



Elachee

Nature Science Center

In the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve

Nature Mixed In

Quarterly News from Elachee Nature Science Center • November 2018

The Past 40 Years Have Flown By!

Forty! Can you believe it? Elachee is turning 40 in 2019.

It started as a grassroots movement four decades ago. Since becoming incorporated February 23, 1979, Elachee Nature Science Center has thrived during this time thanks to the nurturing passions, work and financial support of friends like you!

I am delighted to present this year-end edition of *Nature Mixed In* that also includes Elachee's annual highlights, *2018 By the Numbers*. This noteworthy report summarizes the work we do in conservation and education.

As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, Elachee relies on your financial support to sustain current operations. This organization is fortunate to 'earn' 65% of its operating income through school field trips and seasonal nature education programs, but we continuously work to also 'earn' the remaining 35% from donated support.

My hope is the details shared within will earn your confidence and inspire your continued financial support. Please give generously to continue the success and work ahead.

Will you support Elachee's important nature education and conservation efforts with a year-end donation? Enclosed is an easy-to-use annual gift envelope, or you can make a secure online gift at elachee.org/donate. We will promptly acknowledge your tax-deductible donation. As always, Elachee needs you and thanks you!

My best to you,

Andrea Timpone

President/CEO, Elachee Nature Science Center



Elachee Nature Science Center • 2125 Elachee Drive • Gainesville, GA 30504 • 770-535-1976 • elachee.org

Elachee Nature Science Center is a private, independently owned and operated not-for-profit organization (Tax ID 58-1643768).

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When the oak is felled, the whole forest echoes with its fall, but a hundred acorns are sown in silence by an unnoticed breeze.

– Thomas Carlyle

What Your Dollars Can Do

Your annual fund donation of...

\$1,000... Could buy one year of food for Elachee's resident Red Tailed Hawk or sponsor five Elachee Science Nights.

\$500... Could pay for one PreK-12 class to participate in an Elachee nature education field trip or buy lumber for a hiking trail bridge repair.

\$300... Could enable two children to attend Camp Elachee for a week of summer day camp or buy craft supplies for 1,000 campers this summer.

\$100... Could replace an aging utility wagon that will last five years or provide six months of food for the demonstration bee hive exhibit.

\$50... Could replenish yearly first aid kit supplies for one Naturalist leading field trips at Elachee or feed a resident turtle for three months.

Ways to Support Elachee

- Give to Elachee's Annual Fund
- Become an Elachee Sponsor
Annual Sponsorship OR Event Sponsorship: Flights of Fancy, Raptor Fest, Trillium Trek Trail Run and Snake Day
- Contact Us about a **Planned Gift**
- Donate **Goods and/or Services** to Elachee
- Employee/Employer **Matching Gifts**
- Tap into Georgia's Tax Credit Giving Plan
Select Elachee Nature Academy when you donate online to payitforwardscholarships.com.
- Make Elachee a **Payroll Deduction Option**
Through Earthshare Georgia, Elachee is an eligible non-profit organization in the Greater Atlanta-Athens Combined Federal Campaign (0211).

LEARN MORE: elachee.org/support



Irreplaceable Natural Resource

Whether you hike once a year or more frequently traverse the hiking trails in one of Georgia’s largest protected green spaces, the 1,440-acre Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve, Elachee is looking out for you.

Elachee is conservator in perpetuity for the Nature Preserve, under a land management agreement with the

Chicopee Woods Area Park Commission (CWAPC). Neither CWAPC nor Elachee receive any federal, state or local government funding to perform the conservation stewardship work that restores and protects the health of this regional treasure – its forest, streams and habitats – including the 12-mile hiking trail system.

The hiking trails connect Elachee’s Visitor Center campus with Elachee’s Aquatic Studies Center at Chicopee Lake. To operate and maintain the hiking trail system, Elachee relies on annual donations and volunteer support from individuals and community partners. This symbiotic relationship keeps the irreplaceable recreational resource pristine and accessible for our guests.

TAKE A HIKE: elachee.org/hiking-trails

HIKING TRAIL UPDATES

Elachee Volunteer Trail Crew’s current projects:

TRAIL SIGNAGE To simplify navigation, there are trail name changes prompting signage updates. What’s different? The newly named Bridge Trail starts where the Suspension Bridge intersects the West Lake Trail, extending east to its intersection with East Lake Trail. For reference, the Dunlap Trail formerly overlapped sections of the West Lake and East Lake Trails. Dunlap has now been limited to a beautiful portion of the trail that spurs off of West Lake Trail and runs down to and along Homestead Creek before reconnecting back to West Lake Trail.

TRAIL RELOCATION With the design phase complete, the Trail Crew is constructing a new portion of the Bridge Trail near the Suspension Bridge that will reroute it away from an existing staircase slated for removal. This new section of trail will have a slight grade that will not require a staircase, ultimately requiring less long-term maintenance.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE Recent bridge inspections revealed that component boards required replacement. These small bridge repairs are complete. The constant heavy humidity under the forest canopy contributes to the quick breakdown of lumber, necessitating regular maintenance of trail infrastructure.

