



The Nature Connection

Bringing Nature, Animals & the Arts to People

Fall 2015 Newsletter

NC Nurtures Hidden Talents: A Unique Approach to Alzheimer's Care

"While people are alive, they deserve a good quality of life and opportunities to experience new things."

This simple yet profound statement comes from Tadd Clelland, Partner at Senior Living Residences (SLR). Tadd spoke to us about the how The Nature Connection benefits elders in SLR's Memory Support program at Concord Park Assisted Living.

It's a belief shared by NC, and our supporters as well.

Clelland spoke to us about their unique approach to Alzheimer's care, and how programs like The Nature Connection benefit people suffering from memory loss.

Back in 2007, SLR set out to treat memory-impaired individuals with non-pharmacological approaches combined with traditional Alzheimer's treatments.

"Some doctors were saying that people with Alzheimer's couldn't learn new information. We developed a 'Reconnections' program which included therapeutic programs using food, the arts, geography—and your Nature Connection program. This approach proved those doctors wrong. The people in our programs were learning new things. One group



Ellen Harasimowicz

**An elder explores an ostrich egg, then shares memories of birds visiting her garden.
Concord Park Assisted Living, Memory Support.**

learned three pages of Spanish words," said Clelland.

"An Alzheimer's diagnosis, while terminal, does not mean the end of life. Families have great appre-

ciation for the impact these therapeutic programs have. Sometimes they're even amazed by the hidden talents that emerge when they see their loved ones doing something new."



NC Executive Director Sophie Wadsworth with Dana Neshe, President, Middlesex Savings Bank Charitable Foundation. The Foundation has generously supported NC's programming since 2009.

The Nature Connection

is a nonprofit organization that brings nature-based programs to people with limited access to the natural world. Founded in 1983, The Nature Connection brings individuals together with nature's capacity to heal and to teach.

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Nature Connection Newsletter

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Program participant names have been changed.



Like us and share
The Nature Connection
on Facebook!



Note from Executive Director

Rose Lincoln



"You aren't just sharing nature and animals with us, this program is about our *lives*."

These words, from a girl who lives in a residential program, speak to The Nature Connection's ultimate purpose. As we connect with nature, we connect with ourselves.

We thank each of you for your part in this past year's progress, while reaching to achieve even bolder goals. In the past year, The Nature Connection has provided direct services to hundreds of people. We provide participants with hands-on nature: from the abundance of fall gourds and herbs, to adaptive survival strategies of seeds, to new hands-on encounters with soft, lop-eared rabbits, or even newborn garden snails.

This past year we launched a new Caregiver Training, to teach our methodology to professional caregivers. Funded by the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest, this hands-on workshop provided practical tools and new inspiration to professionals serving elders with Alzheimer's and other memory impairments. Attendees travelled from Cambridge, Canton, and down the road in Concord, to learn more about our unique methodology and best practices in nature-assisted therapeutic interventions. Due to the pilot's success, we will offer this professional training again this year, while adding a second workshop tailored for family members who care for elders with memory impairments. Stay tuned for further information in 2016!

Ambitious planning by NC's board and staff this past year has fueled major steps in capacity building and new program partnerships. We have launched a new at-risk youth partnership with Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps to serve youth who live in residential care. And our new and expanded website, funded by The Sudbury Foundation, went live earlier this year.

We have also made critical progress behind the scenes in our research-based documentation initiative. We give thanks to Bonnie Hoover, Concord resident and researcher extraordinaire, and other generous professionals who have donated their skills to this work. We've also trained over 20 new volunteers during the past year. To shepherd our diverse team of talented volunteers, we welcome a seasoned volunteer coordinator, Ellen Borreliz, to our staff. In a short time, she has streamlined our volunteer recruitment and set the stage for expanding NC's programming. Ellen draws on a law career in family services, and many years work at the Concord Museum and the Museum of Science.

This past year's progress marks the outgrowth of over three decades of work. In New England, given an ideal season, a tree grows faster, its rings wider. For The Nature Connection, this coming year promises a wide growth ring. To all of you who have nurtured these roots, these branches, thank you.

We could not have reached this far without generous support from each of you who recognize what it means to bring nature's healing connections to yourself and to others.

Wishing you many blessings in this season of thanksgiving.

Sophie Wadsworth
Executive Director



Heidi Caro bringing compassion and chinchilla to youth at Home for Little Wanderers. Heidi and her family have generously supported NC for ten years.

Volunteer Spotlight – Heidi Caro

“Everybody has the need for that sense of wonder you get from nature...that sense of possibilities.”

When we moved to Concord, I found The Nature Connection online, and saw that you had animals as well as therapeutic work. I studied wildlife biology in college, then occupational therapy. I liked the combination.

