

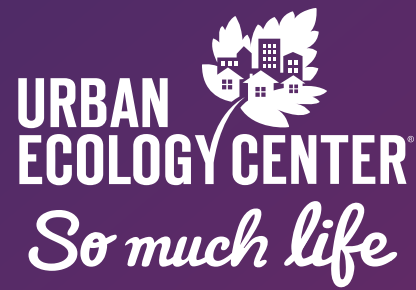


So much life



ANNUAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2019 - AUGUST 2020

SEE HOW YOU'RE CONNECTING PEOPLE IN CITIES TO NATURE AND EACH OTHER



MISSION

We connect people in cities to nature and each other.

VISION

To inspire generations to build environmental curiosity, understanding, and respect. We restore hope and heal our urban natural world, neighborhood by neighborhood.

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1500 E. Park Pl.
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(414) 964-8505

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Branch Manager

Menomonee Valley

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Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 431-2940

Angélica Sánchez Mora
Branch Manager

Washington Park

1859 N. 40th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 344-5460

Terry Evans
Branch Manager

Cover photo:

A fall camper shows her love of nature.
Photo by Alex LaBonte

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CONNECTING NATURE & OUR COMMUNITIES

Though Van Johnson III is one of the newest members of the Urban Ecology Center's staff, he has big plans for what he hopes to accomplish in the community.

Van's goal is to help blur the line between the urban world and the natural world and to help students in Milwaukee realize that both are one in the same. He admits it can be a challenging task at times with the current status of our environment.

"With all that is going on with climate change and environmental disasters, it can in a sense make the current generation jaded to what ecology really is. Is any of it really worth it? Sea levels are rising, temperatures are rising, hurricanes are happening every other week. It can be overwhelming."

As a middle-school student, Van participated in the Urban Ecology Center's Neighborhood Environmental Education Project (NEEP), where he was introduced to nature through hands-on field trips and experiences. Now, as a Community Program Educator at the UEC's Washington Park Branch, Van is working to provide opportunities for children to connect with and learn from nature.

Through programs like the Young Scientist Club, Van is sharing his passion for the outdoors and helping to raise awareness about the natural spaces available to

the community. The Young Scientist Club brings students to the Center to participate in environmental education adventures. The students learn to garden and prepare their own harvest, investigate science through fun interactive lessons, and enjoy the outdoors. All while creating a deep and personal connection to the natural spaces in their own neighborhood.

"Some people in these communities never leave and never get to see a space that is considered ecological or environmental, but those spaces are closer to them than they might think. And it's our job to show them these spaces are here and accessible."

Van believes programs that allow students to build a relationship with nature, like the Young Scientist Club, help educate the next generation of environmental leaders who will protect and save our planet. **Through the support of donors like you, Van's vision is coming to life through the UEC.**

Read more about the impact you are making in our 2019-2020 Annual Report.





photo by Eddee Daniel

Hi Friends,

When this year started, who knew what was in store for the world! Wow! 2020 has been a challenge for us all, but with your incredible support, the Urban Ecology Center has remained active, engaged, and vibrant as a healing force in this city.

From new found talents in virtual education serving tens of thousands of students and adults, to providing safe, accessible, beautiful and calming green space for half a million community visitors (doubling past years visits!), you kept our mission of connecting people in cities to nature and each other relevant every step of the way. Let's explore all the remarkable work you helped accomplish this year!

—Ken Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

DEFINING VALUES FOR GUIDING OUR WORK

In September, the Urban Ecology Center's Board of Directors confirmed a new set of values to guide how our vision and mission are delivered. These values will inform our practices well into the future and we are excited to share them with our community!

The development of this succinct set of values was a team effort with the Center's staff kicking off the process by identifying values that embody who we are and who we want to be. Input from all-staff working sessions were organized into themes and refined by a smaller team.

We appreciate the input and guidance received from the entire Urban Ecology Center staff, board and the Values and Equity, Dignity, and Justice committees.

URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER VALUES

Practice kindness

Nurture communities of belonging

Care for nature

Seek knowledge and inspire learning

Find fun and share it

EQUITY, DIGNITY, & JUSTICE IN AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR SELF-REFLECTION

In January of 2020, the Urban Ecology Center worked with Ubuntu Research & Evaluation to conduct a "dignity assessment" of the Center. Ubuntu is a Milwaukee based, black women led organization that specializes in evaluation and strategy related to equity, dignity, and justice (EDJ). This assessment provided valuable feedback and guidance on where the Center should focus our efforts.

