



Patrons of the
TRUMBULL

Nature & Arts Center Inc.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

PATRONS OF THE TRUMBULL NATURE & ARTS CENTER

PROVIDING E-STEM & NATURE-RICH EXPERIENCES



LETTER FROM THE PATRONS OF TNAC PRESIDENT

What is it about a tree that draws children together to encircle and embrace it?

Why do we love the cool sensation of falling snowflakes as they land gently on our tongues?

The wonders of nature are limitless and we are thrilled to share them with so many. 2023 was another record-breaking year for TNAC as we connected over 5000 people with nature in new and exciting ways.

TNAC has become a trusted resource for schools seeking to engage their students in Environmental STEM programs. This year we offered new curriculum-aligned science activities for both elementary and middle schoolers.

These achievements were the work of many people but none more than our Lead Environmental Educator, Mark Ceneri and our Director, Sheryl Baumann. Their skill and dedication to our mission is at the heart of TNAC's success. Look through this beautiful Annual Report to see the fruits of their efforts and those of our board and all our community partners.

The generosity of foundations, corporations and the State of Connecticut provides the funding needed for TNAC programs to flourish.

Together, we look forward to growing our community's natural connections long into the future.

*Kevin S. Malone, President
Patrons of the TNAC, Inc.*

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ENVIRONMENTAL-STEM EDUCATION ENRICHMENT AT TNAC AND IN-SCHOOL



In 2023, we added new educational programs that extended our reach to older students.

With the addition of our Grade 5 Bioactive Terrarium in-school program, and our Ecosystem Field Study field trip, TNAC now offers programs for every elementary school grade, K - 5.

Highlights of the year's education programs include: *Kindergartners* from all six Trumbull elementary schools looked inside their classrooms' chicken eggs thanks to

Educator Mark Ceneri's expert candling technique.

First graders learned the many roles that bees play in their hive at our Beekeeping & Pollination program.

Second grade students from every Trumbull school came to TNAC on a

field trip for our Exploring the Environment program. They built beaver dams using mud and sticks, and watched as their constructions held-up (or didn't!) under the force of water. They learned the unique ways that seeds travel and designed their own clever seed models. Classes walked on our trails and played an interactive game to learn how plants and animals adapt to their surroundings.



Third graders explored plant and animal adaptations in our forest, meadow, and wetland habitats, and made their own creatures out of clay. When field trips weren't possible, we visited third grade classrooms with our Pond Ecology program, which brought the outdoors directly to students.

At our field trip for *fourth graders*, students compared a wide variety of plants, built mountains to withstand erosional forces, and saved our town from rising sea waters with hands-on manipulatives.

Thanks to a State of CT DECD grant, *fifth graders* built their own bioactive terrariums, complete with reproducing isopods, to learn how energy flows through ecosystems. Some of these students were visited by renowned children's book author/illustrator Lizzy Rockwell. Ms. Rockwell taught the students how to observe and draw their terrariums - an important scientific tool.

After-school and summer programs

To increase our outreach, TNAC developed and provided programs for *Bridgeport middle school students* and *Ansonia elementary school students*.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Kashulon Foundation, hundreds of Bridgeport students were provided with no-cost school-year and summer fun programs. *Trumbull High School students* were assistant instructors during the summer months, helping provide outdoor fun.

GROWING WITH TNAC!

When these two students were in third grade, they participated in our Pond Ecology program in their classroom. They peered through microscopes to investigate pond water, and observed a real-life crayfish, frog, and turtle.

Now as fifth graders, they visited TNAC on a field trip! They saw the pond for themselves, and walked through our stream during our Ecosystem Field Study activity. This continuity of learning helps build a foundation for environmental awareness and stewardship.



SEASONAL OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

WHERE FAMILIES AND CHILDREN LEARN AND CREATE TOGETHER

From spring through winter, TNAC offered a full year of programs for families to enjoy.

Maple sugaring and syrup tasting was on tap in February. Families watched our sugar maple tree being tapped and gathered around our fire pit to observe the evaporation process while they tasted Connecticut maple syrup.



In March, we held our *St. Patrick's Day Rainbow Search*, where families walked along our trails in search of the 7 colors of the rainbow and traditional Irish artifacts along the way.



We had a busy month of April with our *Hiking & Backpacking 101*, *TNAC Trail Tales*, and *Earth Day* programs. Experienced hiker John Saccone taught hiking essentials; and Instructor Pam Roman read a book for small children along our trails.

