



Newsletter Spring 2011

Sheldrake Environmental Center
685 Weaver Street—Larchmont, NY 10538
www.sheldrakecenter.org

Letter from Interim Executive Director Holly Moskow

Spring has sprung at Sheldrake Environmental Center and we are amidst a bustling season of school trips and children coming to explore the natural world under the careful guidance of our trained naturalists.

Why is it such a delight for children to visit? There are no screens at Sheldrake and yet the whole environment is bursting with signs of life in live-action 3-D. In an era of iPads, we show them lily pads; instead of iPods we show them seed pods. There is so much we can offer our visitors both young and old, but to me, our biggest impact is on our young visitors who seem to have few opportunities to explore nature in this digital age. Our naturalists have them “logging-on” by turning over real logs to see the squiggly kind of worms, not a malicious computer virus. Time spent here is a precious awakening of senses to the natural world.

In this issue you’ll read about our upcoming children’s programs, learn how to protect your family from environmental toxins, find Green Week activities and see how you can sink your hands into the soil in our vegetable garden.

As I step into the role of Interim Executive Director, I wish our outgoing executive director all the best in her new endeavors. Marie Venezia served Sheldrake Environmental Center for 10 years: five as a board member and five as executive director. She has been a tireless advocate for Sheldrake and she leaves the organization well positioned for continued success in delivering our mission.

Naturally yours,



Save the Date!

Artwork by Murray Avenue School Students at Sheldrake

Starting Apr. 26

Come see our youngest artists’ interpretation of nature and more!

Green Week Local Events

Starting Apr. 29

For more info, see page 3.

Spring Cleaning at the Reservoir

Sat. Apr. 30, 10 am-12 pm

Join other Sheldrake friends in caring for the Larchmont Conservancy.

Master Composter & Recycler Program

Wednesdays, May 4 to June 1

The Westchester County program is back!

June Extension Program for pre-schoolers

Weekly sessions, Mon. to Fri.

Week of June 6,

9:30 am-12:30 pm or 1:15-4:15 pm

June 6 to July 1, 9:30 am-12:30 pm

Kids’ Summer Ecology Program

Jul. 5 to Aug. 12, 1:30-3:30 pm

If your child loves the outdoors and enjoys getting dirty, this program is the one!

The Gift of Spring by Mary B. Davis, Program Director

“I go to nature to be soothed and healed and to have my senses put in tune once more.” ~John Burroughs

There is a lot of concern these days that children are not spending enough time in the natural world. If you have a child, or know one you’d like to take on a walk, spring is the perfect time to do it. Buds bursting, leaves unfolding, birds calling... It is the season of hope, promise, and beginnings! So, let’s celebrate spring together by going on an unhurried ramble, forgetting about time and without having a particular destination in mind.

Spring flowers are the first thing to catch our eye. We come upon the dangling male catkins of the alder shrub. With one flick of a finger, we send its pollen into the air. The earliest flowers to bloom on trees and shrubs, the tiny, inconspicuous ones, are almost always wind-pollinated. They don’t need to be colorful and fragrant to attract insects. In early spring’s leafless woods, their pollen can fly unimpeded through the air to their destination - a female flower of the same kind. Only if it is pollinated will a female flower bear fruit.

Then we come upon a rotting log. When we turn it over, we find slug eggs that look like pearls. A little further along, we find a tree stump to sit on and listen to the scolding of a wren and the steady drumming of the downy woodpecker. While we’re sitting, we spot a jade green shield bug walking up a tree trunk, as if it had all the time in the world. Our next stop will be at the pond, where we are amazed at the chorus of serenading frogs surrounding us with sound.



(Continued on next page)

Sheldrake Environmental Center
685 Weaver Street
Larchmont, NY 10538
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Our Mission

Sheldrake Environmental Center is a non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire environmental awareness and action in the community and to preserve, protect and enhance local environmental resources.

The Gift of Spring, continued from previous page

The trail takes us to a stream. Its murmuring music compels us to stop and listen. Standing at the edge staring at the water, watching the shadows play over the surface, you can’t help but be in the present. A soft splash announces the arrival of a female mallard, its babies following. Spending only one day in the nest after being born, they are able to belly-flop into the water and paddle along after their mother. If only we could learn to swim so quickly.

As we look down at our feet, we notice the pointed tracks of a deer who has come here recently to drink, as well as the 5-toed, hand-like tracks of a raccoon who may have washed its food here. Whenever we stop to look at one thing - it never fails - we’ll be surprised at how many other things we’ll see.

Going out on walks and spending time in nature may be as important for a child as learning to read or write. It is a simple action...to carve a space in your busy day for a walk like this, and to give a child the gift of time to be in the natural world and feel the wonder of spring.

Simple Steps to Healthier Environments for Children

by Millie Magraw

On the evening of April 4, at Hommocks Middle School, Dr. Maida Galvez spoke to 120 concerned citizens about the influence chemicals have on the development of children and adolescents. Sheldrake was proud to be a co-sponsor of this event.

Dr. Galvez outlined the primary ways children are exposed to environmental toxins and shared research that shows how children’s bodies are uniquely affected. She cautioned about exposures to mold, lead and mercury, then focused on lesser-known threats from BPA and phthalates. She explained that phthalates are found in products like flexible plastics, toys, fragrance, nail polish, food packaging and medical supplies. There is concern in the medical community that phthalates mimic hormonal activity, which may result in pre-mature puberty, male infertility, breast cancer and childhood obesity.

Dr. Galvez highlighted some simple steps to avoid phthalates and BPA:

- 1) Choose fragrance-free products.
- 2) Do not microwave food/drinks in plastic.
- 3) Avoid #3 and #7 plastics –which may contain phthalates and BPA.
- 4) Have good ventilation and be outside.