The Center's long-standing EDJ committee, using both the Ubuntu Assessment and social justice conversations with staff, drafted an anti-racism and commitment

statement. The commitment statement reflects the guidance from Ubuntu and was shaped with input from staff and the board, with a particular focus on centering the voices of staff who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

The Center continues to participate in learning opportunities related to equity, dignity, and justice such as the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge from Food Solutions New England, a training on bias from Guillermo Gutierrez, and a book club on "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

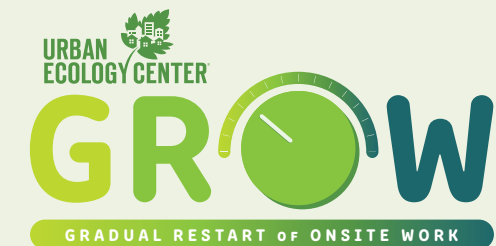
LET'S GROW STRONG & MINDFUL LEADERSHIP IN A PANDEMIC

We have adapted, pivoted and learned so much since the start of the pandemic and are proud of how we've been able to continue to support and engage with our communities and neighbors during this uncertain time. Using our Gradual Restart of On-Site Work Procedure Manual (GROW), we have been able to slowly re-engage in on-site work in a safe way.

Based on the trends, we have re-prioritized our on-site initiatives to accommodate what the community needs most by focusing on: supporting schools, caring for the land and providing opportunities for people to get outside to experience the healing powers of nature, helping with food security and doing what we can to help with childcare.

Throughout all of the changes, we honored a commitment to keep our staff safe, working, and paid.

Our timing to return to on-site work and re-open our doors to the public is driven by public health indicators and guidance from the state and local health departments. We hope you continue to enjoy nature and each other -in a socially distanced way- in our greenspaces.



EVEN THROUGHOUT A CHALLENGING YEAR,
**THE URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER IS
THRIVING - THANKS TO YOU.**

Take a look at the incredible impact your support made possible in the 2019-2020 year.

Park usage
**more than
doubled!**

That translates to over 500,000 visits to our 3 branches.

URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER
**IN
MY BACKYARD**
CONNECTING YOU TO NEARBY NATURE!

More than 200 blogs, videos, and activities were created by staff for this new virtual platform since March with 18,000 views!



The first-ever Urban Ecology Center Podcast was launched this year! The podcast tells the ongoing story of the UEC through conversations with staff members, volunteers, and community members.

**OVER
22,000**
Neighborhood Environmental Education Project (NEEP) visits to our three branches!

100%

of teachers reported that NEEP boosts student performance. In particular, teachers witnessed improvement in science skills like observing, communicating, classifying, inferring, measuring, and predicting.



Rusty Patched Bumble Bees have been spotted at Riverside Park for the second time!

This bumble bee is classified as endangered under the Endangered Species Act, making this observation especially important.

This sighting is a testament to the work you support.

Summer Campers hiking up Coyote Hill in the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum at Riverside Park.

A participant in one of our Adventure Day programs shows off a leaf found while exploring Three Bridges Park



