



## Baskets

By Anissa Howard

It's amazing how handwork can still the body to a place of focus. Repetition often provides a space in our minds for reflection that feels very easy. I encourage an atmosphere in my basket weaving classes in which the children are free to express their feelings while they weave. Then, from those various feelings, connections are drawn between our lives and the baskets we are creating.

Sometimes a feeling of frustration creates stitches that are too tight, causing our baskets to form a shape we don't like. Other times our stitches are too loose because we aren't deliberate enough to remember that pulling them snug is an important lesson in strength. Often our words are

too many and detract from our work causing the momentary shock of the sharp end of the needle.

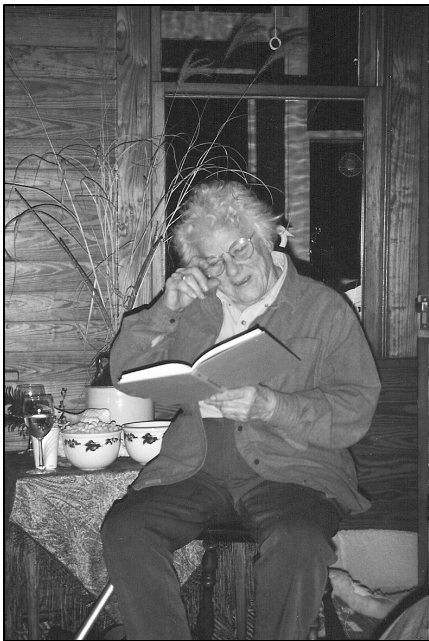
Always, we make sure to take notice of each other's work and encourage each other to keep going. We practice kind words toward one another. For the first time in my experience teaching children to weave baskets, two children in the younger group decided to trade baskets for a few minutes so that they could learn from each other's stitches. This seems similar to the practice of placing ourselves in each other's shoes. Another's perspective is a very effective way of creating the space for empathy and understanding to grow.

The colorful baskets that we are currently working on are woven with twisted paper and waxed linen thread. Some of the children have begun to work with pine needles. The technique is coil weaving and the needles require soaking and a dexterity and perseverance that comes after having mastered certain skills in handwork. When you see these children please let them know how beautiful and well-done their baskets are. This is difficult work and they are doing it with such beauty and consciousness!

**Editorial Note:** This issue is dedicated to the Environment, that which surrounds us both externally and internally. We offer these pages as a celebration of the world in which we live—the nature, the relationships, the senses of our daily existence. This appreciation of the natural world and our interconnectedness are central to the work of Upland Hills School. We hope you find some aspect that resonates deeply with you.

### Contents

Tribute to Nom	2
Calendar	3
How Our Alumni Grow	4
Students, Staff & Alumni	5
Animals as Teachers	6
Dimensions to Remember	8
A Deficit of Nature	12
A Thank You	13
Haworth School Project	13
KJT 5th Anniversary	14
Green Team	15
Kids Helping Kids	15



**Naomi Long, Upland Hills School Alumnus Staff, will be missed...**

Naomi Long, our dear Nom, passed away on Friday, May 11, 2007. Nom, as she was endearingly known, was born in Australia and lived in Melbourne and Sydney before coming to the United States via the Episcopal Church. While in the States she discovered a kind of freedom not available to her in her country of birth.

She became deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement of this country and participated in youth camps, marches, and protests inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. , embracing the cause he and so many others championed.

Nom worked at the Upland Hills Farm day camp in the 60's and was a part of our staff throughout the 80's and 90's. She taught us a lot about life in general and wood carving and Aussie idiomatic expressions in particular. Nom was also a poet who loved to use words in ways that evoked smiles and touched hearts. She loved being around children and teaching them through stories and songs and shaping wood.

“Nom in the Dome” meant that for a series of years she worked and played in our dome. She would teach wood carving during the day and after dinner return to the dome to listen to music, write and whittle. She knew how to enchant and her time with us will live in our memories of the way she smiled and laughed. Her spirit will also live on in these woods which she loved so much.

A memorial service is planned for 2:00 PM, Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at Upland Hills Farm. For more information, please contact the farm at 248-628-1611.

