

In Bloom in Maine

Saturday, April 18, 2020

The Kittery Community Center

Kittery, Maine



The Big Picture: An In Bloom Overview

Looking through a school-calendar lens, our first **In Bloom** conference this year unfolded in Santa Barbara in early November. The keynote address, given by Gopal Krishnamurthy was titled “*Re-Wilding Learning*.” That theme also applies to the content of our upcoming New England conferences this spring.

In the beginning, **In Bloom** conferences catered to teachers of children between the ages of 3 and 6, but children grow up, so we’re catching up! There’s been an interesting upward migration in New England schools as the result of successful nature-based early childhood initiatives. Children continue to want outdoor learning as they move up through the grades. First-, second- and third-grade students look out the window at kindergarteners learning outside and long for the sunshine on their faces and sticks in their hands. Preschool teachers now help their upper grade colleagues learn how to teach math in the woods and how to encourage learning outdoors. And so the doors open up and the school gets turned inside out. Our **In Bloom** workshops will be geared to preschool through third grade, so please invite your elementary teacher colleagues. We’ve got exciting new keynote speakers this year from around the country and a host of new workshop presenters from each region, along with some old favorites. We’ll also continue to spotlight the work of Antioch New England faculty members who teach in the Nature-based Early Childhood Certificate program.

Relative to big pictures, we have a new movie to show! In July 2016, 23 acres of land adjacent to Chesterfield School in Southwestern NH came up for sale. *Turning School Inside Out* is the story of what happened next.

We look forward to seeing you at one of this year’s spring **In Blooms**. Bring mud boots, rain gear, sun protection, your indomitable spirits . . . and perhaps some backyard flowers!



Spring 2020 In Bloom Conferences

In Bloom in Maine

18 April 2020

Eyes of the World Discovery Center
120 Rogers Road, Kittery, Maine.

In Bloom in Western Mass

16 May 2020

Hitchcock Center for the Environment
845 West Street
Amherst, Massachusetts.

In Bloom in Vermont

13 June 2020

hosted by North Branch Nature Center
at Moretown Elementary School
Moretown, Vermont.

This event is sponsored by:

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Eyes of the
World
Discovery
Center

Structure for the Day

8:00am-9:00am	Registration Opens Workshop signups Morning refreshments
9:00am-9:15am	Opening Circle
9:15am-10:15am	Morning Keynote
10:30-Noon	Morning Workshops
Noon-1:00pm	Lunch & Movie Inside-Outside network
1:00pm-2:00pm	Afternoon Keynote
2:15pm-3:45pm	Afternoon Workshops
3:50pm-4:00pm	Closing Circle

Morning Keynote

What Else is Possible? A Glimpse into Vermont's Forest Day Programming

Eliza Minnucci, Founder, Forest Kinder, Tunbridge, VT, Adjunct Faculty, Nature-based Early Childhood Program, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Weaving together receptive administration, commitment to space and time, and a dedication to routines, Vermont's teachers have created a strong culture of weekly Forest Day teaching and learning. Over forty-five public schools now have classrooms spending frequent, immersive time in wild spaces beyond the classroom walls. As teachers and students rediscover joy in their school days, the stories they have to share are inspirational. Bringing you the voices of these teachers and students, the morning keynote provides a glimpse into what can be possible within the structures of public education, as well as a recipe for successful and sustainable programming.

Eliza Minnucci supports teachers in cultivating nature-based play and learning for their students through ForestKinder, a consulting business that she operates with Meg Teachout from her home in Tunbridge, Vermont. She also teaches the Nature-based Early



*Childhood Curriculum course at Antioch University New England. She has taught young children, most recently kindergartners in Quechee, Vermont, and previously in Mexico, Chicago, Seattle and Alaska. She is a frequent presenter at In Bloom conferences throughout New England. She is the author, with Meg Teachout, of *A Forest Days Handbook: Program Design for School Days Outside*, published in 2018.*

We enjoy treating you to a tasty and healthy lunch. During the lunch hour, Liza Lowe and other regional coordinators will update you on *Inside-Outside: Nature-based Educators of New England*,

our growing professional network. There are now a dozen *Inside-Outside* chapters throughout New England. Interested in joining or starting a chapter? Contact Liza Lowe at elowe@antioch.edu.



Morning Workshops

The Importance of Teaching Children Outdoors: An Occupational Therapist's Perspective

Sue Ford, Occupational Therapist, Kids Thrive OT, Kittery, ME

Participants will engage in interactive practice to learn how to incorporate strategies for organized movement, sensory regulation, and developmental progression in the outdoor classroom. We will model how to support sensory challenges and preferences in students (early preschool to elementary grades) by: incorporating nature-based concepts for sensory processing, emotional regulation, and nervous system development, identifying developmental progression for fine and gross motor pre-academic and academic tasks, and learning strategies for educating students about sensory preferences in outdoor classrooms.

