

# Friends of Rye Nature Center's PRESCHOOL ECOLOGY Extended Day Program 2013-2014

**“Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives.”**

*--Thomas Berry, Dream of the Earth*

The Rye Nature Center is excited to continue offering preschool students the opportunity to spend a morning or afternoon exploring nature, learning about ecology, and having hands-on fun. Create a well-balanced “long day” for your child by having the Rye Nature Center staff walk them to and from their local school, as well as our 47-acre preserve. With a visitor center full of animals and hiking trails leading to ponds and a quarry, your child will gain a deeper understanding of and respect for the natural world.



## **Our Staff**

Our educators are experienced early childhood educators with backgrounds in ecology and environmental sciences. Our staff creates age appropriate curriculum for each class that emphasizes the development of fine motor skills, imagination, and observation abilities. Our Education Director, Lauren Donnelly communicates regularly with the preschools to integrate our curriculum and enhance learning.

## **Educational Approach**

In accordance with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, the Rye Nature Center seeks to incorporate a framework that focuses on the learning and development of the whole child. The extended day program provides opportunities for children to acquire knowledge in order to have a deeper understanding of their natural world, engage in daily activities, and form positive relationships through peer collaboration and communication.

Art activities will utilize a large variety of different media and techniques to not only create something beautiful, but to also practice motor skills and explore different textures and sights. In addition, our science component will focus on developing observation skills as well as engaging the five senses in order to better explore the natural world around us.

At least two teachers are assigned to each class at the Nature Center. We limit class size to 15 students. Children must be at least 3.5 years old by the start of the program. Children may come once or twice a week.

## **Registration Details**

Registration for the 2013-2014 school year will begin on January 14, 2013, for current students. New students may register beginning on January 16, 2013. For more information on enrolling your child in this fun and educational program, contact Mary Gillick, Program Director at the Rye Nature Center by phone at 914-967-5150 or via email at [marygillick@ryenaturecenter.org](mailto:marygillick@ryenaturecenter.org).

# Friends of Rye Nature Center's Preschool Ecology/Extended Day Program 2013 - 2014

Thank you for your interest in the Friends of Rye Nature Center's (FRNC) Preschool Ecology Extended Day Program. This program can be a great way for your child to foster a connection to nature in a fun, educational, and caring environment. Before registering your child for this program, we ask that you read through the information below to educate yourself about the FRNC, the program, and whether it is right for your child.

## About the FRNC and Rye Nature Center

The FRNC is an independent, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect our natural resources and promote environmental stewardship and education through support of the Rye Nature Center and conservation projects within its Urban Forest & Wildlife Sanctuary and the community.

Located within the Rye Nature Center, the City of Rye owned 47-acre urban forest, the FRNC operates environmental education programs, camps and workshops for children, school groups, and families using the Nature Center's building and grounds. The FRNC is run by a Board of Directors and employs a small staff of full-time and part-time naturalists and administrators. Our current staff includes:

Christine Siller, Executive Director (full-time)	Mary Gillick, Program Director (part-time)
Lauren Donnelly, Education Director (full-time)	Jeni Casinelli, Environmental Educator (full-time)

During the summer, the FRNC operates a camp for children ages 3.5 through 13 under the regulations set forth by Westchester County's Department of Health. In order to receive a "Summer Camp Operator" permit, a number of our staff must be certified in very specific CPR and first aid courses as well as Epi-pen training. Certifications are updated annually by our permanent staff. Since we work within Rye City School District for specific programs, all staff is required to be fingerprinted and pass the district's rigorous background checks. The FRNC has an emergency action plan in place to ensure the safety of our students and visitors at all times.

**Please note:** The FRNC is not a preschool and is not licensed as a New York State Child Care Provider. We are not legally affiliated with any other school.

## About the Preschool Ecology/Extended Day Program

For the 2013-2014 school year, Preschool Ecology/Extended Day will be offered on the following days:

Monday Afternoon	11:30/11:45 am - 2:20 pm
Tuesday Morning	9:20 am - 12:15 pm
Wednesday Morning	9:20 am - 12:15 pm
Thursday Morning	9:20 am - 12:15 pm
Friday Afternoon	11:30/11:45 am - 2:20 pm

We are required to keep the program duration officially less than three hours during the school year. We can not accommodate earlier drop-off or later pick-up times.

