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Guest Letter

Bo Glover

Join us for our virtual 45th Annual Fall Faire

The Environmental Nature Center's Fall Faire is an annual community tradition. It is a time to celebrate the fall season, reunite with neighbors and old classmates, and support an organization that has served our community for nearly 50 years. This year, due to COVID-19, the ENC will not be filled with thousands of visitors on this day for the first time since 1977. This year's Fall Faire will be held virtually. We feel this is the safest decision for the welfare of our community even though the budgetary impact will be difficult on our organization. Unless...(in the words of Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*) someone like you cares a whole awful lot!



Courtesy of ENC

Bo Glover, "at home" at the Environmental Nature Center

Our financial losses during the pandemic have been substantial but our mission has never been more important. We have been working hard, continuing to provide essential programming and connecting children to nature safely throughout this crisis. Although schools closed and field trips stopped and mandates also closed the doors of the nature center to visitors, we persevered. Our Nature Preschool never closed and provided needed childcare for families of essential workers. We were thrilled to offer 12 weeks of Nature Camp throughout the summer by transitioning to modified camp protocols aligned with best health practices – which included reducing group size to one-half of what they were in the past, in turn doubling staffing costs and reducing incoming revenue.

The school closures presented us with an opportunity to meet our mission in a new way. Our naturalists worked collaboratively to design distance learning programs that engaged students in creative ways. We enter this fall offering After School Nature Camps out of concern for our community's kids, who are sorely missing social time with friends and mentors. Virtual programming for schools, modified in-person field trips and classes, and of course our Nature Preschool will be impacting lives daily.

The ENC serves a vital role in helping our community maintain their mental well-being. A strong connection to the natural environment enhances emotional health and alleviates feelings of social isolation. Connecting people to nature is essential. This pandemic has increased anxieties and separates us, but nature can help sustain us. Nature uplifts, sustains and serves as a beacon of hope.

We are asking you, our community, to serve as our beacon of hope and help to sustain the Nature Center during this time. In order to continue to provide our essential educational services, we need your support. Please join us for a day of virtual fun at our 45th Annual ENC Fall Faire! Embark on a virtual "Craft Crawl" and "Story Walk." Play virtual nature games, do a fun science experiment and watch performances around the virtual "Fire Circle Stage."

In order to raise needed funds and in the tradition of the Fall Faire, we are selling "Fall Faire To Go" bags to be picked up at the ENC. The reusable canvas ENC bag includes a pumpkin, goodies and recipes from our Savor OC restaurant sponsors, an ENC bandana, native plant seeds, a nature tattoo, a children's nature book, materials to do a fun science experiment, materials to create a fall themed craft and much, much more! We will also have an online silent auction with really awesome items for you and your family. Please go to our website at www.enccenter.org to participate and support the ENC.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the amazing staff of the Environmental Nature Center, we send a heartfelt thank you for caring a whole awful lot!

Bo Glover, executive director, Environmental Nature Center

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