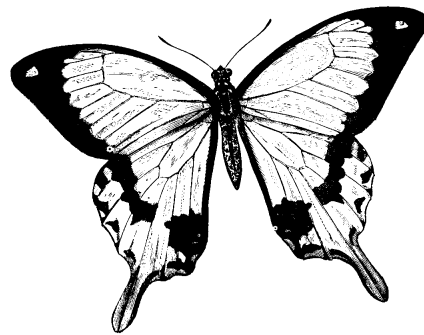


HANA & ARTHUR GINZBARG
NATURE DISCOVERY CENTER

2008 Annual Report
(Fiscal Year October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008)



From the Director

This has been a year of planning and building for the Nature Discovery Center. We have added Collections Curator/Discovery Room Coordinator Laura Stokes to our staff. Laura has already begun to add new activities and specimens to the Discovery Rooms: geodes for young visitors to handle, and skulls, bones and shells to examine. We are also reorganizing our collections to give children in our classes and camps a greater range of natural objects and specimens to work with. Over the summer and into the fall, staff and volunteers worked to refurbish and upgrade exhibit activities and structures for the thousands of children who will explore them in their schools.

Looking ahead, we continue to strive to improve and expand our programs. We are working on upper elementary level programs to take into school classrooms and additional field trip investigations to add to our repertoire. We are also planning to expand our summer camp program to ten weeks in 2009.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the hundreds of volunteers who help with park maintenance, programs, and special events, and to the corporations, foundations, local businesses, and government entities whose support helps expand our outstanding programs and improve the park as a wildlife-friendly habitat.

We are excited about the upcoming year and we hope you will visit us often.

Jennifer Gillespie-Malone
Executive Director



Mission and Goals

The Mission of the Hana & Arthur Ginzburg Nature Discovery Center is *to ignite lifelong curiosity, understanding, and respect for nature through education*

The goals of our programs are to

- Nurture children's curiosity and sense of wonder;
- Spark interest in nature, science, and learning, and give children the tools to explore and learn;
- Introduce students to the scientific method at a level they can understand and use;
- Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills needed in all walks of life;
- Enhance educational opportunities for disadvantaged children;
- Improve elementary science education by example, teacher training, and publications.

History

Our roots go back to 1979, when the Friends of Bellaire Parks, Inc. (now Nature Discovery Center, Inc.) was incorporated. The organization acquired a 4-acre estate, now Russ Pitman Park, with the help of gifts from corporations, foundations, and individuals, and a partially matching grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife, and donated it to the City of Bellaire. Volunteers developed the park and renovated a 1925 house in the park for the Nature Discovery Center. The Center's programs evolved from nature walks and programs offered by volunteers in the park. In 1989, the first full-time staff naturalist was employed and the Center opened to the public free, six days a week. Today, with the continuing support of individuals, foundations, corporations, local businesses and government entities, six full and three part-time staff members, assisted by volunteers, offer in-house and outreach programs, reaching up to 60,000 people annually, including 46,000 school children. From its modest beginnings the Center has emerged as a premier informal science education facility, with a highly qualified, experienced, and dedicated staff, providing educational opportunities not found elsewhere.

Programs for Schools, Libraries and Educators

The Nature Discovery Center's unique, inquiry-based, hands-on and minds-on nature and science programs offer exciting and engaging ways of learning to thousands of children.



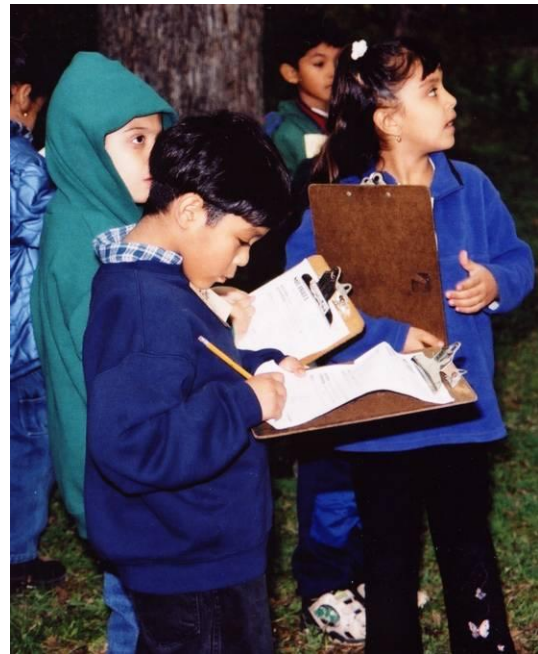
Our programs give children the chance to “do” science, whether they are investigating squirrels or food webs on **field trips** to the park; sorting invertebrates in the Join the Insect Club **outreach presentations**; or testing rocks and matching them to products in one of the **traveling exhibits**. **Educator workshops** provide teachers with tools and techniques to include hands-on activities and outdoor investigations in their curriculum.

