

SPRING 2022

THE EE EXCHANGE

Official Newsletter of the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education



For ANJEE Members and Friends- Return of the Regional Groups and Events!

BY STEPHANIE SINGER

It's been an exciting year for ANJEE so far! From another successful (virtual) Winter Conference with amazing presenters from throughout the state and beyond, to the addition of new members and member organizations, the ANJEE network continues to grow and foster lasting relationships with environmentally like-minded professionals and students within each passing year. After the annual retreat held at Duke Farms this past March, some exciting news: the RETURN OF THE REGIONAL GROUPS!

The Regional Group cohorts have historically been for any member of ANJEE who wanted to enjoy a day of networking, fun, and camaraderie within their geographic region (sorted by county). Past events have included hikes, tours of environmental facilities, and presentations by volunteering environmental education facilities just to name a few. This time, members and subscribers can access the Regional Groups through ANJEE's [member portal](#) at [anjee.org](#) and sign up to meet with other members of their local communities for seasonal fun outings and networking opportunities. Check it out and come and be a part of another fun way to connect around the Garden State!

**Welcome, our newest
organizational member!**
**The Bergen County
Zoological Park**



ANJEE is excited to partner with [The Bergen County Zoological Park](#), located in Paramus, New Jersey! The park showcases animals from North and South America and provides a wonderful array of educational programs for schools, scouts, families and so much more. Education Program Coordinator, Carol Fusco, shares with us some of the current projects the zoo is undertaking for an exciting season, and is delighted to be a part of this amazing network. The Bergen County Zoo has some exciting programs this season including their upcoming Alfred Thomas Wildlife Art Exhibit! This event takes place on Saturday May 21, 2022 from 10A.M. to 3 P.M. with a rain date on Sunday, May 22nd. Enjoy art by a variety of Bergen County artists and enjoy art demos, along with bluegrass music from 12 P.M. to 2:30 P.M. For further exhibit questions, contact GLucente@co.bergen.nj.us, or Carol Fusco at CFusco@co.bergen.nj.us for more zoo information.

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Committees and Membership

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ANJEE wants YOU! Join One of Our Standing Committees



GOT MAD SKILLS? USE YOUR POWERS FOR ANJEE!

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ANJEE

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BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Let's be friends! All ANJEE members enjoy a close connection with like-minded professionals in a wide variety of careers. Whether you are a formal educator, teacher naturalist, lawyer, commissioner, student etc., ANJEE is an ever-growing network of environmentally conscientious folks who are looking to make positive impacts throughout New Jersey and beyond.

Among the many benefits of being an ANJEE member is the exposure to environmental organizations, jobs, and projects throughout the state by way of:

- ANJEE online electronic newsletter and weekly eblast
- annual environmental education conferences
- regional program committees
- an awards and recognition program
- the annual retreat

Being apart of ANJEE not only means making positive impacts on our future, but also establishing and maintaining friendships and partnerships that last a lifetime! For more information, check out our website at anjee.org



DID YOU KNOW?
Members also have the opportunity to be featured in this seasonal newsletter!

Big News for the "No Child Left Inside" Environmental Education Bill!

The New Jersey Student Sustainability Coalition's Green Amendment Team

The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) has recently posted their endorsement for legislation of the NCLI Bill. The bill was introduced to the Senate on April 5th, 2022, written by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) and Sen. John Sarbanes (D-MD).

Members and participants were thrilled to have Margaret Berei and Svanfridur Mura, Campaign Coordinators of the Green Amendment Team present at the 2022 ANJEE Winter Conference this past January. With the goal of passing the Green Amendment in the state of New Jersey, Mura and Berei are not only taking legislative action, but educating students on the details of the amendment while providing them the skills to advocate and organize for themselves and their future.

Backed by research that environmental education boosts academic achievement while engaging children with nature, this legislation would create more opportunities for this valuable outdoor hands-on learning programs. This in turn, would develop confident students who have a deeper, and integrated understanding of climate and environmental challenges, along with problem-solving skills to tackle those challenges as individuals.

Through outreach, lobbying, social media, and mainstream media, the Green Amendment Team is working to uplift their student constituents' voices while also targeting state legislatures who will be deciding whether NJ Voters get a chance to say "yes" or "no" on the Green Amendment. This includes a Green Amendment Podcast which anyone can listen to on Spotify.

