



HANA AND ARTHUR GINZBARG

nature discovery center

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BELLAIRE, TX 77401
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Mission: To ignite lifelong curiosity, understanding & respect for nature through education.

Who We Are: The Nature Discovery Center is a unique and treasured education center and nature park. Since 1979, the Center has become an urban nature destination for Houstonians as well as the thousands of area visitors.

Location: The Center is operated in the historic 1925 Henshaw House, located in the four-acre naturally landscaped Russ Pitman Park, at 7112 Newcastle in Bellaire.

Operations: annual operating budget of \$625,000; 5 full-time and 5 part-time staff; and 400+ volunteers

Funding: The Nature Discovery Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1979 and is supported by philanthropic contributions, membership dues, mission-centric program fees and special event fundraisers.

Russ Pitman Park: The Center is housed in Russ Pitman Park, a 4-acre green oasis in Bellaire (just inside the 610 Loop). The Park serves as an outdoor classroom for our nature science programming and also offers a nature play area.

The park includes a sampling of regional habitats, including wetlands, deciduous woodland and prairie, and is home to a diversity of native plants, and local wildlife (included 60+ species of migrating birds!) that is unparalleled in other city parks.

Discovery Rooms: The Center's two Discovery Rooms are open to the public free of charge six days a week. Visitors find themselves surrounded by natural objects ready to be handled and explored. Trained volunteers and staff encourage and guide children in their explorations, including up-close encounters with our resident live animals!

Nature Education:

Discovery Presentations bring our science programs right to schools and libraries. All programs complement each classroom's curriculum and have been designed to fulfill TEKS requirements for each grade level.

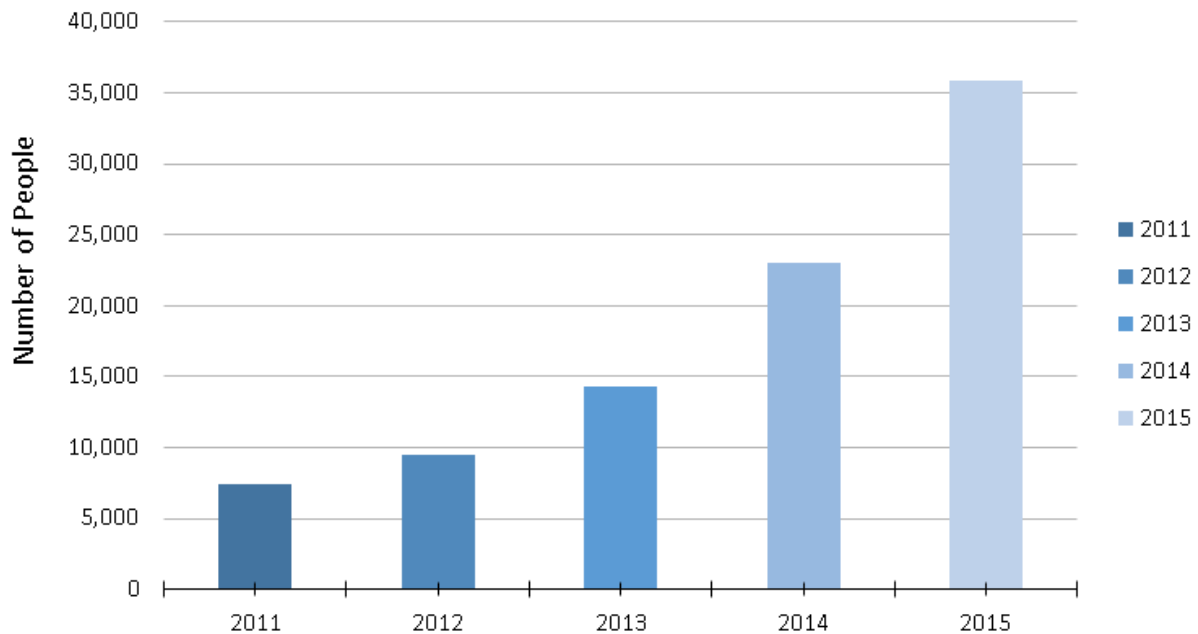
Nature at Your Doorstep, our field trip experience at the Center, is where students become scientists in our nature park, investigating specific topics such as trees, birds, habitats, and food webs.

Young scientists immerse themselves in our outdoor classroom using the scientific method and are then able to continue the experience back in their own classrooms with the follow-up curriculum we provide.

At the Nature Discovery Center, we believe that a personal connection to nature is an essential part of life.

There is strong scientific research that links improved health with physical activity. Playing in nature can positively affect both children and adults' emotional and physical well-being. Our programs encourage the community to get outside and learn about the wonders of nature. And together, we can model and teach youth how to protect their health and the environment, while at the same time feeding their curious minds.

Community Impact by Year



Nature Discovery Center Recent Recognition & Awards

2015
Recipient of the Good Brick Award from Preservation Houston

2014
Pumpkin Patch voted Best Family Festival / Annual Event in SW Houston by Macaroni Kid Gold Daisy Awards

2009
Nominated by Nickelodeon's Parents Picks for Best Day Camps in Houston

2008
Placed 3rd in Nickelodeon's Parent's Pick for Best Day Camp; Won Best in Bellaire in Conservation category by US Small Business Organizations

From the Roots Up: The Creation of the Nature Discovery Center & Russ Pitman Park

Starting in 1981 and through a massive, 7-year grassroots endeavor, the Hana and Arthur Ginzburg Nature Discovery Center (formerly Friends of Bellaire Parks) acquired a 4-acre 1920's estate in Bellaire.

But How? We Do Not Have the Money . . .

Undaunted by the staggering \$1.35 million asking price for the estate and no financial support from the City of Bellaire, the small but mighty volunteer group undertook a massive fundraising campaign to buy the property in phases, with the help of the Trust for Public Land. When faced with the dilemma of what to do with the dilapidated house and no money for its restoration, they followed the advice of one of their mentors: "Not having any money is no excuse for not getting things done." They recruited volunteers, union apprentices, community service workers, architects, designers, and urban foresters to donate their time, talent and treasure.

400+ – Number of in-kind donors from area businesses

2,000+ – Total Number of gifts for park acquisition

Park Acquisition Major Gifts:

\$100,000 – 3 Donors

\$5,000 – 16 Donors

\$2,500 – 16 Donors

\$1,000 – 60 Donors

In 1983, H. Russell Pitman and W. Edwin Bryan, Jr. offered to contribute \$50,000 each for the final portion of the park. City Council agreed and the natural area became Russ Pitman Park. The community preserved the natural and historic character of the estate while creating a space for everyone to discover the wonders, both tangible and intangible, of the natural world that unassumingly surround us all.

