



HANA AND ARTHUR GINZBARG

nature discovery center

WINTER 23-24

# PROGRAM GUIDE

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## MISSION

To ignite lifelong curiosity, understanding, and respect for nature through education.

## FALL 2023

### DISCOVERY ROOM HOURS

Tuesday through Thursday  
10 am - noon and 4 - 6 pm

## ADMISSION IS FREE

Donations are appreciated. Groups of six or more children call for an appointment.


## PARK & NATURE PLAY AREA HOURS


5 am to 9:30 pm DAILY

Russ Pitman Park is a City of Bellaire Park. Dogs, alcohol, and smoking are prohibited by city ordinance.

## VISIT US ONLINE

[naturediscoverycenter.org](http://naturediscoverycenter.org)

 NatureDiscoveryCenter

 naturediscoverycenter

nature discovery center  
7112 NEWCASTLE  
BELLAIRE, TX 77401  
T 713.667.6550

## Welcome Baby Krosis!

A baby alligator named Krosis joined the Center's menagerie of ambassador animals in late October thanks to generous donations made in memory of **Angelo McNulty-Portnoy**. You can stop by the **Angelo McNulty-Portnoy Alligator Enclosure** in our front room during Discovery Room hours Tuesdays - Thursdays to see him, or you can take a peek through the front window from the porch. Krosis hatched from a clutch of eggs that were tended to by park staff at Brazos Bend State Park when their mother made her nest too close to a trail. Krosis will head back to Brazos Bend when he has outgrown the enclosure, and new alligator babies will come to take his place.

Donations in memory of Angelo were made by Shelia McNulty & David Portnoy, Toni Portnoy, Francis, Erin, & Megan McNulty, and Linda Hartley. The alligator enclosure was designed and constructed by the crew from The Bio Dude, who also made in-kind donations.



Photo by Eric Duran, Head Naturalist



## Say Hello to Starla!

Next time you visit the Center, say hello to Starla, our Education Specialist and newest staff member. Starla has experience in wildlife rehabilitation, captive breeding, and recently conservation education. Starla loves working with animals but also has a love and passion for talking to people. She enjoys birds and will take any opportunity to talk about them. Speaking of birds, ask her about cranes!

## Annual NDC Member Meeting & Holiday Gathering

Tuesday, December 5 from 7-9 pm

Current NDC Members, come join us for news of how the Center fared in 2023 and to hear our plans for the future. Please stay to vote on our 2024 NDC Board of Directors! Festive refreshments will be served at this adult-only event.

Members, you will be receiving an email invite to attend this event. Please RSVP with the link provided in the email. Thanks!

Advance registration required unless otherwise noted.

## Curious Kids (3 - 5 yrs old with adult)

**Tuesdays - 10 to 11:15 am or 4 to 5:15 pm**

Preschoolers and their adult caregivers learn basic science concepts in hands-on classes that encourage and celebrate natural curiosity! Curious Kids lessons may incorporate live animals, plants, natural objects, crafts, puppets, stories, and nature walks.

### Remaining 2023 Dates & Topics:

12/05 – Bird Adaptations  
12/12 – Winter Nature  
12/19 – Winter Crafts

### Winter/Spring 2024 Dates & Topics:

01/23 – Deer	03/26 – Flowers
01/30 – Marsupials	04/02 – Dinosaurs
02/06 – Slimy Snails	04/09 – Fish
02/13 – Spiders	04/16 – Springtime Nature
02/20 – Flying Friends	04/23 – Frogs
02/27 – Predators & Prey	04/30 – Snakes
03/05 – Digging in the Dirt	05/07 – Lizards
~ SPRING BREAK WEEK ~	05/14 – Turtles
	05/21 – Alligators
03/19 – Plants	

**Cost/Class:** \$15 member / \$20 non-member

## Mess Makers (3 - 7 yrs old with adult)

**Sundays - 10 am or 1 pm**

Messy, sensory play is an important part of child development. Together with NDC staff and volunteers, you will explore and create with messy things like pumpkin guts, paint, and sticks. We will make works of art as well as just good old messy fun. We'll meet at the Pavilions behind the Center and plan to hold class outdoors.