The bill would also authorize critical funding for schools across the county to develop environmental education curricula, with \$150 million annually authorized through 2027. This funding would not only create more equitable access for students to learn outdoors, but also facilitate teachers' use of school grounds and local outdoor areas as learning tools and "classrooms".

Teachers can also educate their students on the Green Amendment using a 'Teachers Guide' which details the book "Green Amendments for the Generations", all for FREE on fortheGenerations.org.

As a whole, this legislation would strengthen the core academic programs as well as strengthen environmental literacy not only for teachers as they are able to train and prepare for the new programs, but for their students now and for the next several years.

To stay in the loop with Berei's and Mura's efforts, you can follow the New Jersey Students Sustainability Coalition @njstudentsustainability, and check out upcoming events on the NJSSC website at <https://www.njstudentsustainability.com/calender-njssc>. Teachers and students can learn more about the campaign using this [link](#) and share the social media page @njstudentsustainability to spread the word. Thank you for all your dedicated efforts and hard work!

For more information on NAAEE's endorsement, check out the NAAEE website and blog post at

[More at naee.org](http://Moreatnaee.org)

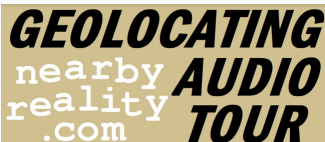
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NEW JERSEY AUDUBON SOCIETY



The EE Corner

Interview with Emma Latham
By Elena Villanueva



Emma is the School Grounds Manager at City Green which is an organization that helps urban areas through agriculture, community involvement and educational programming. Emma has also participated in ANJEE's Conferences as a speaker and in this interview, she shares with us her knowledge and opinions about food sustainability.

1. What are your job responsibilities?

As a school grounds manager, I do different outdoor education programs with K-12 students. I am also involved in the "Farm to preschool" program in which we help schools build gardens. I also create curriculum and train teachers so they can add outdoor curriculum to their lessons.

2. What environmental topics do you teach students?

Some topics that we teach include nutrition, planting, healthy eating, agriculture, ecology, pollinators and climate change.

3. What experiences in your life led you to become an environmental educator?

I come from a family of chefs and bakers so how our food is produced was always an interest of mine. Also, in college I learned the different social impacts that food production has on humans and the environment so that made me even more passionate about working in sustainability.

4. In your opinion, how does farming/gardening help students' life? Connecting with a garden is especially important for students that live in urban areas. The garden is a fun place where they can play and learn how to nurture something, while connecting with their environment. With farming they can also feel confident about their abilities to grow food and be involved in sustainable food production.

5. What kind of projects do you do with students? We do projects where we observe different flowers and how they are connected to different pollinators. We also do compost projects where we examine the different kinds of soil and discuss which soil is healthy and which is not.

6. What are some goals that you have in the future?

We want to support schools and teachers and help them by providing training to educators so they can add farming/gardening to their curriculum. We also want to create more workshops that talk about sustainability and be involved in environmental conservation projects.

7. What are some ways that we can help wildlife in our gardens?

It is important to plant a variety of plant species in the garden so that the insect habitat is more diverse. Some flowers for example that are pollinator friendly are: black eye Susan, catnip, Echinacea and milkweed. Composting is also important for the health of the soil as well as doing a crop rotation which reduces the number of pests in the garden.

Spring Seasonal Tips:

1. To reduce pesticide in your garden plant catnip, as it repels mosquitoes and is a pollinator friendly flower.
2. Plant clover instead of grass. Clover grows less tall than grass which helps you mow less, and the flowers attract many butterflies.
3. Put a water dish in your garden so that wildlife can have a closer water source.
4. Support local farmers. Buy NJ's seasonal veggies like carrots, arugula and radish. You can check jerseyfresh.com to see which fruits and vegetables are in season.
5. Add a new eco-friendly habit in your life this year. Go to www.ecofriendlyhabits.com for inspiration.

Dear Readers,

We hope you enjoy this issue of the EE Exchange! If you are interested in becoming a member of the newsletter team, feel free to reach out to Stephanie, at ssinger@anjee.org. Thank you, and keep an eye out for the next newsletter, coming this October!

Stephanie and the Newsletter Team!