Over 25,000 children participated in our educational programs in 2008

Field trips:

“We liked most that it was geared to the children, they had the freedom to explore their own interests. You run a great program- the guides were great – very patient, very attuned to the children, very positive. I have been taking the 4’s and K’s on field trips for many years and this is one of the best experiences ever.”

*4/16/08 Ms. Meriwether, Memorial Drive
United Methodist Church*



“On other field trips we don’t get to write. It (writing what I found) made me feel like a real investigator.”

10/23/08, Aaliyah, Crawford Elementary School student

Exhibits

Ten schools, most serving low income areas, incorporated three or more exhibits into the science curriculum for their K through 5th grade students.

“With the help of the Nature Discovery Center’s Traveling Exhibits Eliot Elementary students raised their science score by 37 points!!!”

Kathy Taylor, teacher, Eliot Elementary School.



Educator Workshops: One hundred twenty-six teachers attended educator workshops, a 38% increase over last year



“I will definitely recommend this workshop to all educators regardless of their content areas. These lessons would incorporate much more than science.”

“Great ideas and great thinking skills.”

“This workshop validates my own commitment to re-write the science curriculum for more hands-on activities.”

Quotes from anonymous evaluations

Programs for Children

Classes & Camps - After school, weekends, and holidays brought hundreds of children to the Center for hands-on, fun-filled, active learning in classes and day camps. Science experiments, crafts, natural artifacts and specimens, and outdoor games and investigations all contribute to engaging programs that provide each child with a chance to shine.



Free, drop-in Nature Story Time gave 645 youngsters their first introduction to nature through stories and crafts. One day last summer they read The Hungry Caterpillar, hunted for caterpillars among the butterfly weed, and made butterfly window hangings.

Story Time attendance was up 67% from last year.

Over 1,300 children participated in classes and camps.

Over 1,000 children attended live animal programs at parties



Birthday Parties –Over 50 families celebrated birthdays at the Center with a live animal program featuring Scoot the turtle, Dusty the bunny, or the Madagascan Hissing Roaches, and a guided visit to the Discovery Rooms.

Scout Programs - Special classes help boys and girls meet advancement requirements while giving them new insights into nature. Webelos identify trees and useful forest plants while younger Cub Scouts practice wildlife watching in the park. Brownies and Girl Scouts explore animal adaptations or habitats in the park.

Eagle Scout candidates and Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award candidates tackle a variety of projects including replacing non-native species with native plants that will attract birds and butterflies and creating photo collections for introducing visitors to our native prairie plants.

237 scouts participated in advancement programs. Nine Eagle candidates and one Silver Award candidates successfully completed their projects. Six others are in currently in process.



Discovery Rooms - Open free to the public six afternoons each week, the Center's Discovery Rooms hold a wealth of treasures for 3 to 12 year olds to explore with their families, friends, or scout troops. There are small live animals to look at, rocks, bones and seashells to examine, magnet boards, rubbings, and stamps. Our 23 challenging Discovery Boxes invite in-depth investigations into specific areas including herbs, animal survival strategies, and crystals.

The 4400 visitors who explored the Discovery Rooms this year were almost equally divided between local neighbors and visitors from other parts of town.



Adult Programs - "For the Inquisitive Naturalist" is a monthly lecture programs on topics ranging from global warming issues and solutions to peeking into the secret life of spiders. It drew an average of 18 - 20 adults interested in expanding their understanding of nature and our role in it.

Spring and fall guided birding walks and an annual spring migration season field trip drew birders and wildlife viewers from near and far.

