you. They are an incredible mix of fun, fascination, adventure, exploration and opportunity.

It’s that last word, opportunity, which I’d like to focus on. Just look at the list of people, nonprofits and businesses that donated either time, goods, services or financial support specifically for our 2015 summer camps.

Anonymous (2)
A and C Live Bait Shop
Melanie Ariens, Milwaukee Water Commons
Ayco Charitable Foundation
Todd Berens
Cabela’s
Thomas Callan
Cargill
Kevin A. Carr
Barbara A. Connolly-Blick
Ananda Deacon
Discovery World
Janet Eggie
Kevin Fitzpatrick
Fondy Food Market
Gloria & Steven Foster
Greater Milwaukee Foundation - Children’s Experiential Opps Fund
Sam Guyton, Generation Z
Eva Hagenhofer
Laura Herzog
David Johnson
Jorgensen Family Fund
JPMorgan Chase Bank
Ken Knetzger
MaryBeth Kressin
La Lune Collection
Lakeshore State Park
David LesStrang
Priscilla Y. Lietz
Helen L. Loewi
Robert Matthias
Mary E. McAndrews
Sandra McLellan
Sarah Minella
Dave Mueller, Hunger Task Force Fish Hatchery
Mary Louise Mussoline
Milwaukee County Parks
Milwaukee Public Libraries
Mitchell Park Domes
Steve Morse
Murray Hill Pottery
Jake Newborn
Our Daily Salt
Geoffrey Pearson
Pinehold Gardens
Planet Bead
Gene & Ruth Posner Foundation, Inc.

The gifts these folks provided led to fun experiences such as fishing, biking, cooking, pottery, drawing, building, painting, photography, astronomy, gardening, music and memories that will last a lifetime.

Seeing them listed here makes me realize how fortunate I am to work for an organization that forms partnerships with such caring, talented and generous supporters. So to those listed, thank you from the bottom of my heart. If you recognize a name above, let them know you support the Urban Ecology Center, too.

I suppose you can say that healthy living is what keeps a community vibrant. Together we offer that in many important ways for kids and their families — teaching them life-long skills to keep them active, outside and having fun. I absolutely love teaching summer camps and now you know why.

Week-long day camps for Preschool - 8th grade
Scholarships Available
Registration starts January, 2016
“The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little extra.” - Jimmy Johnson

I often hear how extraordinary the Urban Ecology Center is as an institution in Milwaukee. How did we get this reputation? Well ... I’m not 100 percent sure but I have do have a pretty good theory.

The difference between ordinary and extraordinary — the secret to our success that is not shared with the world often enough — is the little extra from you, our volunteers!

You give just a little bit more every time you’re here — be it your time, talent or treasure. This “little bit more” has resulted in a presence that has become collectively quite extraordinary.

We are grateful for the “little extra” you share with us every day. As Shakespeare wrote in Twelfth Night, “I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks.”

With gratitude, Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

5,174 volunteers + 21,593 hours of work = $480,234 saved through volunteer help in 2014-2015*

*Based on UEC fiscal year and Independent Sector total value of volunteer hours for Wisconsin of $22.24 per hour

Volunteers help in many ways including land stewardship, teaching, greeting visitors, performing music, citizen science research, equipment maintenance, photography and artwork. Almost any skill imaginable can be used at the Center!

If you’d like to support projects like these, consider volunteering or making a donation. Learn how at www.urbanecologycenter.org
Welcome to Our New Staff

We’ve seen quite a bit of transition over the past couple of months and we’d like to introduce you to some of our fantastic new staff members!

First, we are pleased to announce that the Urban Ecology Center has two new directors! Jen (Feltz) Hense is our Director of Development and Jeff McAvoy is our Director of Marketing and Communications. These two fantastic individuals have joined our Leadership Team and are helping to make key decisions that will shape the future of the Urban Ecology Center.

These two positions had previously been combined into one, but as our organization has grown the need for focused leadership in each area has increased. This also represents a shift in our leadership team structure and increases our team size by one.