### 2024 Dates & Topics:

01/14 - Snow & Ice	03/10 – Bubbles & Foam*
01/28 - Feather Fun	03/24 – Color Blast*
02/11 - Chalk it Up!*	04/14 – Dirt Doesn't Hurt
02/25 - Nature Play-dough	04/28 – Nature Painting
	05/12 – Shaving Cream*

\*= greatest potential for head to toe mess

**Cost/Class:** \$22 member / \$27 non-member

## Winter Day Camps (5 - 10 yrs old)

Send the kids with their lunch and a refillable water bottle and we'll do the rest. Your children will be engaged and entertained as they play games, create nature crafts, encounter live animals, explore the park and more in our science and nature themed day camps.

Camps run from 9 am to 3 pm. We do not provide pre or post camp care.

### 2023/2024 Dates & Topics:

12/26 - Winter Nature	01/08 - Urban Wildlife
12/27 - Vulture Culture	01/15 - Great Migration
12/28 - Reptile Rendezvous	02/19 - Creative Conservation
12/29 - Food Chain Fun	02/20 - Beautiful Birds
01/02 - Incredible Insects	
01/03 - Forest Friends	
01/04 - Investigating Fungi	
01/05 - Marvelous Mammals	

**Cost:** \$70 member / \$85 non-member per day



## Nature Story Time FREE

**Every Wednesday at 4 pm**

Stories, simple crafts, specimens and more for preschoolers and their caregivers.

**Note that this program is occasionally canceled due to program conflicts and staffing shortages. Please keep your eye on Facebook or Instagram for schedule updates.**



= Drop in program. Call 713.667.6550 if you are coming in a large group. Meet at the Center unless otherwise noted.



Advance registration required unless otherwise noted.

## Special Winter Nature Story Time

Wednesday, December 13 from 4-5 pm

Come celebrate winter with Center staff during a special Winter Nature Story Time. We'll share winter nature themed stories, and guide you through seasonal crafts, and enjoy festive cookies. As an added treat, we'll serve hot cocoa with fun mix-ins. And it just so happens to be National Cocoa Day!

This event is intended for preschoolers and their caregivers. **This is not a drop off event. Attendees of all ages must register and pay. All kids must be accompanied by an adult.**

**Cost:** \$6 member / \$12 non-member

## Bubble Day **FREE**

Saturday, February 17 from 1 to 3 pm

The Center's front lawn, Pecan Grove, and the sidewalks around the Center will be set up with everything your kids need for a fun filled afternoon of outdoor play! You can feel like a kid again, too, if you join them playing with bubbles, hula hoops, jump ropes, sidewalk chalk, and more.

Kids should bring refillable water bottles.

**Note: This is NOT a drop off event. Adult supervision is required.**



## Meet the Animals

Saturday, January 13 at 2 pm - Reptiles

Saturday, March 16 at 2 pm - Insects

Get to know our animals with up close and personal animal encounters!

Each family-friendly Meet the Animals session includes:

- hands-on exposure to live animals and/or specimens
- an informal talk about the animal's basic biology and behavior
- a Q/A period with one of our Staff Naturalists.

**Cost:** \$5 member / \$10 non-member



## Walk on the Wild Side

Saturday, December 16 at 2 pm

Saturday, February 10 at 2 pm

Explore and learn more about the wild side of nature in the city with our fun, family-friendly nature walks in Russ Pitman Park. Join us to sneak up on lizards, search for colorful leaves or flowers, scan the trees for birds and squirrels, and investigate more seasonal nature surprises! These walks last about an hour.

**Cost:** \$5 member / \$10 non-member



Advance registration required unless otherwise noted.

## Tree Identification Walks FREE

Saturdays, December 2, January 6, & February 3 at 10 am

Join Master Naturalist and tree lover Jim McKee, for his monthly Tree Walks to discover more about some of the many species of trees that live in Russ Pitman Park. Jim is always happy to share his knowledge and interesting historical facts about trees as well as help you learn how to identify them.

## Upcoming Bird Walks

Join us for a daytime stroll in the park to enjoy our resident and migrant birds this fall and winter. Call by 10 am to borrow binoculars. We don't stop for lunch, but you can picnic in the park before or after these lunchtime walks.

## Monthly Winter Bird Walks FREE

Wednesdays, December 6, January 10, & February 7  
from Noon to 1:15 pm

## Lunch with the Birds (LWTB) FREE

Wednesdays, March 6 - May 1  
from Noon to 1:15 pm

## Willow Waterhole

## Monthly Bird Survey FREE

Saturdays, Jan 20, Feb 17, & Mar 16 at 8 am

The Nature Discovery Center and Houston Audubon partner to conduct the monthly Willow Waterhole bird survey on the 3rd Saturday of each month. We invite you to help out with this survey whether you're a novice or have birding experience!

