



wildlife clinic

REOPENS TO CARE FOR ANIMALS

By Kristina Garcia Wade, Director of Communications

THE WILDLIFE CLINIC REOPENED on November 10, 2018 with federal permits and temporary state permits for rehabilitating mammals, songbirds, and raptors. Soon after, the first patients arrived: a juvenile southern flying squirrel, two grey squirrels, a pigeon, and a groundhog.

“When a member of the public cares about an ill, injured, or orphaned wild animal enough to rescue them,” says Rebecca Michelin, Director of Wildlife Rehabilitation, “it is our responsibility to provide the highest possible quality of care. We are dedicated to meeting and exceeding national standards by providing prompt medical attention, appropriate housing and diets, and a stress-free environment for recovery.”

We invite you to celebrate with us, to meet the new director, and to be a part of the clinic’s new vision at our grand opening on Groundhog Day, February 2, 2019. We’ll be hosting Winterfest for Wildlife, an event including wildlife crafts, animal face painting, nature walks, a bake sale, benefiting the clinic, and a talk on urban wildlife presented by Rebecca. There will be a limited number of timed tickets for behind-the-scenes tours of the Wildlife Clinic and a list of suggested in-kind

donations to bring the wildlife for this free event. See our website for details.

Over the last year, the Schuylkill Center has remained committed to wildlife rehabilitation. We focused our energy on reopening the Clinic as soon as possible while developing a master plan for the facility, one aimed at strengthening our role as a regional leader in wildlife rehabilitation.

Walking into the updated clinic is revelatory. Rebecca and the newly hired Assistant Director of Wildlife Rehabilitation, Chris Strub, along with 25 volunteers and the entire Schuylkill Center staff, have been hard at work cleaning, organizing, and reconfiguring the space. The kitchen (what was the old baby mammal nursery) is now at the front of the facility, adjoining the lobby.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3





director's cut

MIDTERM ELECTIONS AND THE "GREEN RIPPLE"

WHILE POLITICAL PUNDITS and cable news junkies were obsessing about whether or not a "blue wave" would remake the electoral landscape in November's midterm elections, I was looking for a different wave, a green one, evidence of a groundswell of support for climate change and other initiatives that have suffered in recent times.

While the blue wave swelled even in the days after the election, the climate change takeaway seems different, more like two steps forward, one step back.

Candidates like Beto O'Rourke in Texas and Andrew Gillum in Florida, running for senator and governor respectively, both talked about climate change openly and candidly—and both lost their high-profile races. A green energy initiative passed easily in Nevada, but lost by an overwhelmingly large margin one state over in Arizona.

Still, incoming governors in seven states from Maine to New Mexico pledged action on climate change, two of whom promised to move their states completely to renewable energy. (Janet Mills of Maine vowed to reduce her state's greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2030 and Stephen Evers in Wisconsin

pledged to join 17 other states committed to keeping the goals of the Paris Agreement, which the president famously walked away from.)

I am hoping—praying—that the more than 100 women winning elections for Congress (a record!) also tackle climate change, as men have clearly dropped the ball. "Along with better healthcare," wrote correspondent Mary Jordan in *The Washington Post*, "other key issues that helped propel women were their pledges to better protect the environment and to help stop the rising incivility and divisions among Americans."

So the green wave did not materialize. But there was definitely a ripple. And as 2020 bears down on us like a freight train and our climate continues to crumble, watch for this issue to erupt in the presidential election. It's about time; in fact, it's long overdue.

Mike Weilbacher, Executive Director
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wildlife clinic reopens

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

To enhance the lobby, our talented staff built live-edge shelving, countertops, and a window ledge from invasive trees felled on the Schuylkill Center's own property. Both rooms utilize repurposed cabinets and teal countertops from the former Visitor Center bookstore. The exam and treatment area has been moved to a room double the size and staff created an intensive care unit and five rehab rooms, including a dedicated aquatic room with tubs and bathing areas for turtles and waterfowl.



