



WINTER 2023



THE EE EXCHANGE

Official Newsletter of the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education

Moving Forward with the New Jersey School of Conservation

NEW MEMBER!



This is an exciting year for students from Wenonah Middle School in Wenonah, NJ. This was the **25th year** that they traveled 3 hours by bus each way to the New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC) for immersive environmental education lessons, missing only 2020 at the height of the pandemic. It's one of many positive things happening at the site at which President, Kerry Kirk Pflugh and her colleagues are working tirelessly to reopen the NJSOC since it's temporary closing in 2020. Along with reinvigorating the site's historical role in teacher professional development, the NJSOC is getting core infrastructure updates and partnering with Rutgers University, to expand the school's use as a major field research location!



Pflugh says that the success of the NJSOC comeback is largely due to the high quality of educators that bring forth their diverse backgrounds of experience and enthusiasm for environmental education, many whom live locally in the area and have strong ties to the school. And they are busy! - They will continue to host the NJ Watershed Ambassador training in September, and infrastructure updates are underway to bring back overnight/residential programming which was key to foundational nature experiences that only the NJSOC could offer.

In terms of school programs, the NJSOC is certainly keeping pace with New Jersey's curriculum changes - all of their school programs are aligned with the current Climate Change Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and Social Emotional Learning Competencies. Access to these wonderful programs, and their enthusiastic educators means that students all over New Jersey will foster a love of and understanding of nature that will enable them to be changemakers in their communities, here and beyond the Garden State.

EDUCATOR OPEN HOUSE!

APRIL 29, 2023
9:30A.M. - 4 P.M.

THE NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF CONSERVATION
1 WAPALANNE ROAD,
SANDYSTON, NJ
\$20.00

<https://friendsofnjsoc.org/events/>
for more 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!

Awards Planning Committee: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Help plan an awesome awards celebration event in Fall 2023!

Contact Kelly Wenzel: president@anjee.org

Sponsorship Committee: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Build our fundraising sources to help fund our amazing conferences!

Contact Beth Stolting: director@anjee.org

Welcome New Organizational Members!!



BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

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
- 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

ANJEE

SO HOT RIGHT NOW



<https://www.facebook.com/ANJEE>



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Join us for Regional Group Meet-ups!

Become a member

North

Sussex, Morris, Passaic, Bergen, Essex, Hudson

Central

Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Union, Middlesex, Monmouth

South

Burlington, Ocean, Camden, Atlantic, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Cape May





HOW DOES YOUR (SCHOOL) GARDEN GROW?



An interview with Patrick Evans, *Farm to School coordinator at the Greater Newark Conservancy* Among the presenters at the 38th Annual Winter (virtual) Conference were Patrick Evans, Farm to School Coordinator for Greater Newark Conservancy and his colleagues, Bridgette Byrd, Pablo Verissimo, and Julie Sienkiewicz who detailed their experience in running the successful Farm To School program. I followed up with Patrick to dig deeper into their goals of food education and gain more insight into this delicious concept.

How can a food educational program be introduced to a school with no prior history or interest in learning about growing and maintaining a school garden?

At Greater Newark Conservancy, we feel strongly that every school should provide students with the opportunity to connect with nature and nutritious food. It is important for students to know how plants grow, where they come from, and the fact that fruits and vegetables don't just appear out of nowhere in supermarkets.

We work in many schools in Newark that had no prior history with a school garden, and are now running successful farm to school programs. This is due to many stakeholders involved including the conservancy, school staff, and administration, Foodcorps service members, students, and volunteers. Interest from the school administration is vital for the longevity of these kind of programs.

For schools with no prior history of a school garden: start small. National Nutrition Month is coming up in March and it would be a great time to host a Nutrition Month pep rally to get students excited about healthy eating. The same goes for Earth Day, where students can help paint a big pot to plant tomatoes in.