Teaching Inside and Outside: Mushrooms Everywhere!

Aja Stephan, Kindergarten Teacher, Friends School of Portland, Cumberland Foreside, ME



Betsy Stacey

Learn how a child's exclamation, "Look! It's a mushroom!" turned into an in-depth study. In this workshop, we will look at ways to turn a simple nature walk into foraging for diverse living organisms. Fungi are an integral—and often misunderstood—part of the natural world. They provide countless ways to teach ecological concepts, share stories, and do active science. We will learn how to make spore prints, build a photographic library, and identify mushrooms. Book lists, local resources, and indoor extensions will be shared to help inspire months of inquiry about the natural world.

Outdoors with All Kids: Garnering Administrative Support for Nature-Based Programs

Marie Robinson, Superintendent, RSU #89, Katahdin Schools Stacyville, ME

21st century children need nature! Learn how to talk to your administrator about nature-based programs and delve into outdoor lessons that align to Common Core State Standards. This session will consist of a discussion around sharing the value of nature-based programs with public school administration and families. Participants will then have the opportunity to practice those conversations and share ideas about how we can meet standards outdoors.

Teaching Place-Based Science in Kindergarten (connected to NGSS)

Maggie Corlett, Kristen Giberson, Jessica McMichael, Kindergarten Team, Meroby Elementary School, Mexico, ME

Embracing the seasons and all that comes with them offers a wealth of rich science experiences. We teach Kindergarten in a public elementary school in Mexico, Maine that utilizes nature- and place-based methods in an effort to address the extensive learning needs of our student population. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) help guide our curricular planning. We will share with you some of the seasonal science experiences we have found to be most engaging and challenging.

Morning Workshops (continued)

Stick Play: The Power of Imagination

Anne Stires, Founder/Executive Director, Juniper Hill School, Alna, ME, Adjunct Faculty, Nature-based Early Childhood Program, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Sticks are quite possibly the world's oldest toys. Inducted into the Toy Hall of Fame in 2008, sticks often require expansive imagination, the telling of story, engineering skills, and safety awareness.



Children use sticks as tools, weapons, utensils, machines, magical people, food, animals, puppets, for building, fire-making, cooking, nature art, and flying. There are seemingly endless uses of sticks in play and yet there are perceived and real risks. This workshop

will explore the benefits of stick play, increase our collective comfort in using sticks with children, and expand understanding of managing the risks.

Supporting Children's Development of an Ecological Identity

Patti Bailie, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Maine Farmington, ME

What does it mean to develop an ecological identity? It begins when children experience nature in an enjoyable way—unstructured nature play. Reminiscent of Rachel Carson's book *A Sense of Wonder* (connected to the Maine coast), Ann Pelo wrote a book called *The Goodness of Rain*, where she chronicled a year spent with a one-year-old child, outside everyday in Seattle. Ann introduced the idea that children need to develop a self-identity, and—beyond that—an ecological identity. She identifies six practices for doing so. In this outdoor workshop, we will share the practices and provide techniques to develop ecological identity.



Creating Meaningful Offerings and Rich Storytelling Experiences (for ages 3-6)

Adrienne Hofmann and Christina Powell, pre-K/Kindergarten Teachers, Juniper Hill School, Alna, ME

This workshop will explore the use of storytelling, puppetry and acting to further the emergence of literacy skills in early childhood. We will be looking beyond picture books to demonstrate how oral storytelling and folktales can be used to teach literacy. The workshop will also explore how offerings, with an emphasis on natural materials, can be created within an emergent curriculum. Join us for an active, collaborative journey designed to show how our nature- and place-based class is nurturing literacy in the woods of mid-coast Maine.

Afternoon Panel Discussion

Marie Robinson, Superintendent, RSU #89, Katahdin Schools, Stacyville, ME

Patti Bailie, Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Maine, Farmington, ME

Zak Klein, Environmental Philanthropist, Program Officer, Quimby Family Foundation, Portland, ME

Page Nichols, Chief Innovation Officer, Maine Department of Education, Augusta, ME

Anne Stires, Founder and Executive Director, Juniper Hill School for Place-based Education, Alna, ME

facilitated by **David Sobel**, Author, Consultant, & Professor Emeritus, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Changing the Face of Education in Maine: 21st Century Children Need Nature

Why does it matter if you bring students outdoors to engage in meaningful learning? What is happening in this movement across the region? How can all we help support its growth? Nature-based education champion and author David Sobel will facilitate this groundbreaking, forward-thinking panel in which administrators, a higher education professional, an environmental philanthropist, and the DOE Commissioner's Chief Innovation Officer discuss the importance of nature-based education for all children, everywhere. The fragile planet we are living on needs children who are immersed in and connected to the natural world and their communities so that they become active, contributing citizens.