Special Events

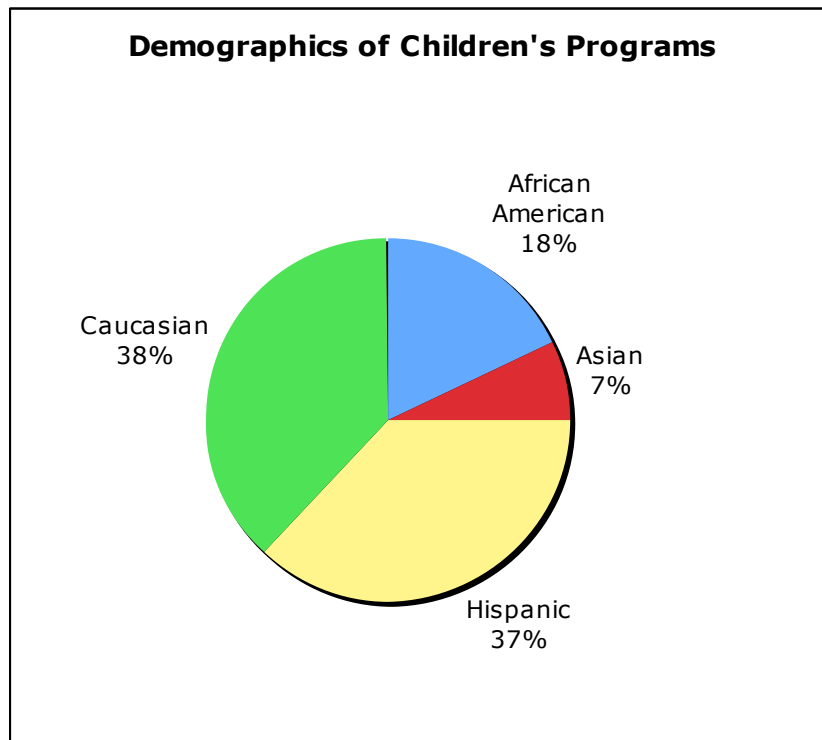


Spring Fling, Pumpkin Patch and Summer Fun Day (sponsored by ACME Party and Tent Rental) are seasonal community celebrations of nature. Games, crafts, vendors, and park tours educate and entertain visitors. Holiday Market showcases gifts for nature lovers.

Over 5,300 people attended our community events this year: 300 at Spring Fling, 3,500 at Pumpkin Patch, 350 at Summer Fun Day.



Volunteers – Teen and adult volunteers are a key asset in planning and putting on special events, caring for gardens and plant beds, assisting with summer programs as counselors and Discovery Room guides, and caring for our live animals. About 300 volunteers contributed over 2,500 hours this year



Awards - The Nature Discovery Center received three awards this year:

- **Best Enviro-Friendly Place for Families in Houston** in Nickelodeon's 2008 Parents' Pick Awards
 - Pick Awards
- Third place in **Best Day Camp in Houston** in Nickelodeon's 2008 Parents' Pick Awards
- 2008 **Best in Bellaire in Wildlife Conservation** category by US Local Business Association.

Financial Reports

Income		
	Direct Public Support	
	Corporations	\$ 32,997
	Foundations	\$ 27,335
	Individuals	\$ 20,211
	County government	\$ 30,000
	Direct Public Support - Other	\$ 500
	Total Direct Public Support	\$ 111,043
	Memberships & program fees	\$ 109,137
	Special Event Income	\$ 122,338
	Investment interest & other income	\$ 13,782
		\$ 356,300
Expenses		
	Program support	\$ 350,672
	Administration	\$ 15,560
	Fundraising	\$ 40,099
		\$ 406,331

Assets: Permanent Fund - value on September 30, 2008 \$654,000

Major Supporters

Discovery Circle- Harris County Commissioner Precinct 3, Steve Radack

Investigator Circle -ACME Party and Tent Rental, Chevron Corporation, ExxonMobil Corporation, The Brown Foundation, Inc.

Explorer Circle - ConocoPhillips, George & Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation, Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation. Kinder Morgan Foundation, Marathon Oil Company Foundation, The Powell Foundation.

Other Supporters** in-kind donations*

JKS Solutions, LLC*	\$4,000
BBC (USA) LP	\$2,500
Karpas Properties	\$2,500
Access Sciences Corporation	\$2,000
Greathouse Realty*	\$2,000
Ray C. Fish Foundation	\$2,000
Star Engraving*	\$1,700
The Samuels Foundation	\$1,700
The Bristol High Rise	\$1,500
Hoffman Marketing & Media	\$1,500
Mountain Commercial Graphics	\$1,500
The Jacob & Teresa Hershey Foundation	\$1,500
Venetian Blind Carpet One Floor & Home	\$1,500
Village Plumbing Company*	\$1,043
Community National Bank	\$1,000
Whole Foods Market - Bellaire*	\$ 925
Lisa Barnes Properties, LLC	\$ 900
Eurocar-Werk	\$ 900
Solutions Bookkeeping & Tax Services*	\$ 715
MinuteMan Press - Bellaire*	\$ 711
BP Fabric of America Fund	\$ 500
Tree Arts*	\$ 500

Bellaire Area Exchange Club	\$ 500
Larry Haas, Haas Insurance Agency	\$ 500
Institute for Museum and Library Sciences*	\$ 500
Briggs & Veselka Co.	\$ 500
Optimist Club of Bellaire	\$ 500
Gem Insurance	\$ 500
Navysis Group	\$ 500
Claunch & Miller, Inc., Engineering Consultants	\$ 350
Greenwood King Properties	\$ 350
Frost Insurance	\$ 350
Mike Livingston-Realtor Consultant	\$ 350
Randalls Food Markets, Inc	\$ 306
Boy Scouts of America, Troop 55	\$ 203
Baskin Robbins #907	\$ 200
A.I. Schepps Charitable Foundation	\$ 200
Bellaire Broiler Burger	\$ 150
Blue Water Irrigation Systems, Inc.	\$ 150
Dentistry for Children	\$ 150
Suzanne Longley Landscapes, Inc.	\$ 150
COM for CARE, Inc	\$ 150
M & M Lighting	\$ 150
Prewett Read and Associates	\$ 150

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 Community National Bank
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 Copy Doctor
 John Daugherty Realtors
 Paul W. Horn Academy
 Houston Audubon Society
 Houston Museum of Natural Sciences
 Houston Wilderness

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 Program)
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