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## Upland Hills School

### Mission Statement

Upland Hills School, founded in 1971, is an independent school community whose purpose is to educate pre-high school children. Our aim is to discover and respect the uniqueness of every child.

### Guiding Principles

Upland Hills School holds the following principles as our core values and seeks to create an environment that:

- Protects, nurtures and defends the innocence of childhood
- Encourages a relationship between children and the natural world
- Empowers teachers and staff
- Fosters cooperation and consensus in decision-making
- Promotes mutual respect and trust that encourages our community to form authentic relationships
- Teaches us to think comprehensively
- Builds friendships that connect us with others around the world

*Upland Hills School encourages children to know themselves and to connect with their environment as responsible world citizens. We provide a full academic program that emphasizes mastery of skills and creative growth. Our vision is that through the alignment and commitment of parents and teachers, children will come to see themselves as having extraordinary learning potential and access to the greatest miracle or tool in human experience, love.*

## Connecting with the Future

### Calendar of Important Events

#### June

**Mon.-Tues., June 4-5**

**Final Evaluations-NO SCHOOL.**

Wed., June 6

Renaissance Festival

Thurs., June 7

All-School Overnight

**Fri., June 8**

**Last Day of School**

#### July

**Summer Break - NO SCHOOL**

#### August

**Summer Break - NO SCHOOL**

#### September

Sat., Sept. 1

11:30-4pm Welcome In/Welcome Back

**Wed., Sept 5**

**First Day of School**

Fri., Sept. 28

1 pm

**karenJoy theatre**

**Rob Faust-Faustwork Mask Theatre Program**

Sat., Sept. 29

10 am-1pm

**karenJoy theatre**

**Rob Faust-Faustwork Mask Theatre Workshop**

Sat., Sept. 29

7 pm

**karenJoy theatre**

**Rob Faust-Faustwork Mask Theatre Performance**

### **Welcoming the Newest Members of the UHS Community!**

Taylor Martine Brodeur, born February 19, 2007

Jeffrey William Broaddus Gardner, born March 25, 2007

Aurora Margaret Eshelman, born April 11, 2007

## **"How do our alumni grow?"**

Where do you go when you leave Upland Hills School? This question, the one that hangs over every incoming parent was posed to a recent alumnus at the January 20, 2007 Alumni Showcase.

*"Do you ever really leave Upland Hills?"* was the reply.

That answer is embedded in the daily happenings at the school—from the hearts of the staff to the final projects sprinkling the grounds. Fond memories of former students surround the school, yet what exactly is the piece that leaves the school and is embedded in alumni's hearts and lives?

Recent conversations and correspondences with alumni from across the country brought these answers and memories.

Melanie (McFall) Craft, a student at UHS in the 1970's had this to say: "A recent career change prompted me to reexamine who I am and what I stand for. The peaceful, compassionate part is what I hold closest. When you stepped on the school ground, everything faded away but who you are. UHS was a safe zone...being accepted for who you are, not your race or anything else....My children go to a similar school in Ohio, Welsh Hills School."



*Melanie (McFall) Craft and her family, Nate(12), Stanley, and Jessie (7).*



*Bobby Robins, at a recent Council of Engagement gathering.*

Bobby Robins, a Gainesville, Florida resident and another early 70's alumnus had his own response, "Upland Hills still occupies a part of my life by guiding many of my core values that the staff taught: compassion, respect for diversity, environmental responsibility, personal responsibility to the world as one community, the ability to question authority, and the joy of life, being empowered to move through life with confidence as an individual occupant with non-negotiable connections to the world community. I also have chosen to send my own children to Jordan Glen, another alternative school, one started by Jeff Davis, a former teacher at Upland Hills."

Amelia Cortis, a college student at Humboldt State University, and more recent (1990's) alumnus, had this input, "I chose my college based on my time at Upland Hills and the experiences I had there."

For a diverse group of graduates, each coming from different decades and pursuing different life occupations, a common thread is woven through each of their experiences. On a visit back to the school, Victor Dickmeyer, a graduate from 2002 commented, "This school assists you in becoming a well rounded individual."

