



N O U R I S H Y O U R N E E D F O R

NATURE™

FALL 2020



THANKS TO YOU

*Dodge is
GROWING*

D O D G E N A T U R E C E N T E R

Flourishing into the Future

Perhaps you saw the statewide headlines: “Dodge Nature Center wants to expand its reach.” “Dodge’s campaign aims to not only upgrade and renovate their space, but to increase accessibility and outreach.”

Then you know Dodge kicked off the largest campaign in our history. Nourishing Everyone’s Need for Nature, a \$40 million comprehensive campaign, will secure the brightest of futures for Dodge, in which everyone has ready access to the natural world.

Because of donors like you, the campaign is off to the strongest of starts. Over \$29 million donated and pledged to the 4-year goal. You will see big, positive differences when Dodge reaches our goal.

Physical changes like accessible buildings and trails. Shepard Farm’s historic buildings renovated to make much-needed classrooms. Solar panels to reduce our carbon footprint and teach the impacts of climate change. Renovated kitchens for adults and older children to learn about traditional agriculture, farm-to-table. A new Restoration Specialist will focus on conserving ecosystems on all four properties.

You’ll see outreach efforts going further and farther in the Twin Cities. For families seeking a nature-based education for their young child, we’ll make Dodge Nature Preschool more affordable.

Because it’s clear that kids gain so much from learning outdoors. Gifts to the campaign—like the \$315,000+ raised at A Night for Nature in September—are already delivering new programs to students in the safest, most effective way.

The initial support for the campaign makes a huge impact. But there’s more to do to ensure Dodge can respond to the needs of our communities, support our dedicated volunteers, and preserve greenspace.

Nourishing Everyone’s Need for Nature is possible with your support. You can join the campaign in many ways: Annual Fund donations, gifts of stock, planned gifts and more. And, due to a generous donor couple, all new or increased gifts to the Annual Fund will be matched up to \$1 million.

For more information, please contact our new Development Director, Brenda Teats, at 651-789-5218 or bteats@dodgenaturecenter.org.



YOU CAN GROW THE WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

There’s a new recognition club for supporters like you—The Wildflower Society.

Just as wildflowers sustain a prairie ecosystem, Wildflower Society donors sustain environmental education and make sure that Dodge will always be here for all.

With your leadership gift of \$1,000 or more to the Annual Fund, you’ll be a Wildflower Society member who provides critical resources for nature learning and native landscapes at Dodge. Your Annual Fund donation supports daily operations and gives Dodge flexibility in responding to community needs.

Thanks to the challenge match, **there’s no better time to step up your support for Dodge.** With your new or increased gift today, you can join the Wildflower Society and **your gift will be doubled, dollar-for-dollar.**

To learn more, visit dodgenaturecenter.org/wildflower-society.

KNOW-HOW AND CAN-DO FOR DODGE



David Schmidt and Sara Klasky support Dodge with their time, expertise and Annual Fund donations.

As days warm in late winter, sap starts to flow. In the sugarbush at Dodge, sap drips into aluminum buckets hanging on maple trees and naturalists keep sap at a rolling boil in a blackened cauldron. Many hours and people power bring the sweet treat of maple syrup to families and classrooms of kids every spring. And it wouldn't be possible without volunteers like David Schmidt and Sara Klasky.

David's love for animals and the natural world goes deep. In 2005, he was among the first people in the state trained as a Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteer by the University of Minnesota Extension. Looking for a place to use his new knowledge of environmental education and stewardship, he found Dodge Nature Center, not far from his home in Inver Grove Heights.

He began by leading maple syruping programs, but David soon added to his volunteer roles. As a Master Naturalist

instructor, David brought the 'Big Woods, Big Rivers' training course to Dodge for several summers. He and his spouse Sara Klasky, also a Master Naturalist, support seasonal events like Rock the Barn, Halloween and Winter Fun Fest.

The more David and Sara volunteered for Dodge, the more they saw the positive impact of nature in people's lives. That encouraged them to not only be generous volunteers, but donors to Dodge, too.

"Dodge is doing the right things for the right reasons. The little farm in the middle of the city is so approachable and friendly. Great walking trails and a beautiful location—it's a gem!"

Sara Klasky
Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteer

Over the years, they've attended the Dodge Ball and A Night for Nature benefits and this fall, David and Sara will be among the founding members of the new Wildflower Society. As volunteers and donors, their contributions are far from drops in a bucket—they make an immeasurable difference for Dodge.