Afternoon Workshops

Working with Two-Year-Olds in Outdoor Environments

Fred Hoyt and Katie Clark, Twos and Threes Teachers, Eyes of the World Discovery Center, Kittery, ME

We have a successful outdoor program for two- and three-year-olds to develop self-confidence, resilience, and community. Toddler and early pre-K-aged students are often more capable than many assume. By the end of the year, the children dress themselves and others, prepare their outdoor gear, and are members of a tight-knit community. In this workshop, we present the elements of our success. Topics include: the importance of proper gear, transitions, development and maintenance of routines, and how students help one another.

Administration of a Nature-Based Early Childhood Program

Jessica Labbe, Director, Eyes of the World Discovery Center, Kittery, ME

Come on an adventure through policy and team-building. How do you prepare for a nature-based program? What policies are specifically needed? How do you train staff to work outdoors? While nature-based programming is on the rise, there are still laws and regulations to follow. We'll talk about how to work within these regulations and still run a terrific program. Hands-on, meaningful activities and discussion will happen primarily outdoors.

Afternoon Workshops

Not If, but How: Inclusion and Advocacy in Nature Based Programming

Lisa Burris, Founder and Director, Turn Back Time, Inc., Paxton, MA

If you work with children, you likely have encountered challenging behaviors. The trends for children with diagnoses of autism, ADHD, and trauma-related conditions are on the rise. In this workshop, we will discuss (and model) inclusion and diversity practices—and how we can make sure our programs are inclusive and diverse. Many children who struggle with behavior have challenges in the following domains: emotional regulation, sensory challenges and social/emotional connections. We will show how children use behavior to communicate, discuss how nature-base programs can support all children, and emphasize the importance of developing a support network for providers.

Tips, Content, and Rhythm to Keep Nature Connection Alive—Even in Winter!

Emily Calhoun Woodsmansee, pre-K/Kindergarten Teacher, Live n' Learn Center, Lee, NH

Let's head to the forest and dive into rhythms, tips, and content that help keep nature connection alive year-round! When there's snow on the ground or a chill in the air, heading outside for adventures can feel overwhelming. We'll use our time together to understand the risks and hazards of winter immersion, explore seasonal activities, and dive into winter-based routines. Participants will gain new tools for cultivating opportunities to learn in, around, and with nature throughout the year. Loosely geared to pre-K with adaptations for all ages.



The Natural Nature of Mime

Antonio Rocha, Storyteller and Mime, StoriesinMotion and TEDx Speaker, Portland, ME

Children are natural imitators and they love to make believe. The art of mime is to surrender one's body to a character, thing, or environment. This workshop will focus on how to teach children to observe what surrounds them in order to create authentic movement in nature. With specific mime and movement techniques, we will show participants how to build strong movement vocabulary and develop kinesthetic memory. Participants of this workshop will learn specific mime techniques and storytelling activities by imitating nature. Easily applicable for teachers of all ages.

To register:

antioch.edu/new-england/in-bloom

School Days to Forest Days: Routines in the Wild

Eliza Minnucci, Founder, ForestKinder, Tunbridge, VT
Adjunct Faculty, Nature-based Early Childhood Program, Antioch University New England, Keene, NH

Meg Teachout, ForestKinder, Tunbridge, VT

In 2013, Eliza Minnucci and Meg Teachout founded a *Kinder-garten Forest Day* in Quechee, Vermont. Since then they have collaborated with teachers in dozens of classrooms to develop similar programs. In this workshop you'll experience an abbreviated version of some tried and true outdoor rhythms. From the morning bell to the tick check, learn routines that balance play and learning. This workshop is an especially good fit for educators looking to start frequent and extended outdoor time with students. Come prepared for the weather; we will be outside!



I Love My Dandelions: The Why and How of Teaching Music Outdoors

Annie Nixon, Singer & Songwriter, Physical Education Teacher, Center for Teaching and Learning, Edgecomb, ME



What does it take to create an outdoor classroom for music? How can we use inspiration from the natural world to create music and sing together? How can we learn with the children about our own sense of purpose and well being and giving back to the earth? Using a series of activities and collected songs, we will weave together natural rhythms to create an outdoor classroom for music. Workshop participants will leave with a collection of new songs and the knowledge to bring seasonal, nature-based music to their students.

Unless otherwise noted, photographs from Juniper Hill School, used with permission.

Registration Fees:

Working Professional	\$125
Group Rate:	\$100 per person for 3 or more from same organization
Antioch University Alumni/Co-sponsors:	\$75
AUNE/College Ed or ES students:	\$50

For more information, contact Peg Smeltz at
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