Another common theme with former alumni is to leave the surrounding area and then find themselves occupying a similar piece of landscape. Baruch (Josh) Simon, an alumnus, from the 1980's, has found himself occupying a chair alongside his mentor, Jean Ruff. "My experiences as a student at Upland Hills School were precious and meaningful. They helped shape the voice and character I was to develop. Once I left, bridging those experiences to my life was challenging at times. It is now that I have returned to my home state, my home school, that I feel those formative relationships and experiences are growing once again. The taproot of my former experiences is again being nourished, digging deeper within myself and this community."

*continued on page 5*

*Continued from page 4*



*Baruch Simon, at school*

Could the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson been dreaming about Upland Hills School when he wrote, "Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful we must carry it with us or we will find it not."

What are the beautiful things showing up in your life? Contact Linda Bowers at [development@uplandhills.org](mailto:development@uplandhills.org) with your story. We are always looking for articles, personal antidotes, stories and ways to stay connected. We are hoping to create a way to better use email in the near future. If you want to be part of our email newsletter, let her know.

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## Student , Staff and Alumni Highlights

-----Last Fall, Serena Scholz's drawing was chosen for the *2007 Kid's Clean Water Calendar Project*. This calendar was sponsored by the Environmental Public Education Team of the Oakland County Drain Commission and was distributed across the County. Serena is a student in Kathy Long's morning meeting group.

---This past March, Zach Meyer's drawing received First Place in the Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness 2007 Poster Contest. In April, he received 2<sup>nd</sup> Place for his Poster of the Earth for the DEQ's Earth Day Celebration. He and his family went to Lansing to receive his awards. Zach is a student in Jan Butcher's morning meeting group.

---Alumnus Katie Gardner (2002) and her band "Don't Mind Us", was awarded the 2007 Sheldon Dunn Award at the Oakland County ARC's Dove Award Ceremony. ARC is an organization that advocates for developmentally challenged individuals of all ages.

---Alumnus Allison Butcher (1993) and her mother, UHS teacher Jan Butcher , will be traveling to Belize this summer on a medical missionary trip. Allison, a pharmacist, will be providing immunizations and pharmacy consultation. Allison is currently a Professor of Pharmacology at Palm Beach- Atlantic University. Jan is going along to assist with the care of patients' families. Jan's calming approach to new situations will be an added blessing for the medical team. Look for highlights of their trip in the next issue of Connections.

---Alumnus, Andy Roberts was recently promoted to Production Engineering Manager at Inalfa. Upland Hills School found out via the email grapevine (and his proud mother).

---Alumnus Krystal Bowers (2003) received a \$500 award from the Rochester Area Youth Assistance program for exemplary community service. She was also the recipient of a \$500 Ashley Iserman Memorial Scholarship for working honors students, and a \$2000 music scholarship to Adrian College, where she will be a freshman this fall.

---Deb Morrissett, alumni parent and Vice President of Regulatory Affairs for Daimler Chrysler has been helping to bring B20 bio diesel fuel more readily available to customers at the pump. Upland Hills School found out this exciting news through our work with Deb and her staff at DC on behalf of the Earth Day Expo on April 21, 2007.

---The students in Jan's Group have been raising money for Heifer International all year as outreach community service. Through activities including apple sales, bake sales and donations from the kids, the class has raised over \$1200 which will be used to purchase a water buffalo in Cambodia and a Milk Menagerie, which includes a heifer, a water buffalo and three goats . For more information on Heifer International, visit the website, [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

## Animals as Teachers

By Robin Michel

A few months ago I had the opportunity to sit and observe Kathy Long's morning meeting group as Jorge Arenivar, one of Upland Hills global teachers, talked about different animals in the natural world. The intention was to expand the children's understanding of the Michigan Bioregion and the animals that have inhabited the area over the centuries. Jorge, known as Red Hawk is a sundancer and pipecarrier in the Lakota Native American Tradition. He brings an understanding of Native American Spirituality and the way in which animals provide "medicine" or teachings about the content of our lives. I was curious about the conversation Jorge would have with the children. Throughout my life, my relationship with nature, especially animals, has felt complicated.