Photo by Angélica Sánchez Mora

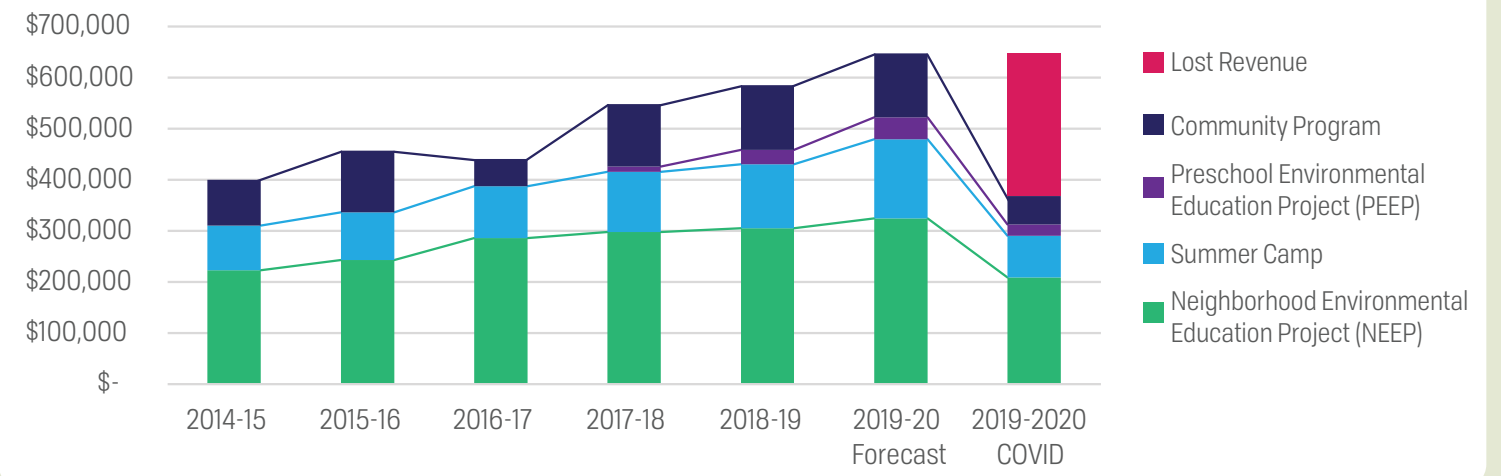
FISCAL YEAR 2019-20 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Urban Ecology Center successfully weathered a challenging financial year in FY19-20. The COVID-19 outbreak in the United States caused significant business disruption with the closure of the three branches to the public in March. The UEC successfully secured a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan, which is expected to be forgiven in 2021. Additionally, the Center quickly transitioned to virtual programs, redeployed staff to essential work, and implemented a disciplined spending plan, resulting in a balanced budget of \$4.48M. The Center remains committed to ensuring the long-term fiscal sustainability through shared attention on immediate fiscal needs and strategic planning for the future.

The Center carries no long-term debt. It only enters into agreements supported by existing pledges and donor contributions. The Board of Directors and Finance Committee maintain an intense focus on the adequacy of cash and oversight for all material financial aspects of the organization. The Center has a positive ratio of assets to liabilities and a broad donor base, ensuring a solid financial foundation for future growth. Our annual financial statements are audited by the Milwaukee based accountants of Scribner Cohen & Co.

Please visit our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org for additional information, including the IRS Form 990 and audit report.

Key Program Revenue 2014 - 2020



Volunteers are at the core of the UEC's operations. Despite reduced onsite volunteer opportunities this year, our volunteers contributed their time and expertise to help further our mission!

1,354 volunteers dedicated

8,241 hours to the Urban Ecology Center.

That's **\$211,464** of contributed labor!*

*Based on a \$25.66 per hour value determined by Independent Sector for the state of Wisconsin.

HERE'S TO YOU

The Urban Ecology Center thanks you, our generous donors, for your support in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

As an organization that started small, the Urban Ecology Center understands that something small can make a big impact. As we've grown over the years, we've depended on donations - both large and small - to support our mission of connecting people in cities to nature and each other. For that reason, this year's Annual Report lists our supporters alphabetically rather than by giving level. Every donation makes a difference and we are pleased to acknowledge the following donors for their generosity and support.

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Pandemic or not, research continues! Our Research & Community Science team was especially adaptable this year, continuing field work and offering great virtual programs.



Land Steward Drew Vandegrift leads a small group on a Wildflower Hike as part of this year's successful, COVID-conscious HKE MKE fundraiser

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

The Urban Ecology Center thanks you, our amazing volunteers, for your work in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Thank you to the following volunteers who contributed 10 or more hours of service to the Urban Ecology Center between September 1, 2019 and August 30, 2020. We are grateful for their gift of time and commitment to our mission.

