



Just over a year ago, I was overjoyed and humbled to announce that The Nature Connection is indeed resilient; that with new leadership and financial support from donors, The Nature Connection would continue. And though we have much to celebrate in our 40th year, I can't help but look around at the terrible realities of our world today and be reminded that resiliency only comes after a time of difficulty.

I look to the many connections of nature and see how they give the web of life its resiliency. Connections give us hope to soothe our souls and support our spirit in times of difficulty. Connections root us - letting us know that we belong. That we are seen, heard and valued. It is in that space in between two points, two beings...an intermediary, that we find our belonging; that gives us resiliency. There are so many connections that you have made possible through your support of The Nature Connection. Read on to join our celebration, connect, and see where the road ahead is taking us!

With deep gratitude,
Taylor Eagan, Executive Director



Supporting the human spirit through
connections with the natural world
since 1983

Fall 2023 Newsletter

Connecting Across Generations: *Summer Teen Volunteers*

In the Summer of 2023, The Nature Connection kicked off our inaugural teen summer program! Six high school students from four different high schools volunteered with us at assisted living, skilled nursing, and memory care for Alzheimer's/dementia facilities for seniors.

Collectively, they volunteered **60 hours** during July and August, sharing the joy and wonder of our plants, animals, and summer-based natural materials in nursing homes, memory care units, and day programs for elders and adults with disabilities.

One of our summer teens said while reflecting on their experience...



One of The Nature Connection's teen volunteers sharing critters from a summer garden with a senior at Bridges by EPOCH in Westford.

"I learned a lot about how to work with different people that often had unique challenges. I also learned a lot about dementia."



Our mission is to improve the wellbeing of individuals and disabilities through the therapeutic use of nature.

Board of Directors

- Ian Agranat, *Board Chair*
- Alan Jay Rom, *President/Treasurer*
- Jennifer Albanese, *Clerk*
- Marcia Chertok
- Lisa Brukilacchio
- Nancy Stillman
- Wendy Leiserson
- Elda Kalivioti

Staff

- Taylor Eagan, *Executive Director*
- Carol Hani, *Program Coordinator*
- Autumn Cutting, *Program Coordinator*
- Deborah Krause, *Program Coordinator*
- Bethany Burke, *Volunteer Coordinator*
- Samantha Menapace, *Communications Coordinator*
- Rebecca Bromark, *Community Outreach Coordinator*

Follow, Share & Like Us!



The Nature Connection's

New Home: **Brookside Square**
80 Beharrell St, Suite D
Concord, MA

We're settling into our new home! The new space has more room for in-house programs, volunteer trainings, workshops, and becoming a vital community space connecting people and nature. We are located at Brookside Square on the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, directly across from the West Concord train station. Take a train, ride your bike, walk or drive over to say "Hi!"



...and the New Car



In the Fall of 2022, The Nature Connection received a generous grant from the Yawkey Foundation for the purchase of **the organization's first vehicle!** **The Nature Connection travels over 9,000 miles every year** from Cambridge to Lowell, Marlborough, Framingham, and everywhere in between across Middlesex County.

You can see the car featured in the video, get ready for a program with us!



Thanks to your generosity, together we raised \$18,230!

Thank you for making our 40-year celebration on October 26th at The Concord Scout house such a wonderful evening! We had so much fun celebrating with great food, exciting silent and online auctions, beautiful owls, and meaningful remarks from Sarah and Rebecca.



Thank you to our Event Sponsors



West Acton Village Works
Kati Oates, Realtor
New England Nurseries
Ocean State Job Lot

The Blue Morpho Foundation
The Wellesley Compass Group
at Morgan Stanley

Cambridge Trust
Sullivan Tire
Eriksons Grain Mill
Brown & Brown, P.C.



Connect at Wednesday Nature Nights



Come connect with nature and your neighbors through workshops, activities or animal encounters.

Wednesdays, 6-7pm

Brookside Square at
80 Beharrell St, Suite D, Concord, MA

Pre-registration strongly recommended as space is limited. Check online for 2024 dates!