When we came to Upland Hills, the School's emphasis on outdoor play was a natural fit for my husband. Hunting and fishing are passions and family traditions that draw him outside. Over the years, he often showed our daughters how to listen to the changing sounds of the land. He could sit quietly amongst the tall grass and recognize the different songs that the birds sang. His copy of the Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold was well thumbed. To my viewpoint, my husband's relationship with the nature was defined. It was directly based on activities and experiences he regularly enjoyed and shared with people. He *knew* the questions as well as the answers he was seeking when he went outside.

Growing up in urban Detroit, my own early sightings of animals were contained to errant raccoons coming up through the sewer or incidental sightings of snakes. As a teenager and even as a young adult my relationship with the outside world had been fueled by a driver's license and the desire to see how far a tank of gas would carry me. It was a place to contain my need to escape and prove my independence. My desire to explore nature was more or less based on the weight of my backpack and personal courage to explore new and ever increasingly remote surroundings.

Today, as I sat on the meeting room floor in the Ecological Awareness Center with all the children from Kathy's group, I felt a strange twinge creep through my stomach. Be honest, I chided myself as I crossed my arms over my legs. You aren't a hunter like your husband nor a vegetarian like Jorge. You don't love animals but you are okay with the animals that are in your life. You enjoy walking your pet dog. You don't have to prove that you are or are not an animal lover. Listen with an open mind.

"What type of animals do you know?" Jorge's voice cut into my thoughts.

For a moment the children looked at each other.

"We own 22 horses," one of the girls started off. "What kind of medicine does a horse have?"

"Jumping horses is hard," another girl added.

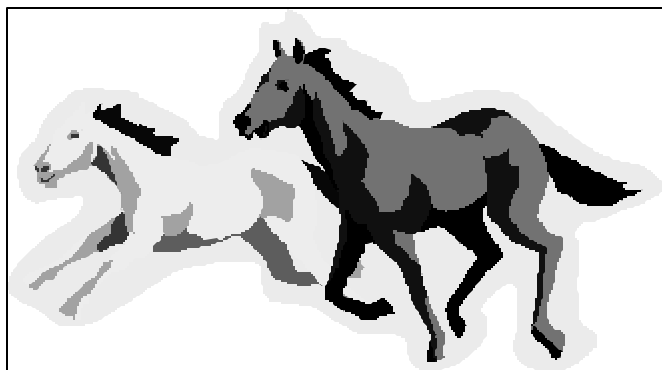
"You have to really pay attention and know what you are doing," a boy chimed into the conversation.

I looked around the room and counted the number of horse riders amongst the children. Many of them had spent cold winter hours in a barn—grooming, riding, and even jumping horses. I could feel myself, along with the children, leaning forward to hear Jorge's response.

"A horse isn't a traditional animal on the medicine wheel," Jorge replied, "Horses are respected as one of the four legged. They teach people to focus their will to accomplish things in life. They are ones that have great strength."

Focus their will to accomplish things, great strength. That makes sense, I mused to myself. Through my own experiences with horses, I had seen shy children grow confident by handling and riding such large animals. Look at all those horse stories in the school library. More than one person has been drawn to a horse's strength. Horse medicine didn't seem too difficult to accept, I thought.

"Look at those deer!"



*continued on page 7*

*Continued from page 6*

My thoughts jumped to the present as a boy in Kathy's group pointed out the window to a deer moving through the snow just inches from us. A number of the children stretched up from their seat on the floor to catch a glimpse of the grayish brown doe. Snow flakes lay heavy on her back.

"What about a..."

"Shh..." another boy interjected.

All of us watched the doe move slowly across the snow covered grounds. She moved her head, nudging drifts of snow as if she was looking for some food. For what felt like a minute, no one spoke.

"Did you see how she looked straight at us?"

"I saw some deer this morning."

"What about Possum medicine?"

"Beavers?"

"Mice?"