Students may come on multiple days; however, we recommend that you limit your child's enrollment to just two days per week.

Each class will have a lead teacher with one other staff person assisting. At times, an adult volunteer will be with each class to maintain a low student to teacher ratio.

Please note that the schedule for this program will follow the Rye School District's calendar. If school is not in session, there will not be a program that day. A calendar of the session's dates will be distributed in August. In addition, there are no refunds for missed classes due to absences/conflicts and the session can not be pro-rated.

Regarding inclement weather, we follow Rye City School District's directions when it comes to cancelling classes. If there is no school that day, there is no class at the Nature Center. However, if Rye City School is delayed, we will still start at 9:45 am.

### **Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday Morning Ecology Classes:**

Students should arrive at the Nature Center no earlier than 9:20 am and no later than 9:30 am. Please walk your child into the Nature Center. The class will meet in the main room each session. If your child is sick, or if you will be late for the class, please call us at 914-967-5150.

The children will eat lunch at 11:30 am. If we are walking children to their local preschool, we will leave the Nature Center at 12:00 pm so that the children can arrive in their classrooms by the school start time. At least three FRNC staff will walk the children to school. We will stop traffic on the Boston Post Road using a STOP SIGN to ensure a safe crossing. The children will be brought directly to their classes by RNC staff. Each child's teacher will sign the FRNC drop-off log to confirm that your child has reached class.

### **Monday & Friday Afternoon Ecology Classes:**

Three FRNC staff will go to your child's school at their pick-up time (typically between 11:30 and 11:45 am). Each student's teacher will sign the FRNC pick-up log to confirm that your child has been placed under our care. We will leave for the RNC no later than 12:00 pm. FRNC staff will stop traffic on the Boston Post Road using a STOP SIGN to ensure a safe crossing. Children will eat lunch upon arriving at the Nature Center.

Please arrive at the Nature Center no later than 2:20 pm to pick up your child.

### **Lunch & Food Safety**

Children should pack a hearty and healthy lunch. Although the Rye Nature Center is not a peanut-free facility, we ask that you pack lunches that are respectful of your child's school's food safety guidelines. Children going to school for afternoon classes will wash hands prior to leaving the Nature Center.

Children must be able to feed themselves. We recommend packing your child's favorite lunch when he or she is coming to the Nature Center. We have a full kitchen here and would be happy to reheat kid-friendly items like chicken nuggets or mac n' cheese. Also, be mindful of the number of snacks packed in the lunch. Less options equals more eating. If you give them too many choices, children will fill up on yogurt drinks, juice boxes, and snacks before tackling a sandwich despite our reminders about the proper eating order for lunch. A sandwich with a piece of fruit and one small cookie or a bag of crackers should be plenty. We are happy to supply water, just let us know.

## Backpacks, Clothing & Footwear

Please dress your child in appropriate clothes for an outdoor hike and have them wear sturdy boots or older sneakers. (Your child may get muddy and dirty while at the Nature Center. This is a sign that they are having a great time.) Flip-flops and/or crocs are not appropriate footwear for Nature Center programs. The children will need to bring rain gear when the weather requires it and bring hats and mittens when the months grow cold. Pack extra gear in your child's backpack. Our staff will assist children when necessary with the task of putting on outerwear.

## Is Your Child Ready For A Long Day?

Adding a morning or afternoon ecology program to your child's school day is a wonderful way to connect them to nature. We have found that children who enjoy our "extended day" ecology program have reached several important milestones. This program could be right for your child if:

- Your child will be 3.5 years old by September 1, 2013.
- Your child is completely toilet trained and needs little or no assistance in the bathroom.
- Your child can follow simple directions within a group setting.
- Your child has some physical endurance (e.g. can walk without being carried, no longer needs a nap).
- Your child enjoys time away from their primary caregiver and is resilient (e.g. he or she likes to be with other children, usually separates easily to go play).
- Your child enjoys being outside and likes animals.

Please note if your child has an aide at school, they will likely need that aide to be at ecology class with them as well. We do not provide individual aides as part of our program.

## Fees and Registration

The fee schedule for the school year is as follows. Please note that some days have a different number of classes and therefore a different fee for the year. You must be a member at the Family level or above for the entire school year to participate in this program. Family membership is \$75.00 per year.