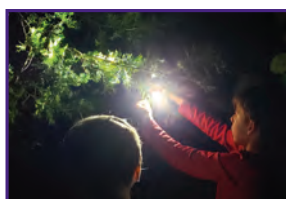
In May and June, we hosted old favorites and new programs. *Fishing 101* and *Intro to Archery* were joined by *Make a Healthy Hummingbird Feeder* and *Build a Bat House*.



The fall months saw some traditional favorites, as well as a new program for families with younger children.



Our sunflowers grew as high as an elephant's eye again this year! At our *Sunflower Seed Harvest* program, families cut down their own huge sunflower heads and learned how to remove their seeds. They also potted their own dwarf sunflower plants and made a sunflower craft.



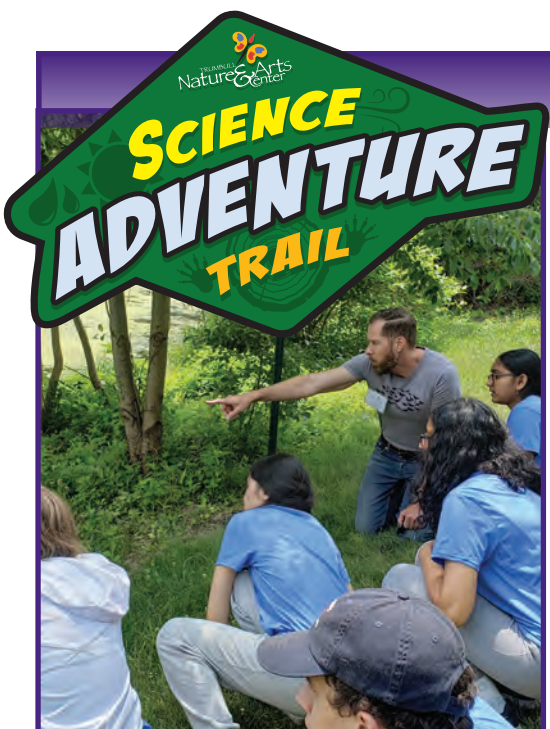
Our new program, *Bubbles in Nature*, had children making their own colorful bubble art as they learned about naturally occurring bubbles from spittlebugs to flowing lava.

Storytelling & S'mores and our *Full Moon Night Hike* had us gathering at dusk and into the night to hear ancient tales and discover phenomena that can only be seen when the sun goes down.

We co-led hikes in the spring and fall with the Trumbull Historical Society to enjoy Trumbull's beautiful acres of parks.



To round out the year, a sold-out crowd crafted *Blue Spruce Holiday Wreaths* in December.



LEARNING E-STEM ON THE TNAC TRAILS

Families headed out onto the trails to perform environmental experiments and enjoy nature along the way.

Before they headed out on their adventures, families checked-in at the Trail Station where they were given a custom map, guidebook, and science tool kit. They used these supplies as they navigated their way to ten marked trail stops.

At each trail stop, families performed an experiment or activity that had them learning a unique Environmental-STEM concept. These included a visit to a human sundial where they determined the time of day by using their shadows, a hydropower generating station where they used the force of water to light a bulb, and a water experiment where they plunged a thermometer into the pond to compare their reading to the air temperature. These are just a few of the stops along the trail that immersed adults and kids alike in Environmental STEM learning.

Multi-generational families have participated in the program, spending quality time outdoors, while sharing in a fun E-STEM learning experience.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

SUPPORTING OUR TOWN AND NONPROFIT PARTNERS



The Patrons of TNAC value their community partners and support them through E-STEM and art activities.

Trumbull Community Women

TCW held its popular paper shredding event at TNAC in both the spring and fall. New this year was their "BEE Our Valentine" program held at TNAC in February. At this program, Karin King taught children about the importance of bees, and children made cute bee-themed crafts.

Town of Trumbull

TNAC participated in several Town of Trumbull community events this past year:

- **Trumbull Day:** Children visited our tent to view the Connecticut Kaleidoscope banner and to make a humming toy craft.
- **Trumbull Parks & Rec Arts Festival:** TNAC shared the big tent with TCW, where more humming toy crafts were made by children (and parents)!
- **Trumbull Parks & Rec Fall Festival:** While children eagerly awaited pumpkin painting and face painting, they visited the TNAC table to make animal track and leaf rubbings.

Green Village Initiative Harvest Festival

As a member of the Bridgeport Youth Engagement Collaborative, TNAC hosted a "Science of Plants" table.

Visitors to the TNAC booth viewed a variety of exotic plants and observed the structure of leaves close-up via scientific microscopes.