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| AMTouch USA Inc | Cherry Republic, Inc. | Husch Blackwell | North Shore Bank | The Kubala Washatko Architects, Inc. |
| Anon Charitable Trust | Christ Church Episcopal CIBC Bank | IBM Employee Services Center | Northwestern Mutual Foundation | The Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation |
| Anonymous (5) | Clare M. Peters Charitable Trust | Immanuel Presbyterian Church | Plum Media | The ROS Foundation |
| Antonia Foundation | Colectivo Coffee | Impact Assets | PNC Bank | The Starr Group |
| Argosy Foundation | Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Inc. | Jane Bradley Pettit Foundation, Inc. | PNC Foundation | TIAA Charitable |
| Artisan Partners | Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee | Jewish Community Foundation, Inc. | Pour, Inc. | Truist |
| Associated Bank | Cream City Ribbon | JLL Community Connections | Prairie Springs: The Paul Fleckenstein Trust | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| Astor Street Foundation, Inc. | DeWan Dental Wellness | Johnson Controls, Inc. | Puelicher Foundation, Inc. | U.S. Forest Service |
| Backyard Nature Products | Dorothy Inbusch Foundation, Inc. | Jones Lang LaSalle | Purple Door Ice Cream | Union Pacific Foundation |
| Bader Philanthropies, Inc. | Eaton Corporation | JPMorgan Chase Foundation | Ralph Evinrude Foundation, Inc. | United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County |
| Baird Foundation, Inc. | ELM II Fund | Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful | Reader's Digest Foundation | United Way of Metro Chicago |
| Beans & Barley | EZ Improvements | Kelben Foundation | Redwall Screen Printing | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee |
| Benevity Community Impact Fund | First Midwest Bank Foundation | Kohl's Department Stores, Inc. | Rexnord | Up-Down Milwaukee |
| BMO Harris Bank | Foley & Lardner, LLP | Komatsu Mining Corp Foundation | Rite Hite Corporation | Upham Woods/UW Extenson |
| Bogs | Forest County Potawatomi Foundation, Inc. | Komatsu Mining Corp Foundation | Robert W. Baird & Company, Inc. | Urban Ecology Center Photo Club |
| Bostik, Inc. | Four-Four Foundation, Inc. | Lakeside Animal Hospital | Robertson Ryan & Associates | Vanguard Charitable |
| Boutique Photographer | GE Foundation | Landaas & Company | Rockwell Automation | Vine & Branches Foundation |
| Brady Corporation | GE United Way Giving Campaign | M3 Insurance Solutions, Inc. | Rotary Club of Milwaukee, Inc. | VJS Construction Services, Inc. |
| Brewers Community Foundation, Inc. | General Mills Foundation | Marlo Foundation LTD | Sacajawea Charitable Foundation | Washington Park NID |
| Burke Foundation | George B. Storer Foundation | Marquette University - Trinity Fellows Program | Salawdeh Law Office, LLC | Wauwatosa Presbyterian Church |
| Cambridge Woods Neighborhood Association | Geromove Physical Therapy | Milwaukee Film | SeedMoney | We Energies Foundation |
| Campbell Soup Foundation | Get Busy Liv'n | Milwaukee Kayak Company | Shorewest Realtors | WEC Business Services |
| Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate North America | Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund | Milwaukee Metropolitan | Steigleder Charitable Trust | Weyco Group, Inc. |
| CARS, Inc. | | | Tandem | Yellow Wood |
| Catena Foundation | | | | |

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Alverno College | Dominican High School | Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design |
| Anonymous (2) | Empower Retirement | Milwaukee Riverkeeper |
| Brady Corporation | Global Workplace Solutions | Northwestern Mutual Foundation |
| Cardinal Stritch University | Harley-Davidson Museum | Operation Dream |
| Carmen High School of Science and Technology | Hydrite Chemical | Pantheon Industries |
| Carroll University | Marquette University | Rockwell Automation |
| Corner Stone Church | Milwaukee Center for Independence | Senior Center |

Every effort was made to ensure that the donor list is accurate. If you made a gift of \$250+ between September 2019 and August 2020 and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact Urban Ecology Center's Development Office at (414) 964-8505. A full listing of donors can be found on our website.



A damselfly rests upon a blooming New England Aster in Riverside Park.

GIFTS IN HONOR OF

Gifts given September 2019-August 2020 in honor of an individual.

15th Anniversary of Wisconsin Green Muslims	Jennifer Callaghan	Pau Aragon
Aleta & Walt Chossek's 50th Anniversary	Jerry Krause	Penny and Finn
All Kids	Kate Carollo	Penny Cruse's Birthday
Angela Carollo	Katie & Mark's Wedding	Peter Layde
Black Lives Matter	Ken Leinbach	Phyllis Davidson
Bob & Lyn Slater	Kevin Klein	Quinn Endres' Birthday
Bob Peschel's Retirement	Laurel Shanks	Rachel Nielsen
Brent Suter	Margot Fuchs' Grandchildren	Sally M. Tolan
Brien Vlcek	Marilyn Hennessy	Susie Inbusch
David & Kathy Herrewig	Mark Horowitz - Retired MPS Teacher	Susie Kasten's Birthday
Eileen Griffin	Mary and Ned Witte	Tim Ottman's Birthday
Else Ankel's Birthday	Miss Alex LaBonte	Tim Vargo
Erin Eregbu	Monica Carollo	Urban Ecology Center
Father Doug Hennessy	Padraich Spence	Walter Drefahl
Fred Kluhsman	Paige Prillaman for her acts of social justice	
Gene Laczniak	Pat Mueller	