Jen, our Development Director, comes to us from the YMCA of Greater Waukesha’s Tri-County YMCA where she was the Executive Director. She began her new role with us on September 20th at our recent HKE MKE event.

Jeff, who was promoted to the role of Director of Marketing and Communications, has held a marketing position at the Urban Ecology Center for the past six years. During that time he has helped build a marketing team and many of the communications channels that the Center now uses regularly.

In no particular order, here are other staff who have been newly hired or recently promoted to a new role:

Amy LaMacchia is our new Donor Relations Manager. Lianna Bishop was promoted to the new role of Corporate and Foundation Relations Manager. Brittany Peters was promoted to Membership and Development Systems Coordinator. Chris Steinkamp is our new Evaluation Coordinator but don’t worry, he will continue his half-time Volunteer Coordinator role at Menomonee Valley as he adds this new half-time role. Shameka Tyler is now the full-time Human Resources Specialist. Kirsten Maier is a full-time Environmental Educator at Riverside Park. Emily Bablitch is a new full-time Environmental Educator at Washington Park. Jaime Cano is the new Visitor Services Specialist at the Menomonee Valley. Davita Flowers-Shanklin has two new roles. She is the Volunteer Coordinator at Washington Park as well as our Development Specialist. Martha Sudermann is joining us this year as our Lutheran Volunteer Corps intern, serving as a Community Program Educator. Francis Sullivan is our new Community Program Assistant. Alex LaBonte is an Environmental Educator working at both Riverside Park and Washington Park.

With a larger leadership team, a full staff of brilliant and enthusiastic individuals, and thousands of dedicated and inspiring volunteers, we are well poised for future success! 🌍

Come to our Annual Meeting on November 18th!

It’s time to celebrate! Join us on November 18th for our Volunteer Appreciation Party and Annual Meeting as we thank our wonderful volunteers for the tremendous work they do (see page 5 for details). Among those volunteers being recognized are members of the Urban Ecology Center Board of Directors.

We’d like to thank the following directors who have graciously agreed to serve another two-year term: Monique Charlier, Pete Campbell, Penny Cruse, David Froiland, Dennis Grzezinski, Ed Hammond, Troy Hilliard, Antoine McDuffie, Joshua Morby, Jim Schleif, Jeff Spence, Daniel Van House and Mary Witte.

We would also like to recognize the following new Directors: Joseph Brooks, David Carr, Tony Haning, Rebecca Mitich, Kate Nelson, Callan Schoonenberg and Judge Derek Mosley. All Center members in attendance can vote to approve these new Directors.

We would like to recognize the following Directors who are leaving the Board: Jennifer Bolger-Breceda and Molly Schissler. The entire Urban Ecology Center family thanks you for your service, dedication and wisdom.

One of the purposes of this year’s Annual Meeting is for the members to consider and act on a proposed amendment to the Urban Ecology Center’s Restated Articles of Incorporation. As part of an effort to provide opportunities to engage and activate our members in a more meaningful way, last month the Board of Directors recommended a new system to elect our Directors. If approved and made effective, the amendment would result in the Urban Ecology Center’s members no longer being considered “statutory” members under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This change would, among other things, result in the transition of the responsibility for electing Directors from the members to the Board itself.

The amendment would not impact the Center’s student, individual or family membership benefits, as described in our member benefits booklet. Rather, it is recommended within the context of new, more robust and authentic engagement processes for members and constituents.