11/15

Fall Nature Crafts (Family Friendly)

11/29

Animal Encounter: Chinchillas

12/6

Chai Spices Exploration

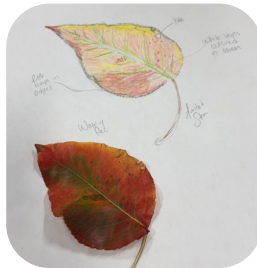
12/13

Earthnotes: Nature Journaling

12/20

Winter Solstice Celebration & Activity

Register Today!



Connections - *Rebecca Reynolds Weil*

“The simplicity of The Nature Connection has always been about building connections, of letting a leaf or a rock tell its own story, of listening to the seasons and the wind and trees, of using all our senses to connect with the wild. There is no technology or spreadsheet needed—and this seems even more important as technology speeds up our lives—so we can slow down and savor the simple joys of looking and listening, of feeling and being. **These connections may help our human selves by giving us context, meaning and nourishment.**”

As Rachel Carson said, ‘there is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter’, but profoundly, these connections can also help us be humble within the world and in this way help the world. These connections can help us remember that humans are not the center piece, that we are a community. We are part of nature, connected in and with the wild.”



*Sarah Ward & Rebecca Weil
at Inspire 2023*

Upcoming Events

Gobble Wobble

November 18th

The Nature Connection is heading outdoors to the 10th Annual Gobble Wobble for SMILE Mass! You can support our team as we compete in the kids fun run, 1.4 mile walk, 5K run and 10K run in Sudbury.

Community Pint Night

at Remnant Brewery

November 30th

Drink EXTRA responsibly on November 30th and help raise money for a great cause! For every pint of beer sold, \$1 will be donated to The Nature Connection.

West Concord Holiday Stroll

December 9th, 1-5pm

Visit us at the West Concord Holiday Stroll! We'll be there along with other West Concord local business to celebrate the holiday season.

A Special Thank you to our FY 2023 Donors

Your generous support makes The Nature Connection's work possible - we can't thank you enough!

Our 2022-2023 Program Partners

Youth

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell

Lowell

Finch HRI Residence

Cambridge

Gleason Public Library

Carlisle

Littleton Academy - JRI

Littleton

Watertown Boys & Girls Club

Watertown

Seniors & Elders

Branches - Benchmark

Marlborough

Bridges by EPOCH

Westford

Carriage House at Lee's Farm

Wayland

Christopher Heights

Marlborough

PACE Center - Cambridge Health Alliance

Cambridge & Malden

Newton-Wellesley Center for Alzheimer's Care

Wellesley

Rivercrest Rehab and Nursing - Newbury Court

Concord

Summit Elder Care, PACE Center

Lowell

The Gardens - Newbury Court

Concord

Youville Place

Lexington

Individuals with Disabilities

Minute Man Arc

Concord

Jewish Big Brother, Big Sister

Waltham

Supportive Living Inc./Advocates

Foundation & Grant Support

4Imprint
Cummings Foundation
Digital Lift
Herman's Garden Seeds
Hesed Foundation
Mabel Louise Riley Foundation
Massachusetts Cultural Council
TD Bank Charitable Foundation
The Fieldstone Foundation
The Hamilton Company
Charitable Foundation
Universal Participation - MCC
Yawkey Foundation

Volunteers

Abigail Dudley
Aiyana Currie
Alan Rom
Alexis Chrobak
Alicia Bedau
Allee Platanitis
Alyson Kennedy
Amber Gonsalves
Amelia Fallon
Amelia Walske
Amy Franks
Anais Tsai
Andrew Boardman
Angelina Jimenez
Anne Joseph
Anu Saptharishi
Audrey Yeyinmen
Avra Hoffman
Benjamin Smith
Bridget Sonnier-Hillis
Caroline Brooks
Carrie Shirley
Charlotte Grinsztejn
Christianna Vasquez
Cindy Bechard
Cookie Lustig
Dani Zeng
David DeMeo
Deborah Gerstein
Diane Harwood
Elia Han
Elizabeth O'Neil
Ellen Leigh
Ellie Pasternack
Emily Fraser
Emma Marlin-Curiel
Enrica Filippi
Eugenia Martens
Evelyn Shuster
Francesca D'Angelo
Frann Addison
Franscheska Eliza
Fred Wersan
Gabby Rose
Gail Rogers
Gail Shamsi
Geoff Walton
Gwyn Morrissey