Make-a-Wish Foundation

For the second year in a row, TNAC hosted a table for children participating in the Make-a-Wish Walk for Wishes event. TNAC is proud to have participated in this worthwhile program for children and their families.

Goodwill of Western & Northern Connecticut

Over the past several years, TNAC has partnered with Goodwill to provide volunteer work opportunities for their program participants. Among the helpful work they do for TNAC is to assemble the notebooks that children use to make nature journals during events.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ART

TNAC was honored to support Danielle Haniph's "Connecticut Kaleidoscope" banner.

An initiative of CT State Senator Marilyn Moore, St. Joseph's High School 2023 alum Danielle Haniph developed this community-building banner with administrative and grant-funded financial support from TNAC.

The banner displayed over 400 butterflies painted by Trumbull, Bridgeport, and Monroe second grade students. It was displayed in libraries in all three communities, as well as the CT State Capitol, where Sen. Moore recognized Danielle and TNAC on the floor of the Senate for this outstanding achievement.



CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TEAMING TOGETHER TO MAKE AN IMPACT

HENKEL AND UNILEVER COMMUNITY IMPACT DAYS

These multi-year partners have helped make a huge impact on TNAC's appearance and functionality.

Henkel Corporation

Volunteers from our corporate neighbors completed multiple projects inside the building and on the grounds, in both the spring and the fall.

In the spring, they sanded and re-painted our sign, raked, shoveled and cleared our trails. In the fall, 20 hard-working employees overhauled the area in front of our new ramp, including planting native winterberry bushes. They repaired the playground wall, loosened stuck doors, fixed wheelbarrows, and posted book pages along our trails.

In addition to all of this work, the Henkel Corporation recently awarded TNAC a \$10,000 grant for a new Sustainable Youth program and a continuation of our Science Adventure Trail Student Docent program.

Unilever

A core group of volunteers spent a half day at TNAC in the fall getting a lot done, including assembling shelving units, clearing out gardens, and raking around our sugar maple tree.



TRUMBULL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Trumbull High School students helped make our programs a success.

Aya Otorova: TNAC board member, business intern, and program volunteer

As a TNAC board member, Aya provides valuable insight from a student's perspective. As our business intern, she helps track our grant-funded expenditures. And as a program volunteer, she represents TNAC at events by greeting visitors and helping with craft projects.

Science Adventure Trail Student Docents

Over three summer days, eight THS students were trained

to assist families with their E-STEM experiments along the Science Adventure Trail. They learned how to run the stations, answer questions, and help anyone who may have gotten lost along the way.

Second Annual Earth Day

Volunteers from the THS Science National Honor Society helped to set-up the event, run the binocular craft activity, and helped guide visitors to our various activities.



FINANCIAL REPORT/PARTICIPATION RATE

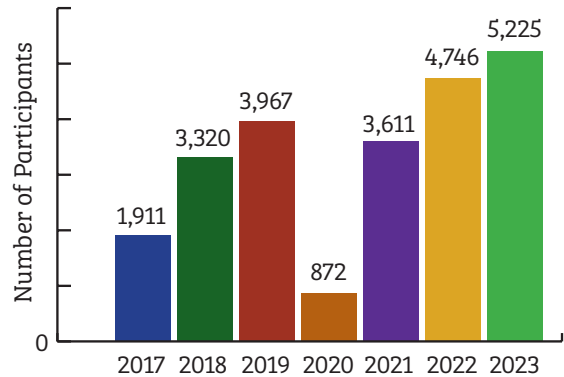
TWO YEARS OF STATE FUNDING = INCREASED PARTICIPATION

Record-breaking number of total participants.

In 2023, we provided programs to 5,225 participants. This was a 10% increase in participation over 2022. Educational program participation showed the highest growth at 4,184 vs. 2022's 3,671. This is largely due to our increased visits to multiple schools in both Bridgeport and Trumbull.