ABOVE: THE SOUTHERN FLYING SQUIRREL RECOVERING AT THE WILDLIFE CLINIC

The clinic is also now set up to take debit and credit cards and boasts a new digital patient recordkeeping system, as well as a hotline application for keeping track of the thousands of phone calls received each year.

Rebecca and Chris have big ambitions for the clinic. Chris, who was hired from the Wild Bird Fund in Manhattan for his experience developing and implementing volunteer programs, says he and Rebecca are working on creating an innovative training program that will include online courses for progressive skill development. "We want volunteers to understand as much as possible," says Chris, "to encourage their personal development. We want to be one of the go-to facilities where people learn, and to train the future rehabbers in the region—because there will never be enough wildlife rehabbers!"

If you're interested in volunteering, contact Claire Morgan at 215-482-7300 or claire@schuylkillcenter.org. We're also hosting volunteer orientations—check our website for details.

Rebecca shares Chris' love for teaching, travelling several times a year through the International Wildlife Rehabilitation

RIGHT: REBECCA MICHELIN AND CHRIS STRUB CONDUCT AN INTAKE EXAM ON A YOUNG RABBIT

Council to teach a two-day intensive course in basic rehab. "Wildlife rehabilitation is a relatively new and fast-growing field," says Rebecca, "with innovations happening all the time. It has become very important to me to share the experience I've accumulated to ensure we are all providing the highest possible quality of care no matter where we are."

In the meantime, the flying squirrel is adjusting to her winter quarters. The clinic staff is introducing her to natural foods and helping her adjust to natural temperatures by moving her cage outdoors during the day and inside at night, in preparation for moving her to a large outdoor enclosure. When cold winter months hit and food becomes scarce, southern flying squirrels nest in groups to benefit from shared body heat, reducing their metabolic rates and body temperatures to conserve energy. Since this young squirrel has not stored any food for winter and does not have a group to join for warmth and safety, clinic staff will wait until food sources are abundant in the spring before returning her to the wild.

Thanks to you, the clinic provides animals like this flying squirrel with life-saving medicine, food, and a warm, safe place to recover. To help the clinic prepare for the year ahead, please donate using the enclosed envelope. As members and donors, your support of the Wildlife Clinic has made an enormous difference in our ability to treat over 90,000 animals in the clinic's 30-year history. We look forward to working together now and into the future. ✂

TO VOLUNTEER, CONTACT CLAIRE MORGAN AT
215.482.7300 OR CLAIRE@SCHUYLKILLCENTER.ORG



community

INVITATION TO SUBMIT TO GROUP ART EXHIBITION

By Christina Catanese, Director of Environmental Art

IN JANUARY 2017, we presented for the first time the art work of our members, neighbors, staff, volunteers, and friends in *Community*, a crowd-sourced gallery exhibition celebrating our collective creativity. Thirty-six artists connected to the Schuylkill Center responded to the open call and the gallery show contained over eighty of their works. Participating artists exhibited in a range of media, including paintings, drawings, sculpture, video, photographs, collage, carvings, and even lamps. I'm not sure we ever had a more crowded gallery or a livelier opening reception.

After almost two years, we will be presenting *Community* once again this winter. *Community* is a non-juried, salon-style exhibition, open to Schuylkill Center members, neighbors, staff, volunteers, and friends. Featuring artists of any medium, style, theme, or concept, this show will create a portrait of our community: a vibrant, diverse, and multifaceted group of makers.

You are invited to submit your work to this exhibition, which is open to all. We're hoping to set a new participation record! *Community* will open with a public reception on February 21, 2019 from 6–8 pm.