Hands shot up and animal names started to spill out of some of the children's mouths. Kathy raised her hand. Within a few moments, all tongues grew silent. The last remaining pairs of eyes returned from gazing out the window to where Jorge sat on the floor next to the EAC's small wood burning stove. Jorge began to speak again.

"On the medicine wheel there are certain animal teachers..."

A strange ache came across the top of my head as Jorge asked the children questions about their class animal research projects. I rubbed my forehead, hoping it wouldn't turn into a full headache. Sometimes changes in the weather did that.

"I was once given the name 'Butterfly girl.'"

*continued on page 10*

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**Boating - Swimming - Nature Study - Music - Games - Sports**

# Upland Hills Farm

## Day Camp 2007

The wonder of nature and the thrill of

discovery await your child this summer at the farm.

For Boys and Girls ages 5-12

1-8 week camp sessions available, June 25-August 24

Call us for more information - 248-628-1611




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**Care & feeding the animals - Milking the cows - Hayrides - Crafts - Horseback Riding - Fishing**

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## Dimensions: An Auction to Remember

By Phil Moore

The night before the auction I was thinking about what I would say if I felt strong enough, or clear enough to speak between the close of the Silent Auction and the beginning of the Live. I imagined myself hobbling up to the stage and perching myself on the edge of a stool. I'd force a slight smile, using my will to push back the shooting pain that had presented itself a full week prior. I saw a picture of this unfolding in my mind's eye from a remote corner of ceiling. I was in two places at the same time. Above and beyond it all and smack dab in the middle of it as well.

"Thank you all for coming out tonight to support our school, and a special thank you to Linda Bowers and her fabulous auction committee for your spectacular work."

The predictable opening. Then I thought....

"Pain is a powerful teacher. It forces you to pay attention in a way that nothing else can."...Now there's an inspiring opening that will insure a lively auction....Then I thought...

"The first item in the live auction, inspired by the auction committee, is 'Be Phil for a Day'.....as if someone in an audience of 350 would pay good money to be me"....and what exactly did that mean?....be the director of the school? ....be a quirky bearded 58 year man who lives in the forest, wears recycled shoes, and teaches music to 4 and 5 year olds? Be Phil for a day...kept repeating in my mind like one of the electronic billboards that plays the same message over and over. Was this a good idea? What if no one raised their bid book? What if someone did? What would happen when that person showed up for work? Here's the key to door, there's the bathroom, good luck.

By now the Tylenol 3 had kicked in and I was off in some nether world half dizzy, half asleep, half conscious and half crazy. I thought about the past week and how I had been confined to my bed for 72 hours, lying flat. I thought about the pain I experienced whenever I tried to stand. I thought about my 'vision quest' years before, and how I had to fight with myself to lie still in a small circle under the big sky without food or water for three days. I thought about the two things that had come in the mail during that week that had nourished me in unexpected ways. The first was a report from The Institute of Noetic Sciences entitled "The 2007 Shift Report: Evidence of a World Transforming" and the second a DVD from the Integral Institute where a man by the name of Terry Patten presents the idea of "uncaused happiness" in a seven minute and six second film clip.

Being Phil for one of these days meant waking up in pain, moving very slowly, confronting despair, lying in peace and finding my way to gratitude. Gratitude has become my practice. I'm not sure now how long I've been practicing, but I know that for many days I've been training my mind to think of all the things in my life I have to be grateful for. There are so many. Yet, there are times when I'm feeling something other than gratitude...despair....sadness....unworthiness...self doubt....I feel it, note it and move on.

The Shift report talks about 'transformative practices' and says "...research suggests that three elements are common to all successful practices: intention, attention, and repetition." My intention upon waking is to consider the beauty, uniqueness and privilege of my circumstances. Then to look out my window and appreciate the 'wildness' of this place, the comfort of being near my wife, the silence of my walk to school, the beauty of each child's face, the delight of being with such dedicated teachers and friends, the admiration I have for the people who send their children to us. I go into appreciation and then I do it again and again and again.

