



FALL 2023

# THE EE EXCHANGE

Official Newsletter of the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education

## Notes from a “Green” Educator

Like many, I was a new (aka “green”) parent myself with a fail-proof plan of how I’d raise my children to be thoughtful, confident environmental stewards. They would rescue and relocate critters (appropriately) and would confidently hike ahead on a challenging trail. It would be similiar to how I grew up in Rahway of all places. Outside, by the stream, in the woods (and yes, we had them in Rahway - Robinson’s Branch, anyone?) and on my bike no matter the elements.

It was crucial to me that my kids - all kids - had these opportunities; active no matter their locale, exposed to nature, comforted in the discomfort, and with the potential to apply these abilities in all facets of their lives. My family is in Hunterdon County and privileged to call the Sourland Region home; therefore, nature and its opportunities to escape, educate and inspire are right outside our door! If I could do this in the city, there’s no reason they can’t here in the sticks. Piece of cake!

Did it always work out this way? No... Kids grow up; those weekly hikes and willful adventures were replaced by sports, exorbitant amounts of homework and “crankiness”; but then a scary family heath diagnosis challenged that safe routine, and suddenly running ahead and being outside truly became an escape. Children who interact with nature expand their bubble far outside the reaches of their interior circle. They grow in to confident, thoughtful beings which translates in to school, friendships and, hopefully, beyond.

Parenting will always be my pride and biggest accomplishment, and I was thrilled to see my work outside with my kiddos pay off and felt compelled to continue to share with others the opportunities they had.

I searched for ways to recapture and share that joy professionally, and landed with Raritan Headwaters as an environmental educator in 2021. The opportunity to learn alongside seasoned educators and environmental stewards has been rewarding; to teach a child why a leaf changes, lead them on a hike in a world larger and far more realistic than their “inside classroom”, to allow them to get their feet wet and meet a critter up close, learning why it’s there and how we should share our home is incredibly rewarding.

Environmental educators impart confidence and lessons which may be applied to every facet of a child’s life. Remember “environment” is not just geographic. Remember, too, that children ALWAYS remember how YOU make them feel. Core memories are usually the sound of the mourning dove, the smell of the rain, the feeling of accomplishment and environmental educators capture these opportunities to teach and heal; not just for their students, but for themselves, too.

**Alison Kavchok**

**Are you an educator with a story to share from the woods?**  
**Send it to: [akavchok@ANJEE.org](mailto:akavchok@ANJEE.org) to share in our next newsletter!**



**Are you an educator, parent or pediatrician looking for resources on implementing outdoor education to your practice? Check out: <https://njkidsinnature.org/>**

## The Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education Board and Staff

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Committees and Membership

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# Introducing ...

## ANJEE's Research Symposium

Planning is in full swing for the 39th Annual Winter Research Symposium and Conference, to be held at TCNJ in the Education Building on Thursday and Friday, January 11th and 12th.

**New to the winter conference is the Research Symposium. This curated event will take place on Thursday, January 11th and include a poster session for those whose research reflects the conference theme and threads.**

Submission deadline for posters is January 3rd. *Posters for research in any stage of progress are welcome!*

Conference presenters will be finalised and announced December 1st.

**Register today!**



# You're Invited!

TO THE  
**39TH ANNUAL  
WINTER RESEARCH  
SYMPOSIUM AND CONFERENCE  
IN PERSON!**

The College of New Jersey  
2000 Pennington Road  
Ewing, New Jersey

Research Symposium    Annual Conference  
**Thursday                      Friday**  
**January 11, 2024          January 12, 2024**

## Together We Thrive!

**TO REGISTER:**

Visit <https://anjee.org/conference-registration.html>

**Be sure to check your email for the poster submission link.  
Please contact [presenters@anjee.org](mailto:presenters@anjee.org) with questions!**

### A Big Thank You to our Organizational Members, Partners and Sponsors





# ANJEE wants YOU! Join One of Our Standing Committees



GOT MAD SKILLS? USE YOUR POWERS FOR ANJEE!

## Conference Committee: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Help plan our first IN PERSON Winter Conference in 3 years!  
Contact Kelly Wenzel: [president@anjee.org](mailto:president@anjee.org)

## Sponsorship Committee: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Build our fundraising sources to help fund our amazing conferences!  
Contact Beth Stolting: [director@anjee.org](mailto:director@anjee.org)

## ANJEE WANTS YOU!

To join  
the Board!



We welcome new faces  
and bright ideas!

## **BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!**

And fill out a nomination form at

<https://anjee.org/volunteer-opportunities.html>

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

- Post Your jobs in our Career Center
- ANJEE online electronic newsletter and weekly eblast
- Discounts to annual environmental education conferences
  - Regional program committees
  - Awards and recognition program
  - Annual Member's 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](http://anjee.org)

## Find ANJEE on Social Media



### A Note From Our Board:

*Are you interested in helping to guide the future of ANJEE and working towards advancing environmental education in New Jersey? Consider applying to serve on ANJEE's Board of Directors. ANJEE is seeking individuals who are excited about the work that we are doing and want to help ANJEE by serving on a personal level. Self-nominations encouraged. Submit your completed nomination via the link on this page. Nominations will be reviewed and selected by the Board of Directors in February. Nominees will be notified in March. Board Terms begin July 1st*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Members also have the opportunity to be featured in this seasonal newsletter!





# The EE Corner

YOUNG ADULT VOICES ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

AS PART OF AN ECO-AMBASSADOR BLOG WRITING PROMPT

BY MILLBURN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, VIDYA BINDAL.

## What does “Sustainable Development” mean to you?

To me, sustainable development means combating the climate change issues in a methodical way, especially the Sustainable Development Goals (or the SDGs). I feel that the 17 SDGs introduced to us by the UN in 2012 recognize and categorize the life of an ordinary citizen, while encouraging the possibility of integrating sustainable aspects to them. Personally, I feel like with the broadness of each sustainable development goal, it allows for so much to be achieved under every single one, genuinely opening the door as wide as possible to any and all ideas that could help make our world a greener place. For example, I have taken sustainable actions in my town and have done work under a somewhat of a large array of them. However, the best part with each one is that it encourages me to branch out even more and try to really dig deep with an SDG to truly connect with it and make a large difference with it. The current SDG I am working on is SDG 5 on gender equality and how to make that aspect of life much more climate change friendly. I definitely look forward to many of the differences I can make in the field of environmental science, and I know that with the empowerment of the SDGs, I have almost a clear guideline of how I can make the biggest impact possible!

**Vidya Bindal**

*Vidya Bindal is a rising Sophomore in Millburn Public High School in New Jersey, USA. She is one of the first Eco-Ambassadors for the Columbia University Center for Sustainable Development Program. In that role, she actively organizes, leads, and volunteers in a large variety of local environmental projects, as well as contributes her time to engaging with an international consortium of environmentally energized students as thought leaders via conferences and workshops, both virtually and in person.*

*Vidya believes that one of the most important steps towards climate awareness is being outdoors and engaging with nature and climate. Vidya is studying science and wished to combine her love for movement and environment in a scientific query to make sustainability not just an option, but an economically and technologically viable default choice.*

**Stay tuned for more questions and answers with Ms. Bindal in upcoming newsletter issues!**



Looking to add lesson plans on climate change to your curricula? Look no further than the Climate Education Resource Hub!  
<https://njclimateeducation.org/>



ANJEE is a proud Affiliate of the North American Association for Environmental Education  
[NAAEE.org](https://naaee.org)

**2023  
Conference Registration**