Through NC, I’ve worked with wonderful youth and elders. The kids are so happy to see us and the animals. When we visit the elders, it sparks memories, and we can get them talking about the materials they enjoy. We invite them to explore....

We took a chicken one day! It’s amazing for them to be close to a chicken. *I had never held a chicken. NC isn’t a show and tell, where people can look but not*

touch. We are there so the people can interact with the materials, and interact with each other and the NC team. We are there to develop relationships between the people we serve, and between people and nature.

Everybody has the need to look at the leaves—to be contemplative. That sense of wonder you get from nature... that sense of possibilities.

Many organizations need volunteers, but I like the simplicity and focus of NC’s work — bringing nature to people. It’s worthwhile, and a lot of fun to volunteer!

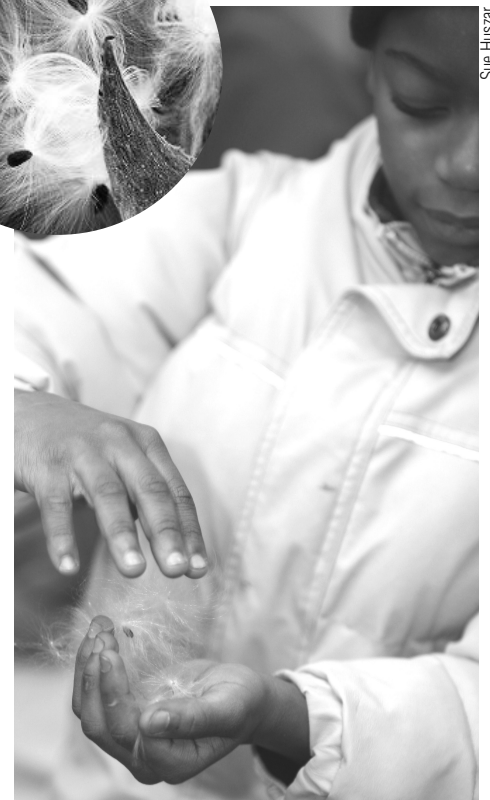
Excerpted from an interview, November 2015

New Board Members Bring Energy, Enthusiasm, and Expertise to NC

The Nature Connection welcomes two new directors to our team this fall.

Jennifer Albanese, of Carlisle, brings a special interest in educational program development and event planning to The Nature Connection. She served on the Concord-Carlisle Adult and Community Education Advisory Committee, including five years as chairperson. Jenn has been a member of the Middlesex Chapter of the National Charity League for six years, volunteering for local charities, most of which address food scarcity. She also has an interest in theater production. Jenn’s professional background includes over 20 years in higher educational publishing; she currently works for OnX Enterprise Solutions. She believes deeply in the healing power of nature.

Nicole Pecorelli is Regional Manager and a Vice President of Community Banking at Middlesex Savings Bank. In this role she oversees the operations of five branch offices including Concord, West Concord, Westford, Bedford, and Groton. Nicole is newly appointed as Treasurer for The Nature Connection. In addition to being a Director of The Nature Connection, Nicole is a longtime supporter of Household Goods in Acton, MA. Nicole is also a member of the Rotary Club of Nashoba Valley, MA. She enjoys the outdoors and believes in nature’s ability to regenerate and restore the soul.



A child in a foster care program sees how a milkweed seed flies to find a new home.



The Nature Connection

P.O. Box 155
Concord, MA 01742

Sheridan Kahmann



George, NC's therapy dog.

**Shop Original Artist
Silkscreens at
The NC Table at Winter
Market— Improve Lives!**

Friday December 4
from 1:00-6:00

Saturday December 5
from 10:00-5:00

Sunday December 6
from 1:00-5:00

Visit the Winter Market at The Umbrella Community Arts Center in Concord and buy handmade gifts for the holidays. **NC supporters Helen Popinchalk and Morgan Grenier have designed custom silkscreens featuring NC's therapy animals.** They'll be hand-printing these images on tote bags and t-shirts in adult and children's sizes. 100% of the profits will benefit NC programs.

Helen Popinchalk and Morgan Grenier are co-founders of Trifecta Editions, a growing print collective based in Boston, MA.

They support The Nature Connection because they think everyone deserves access to the beauty, wonder and healing qualities of the great outdoors.



Harper Collins

Dr. Irene Pepperberg
will speak at NC's
Inspire Benefit, May 2016.

Save the Date!

Inspire

a benefit for The Nature Connection
May 25th, 2016

At: 51 Walden, Concord

Featuring: Dr. Irene Pepperberg
New York Times Bestselling Author of *Alex & Me*,
Animal Cognition Researcher, Harvard University



"Sometimes a single individual changes the world, even if it is a parrot".
Frans de Waal