The recommendation comes on the heels of a renewed focus on the Washington Park, Menomonee Valley and Riverside Park Advisory Committees — three committees of the Board specifically created to engage the voice of our community. These committees are made up of Board, staff and community members at each branch and have the responsibility to solicit and respond to feedback provided through activities such community listening sessions. For more information read Let’s Be Real: Building Authentic Engagement on page 1. 🌍
This newsletter is a publication of the Urban Ecology Center, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Thanks to the generous annual contributions of 215 foundations, corporations and organizations, 3300 members and many in-kind donors the Center provides safe parks and programs for over 300,000 people per year. To make a contribution, please see below for the easy to use form, visit our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org or call the Center at (414) 964-8505. The Urban Ecology Center fosters ecological understanding as inspiration for change, neighborhood by neighborhood. Our Environmental Community Centers:

- Provide outdoor science education for urban youth.
- Protect and use public natural areas, making them safe, accessible and vibrant.
- Preserve and enhance these natural areas and their surrounding waters.
- Promote community by offering resources that support learning, volunteerism, stewardship, recreation, and camaraderie.
- Practice and model environmentally responsible behaviors.

LOCATIONS & HOURS
See page 5 for Holiday Hours

Riverside Park
1500 E. Park Place
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211
(414) 964-8505 Fax: (414) 964-1084
jferschinger@urbanecologycenter.org
Hours of operation:
Monday - Thursday: 9am - 7pm
Friday & Saturday: 9am - 5pm
Sunday: Noon - 5pm

Washington Park
1859 N. 40th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(Mailing address: 4145 W. Lisbon Ave., 53208)
(414) 344-5460 Fax: (414) 344-5462
tevans@urbanecologycenter.org
Hours of operation:
Tuesday - Friday: Noon - 6pm
Saturday: 9am - 5pm

Menomonee Valley
3700 W. Pierce St.
Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 431-2940
gholstein@urbanecologycenter.org
Hours of operation:
Tuesday - Friday: Noon - 7pm
Saturday: 9am - 5pm

BECOME A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER

By making your gift, you become a contributing member of the Center. Your support provides learning opportunities for thousands of urban youth each year and allows you to enjoy contributing membership benefits at all three of our branches.

Choose a Contributing Member Level:

☐ Student - benefits one college student ............. $30
☐ Individual - member plus one guest ............. $35
☐ Family - two adults, and all children or grandchildren under 18 in a household plus one guest ............. $45
☐ Other - contributions above $45 receive family level benefits and can help us: provide a membership for a family in need ($90) provide a Summer Camp scholarship ($200) restore urban land with native plants ($500) Please enter an amount ............. $_____

Give a gift membership:
Gift memberships are a great way to connect your friends and family to the natural world.

Recipient Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Email
Occasion
Delivery by
Membership Type: ☐ Individual $35 ☐ Family $45
Send the announcement card to: ☐ Me ☐ Gift Recipient ☐ Card picked up

Total $_____________________

Everyone is welcome! Thanks to generous donors we are able to offer need-based scholarships for memberships. For more information and to apply, please contact our Membership Staff at (414) 964-8505 or drop into one of our Centers and speak with our Visitor Services staff.

My gift is ☐ in honor of or ☐ in memory of
☐ My employer (list below) has a matching gift program
☐ I would like information about estate and planned giving

Please return this form to: Urban Ecology Center, 1500 E. Park Place, Milwaukee, WI 53211.

Did you know you can become a contributing member securely online? Visit urbanecologycenter.org and click membership.
Candlelight Walk

Celebrate the Winter Solstice with a guided candlelit walk through Riverside Park as we listen to poetry and readings of the season. Then warm up inside by the fire while you enjoy cider, snacks and music. Walks begin every fifteen minutes. Registration not required.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 19 | 7 - 9PM
For adults and teens | $5 (Nonmembers: $10)

Candlelight Walk for kids

Enjoy the wonder of a winter night with stories for kids on an easy walk through the woods. Then warm up inside with games and treats. Walks will leave every 15 minutes. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 19 | 4:30 - 6:30PM
For families | Adults: $5 (Nonmembers: $7) Children: $3 (Nonmembers: $5)

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IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO PUT ON A GREAT SUMMER CAMP!
by Matt Flower

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF

COME TO OUR ANNUAL MEETING!

SEE FOR YOURSELF! (NO REALLY, SEE WHAT’S HAPPENED WITH YOUR SUPPORT)

Thank You Volunteers!

5,174 people volunteered during our 2014-2015 fiscal year!