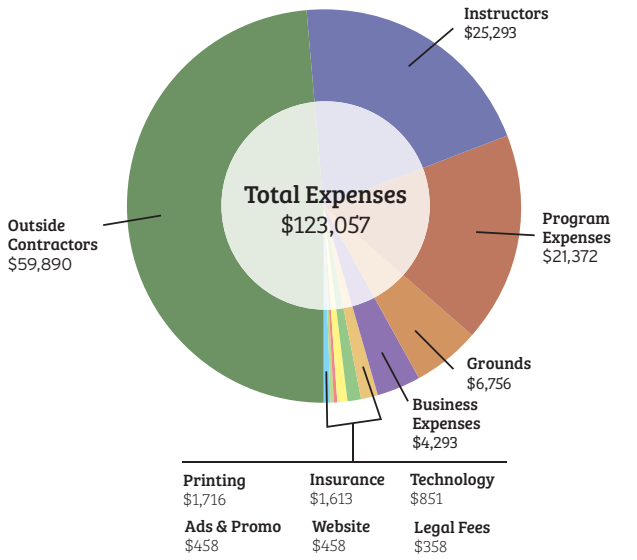
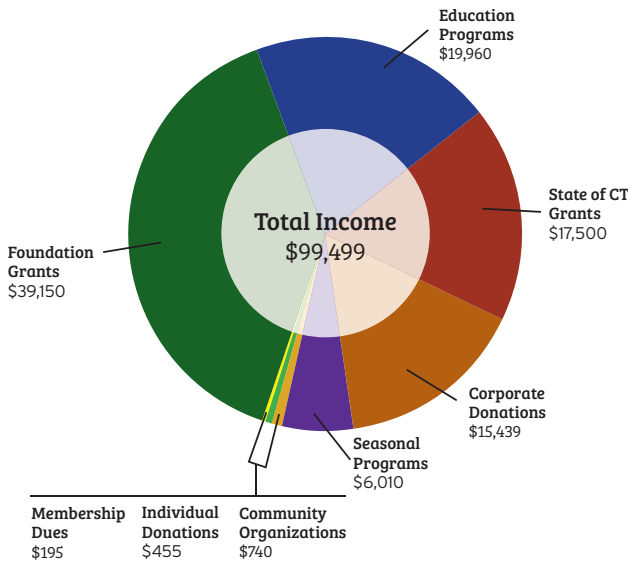
We also increased our participation from students in neighboring towns including Newtown, Ansonia, and Monroe.

Our largest grants and donations came from a variety of generous donors.



5,225 participants in 2023!

| Foundations | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| John and Ethel | |
| Kashulon Foundation: | \$20,000 |
| Horizon Foundation: | \$15,000 |
| Werth Foundation: | \$2,400 |
| Mallett Foundation: | \$1,750 |
| Government | |
| State of CT: | \$17,500 |
| Corporations | |
| Henkel: | \$11,200* |
| M&T Bank: | \$2,500 |
| Town Fair Tire: | \$1,000 |
| Malone Environmental: | \$560 |
| 4Imprint: | \$500† |
| Unilever: | \$200‡ |
| Community | |
| Tashua Knolls Golf Course: | \$450 |
| Trumbull Mamas: | \$250 |



*\$1,200 of this donation went towards Community Action Day supplies.

†4Imprint contributed \$500 towards the purchase of their promotional products. Funds were used to buy TNAC branded t-shirts and instructor name tags.

‡Donation towards the purchase of shelving.

A portion of 2023 expenses were paid for using grant income received in 2022.

In 2023, our expenses exceeded income because of grants received in 2022 that covered 2023. This included both the second year of a biennial \$75,000 State of CT Department of Economic & Community Development grant and a one year \$35,000 grant for Youth Services Prevention from the State of CT Judicial Department.

BUILDING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

ARPA FUNDED PROJECTS AND PLANNING AHEAD

The Patrons of TNAC thank the Town of Trumbull for allocating American Rescue Plan funds towards TNAC building improvements.

The Town of Trumbull allocated \$75,000 in 2023 for much needed projects. These included the replacement and widening of the ADA accessible ramp to the front door, replacement of the roof and partial new gutters, four new exterior doors and new basement garage door. These repairs have helped improve our visitors' experience.



Looking back on 2023, we are grateful to our donors, volunteers, and program participants.

Donations allowed hundreds of students from underserved communities to participate in our programs. The feedback we get from these children's teachers can be summarized in the picture at right. ❤️



The Patrons of TNAC board is a dedicated team of caring volunteers who support the TNAC mission. They are driven by the enjoyment TNAC program participants experience learning in and about nature.

In 2024, we will be doing MORE!

More programs, and more outreach. Which means we'll need more help from volunteers. Volunteering with TNAC means YOU will make a difference - to students, to our community, to families, and to the sustainability of our environment. To find out how you can help, send us an email, call us, or scan the QR code below.



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For more info about TNAC and how you can get involved: scan the QR code at right



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Connecticut
Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

TNAC is a proud member of these affiliate organizations:



The Trumbull Nature & Arts Center is supported by the Patrons of the Trumbull Nature & Arts Center, Inc., a 501(c)3 organization