Do students play a role in the maintenance and care of the plants, as well as harvesting vegetables? What are their favorite responsibilities?

Yes! The students we work with through our Farm To School program play a huge role in the maintenance and care of our school garden. Our FoodCorps service members, who serve as the garden and nutrition educators, work hard to get their students outside in the garden as much as possible. Students are doing everything from seeding, transplanting, watering, harvesting, composting, pruning, weeding, seed saving, and more! To many gardeners out there, some of these tasks are daunting, but for most of the students we work with, they are overfilled with joy when they have the opportunity to sow seeds or shovel dirt.

The range of students' favorite responsibilities is different for every class and school. I worked with students who did not like to get their hands dirty, but loved to get water from the rain barrel. I have other students who like to dig, sow seeds, and weed, where other students gets a kick out of spinning the composter. Without these amazing students, our FoodCorps service members and school staff would have twice as much work in a given week.

" Interested in visiting our site or attending a program/workshop, please feel free to reach out to me at pevans@citybloom.org! We are slowly building a network of school garden advocates and leaders, and if you want to be a part of it to receive monthly updates, upcoming events, and have the chance to collaborate with like-minded folks, connect with me and I will make that happen! "

A Big Thank You to our Partners and Sponsors



The EE Corner

ANJEE's 38th Annual Winter Conference saw many noteworthy topics presented including The EmPowered Schools Program which encourages students to become agents of change in their schools homes, communities, and globally through lessons based on energy conservation, careers, climate, and environmental justice. Teacher at George L. Catrambone Elementary School, Kelly Stone, discussed how her students engage in real world issues and discover solutions to those problems. Creative and innovative lessons driven by students' interests allows for much flexibility. And partaking in an energy conservation contest fuels their motivation to reach new heights in the program. By implementing simple behavior changes, as well as comparing themselves to activists around the world, the students become positive changemakers and stewards for the planet. Let's hear what Kelly Stone's students at GLC have to say about their amazing experiences with the program!

DARALY "THE MOST INTERESTING AND FUN PROJECT OR ACTIVITY I'VE DONE IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LEADERS AND WRITING THE BIOGRAPHY REPORT."

ALANNAH " I LOVE THAT WE DO EXPERIMENTS AND PROJECTS BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I LEARNED IS BEING EMPOWERED TO CHANGE THE WORLD."

MA'AYAN - "BEING ABLE TO LEARN ABOUT BEING GREEN AND LEARNING HOW TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO BE GREEN IS THE BEST PART."

LUIZA " I REALLY LIKED MAKING ORNAMENT FROM RECYCLED PLASTIC CUPS AND DECORATING THEM."

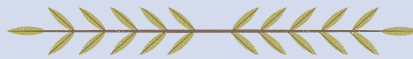
BETSY "MY FAVORITE PART OF THE EMPOWERED PROGRAM WAS MAKING POSTERS SO WE CAN HELP SCHOOLS RECYCLE"

ANNA MARIE " MY FAVORITE PART IS POWER SAVE IS WHEN WE LEARN NEW STUFF AND IT IS REALLY INTERESTING."

KEITLIN " ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING THINGS THAT WE LEARNED ABOUT WAS RESEARCHING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LEADERS AND SCIENTISTS."

MARIA- " THE MOST INTERESTING AND FUN ACTIVITY IS WHEN WE DID THE POSTERS TO REMIND THE TEACHERS THAT WHEN THEY LEAVE A ROOM THEY NEED TO TURN THE LIGHTS OFF."

DAVI" MY FAVORITE EMPOWERED PROJECT WAS LEARNING ABOUT RENEWABLE ENERGY. WE GOT TO BUILD A MODEL HOME USING WIND, SOLAR, AND WATER ENERGY. WE ALSO MADE VIDEOS ABOUT THEM."



SAVE THE DATE!

ANJEE's Annual Fall Conference
Friday
September 29, 2023
Duke Farms, Hillsborough NJ

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