Partnership Puts Student Scientists on Lake Lanier



Pictured L-R: Rob Robinson (Elachee Board Chair), Mike Little (Hall County Parks & Leisure Services), Andrea Timpone (Elachee), Peter Gordon (Elachee), Marty Nix (Hall County), Nick Baggett (Army Corps of Engineers), Jason Ulseth (CRK), Juliet Cohen (CRK), Becca Klein (CRK), Jeff Stowe (Hall County Commission)

Elachee, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) and Hall County Parks and Leisure Services recently celebrated a ribbon cutting for the new Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center (LLALC) boathouse and two-slip dock at River Forks Park in Gainesville. The LLALC program serves K-12 schools throughout north Georgia, college and universities, church and civic organizations. Its operational costs are funded in part by charitable donations.

“This has been a successful Elachee and CRK collaboration for 18 years and has hosted more than 50,000 students in

that time,” shares Andrea Timpone. “The move to River Forks Park adds Hall County Parks and Leisure Services to this educational endeavor and gives this important program an excellent home base.”

Aboard CRK’s catamaran, the *Chota Princess II* floating classroom, Elachee instructors guide students in collecting lake sediments, determining pH and dissolved oxygen levels, sample plankton and measuring turbidity. Then on shore, they engage students in environmental management activities related to the watershed.

“Our partnership is a prime example of three agencies working well together for the greater good of our community,” says Mike Little, Director, Hall County Parks and Leisure Services. “It has been a natural fit because our values and philosophies regarding environmental conservation and education line up together so well.”

READ MORE: elachee.org/student-scientists-active-on-lake-lanier



Guests at the ribbon cutting joined Myers Elementary 4th grade students for an aquatic studies program aboard the LLALC floating classroom.



‘Recycle-Reuse-Repurpose’ Reimagined

Elachee Senior Naturalist Carol Sowers, pictured above, has created a 10 ft. x 5 ft. masterpiece quilt using past Camp Elachee t-shirts as the unifying theme. Involved with Camp Elachee since its earliest days, even before the Nature Center facility was built in Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve, Carol’s unique perspective is reflected in this ingenious documentary of Elachee’s longest running nature education program. Thank you, Carol! [CAMP ELACHEE DETAILS: elachee.org/camp-elachee](http://elachee.org/camp-elachee)

Share the Limelight with Camp Elachee

Since the turn of this century (you know, Y2K) we estimate 14,250 Camp Elachee t-shirts have been put into circulation throughout Gainesville and other north metro Atlanta communities. *Elachee’s Annual Sponsorship Program offers your business a way to support Camp Elachee and be recognized on the 2019 summer camp t-shirt!* **INTRIGUED? Call 770-535-1976 or email kim@elachee.org**

Take a Camp Elachee Family under Your Wing

Thanks to Elachee annual fund donations, each year families may request financial aid for their child’s Camp Elachee registration fee. Yet, they need help from an advocate to ‘plug in’ to learn how to access this resource.

“I believe that sometimes you just need someone who is in your corner,” confides a Camp Elachee 2018 parent. “When I was encouraging a friend who had fallen on a tough financial time, I didn’t know what that could look like until I learned about Camp Elachee. After making the initial call to learn what steps she needed to take to request help, I was able to point her in the right direction.” The friend’s three children received financial assistance for a week of summer day camp.

“The kids absolutely loved their time at Camp Elachee, receiving in-depth nature instruction and learning that is unmatched to other camp experiences,” she shares. “Encouragement comes in many different forms, and I am proud that Elachee Nature Science Center has found many ways impact this community and families in this area.”

INTRODUCE A FRIEND TO CAMP ELACHEE: Call 770-535-1976 to learn more.



Elachee Science Nights Hit the Mark

Enthusiasm ran high at the most recent Science Night. A young couple attending the *Bat Ecology* program shared they recently moved here from Athens and this type gathering was just what they were looking for in their new home! Held monthly at Recess Southern Gastro-Pub, this is a free environmental education and discussion series for adults. **PROGRAM TOPICS & DETAILS: elachee.org/lifelong-learning**



What’s Happening?