Dr. Galvez also stressed the importance of children having positive experiences in the natural world, citing the work of Richard Louv who coined the term “Nature Deficit Disorder”. She noted that, “Too often kids are inside because of the things that keep them indoors like computers and TV. Remember positive aspects of the environment are equally important.” At Sheldrake, we couldn’t agree more!



Dr. Maida Galvez is an Associate Professor in the departments of Preventative Medicine and Pediatrics, and Director of Mount Sinai's Region 2 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit.

Come Enjoy the Sheldrake Gardens

Our community vegetable garden has fed Larchmont/Mamaroneck Pantry clients and others for over 30 years. Come help us on the weekends or during the week from now to October 15.

Our native plant garden houses native plants suitable for Westchester gardens. A pamphlet in the Potting Shed will tell you about our collection of over two dozen plants that need little maintenance or pampering to do well in our climate.

Our newest garden is for Monarch butterflies in migration. Part of Monarch Watch, a program housed at the University of Kansas Entomology Department, our garden is now one of a chain of gardens running from Manitoba to Texas throughout the Eastern United States. Plants supply food and nesting for Monarchs on their way to and from Mexico. Our garden was certified this spring and is number 4549 in the chain.



Larchmont-Mamaroneck Green Week 2011

SHELDRAKE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

INVITES YOU TO

PARTICIPATE IN A CLEAN-UP AT



THE JAMES G. JOHNSON, JR.
CONSERVANCY
("The Larchmont Reservoir")

SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH
10 AM – 12 NOON

CONTACT SHELDRAKE AT 834-1443

CLEANUP BAGS & GLOVES PROVIDED BY THE
VILLAGE OF LARCHMONT DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS



BRING RAKES AND WEAR YOUR MUD-SHOES OR
BOOTS



Families welcome – children must be supervised by an
adult.

Village of Mamaroneck Clean-up

Saturday, April 30
9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Starting at Harbor Island Park
Tree Planting Ceremony at 9:30 am

Village-wide clean-up to follow

Pitch in to help our community be a
cleaner and greener place to live.

Clean-up bags, gloves and tools provided
by the Department of Public Works and
local sponsors.

Contact the
Committee for the Environment
at cfe@vomny.org or call the
Village at 777-7736 to volunteer.

The **League of Women Voters** invites
all to join us for breakfast on Friday,
May 6 at 8:15 A.M. at Hector's
Restaurant on Mamaroneck Avenue.
The League will have as our guest
speaker, 9/11 First Responder John
Sferazo. In connection with John's
advocacy work to assist those disabled
by their recovery efforts, John is using
outdoor property he purchased in
Maine to provide nature therapy to
disabled veterans and responders who
come to this getaway to restore their
spirits while also restoring this natural
setting with plantings and trees which
are native to this outdoor habitat.

Thank You to All Our 2010 Members and Donors
We are pleased to acknowledge here our donors who made gifts of \$100 and above in 2010.
Don't see your name? Become a member today or let us know of any omissions so we can correct next time.

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Become a Member or Make a Donation Today!

In this time of tight budgets, we need you more than ever. Nearly half of our funding comes from membership fees and contributions. Your dollars work hard to help us fulfill our mission. How is your money used?

\$100 can purchase art supplies for our children's programs.

\$250 can offset the cost of bringing beloved animals to a seasonal festival.

\$500 can provide a scholarship to our Summer Ecology Camp.

\$1,000 can offset costs of our communications.

\$2,500 can help us upgrade our website.

\$10,000 would help us upgrade our aging computers so we can leverage more volunteers and student interns.

Another way to make a lasting contribution...

You have supported Sheldrake Environmental Center during your lifetime. How can you provide for our future support?

Include a charitable bequest in your will or revocable trust. You can remember Sheldrake by using the following language: "I bequeath to Sheldrake Environmental Center, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation located at 685 Weaver Street, Larchmont, NY 10538, ___% of my residuary estate (or \$ ___) for its general purposes."

How else can you get involved?

More than 6,000 people participated in our programs this past year alone—it would not have been possible without a dedicated cadre of talented volunteers.

Have a few hours? We'd love your expertise!

Send email inquiries to scheduling@sheldrakecenter.org.

In the office:

Writers: 2 hrs/wk

Graphic Design: brochures, signs and more (project-based)

Data entry: 2 hrs/wk

Grant writers: (project-based)

Fundraising & events: committee members

On the trails:

Volunteer Environmental Educators: training classes run each fall

Clean-ups: on the Larchmont Reservoir James G. Johnson, Jr. Conservancy

Seasonal Festival Volunteers: set-up and man tables during festivals

In the garden:

Volunteer gardeners: grow vegetables for Larchmont-Mamaroneck Food Pantry

GO GREEN: JOIN OUR EMAIL RAFFLE!

To help us reduce paper use and to provide timely communication to you, we'd love your email address. All new email addresses we receive will be entered in a drawing to win \$50 or an annual family membership. Please include your email on your membership form or email scheduling@sheldrakecenter.org. The winner will be selected at the end of 2011.



Thank you to our Volunteer Environmental Educators!

John Auerbacher	Gail Koller
Rita Calandresa	Michele Lewis
Laura Chamberlain	Kathy McCarthy
Jacqueline Cooperman	Maggie McGovern
Laurie Dallos	Mike Merigliano
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Sheldrake
Environmental
Center

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Sheldrake Environmental Center
Children's Summer Ecology Program
EXPLORE, DISCOVER, HAVE FUN!



For ages 3 to 8
July 5 to August 12, 1:30-3:30p.m.
For information call (914)834-1443.