Guidelines for submission will be available on our website. ✂



LEFT TO RIGHT: INSTALLATION SHOT OF COMMUNITY IN 2017 (LEFT SIDE OF ROOM); COMMUNITY ARTISTS AT THE 2017 RECEPTION; DETAIL OF COMMUNITY IN 2017.

bird blind re-dedicated

IN HONOR OF CHERYL BETH SILVERMAN

On our September 15th Members Appreciation Day, we re-dedicated the Widener Bird Blind in memory of Cheryl Beth Silverman, whose parents Art and Carol have supported the Schuylkill Center for over 30 years. Cheryl Beth was a friend to all living things and a passionate advocate for the environment who passed away in 1987 at the young age of 24. We invite you to experience this special place in winter to watch the birds that Cheryl Beth loved.

Built in 1975, the bird blind was designed as the destination for the Widener Trail, one of the first handicapped nature trails in the state. ✂



LEFT: CAROL AND ART SILVERMAN (ON RIGHT) WITH CHERYL BETH'S BEST FRIEND AND HER FRIEND'S DAUGHTER

naturalist's notebook

DISCUSSING OUR ARBOREAL FUTURE

By Andrew Kirkpatrick, Manager of Land Stewardship

EVERY JANUARY, I LEAD A WALK CALLED GIANTS OF THE FOREST. We trace the steps of a historic survey from the 1970s, identifying the great trees of our landscape. We discuss the history of land use and how that impacted the diversity and composition of the forest we see today. As I look around this winter, I see change occurring. Our forest at the Schuylkill Center is in a transition epoch. Emerald ash borer, a beetle native to northeastern Asia, is wreaking havoc on our ash trees, which represent a significant portion of the canopy in the upper half of the property. The sassafras and black cherry trees aren't faring much better. The exact reason is unclear, but it's most likely a combination of age, climate, and disturbed soil biology. Bacterial leaf scorch is impacting the red oak group (which includes red oak, scarlet oak, pin oak, and black oak). Taking these species together, that's a large percentage of our current native forest composition.

What does the future hold? Are we doomed to an invasive menagerie of devil's walking stick, cork trees, and empress trees? The answer is: not entirely, but certainly not without intervention. The forest is still regenerating. If you look closely, you can find tiny red maple, chestnut oak, hickory, and beech seedlings fighting for survival. The white-tailed deer are the single biggest challenge these baby trees face and many of these saplings disappear in a season after a long winter of deer browse.

We can help them along to maturity by protecting them with deer fence and by planting trees, lots of trees, more trees than will reasonably survive, so that a few will reach maturity. Every spring, we do just that with grants from the state-funded Tree Vitalize program. In the last three years we've planted over 1,000 trees and shrubs.

We offer many opportunities to engage with the forest. The first is our next Giants of the Forest walk on January 19, 2019. Another is our May Restoration Volunteer Work Day, where we will continue to plant the future forest. But you don't have to wait until May to volunteer. Our restoration work days happen on the third Saturday of every month, including January 19. I invite you to come volunteer on the 19th and then stay to learn about the forest, where it's been and where it's going. ✂



TOP: YOUNG SEEDLINGS
LEFT: A WINTER FOREST SUNSET
RIGHT: TREES PLANTED WITH PROTECTIVE DEER FENCING



nature preschool

NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES

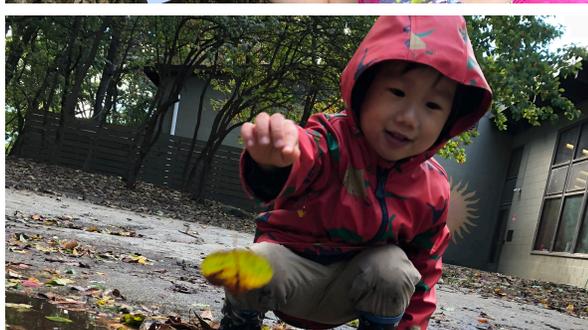
By Sandi Vincenti, Director of Early Childhood Education

THE GOAL OF NATURE PRESCHOOL has always been to share the benefits of nature-based learning with a diverse community of young learners. We are proud to share that, through the hard work and persistence of preschool leadership over many months, families who need financial assistance can now utilize the city's subsidized child care program for our preschool.