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 10, 2018 ... **Stars Over Elachee**
elachee.org/stars-over-elachee
- Nov. 13, 2018 ... **Elachee Science Night**
elachee.org/lifelong-learning

DECEMBER

- Dec. 8, 2018 ... **New Student Open House**
Elachee Nature Academy
elacheenatureacademy.org
- Dec. 15, 2018 ... **Stars Over Elachee**
elachee.org/stars-over-elachee

JANUARY

- Jan. 8, 2019 ... **Elachee Science Night**
elachee.org/lifelong-learning
- Jan. 12, 2019 ... **Stars Over Elachee**
elachee.org/stars-over-elachee
- Jan. 14, 2019 ... **Enrollment Opens**
Elachee Nature Academy
elacheenatureacademy.org

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 1, 2019 ... **Camp Elachee 2019 Registration Opens**
elachee.org/camp-elachee
- Feb. 9, 2019 ... **Stars Over Elachee**
elachee.org/stars-over-elachee
- Feb. 12, 2019 ... **Elachee Science Night**
elachee.org/lifelong-learning
- Feb. 16, 2019 ... **Chicopee Lake Birding Hike**
Great Backyard Bird Count



Mark Your Calendar

Mar. 16, 2019
Raptor Fest
elachee.org/raptor-fest

Apr. 13, 2019
Trillium Trek Trail Run & Walk
elachee.org/trillium-trek

Apr. 13, 2019
Spring Plant Sale

Saturday Evening
Apr. 27, 2019
Flights of Fancy Benefit & Auction
elachee.org/flights-of-fancy



Secure Your Sponsorship Today
DETAILS: elachee.org/support

STAFF PROFILE

Cindy Andrews

Elachee Senior Naturalist

With an effervescent personality that draws you in and captures your imagination, Cindy has been an integral part of the Elachee family



since 1999. So much so, her fingerprint is all over Elachee's incomparable STEAM-based environmental education programs for school children. The past two decades, Cindy's charismatic teaching style has brought to life these ecology concepts for tens of thousands of Georgia students participating in field trips to Elachee. Not surprising to us, Cindy is one of Elachee's most recognized and requested naturalist!

So What Gets Cindy Revved Up?

Of Elachee's 54 grade-specific school programs, Cindy's favorite is *Lessons from the Cherokee*. She relishes giving students a glimpse into the culture, life and history of the remarkable Cherokee Native Americans. Her own fascination with their survival skills and how they lived off the land inspires eye-opening dialogue as students grasp past ways of living.

Another topic Cindy passionately promotes is snake education and awareness. "I hope that more people can learn the benefits of snakes and begin to fear them less," she says. "If you leave a snake alone, it will leave you alone and will most likely help with any pest problems you may have!"

Cindy is one of Elachee's two dozen skilled educators who serve nearly 35,000 PreK-12 students from around the north Georgia region each year through environmental education field trips to the Nature Center and Lake Lanier, and *Elachee in Your Classroom* outreach programs.

SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP: elachee.org/school-programs

Elachee Brides Thank Walmart

Destination weddings are all the rage and Elachee's patio, pavilion and knoll each offer a natural setting to say, "I do." Just ask Facility Rentals Manager Kristin Love who tours, on average, four engaged couples per month. Elachee's many open-air and indoor wedding packages are a great fit for ceremonies of 20 up to gatherings for 200.

Elachee's new bridal suite is an awesome amenity getting a thumbs up from discerning brides-to-be. Thanks to a *Walmart Community Grant* from Gainesville Supercenter #510, Elachee now offers an inviting dressing area with neutral decor for bridal party pampering and photos.

DETAILS: elachee.org/weddings



COURTESY OF KAITEE NEWTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Storybook Setting for a Hike

Accessible from multiple locations around the Elachee Visitor Center, the paved half-mile Geiger Trail is tailor-made for easy, low-impact meandering. There is a particularly enchanted section of the Geiger Trail, referred to as the *Storybook Trail*. Here, visitors may leisurely stroll from kiosk to kiosk to read a children's book. At the start of each new school year, the Elachee Nature Academy (ENA) posts an enlarged book reproduction for every visitor to enjoy.

"Mom and Dad would be delighted," shares Beth Geiger Bolstad about the Geiger Trail's namesakes. "Two of their greatest joys in one, a walk in the woods and a good book – what a brilliant idea!"



Engaging Element for Our Youngest Visitors

The *Storybook Trail* has been a welcome addition to the Elachee visitor experience. Easy to navigate with little ones, the trail offers a relaxing way for families to enjoy being outdoors together while benefiting from reading about nature.

ENA students and teachers also benefit from this educational resource. "The *Storybook Trail* allows us to see a book in a whole new way," says ENA Preschool Teacher Angela Belanger. "I love it as a teaching tool because there are so many more ways to enjoy the story when it's on a trail. It's fun for the children to discover it first, make it their own and then later bring it to life."

Volunteers' Labor of Love

Creating this interpretive outdoor educational exhibit has been an ongoing labor of love for Elachee's volunteer Trail Crew and ENA teachers. From building and erecting these 20 kiosks three years ago to maintaining them, the *Storybook Trail* brings together members of the 'Elachee Family' who don't often get to work together. **STROLL WITH US:** elachee.org/plan-your-visit

Elachee Nature Academy
PRESCHOOL and KINDERGARTEN-1st GRADE

**New Student
OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday • December 8, 2018 • 10-Noon

SEE DETAILS: elacheenatureacademy.org