Haley Oliver
Hilary Taylor
Ian Agranat
Inung Hwang
James Dereshinsky
Jamie Scarpantonio
Jeanne Andersen
Jennifer Albanese
Joel Putnam
Jonathan Guerra
Judie Bryant
Judith Aronstein
Judy Garrit
Kaitlin Kean
Karin Broden
Karl Kussin
Kate Ezawa
Katherine Gorman
Kathleen Rusilas
Kati Oates
Kayla Casanova
Kelly Curtis
Kimberly Brainerd
Liam Jantzen
Linda Gable
Lindsay Hart
Lisa B. Brukilacchio
Lisa Curtis
Lisa Gennari
Lisa Harsip
Liz Bradley
Marcia Chertok
Marcia Shalek
Marissa Ventre
Mary Selker
Maryam Mulyono
Matilda Chartener
Melanie Matossian
Melissa Barber
Michele Powell
Michelle Clement
Moving Volunteers from Concord-Carlisle High School
Nancy Shepard
Nancy Stillman
Nancy Szczesniak
Naomi Hitchcock
Natalie Olofsson
Nayanna Tobin
Nick Rye
Nouna Pinto
Pamela Woodhull
Phoebe Walsh-Costello
RM
Sam Agranat
Samantha Gafford
Sandra Mika
Sandy Shen
Sarah McLaughlin
Sarah Tucker
Sarah Vander Rhodes
Sheila Morehouse
Shoshana Alexander

Solaina Chandra
Sonya Hartley
Sophie Flomenbaum
Sumant Rao
Susan Dobbie
Susan Quartuccio
Susan Tu
Sydney Callahan
Sydney Robichaud
Trudy-Ann Grant
Vinicius Freitas
Wendy Leiserson

Individual Donors

Alan Rom
Allan Chertok
Alyson Kennedy
Amy Graves
Anonymous Donations
Astrid Williams
Barbara Feehrer
Barbara Liskov
Beverly Smith
Bill Lenderking
Bradley Richardson
Brian McCormick
Carol Burnes
Carol Hani
Carol Krauss
Carrie Flood
Catherine Collins
Chris Shramko
Cummings Foundation
Cynthia First
Deborah Loverd
Dianne Brooks
DJ Byrne
Elizabeth Lassen
Ellie Bemis
Emily Speagle
Erica Aucoin
First Parish in Bedford
Frances Chang
Frann Addison
Hanna Moog
Hans Heilman
Harriet Feinberg
Harriet Gabbert
Harvey Nosowitz
Heidi Caro
Henry Harrison
Hilary Taylor
Ian Agranat
Jane E. Downey
Janna Frelich
Jean Maestre
Jean Rosenberg
Jeanne Nevard
ennifer Albanese
Jennifer Emerson
Jennifer Reilly
Jill Isselhard
Jo Anne Albright
John Stillman

Jonathan Panek
Judith Aronstein
Judith Burton
Karel Wahrsager
Karl Kussin
Kate & Erin Moran
Kate Blair
Katharine H.L. Preston
Katharine Thompson
Katherine Olney
Kathleen Atfield
Kathleen Fleming
Kathleen Rusilas
Kati Oates
Kelly Tzannes
Kristine Sessa
Lisa B. Brukilacchio
Lisa E. Bailey
Lorraine & Joseph Sheehan
Louise Berliner
Lynne Stone
Marcia Chertok
Margaret Enloe
Margo Jay
Marianne DiBlasi
Martha Dolben
Mary Ann Gore
Mary Caragian
Mary Jane Wuensch
MaryAlice Mudge
Maureen Johnson
May Baldwin
Merewyn Harrington
Michael A. Eagan

Michael Judelson
Michelle Small
Nancy Shepherd
Nancy Stillman
Natalie MacKnight
Nevene Reynolds
Nola Sheffer
Patricia Dranoff
Paul Wexelblat
Penelope Rodday
Rahul Bhargava
Rebecca Weil
Robert Andrews
Robert Morrison
Roberta Messina
Robin Humes
Robin Wilkerson
Ron Kearns
Ruth Weeks
Sandra Mika
Sandy Shen
Sarah Lemaire
Sarah Ward
Sharon Spaulding
Shona Daley
Stephen Kirkland
Steve Tobin
Susan Oman
Terry Greene
Thomas Healey
Virginia Dow
Aliza Edwards
Wendy Leiserson