In Philadelphia, subsidized child care is available through Child Care Information Services (CCIS). If a family meets the agency's guidelines, CCIS will pay a part of the child care cost, and the family will add a smaller co-pay.

To apply for financial assistance, families can visit the state's online COMPASS system at www.compass.state.pa.us. Families who think they might qualify can call 1-888-461-KIDS(5437) to learn more. Through COMPASS, families can also apply for additional benefits such as cash assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), health care coverage, home heating assistance (LIHEAP), school meals, SelectPlan for Women, and long-term living services.

If you or a family you know is interested in CCIS funding, please share the news: income is not a barrier to attending Nature Preschool. ✂

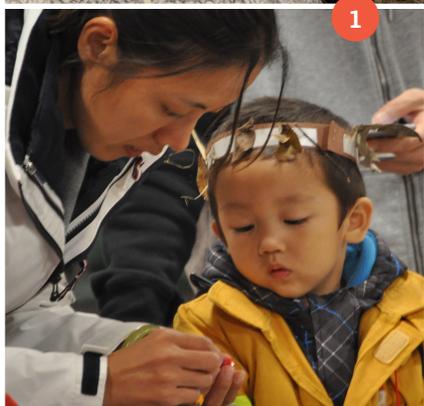


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHILDREN HUG AFTER PAINTING EACH OTHER'S FACES DURING FALL FEST; AT THE CHERYL BETH MEMORIAL BIRD BLIND; EXPLORING CATTAIL POND; ADMIRING A PRAYING MANTIS; LEARNING ABOUT LEAVES; HAPPILY HIKING.

the season in brief

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FALL 2018

- 1** In spite of the Saturday rain, we had a successful **Halloween Hikes and Hayrides**. Many thanks to all of our members who purchased pre-sale tickets! Pictured: Jamie Coyle as a possum; pumpkins; guests making nature crafts.
- 2** Environmental Educator Eduardo Duenas planned our first ever **Latinx Community Day** in collaboration with two city-wide organizations, Concilio and Congreso. We hosted canoeing and bilingual hikes for around 150 guests, many of whom had never been to the Schuylkill Center.
- 3** This fall, we unveiled the new **River Trail Gateway**. The Visitor Center has already noted an increase in visitors hiking up from this second entrance.
- 4** **Stacy Levy** was the 2018 winner of the Henry H. Meigs Award for Environmental Excellence, honoring her innovative sculpture and art works from Seattle to the Schuylkill Center.
- 5** In October, the Schuylkill Center showcased **Remembering Water's Way**, our first commissioned dance performance in over ten years. This interactive, participative piece asked us to consider the flow of water, both current and historic.
- 6** This fall, we launched a re-vamped version of our free **Wellness Saturday** program. At 9:30 am on the last Saturday of every month, we take a short hike followed by a wellness exercise. This winter, check out our offerings of yoga, mindfulness, and Tai Chi. See www.schuylkillcenter.org for details.
- 7** This season, we said goodbye to **Jakob Gelleri** (pictured here with the Monkey Tail Gang after school group), **Michelle Goldsborough**, and **Damien Ruffner** (now at the Discovery Center at Strawberry Mansion). We also welcomed **Emily Smulowitz** in a new position as Program Coordinator.





The Schuylkill
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for ENVIRONMENTAL
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WINTER 2018

in this issue:

WILDLIFE CLINIC REOPENS,
PAGE 1

COMMUNITY SHOW, PAGE 4

GIANTS OF THE FOREST, PAGE 5

NATURE PRESCHOOL FUNDING,
PAGE 6

support

THE SCHUYLKILL CENTER

Make a gift today to help the Wildlife
Clinic at the Schuylkill Center prepare
for the year ahead.



this season

winterfest for wildlife
celebrating the reopening of our clinic
saturday, february 2 | 12:00–4:00 pm

crafts, nature
walks, bake sale,
talks & tours