Every effort was made to ensure that this list of donors is accurate. If you made a gift between September 2019 and August 2020 and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please contact the Urban Ecology Center's Development Office at (414) 964-8505.

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF

Gifts given September 2019-August 2020 in memory of an individual.

Else Ankel	Father of Megan Husband	Jeff Pomije
Beloved brother of Jason Anderson, Shannon Aylesworth, Jon Broskowski, Aura Hirschman, Brenna Katch, and Laura Wick	Jane Jensen	James Porfilio
Kathryn Barbieri	Richard "Dick" John	Erwin "Erv" Russell
Terry Buckman	Steve Johnstone	Shirley Silko
Noel J. Cutright	Miss Juneau and Miss Santly Teachers at Greenfield Elementary School 1936	Bob Slater
Joseph Ferschinger	Martha Laubach	Mark Straube
Jean Groh	Cathy Lemke	Harry F. and Patricia H. Weisberg
David Gronauer	Beverly Lustig	Mary Winkleman Franke
Gayle Grubisic Riordan	F.J. "Red" Matzen	Les Young
John and Jane Hennick	Carol H. Mayes	Ruth Zillman
	Harold Osten	

LEGACY SOCIETY

When you include the Urban Ecology Center as a beneficiary in your will, living trust, insurance, or retirement plan you help ensure that the UEC's mission and your values continue into the future. We are pleased to recognize the following Legacy Society members who have made a lifetime commitment to the Urban Ecology Center.

Anonymous	Jim Schleif and Bill Morley
Nancy Aten and Dan Collins	Nancy and Dick Spransy
Kat Grinker	Lindsey Tauber and Sam Leichtling
Margarete and David Harvey	Sally Tolan
Patricia and George Mueller	Chris von Briesen

We are grateful for the following legacy estate gifts we received between September 1, 2019 and August 30, 2020.

Petrovic Nature and Art Trust in the memory of Gayle Grubisic Riordan

Ruth Zillman

Interested in becoming a Legacy Society Member?

Please contact Jen Hense at jhense@urbanecologycenter.org or 414-626-8544 for more details.

Community Programs Educator
Erin Whitney sparks Summer
Campers' curiosity at the Riverside
Park community gardens.

JOIN THE FUN!

VIEW OUR FULL PROGRAM & EVENTS CALENDAR ONLINE

EQUIPMENT LENDING for MEMBERS

Members of the UEC can borrow equipment like cross country skis and snowshoes in winter and kayaks and canoes in summer for free, creating wonderful opportunities to explore our parks (and beyond)!

URBANECOLOGYCENTER.ORG/EQUIPMENT-LENDING

SUMMER SOLSTICE SOIRÉE

Summer 2021

Join us as we celebrate the 14th Annual Summer Solstice Soirée, a unique evening in celebration and support of the Urban Ecology Center.

HKE MKE 2021

Autumn 2021

Join us for HKE MKE! Our annual fall fundraiser takes you on a scenic hike through the heart of the city — with lots of fun stops along the way!

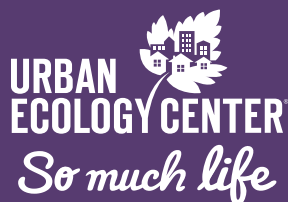
ONLINE:



URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER IN My BACKYARD

Whether your “backyard” is a local park or connected to your home, we’re here to help make it your virtual UEC. We’re providing TONS of resources to help you enjoy your nearby nature: educational content for families, opportunities to contribute to research, and much more!

URBANECOLOGYCENTER.ORG/INMYBACKYARD



Riverside Park

1500 E. Park Place
Milwaukee, WI 53211
(414) 964-8505

Washington Park

1859 N. 40th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 344-5460

Menomonee Valley

3700 W. Pierce Street
Milwaukee, WI 53215
(414) 431-2940

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