My mentor and teacher Buckminster Fuller is quoted in the Shift report as saying, "*You never change things by fighting the existing reality, to change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*" That brings us to Terry Patten who tells the story of King Midas and how when he got his wish and turned his bed stand into gold and his copper coins into gold he was very happy. But when he turned his dog, a piece of bread and then his beautiful daughter into gold, he became deeply troubled and would do anything, including giving up all his wealth to have it back

*Continued on page 9*



## "Dimensions 2007 "Auction



This year's auction was attended by over 330 friends, alumni and staff. We basked in the warmth of fellowship and generosity that night, which resulted in :

- the formal introduction of Nancy's Fund, the UHS tuition assistance fund
- over \$18,000 raised for Nancy's Fund
- over \$40,000 raised to support the work of Upland Hills School

Early UHS Years Alumni  
Guests:

Amy Nevel, holding  
daughter Cora,

Richard Harrington and  
Bobby Robins.



**Thank you to all of  
our supporters, near  
and far, businesses  
and individuals!**

**We could not have  
done it without**

**You!**

*Continued from page 8*

the way it was. There are things that we often take for granted that are sources for happiness that are uncaused. Take a breath, for example, exhale. Use your eyes to see...to truly see, take one step without pain, oh how marvelous. Uncaused happiness....

Being Phil for a day means you get to wake up and practice gratitude, even if you have to fake it for a while. You also get to think of all the sources of 'uncaused happiness' and you get to hear stories like this: Evan (a five year old in Holly and Anissa's group) used to get asked "So what you want to be when you grow up?" by many people. He grew tired of this question and began to answer it by saying "I don't know," "Please don't ask me again, I'm too young," and "It irritates me when you ask me that." So when he came to school one day last week saying he knew what he wanted to be, his teacher asked "What?" and he said "A World Person." "Now what does a World Person do?" his teacher asked. "A world person travels all over the world helping anybody who needs help."

So I imagined all this and knew that I'd never be able to do this in front of 350 people.

And I wanted to make some kind of joke, because there's nothing as comforting as an audience laughing with you. So instead of 'Being Phil for a day,' try pronouncing my name the way that my 7 year old friend Ross does, and "Be Full for a day...."

*Continued from page 7*

The voice of one of the girls interrupted my reverie. A smile, the type that caused the edges of her eyes to crinkle up, widened over her face. The smile looked familiar. Just a few weeks earlier, this same girl had slipped in the mud on the playground during fresh air break. That same smile had crossed her face that day. She laughed and whispered to her friend sitting next to her, "It was at a Pow Wow."

Only a year ago she was new to the school and trying to find her way to fit into the school culture. Now she was falling into the mud and laughing just as easily about it. So many beautiful gifts were shining through that smile.

I glanced across the room at Jorge.

Outside it was cold and snowy. Inside 16 children were listening not only to words that described how an animal looked or the habitat that it lived in, but...

"Butterflies," Jorge answered as he leaned into the circle, "are symbols of transformation."

Nods went around the circle. What seemed so difficult to me to understand without a book to guide my experience was real to the children. Their scientific inquiry, coupled with their personal experiences of nature on and off the school ground was being completed by the words spoken by this man. Why did animals and the idea that they had medicine seem so hard to understand? Butterflies do transform themselves, I muttered to myself. Yet, how can knowing when I see a butterfly, a mouse or any animal, that it might be guiding me to something I need to explore within my own life?

Jorge stood up and took out a small drum. The children scrambled to their feet and stretched.

"We're going to dance," Jorge announced.

He began shaking the small drum and leading us in a circle as he guided us to move like a butterfly. One by one the children began moving themselves around the room. One of the boys bumped playfully into the boy in front of him. He stopped when he glanced over at Kathy and caught her eye. Jorge started to sing a song, at first unfamiliar to all of us, but quickly most of the children were able to join in the rhythm.

*continued on page 11*

## Group Energy Tours and Seminars

Teachers ☼ Youth group leaders ☼ Civic groups ☼ Faith communities ☼ Other interested groups

The UHEAC building is a one-of-a-kind facility that demonstrates many examples of renewable energy, energy-efficiency and ecological design principles in action. We provide both on-site tours, or we will come to you for off-site seminars that include interactive, multi-media and hands-on demonstrations. Tailored for both adult and youth groups, tours and seminars are designed to help individuals:

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- Learn lots of simple, inexpensive ways to save energy and \$\$\$
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- Explore fascinating possibilities for powering the future



Tours/Seminars typically last 1 1/2 to 2 hours but can be customized to fit the time needs of your group. We also work with teachers and group leaders to coordinate with curriculum or study units.