	January, 2013	April 15, 2013	August 15, 2013	Total
Mondays 27 Classes	\$250 non-refundable deposit	\$600	\$581	\$1,431
Tuesdays and Wednesdays 30 Classes	\$250 non-refundable deposit	\$600	\$740	\$1,590
Thursdays and Fridays 31 Classes	\$250 non-refundable deposit	\$600	\$793	\$1,643

Registration for 2013-2014 will open on January 16, 2013, for current students. Spots will be filled on a first come, first served basis. A complete application will include the following five documents and the non-refundable deposit\* (check payable to the Friends of Rye Nature Center):

- Registration Form
- Medical and Emergency Contact Form
- Signed Consent/Contract Agreement
- A Copy of your Child's Immunization Record
- Proof of Your Child's Age (copy of birth certificate, copy of passport)

\*Please note that if you are registering for more than one day, you will need to place a deposit for each class you wish to enroll. If you are not selected for the program, your \$250 deposit will be refunded to you.

You may cancel for a full refund less \$250 processing fee if you notify the FRNC in writing by August 1st, 2013. Membership is non-refundable. No refunds will be available after August 1, 2013 for students not enrolling in the program.

**Friends of Rye Nature Center's  
Preschool Ecology Extended Day Program  
2013 - 2014 Registration Form**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

School and Teacher's Name/Class \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Two: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: All correspondence will go to the primary email address listed on this form.

Please label in order of preference (e.g. 1, 2) the class you wish to enroll your child. If you would like to enroll twice per week, please fill out the Day Two section as well.

Please label your preference by number:

**Day One**

- Monday Afternoon 11:30/11:45 am - 2:20 pm
- Tuesday Morning 9:20 am - 12:15 pm
- Wednesday Morning 9:20 am - 12:15 pm
- Thursday Morning 9:20 am - 12:15 pm
- Friday Afternoon 11:30/11:45 am - 2:20 pm

**Day Two**

- Monday Afternoon 11:30/11:45 am - 2:20 pm
- Tuesday Morning 9:20 am - 12:15 pm
- Wednesday Morning 9:20 am - 12:15 pm
- Thursday Morning 9:20 am - 12:15 pm
- Friday Afternoon 11:30/11:45 am - 2:20 pm

If you would like to enroll in more than two days, please indicate the day here: \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends of Rye Nature Center's  
Preschool Ecology Extended Day Program 2013 - 2014  
Emergency and Medical Form**

**Emergency Contact Information**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

First Emergency Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Emergency Contact Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Second Emergency Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Second Emergency Contact Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Pediatrician's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information**

Is your child subject to asthma, allergies, diet restrictions, and limits on activities? Yes No

If YES, please explain:

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Does your child have any medical conditions?  Yes  No

If YES, please explain:

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Does your child have any learning, emotional, or behavioral challenges?  Yes  No

If YES, please explain and let us know the best way to connect with your child and/or address the challenges:

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Are there any other circumstances concerning your child that we should know about?

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**Friends of Rye Nature Center's  
Preschool Ecology Extended Day Program  
2013 - 2014 Consent/Contract Agreement**

Dear Friends of Rye Nature Center:

This letter confirms that I wish to enroll my child, \_\_\_\_\_, in the Rye Nature Center's Preschool Ecology Extended Day Program for the 2013-2014 school year. As part of my child's enrollment in this program:

- I give the Rye Nature Center staff permission to walk my child to and/or from their preschool. I understand that my child will be crossing the Boston Post Road under the Rye Nature Center's staff's supervision.
- I give my consent for Rye Nature Center staff to pick my child up from his or her classroom or bring my child to his or her classroom on their enrolled program day(s).
- In a medical emergency, I give the Rye Nature Center staff permission to take my child to a hospital for examination and treatment of injuries and/or to receive other necessary care.
- I understand that my deposit is non-refundable and that I must make the payments for the class according to the fee schedule. I understand that if I chose not to enroll in the program I must let the FRNC know in writing by August 1, 2013. A full refund less the \$250 deposit and membership fee will be issued to me. I understand that no refunds for cancellation are available after August 1, 2013. A \$150 reimbursement will be issued to me by December 1, 2013. No refunds will be issued after November 16, 2013.
- I understand that the FRNC will communicate with me in writing about my child's progress in the class. I understand that the FRNC reserves the right to cancel this contract at anytime if the staff finds that the program is not suitable for my child due to repeated, unacceptable behavior and that any refund will be at the FRNC's discretion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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