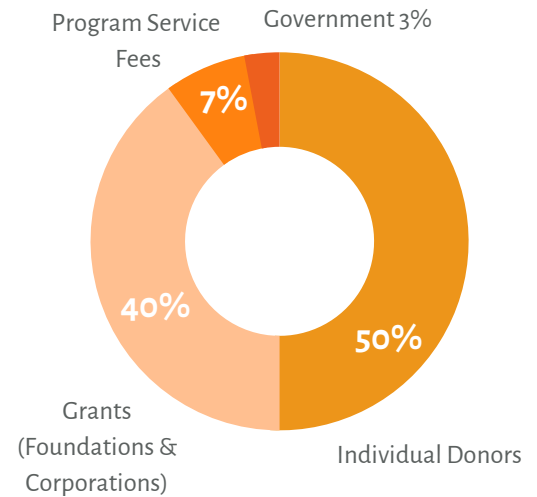
The Nature Connection FY23 Financials

Although The Nature Connection faced imminent closure over the summer of 2022 as the financial toll of COVID and economic recession piled up against our small non-profit, supported in large part by individual donors, The Nature Connection community at large took nature's lessons of resiliency and cycles to heart. An outpouring of support came through and a rescue board stepped up to save everything:

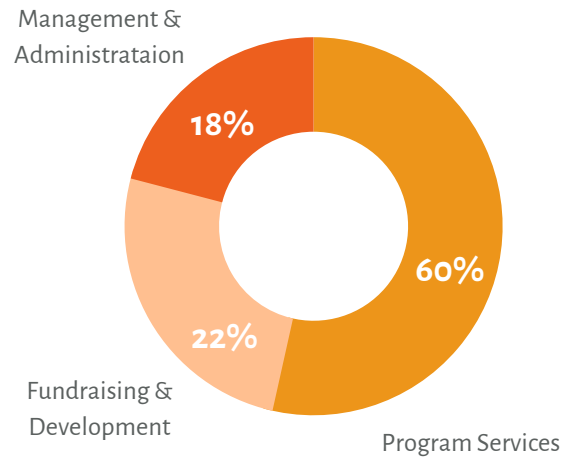
“[The community] worked brilliantly and was sort of this ad hoc rescue team that came together and... Pooling resources, financial commitment, experiences, contacts, connections, creative energy... working very well together, it was really inspiring to see us all moving in the same direction, trying to figure out what we could do...” – Ian Agranat, Board Chair, at Annual Meeting 2022. You can view a recording of the 2022 Annual Meeting on The Nature Connection’s website where Ian gives a full explanation of the financial situation leading to closure.

One thing Executive Director, Taylor, points out for FY23 is that we are starting to see a bounce back in revenue from program fees as we get some more distance from the 2020 COVID shutdown. In FY20 (Aug '19 - July '20), The Nature Connection received \$47,549 in program service fees, 21% of the revenue for that year compared to only 7% this past fiscal year. **“Being able to offer a sliding scale program fee lets us remove the barrier of cost for our participants to access nature. It has been critical the past few years, and our donors have carried the weight and the impact of being able to keep others connected to nature and this community; I don’t think we’ve communicated that enough,”** says Taylor.

FY23 Revenue



FY23 Expenses



Revenue

	FY21	FY22	FY23*
Contributions, Grants & Other	\$252,222	\$199,693	\$329,367
Program Service Fees	\$6,240	\$10,631	\$25,881

Total Revenue

\$258,462 \$210,324 \$355,248

Expense

Program	\$110,107	\$134,491	\$145,449
General & Administrative	\$74,444	\$63,603	\$44,298
Fundraising	\$114,815	\$115,655	\$52,860

Total Expense

\$299,367 \$313,748 \$242,607

*Preliminary unaudited results for all FY23 data

FY23 By the Numbers

3,015

Connections with Nature

22

Program Partners

558

Individuals Served



Woolly Bear caterpillars have been a favorite on programs this fall! Their suction cup like feet tickling hands as we try and predict the winter. While sharing with two program participants, Jessie and Nancy, Nancy commented to Program Coordinator, Autumn that, **“The best thing about this program is watching the interaction between the two of you and seeing how happy it makes her.”**