**Contact:** 248-693-1021

[info@uheac.org](mailto:info@uheac.org)

[www.uheac.org](http://www.uheac.org)

*Continued from page 10*

The story, I reminded myself. I tried to gracefully lift one sock covered foot and move along the circle as the memory of a conversation I had a few months earlier with a new parent popped into my thoughts.

One Friday at coffee, she told me the story of how a hawk had appeared the day she had first driven out to the school. She had felt it was leading her somehow that August day. Up to that point in their lives, she and her husband had been contemplating a move to Ann Arbor as they fruitlessly searched for the right school for their children. The hawk had appeared quite distinctly on the day of their visit to the school. Six months into the school year, her daily commute to school was long and in the winter weather conditions, challenging, yet it always was feeling right to her; right for her children. The hawk had guided her or had she said it confirmed something she was feeling inside herself that day? I racked my mind, hoping to complete the details of that conversation.

“Time to go,” Kathy announced. The butterfly dance and song had just ended.

One girl pulled out a small tissue wrapped package from her blue jean pocket.

“For you,” she said as she handed the package to Jorge.

“Thank you.”

A few more children brought up some other simple tokens of appreciation—a clay bowl, pine tar, a candle. One by one they handed them to Jorge. Kathy had prepared them the day prior to think about a way to show their appreciation to Jorge for spending time with them.

I looked down at my hands; empty except for a pad of paper and pen. I had sketched out a poem that morning as I had sat in the EAC and waited for the children. Do I give that to him? Outside of my graduate school classes, I hadn’t shared much of my poetry. Did I take that step now and offer that scrap of writing? So often I had watched my daughters freely share their writings and songs with others. Just today on the car ride into school, my daughter had written and sang a new song. Was I as courageous as she was to share a piece of my writing with him?

After the children left the EAC to cross over the bridge and return to the school, I stayed to talk with Jorge and close down the

wood burning stove and shut the drapery.

“Your name is Robin,” Jorge observed as we worked together to work the curtain ties. “That is good medicine for the spring. It means new growth.”

The irony struck me as we parted ways. I came to Jorge so I could learn how the animals that showed up in a person’s life could also teach something about the content of that person’s life; how the dynamic interplay that each of us witness when we did things such as watch an ant hill or observe Canada geese flying over head reflect a greater lesson, ones not always accessible by applying a single tradition or chosen lifestyle. All the while I was always carrying an animal teacher within me. I didn’t need to sit outside to observe nature, I just had to sit still and observe what was going on within.

A snippet of a poem I had written as a child came into mind. “No matter how fast or far you go, life is always there for you to know.” By drawing upon his own ancestral teachings, Jorge offered a piece of understanding and connection that completed my search. I didn’t have to go fast or far. My own name is guiding me to something I need to consistently cultivate within myself: new growth.



## What Happens When Kids Stop Going Outside - A Deficit of Nature

By Jim Bedford



When I was growing up in East Lansing in the 1950's, I remember wanting to spend as much time outdoors as possible. My two playgrounds were the Red Cedar River and Hillcrest Woods. I was a paper boy so my bike was equipped with a large basket, perfect for carrying my tackle box and other fishing gear to the river. The basket also came in handy when my pals and I trekked to Hillcrest Woods to capture garter snakes for transplant into our backyards. My parents worried at times that something might happen when I was off to my haunts but nothing did and I owe my love of the outdoors to these nurturing times.

Today, a high percentage of our children are only rarely exposed to the outdoor world. We are now in at least the second generation of kids that are much more familiar with computers and computerized games than with the natural surroundings around them. Richard Louv in his insightful book, "Last Child in the Woods" (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005) coined the term "Nature Deficit Disorder" and laments the increasing separation of the young and the natural world.