Nature Activities

NOV. 2020 - DEC. 2020

For activity details and registration, visit DodgeNatureCenter.org or call 651-455-4531

NOVEMBER

Nov. 9 - Dec. 7	Girls Explore Science	5th-8th grades
10	Homeschool in Nature: Raptors	Families
19	Give to the Max Day	Adults
21	Buckthorn Bonanza	Families
23	Paint by Nature: Fall on the Farm	Adults 16+
Nov. 23 - Dec. 5	Virtual Winter Craft Bazaar	Adults
24	Homeschool in Nature: Camouflage	Families

DECEMBER

8	Homeschool in Nature: Wildlife in Winter	Families
9-16	Outdoor Learning Days: As Winter Comes	1st-5th grades
12	Winter is Coming	Families
21	Paint by Nature: Snow Vixen	Adults 16+



GIVE TO THE MAX FOR DODGE

For more than a decade, Minnesotans have gathered online for Give to Max Day to show their support for our state's nonprofits and schools. Your donation at givemn.org/organization/Dodge-Nature-Center helps kids get outside and learning in nature—when they need it more than ever.

Each time you make a gift during Give to the Max, you could help Dodge win part of the \$100,000+ prize pool. There are 145 chances for Dodge to win, from the start of early giving on November 1 through Give to the Max Day on November 19. If they randomly draw your gift, Dodge receives a Golden Ticket worth \$500 to \$10,000.

This year, your new or increased donation is eligible for our challenge match, too—you will double your impact for Dodge! Plus, with a gift of any size, we will enter you in a drawing to win a Zoom meeting with a Dodge animal ambassador.

Giving online November 1 - 19 is easy at givemn.org/organization/Dodge-Nature-Center



OFF SCREENS AND OUTDOORS

In a grassy green field, girls take on the roles of the Minnesota wildlife that call Dodge home. They communicate, relate, and survive as owls, voles and snakes. Because of COVID-19, the ecological game they're playing is hands-off—no tagging or touching—but it's definitely minds-on.



Middle schoolers engage in an ecological game of Predator-Prey during an October session of Girls Explore Science.

This game of Predator-Prey occupied them for over an hour, says Dodge naturalist Mary Dybvig, one of the leaders of Girls Explore Science. She developed the new after-school program to get middle school girls learning outside while their schools are in distance and hybrid models.

"When you talk to kids, they're burned out and it's only October," Mary says. "Every kid expresses gratitude to be learning outdoors."

Dodge wants to do more for middle schoolers, an age at which many kids stop visiting the nature center. The pandemic ended up being a good time to pilot a program for this age group.

"Middle school is a socially difficult time anyway," Mary says. "So, let's ditch screens, and get them outside with their peers, in person."

On their first day, the girls dove into an intense field study called a BioBlitz, a technique used by ecologists to survey living species. In conducting real science, they're exposed to future career paths, and have female role models in Mary and Julia Abell, a Naturalist Fellow.

They get a physics lesson on the archery range. They shoot compound bows that consist of two simple machines, a lever and a pulley. Mary wanted to complement middle school science curriculum—but also give girls the fun, empowering experience of trying a new sport.

"I want to play with girls my own age," says one St. Paul 5th grader in the program. "I like that we get to work together on projects and play games. A lot of what we're learning is new to me."

Pete Cleary, director of environmental education, says Dodge is committed to getting kids learning outside in safe and smart ways during the pandemic.

It's been near impossible to schedule in-person programs around every school district's learning model in the Twin Cities metro area. The Dodge solution is to offer a wide variety of programs, like all-day Outdoor Learning Days for elementary students. Girls Explore Science is one afternoon a week, for 4 or 5 weeks. Fall Break Camps expanded to three days over the MEA break. After-school Adventures is offered through TriDistrict Community Education; home school programs have morning and afternoon options.

Because of support from donors and foundations, Dodge is able to branch out to bring nature to students wherever they are. Naturalists offer live video conferences and travel to schoolyards to recreate field trips.

"It is a more complex problem this fall than the usual scheduling of field trips," Pete says. "But we're going to go out of our way to make it work for teachers and principals."

As naturalists adapt field trips, they adhere to Minnesota state standards and hit all the hallmarks of Dodge teaching—outdoors, inquiry-based and, of course, fun.

Winter won't stop the outdoor learning. Another session of Girls Explore Science will extend into December. When the sun sets at 4:30 p.m., girls will transform into astronomers, identifying moon phases, constellations and planets.

As biologists, they'll use UV flashlights to search for fluorescent organisms in the woods. And hopefully these students will discover that, even when times are dark, there is brightness to be found.



In the safety of beekeeping suits, elementary students get up close to hives at the Dodge apiary during Outdoor Learning Days.

VIRTUAL
WINTER CRAFT BAZAAR
DODGE NATURE PRESCHOOL

Bid, shop, and support scholarships
November 23 – December 5
winterbazaar.givesmart.com

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO FOR DODGE!

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