Meet in the parking lot of the Gathering Place at 5310 South Willow Drive, Houston, TX 77035.



## Special Adults-Only Event

### Campfire Night

Friday, February 16, 7 - 9 pm

Visit the Center for an evening of adult fun! We'll roast (gourmet) hot dogs and make a variety of adult s'mores by the fire, enjoy beer and wine and grown up snacks, play corn hole, interact with live animals, and take a night hike through the woods. *Vegetarian food options will be available.*

This evening out is definitely for adults ages 21+.

Cost: \$25/person



Look for a special Saturday afternoon Bubbles & Bubbly Adults-Only Mess Makers event in April!



# BOOKABLE PROGRAMS

Please fill out an Inquiry Form on our website.

## Scout Programs

**Scheduled based on staff and program space availability.**

We offer a variety of programs to help your Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts complete badge, journey, or achievement requirements. Bring your group of 5 or more scouts for an engaging program in the beautiful setting of our nature park. Each program satisfies all of the requirements for that badge or achievement. Scout program prices include a Nature Discovery Center fun patch for each participating scout!

*Note, however, that we do not provide earned Girl/Cub Scout badges for your scouts. You will need to purchase them at the Scout Shop.*

### Girl Scout Programs

- **Daisy** - 45 to 60 minute programs
  - **Rosie & Clover Petals**
  - **Animal Observer, EcoLearner & Shapes in Nature**
- **Brownie** - 1.5 hour programs
  - **Senses, Outdoor Adventurer, Bugs, Eco Friends, & Hiker**
- **Junior** - 1.5 hour programs
  - **Animal Habitats, Flowers**
- **Cadette** - 1.5 hour programs
  - **Trees**

### Cub Scout Programs

- **Tiger** - 45 to 60 minute programs
  - **Tigers in the Wild**
- **Wolf** - 1.5 hour programs
  - **Paws on the Path**
- **Bear** - 1.5 hour programs
  - **Fur, Feathers, & Ferns**
- **Webelos** - 1.5 hour programs
  - **Into the Wild, Into the Woods**

## Outreach Programs

Can't bring your group to the NDC? We'll come to you!

**Classroom or library audience based programs** last about 45 minutes depending on group size and participation. Topics include: Bunny Buddies, Join the Insect Club, Warm and Fuzzy: Mammals, Scales & Tails, and Back to the Bone.

**Festival style table-top outreaches** are available for Science Nights and other such events.

## Birthday Parties

See website for full details including party policies & pricing.

**Note: You must be a Family Level or higher NDC Member to hold a party at the Center.**

Birthday parties at the Nature Discovery Center include reserved use of our outdoor Pavilion Area for a 2 hour party with your guests, as well as one party program option of your choice (see below). Our party programs each last about 45 minutes depending on the age and interest level of party guests.

Your total pavilion reservation time includes 30 minutes before and after your party to allow time for set-up and clean-up. For example, if your party is from 10 am – 12 pm you can arrive to set up at 9:30 am and you can stay to clean up until 12:30 pm.

**Party times are:**

**Fridays 4 - 6 pm**

**Saturdays & Sundays 10 am - 12, 1 - 3 pm, & 4 - 6 pm**

**Animal Themed Programs** - Live animals and specimens from our collection help make our party programs a special experience for your birthday child and their friends and family to enjoy. All programs end with a short nature hike.

- **Bunny Buddies** (ages 2 to 6)
- **Join the Insect Club** (ages 4 and up)
- **Scales & Tails** (ages 4 and up)
- **Butterflies & Blooms** (SEASONAL, ages 4 and up)
- **Furry & Fuzzy** (ages 4 and up)

**Mess Makers Themed Programs** - Your birthday child and up to fourteen of their guests will bubble over with excitement or get covered in color in these parties designed for messy play fun! Perfect for kids ages 3 and up with parent participation.

- **Bubble Fun**
- **Color Blast**

**Enchanted Fairyland Themed Birthday Program** - You and your guests will enjoy an enchanting time in the park as you hunt for fairy doors and fairies, create fairy themed crafts, and encounter a live animal that could be plucked straight from the setting of a fairy storybook. Best for ages 4 and up with parent participation.

**Discovery Room Tour** - One of our naturalists will guide 15 children and 2 adults through our Discovery Rooms, and will bring out live animals for the children to meet. After the tour, we'll head outside for a fun nature hike.

