

NEWS FROM THE


NATUREHOOD

SEE HOW YOU'RE CONNECTING PEOPLE IN CITIES TO NATURE AND EACH OTHER | SUMMER 2020

YOU bring
learning to life!

You're growing
the joy of learning for
children in our city





Sharveta, valued community member and Lileth's mother, enjoying her time at Washington Park.

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH NATURE

BECAUSE OF YOU, KIDS ARE LEARNING FROM NATURE RIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE CITY.

“They picked rhubarb from the garden, they picked cherries from the orchard; all here on this property at Washington Park. They made rhubarb crisp and she said, ‘We made this mom!’”

Sharveta has special memories of picking rhubarb as a child. It was not, however, an experience she thought her daughter, Lileth, would have growing up in the heart of Milwaukee. But through her experiences at the Urban Ecology Center summer camps, Lileth is doing just that.

Understanding her relationship to nature by seeing how food grows is just one way that Lileth has deepened her connection to nature. From picking up litter to understanding how pollination works, Sharveta has watched concepts that only existed in a textbook come to life for Lileth. (Did you know that mosquitoes pollinate blueberries?!)

As an educator herself, Sharveta understands the importance of learning about the environmental sciences. “It’s not something you can turn on and off like

a TV, it’s a continuous process. As we learn, we transfer that knowledge. Lileth is able to make those outside connections now because of her experiences. Many kids don’t have that opportunity. It’s just textbook information, but when it becomes a real life experience you become enriched because you have firsthand knowledge: “Oh, I’ve seen a beehive, I’ve been to the orchard, I’ve picked rhubarb.”

And while the education piece of summer camp is certainly something that mom and daughter both appreciate, the summer camp experience at the UEC is fun too! Sharveta laughs as she recounts Lileth asking her to pick her up as late as possible at the end of the day because she didn’t want it to be over. It’s a feeling so many youth get each time they walk into the buildings and parks supported by the UEC community.

Sharveta summarizes it best, “...and it’s located right here in the heart of the city—we take it for granted so often, but the opportunity to come here is a beautiful and life-enriching experience.” 🌿

SUMMER CAMP UPDATE:

COVID-19 has made finding summer camp and child care options challenging for many parents across our city. At the same time, children have missed out on months of hands-on learning and social development that typically happens in the classroom.

You can help. The Urban Ecology Center, following health and safety guidelines from the Department of Children and Families, is offering outdoor summer camps so that affordable, high-quality summer care is available for all families regardless of their income.

For every \$250 you donate, a child will have an Urban Ecology Center summer experience. And you will be doing so much more than just getting a child outside. You will be opening up a whole new world of opportunities and experiences while giving parents the peace of mind that their child is being well cared for during this difficult time.

YOU CAN GET MORE KIDS OUTSIDE THIS SUMMER! DONATE AT [URBANECOLOGYCENTER.ORG/DONATE](https://urbanecologycenter.org/donate)

FROM VOLUNTEER TO BOARD MEMBER

ANTOINE'S DEDICATION HELPS THE UEC SHINE

Antoine McDuffie was first introduced to the Urban Ecology Center in 2011 through a volunteer opportunity with his employer, Baird. "I was super pumped when I learned that there was another site located a short distance from where I lived." That experience introduced him to the Washington Park branch and the huge impact it was having on the youth and overall community in the surrounding neighborhood.

"The idea that kids and families from the inner city—particularly, black kids and their families—had this grand opportunity to explore nature right in our own backyard and in turn develop a better appreciation for the land around them really excited me. Traditionally, kids from the inner city think that you have to travel far out somewhere to explore nature and many of them do not ever get that opportunity."

Antoine remembers how his eyes lit up a few weeks later when a co-worker suggested joining the Washington Park Branch Advisory Committee. That involvement led to joining the Board of Directors a few years later and becoming Secretary of the Board in 2019.

"I get to volunteer alongside a diverse range of brilliant people and I get to learn from these people. I have grown both personally and professionally through volunteering at the UEC and honed skills that I have leveraged back at Baird and in my work at other non-profit organizations. Additionally, it provides me with another opportunity to demonstrate by example to my kids the importance of service to your community." Thank you for supporting the UEC Community through your committee and board service, Antoine! 🌱



Have a special gift or talent you'd like to share?

Learn more about volunteering at UEC by visiting urbanecologycenter.org/volunteer



Brush up on your birding skills with UEC experts and much more in our new online programming!

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING CHECK IT OUT!

URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER IN MY BACKYARD

CONNECTING YOU TO NEARBY NATURE!

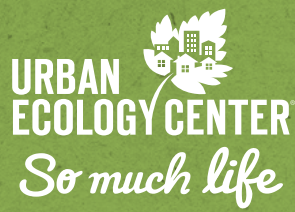
Your “backyard” may be a local park, or it may be connected to your home, but either way, we’re here to help make it your UEC while we all practice physical distancing! We’re providing TONS of resources to help you enjoy your nearby nature: educational content for families, ideas for how to learn from nature, fun activities to share, and more!

URBANECOLOGYCENTER.ORG/INMYBACKYARD



If you have named the UEC in your will or trust, thank you!

If you are considering a gift for the future, please connect with Jen Hense at (414) 964-8505 or jhense@urbanecologycenter.org



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