DECEMBER					1	2 Tree ID Walk 10a
3	4	5 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Bird Adaptations 10a, 4p Annual Member Meeting 7 - 9p	6 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Monthly Winter Bird Walk 12 noon Nature Storytime 4p	7 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	8	9
10	11	12 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Winter Nature 10a, 4p	13 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Special Winter Nature Storytime 4p	14 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	15	16 Walk on the Wild Side 2p
17	18	19 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Winter Crafts 10a, 4p	20 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Nature Storytime 4p	21 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	22	23
24	25	26 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Winter Break Day Camp: Winter Nature 9a - 3p	27 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Winter Break Day Camp: Topic TBA 9a - 3p	28 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Winter Break Day Camp: Reptile Rendezvous 9a - 3p	29 Winter Break Day Camp: Food Chain Fun 9a - 3p	30
31						

	1	2 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Winter Break Day Camp: Topic TBA 9a - 3p	3 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Winter Break Day Camp: Forest Friends 9a - 3p	4 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Winter Break Day Camp: Topic TBA 9a - 3p	5 Winter Break Day Camp: Marvelous Mammals 9a - 3p	6 Tree ID Walk 10a
7	8 Winter Break Day Camp: Topic TBA 9a - 3p	9 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	10 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Monthly Winter Bird Walks 12n Nature Storytime 4p	11 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	12	13 Meet the Animals 2p
14 MM: Snow & Ice 10a, 1p	15 Winter Break Day Camp: Topic TBA 9a - 3p	16 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	17 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Nature Storytime 4p	18 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	19	20 Willow Waterhole Bird Survey 8a
21	22	23 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Deer 10a, 4p	24 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Nature Storytime 4p	25 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	26	27
28 MM: Feather Fun 10a, 1p	29	30 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Marsupials 10a, 4p	31 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	JAN		



FEBRUARY				1	2	3 Tree ID Walk 10a
4	5	6 CK: Snails 10a, 4p	7 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p Monthly Winter Bird Walk 12 Noon  Nature Storytime 4p	8 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	9	10  Walk on the Wild Side 2p
11 MM: Chalk it Up! 10a, 1p	12	13 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Spiders 10a, 4p	14 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p  Nature Storytime 4p	15 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p  Spring Break Camp Registration Opens for NDC MEMBERS	16  Adult Campfire Night 7 - 9p	17 Willow Waterhole Bird Survey 8a  Bubble Day 1 - 3p
18	19 Winter Break Day Camp: Topic TBA 9a - 3p	20 CK: Flying Friends 10a, 4p Winter Break Day Camp: Beautiful Birds 9a - 3p	21  Nature Storytime 4p	22  Spring Break Camp Registration Opens for non members	23  Summer Program Registration Opens for NDC MEMBERS	24
25 MM: Nature Play-dough Fun! 10a, 1p	26	27 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p CK: Predator & Prey 10a, 4p	28 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p  Nature Storytime 4p	29 Discovery Rooms 10a - 12n, 4 - 6p	<b>Upcoming in March:</b> Discovery Room Hours & Nature Story Time Curious Kids & Mess Makers Spring Break Day Camps Lunch with the Birds  <b>See Special Spring Save the Dates below!</b>	

# SAVE THE DATES

## Spring Break Day Camps

Spring Break Camps will be offered **March 11 - 15** from 9 am to 3 pm each day. Look for registration to open **February 15** for members and **February 22** for non-members.

## Spring Fling

**Saturday, April 27 from 10 am – 3 pm**

Join us for our annual Spring Fling event celebrating nature in the park. Animal encounters, exhibitors, crafts, nature walks and more will make for a fun family outing!

## Summer Program Registration

Registration for our Summer Science Camps and Mess Makers classes will open to members on **February 23** and will open to non-members on **March 1**. Look for dates and topics on our website at <https://naturediscoverycenter.org/kids-programs/>

## Summer Teen Volunteer Position Announcements & Application Deadline

We will announce our Summer Teen Volunteer Positions by **April 1** when the Summer Teen Application Form will become available online. Applicants for our Summer Teen Volunteer Program must submit their online applications by **April 30**. We will then begin reviewing applications, contacting teens for interviews, and scheduling required training sessions. Applicants will be notified whether or not they have been accepted by May 3.



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## nature discovery center

7112 NEWCASTLE ST  
BELLAIRE, TX 77401

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



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