A growing amount of scientific evidence supports the basic premise that being connected to nature is essential to our physical, mental and spiritual health. Because of this, Louv asserts that reducing the nature-deficit or "healing the broken bond between our young and nature" is in our self-interest. He further relates that nature comes in many forms for the young. Some of his examples and mine would include experiencing the life and death of a pet, walking a trail in a forest, getting off the trail and encountering nettles or prickly ash, overturning a rock on the land or in a shallow stream and seeing what lives under it, and the sound of an unseen critter scurrying through the brush.

We are all familiar with the term, "street smart" which describes the knowledge that helps kids get along in urban settings. Louv thinks that "nature smart" is a broader adaptive intelligence for our children. He states that a child in nature is required to make decisions not often encountered in more constricted, planned environments and this results in him or her becoming a stronger adult.

I realize that much of this discussion, as it relates to avid readers of this magazine, is "preaching to the choir." Most of you are already immersed in outdoor activities. But it does remind us that we need to keep our children's computer/electronics dominated world balanced with plenty of outdoor time.

(abridged and reprinted with permission from "Michigan Out of Doors Magazine", Jan 2007)

## A Thank You Letter

Dear Phil and Karen,

We are often asked about why we would move across the state to send Chris and Audrey Anna to Upland Hills School, and about the unique place that motivated us to do so. As today, a day for expressing our gratitude, a few short sentences could never begin to describe what was a clear and determined *knowing*, a deep and insistent need to find the school where our children could belong, be themselves, grow beyond their boundaries, and where the threads of life experience could forever change them.

At Upland Hills, we found this place, where moments were filled with meaningfulness. Experiences were raw, like head-to-toe mud from swamping, the sharp and stinging poke from a needle while quilting, or cupping a war, freshly picked vegetable. They ricocheted down a rapid in a canoe, built blazing fires, got burrs in their clothes from romps in the high grasses, and were rained on, instead of looking out the window at life, as it poured down all around, without them. At Upland Hills, they stood in the rain, felt the whipping wind, got overheated or felt their frozen toes spending the day in Nature.

At Upland Hills, our children's minds were engaged and encouraged, opinions were accepted, stirred up and then tempered with reminders of the importance of broadmindedness. Hearts were nurtured, strengthened, and softened with reminders of the importance of kind relationships as the basis for being together in community. They were asked to navigate the nuance, to speak up but also to listen, to form opinions, not judgments.

Above all, when we came to this place, we found that the fires burned again in our children. Our children had the chance to feel the moments of their lives: their passions, their physical strength, their creativity and they fully indulged their intellect. As parents, we watched this with joy. Our children were living their lives, as well as they could be lived, something that few can claim.

Day in and day out since arriving at our beloved school, we have said one thousand "thanks" in a mental whisper, or aloud among our family in conversation. These are to you two. We are going somewhere altogether different in our lives because of this experience. And it is not about where we end up, it is about knowing what to do with a moment. Moment to moment. Thanks to you.

With gratitude, David and Ann Batdorf-Barnes

## Haworth School Project wins \$10,000 Grant

Two students from Ted's Group, Theo Zucker and Melina VerVane, were among four students representing the Orion Historical Society at a national Youth Summit and Awards Breakfast May 15-16 in Washington, D.C. They returned to news that the project had been selected as one of three recipients of a \$10,000 grand prize National Award through The History Channel's 2007 Save Our History National Awards.

As part of a collaboration that has been involved in the Haworth School Preservation Project, Ted's group has conducted archeological investigations, contributed to a children's history book for Lake Orion students, performed oral history interviews with area seniors who attended one room schools, worked on a physical restoration of the building and created a DVD that documents the entire process. UHS Alumni parent and local preservationist Leslie Pielack organized the collaborative group to save and relocate the last remaining one room school house in Orion Township, which was used as a school from 1859-1954. Other members of the group include Orion Township Library, Orion Neighborhood Television, Lake Orion Schools and local business, government and civic groups.



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## Green Team Update

During the past school year, the school board of trustees and staff began implementing its long term strategic plan by examining its role in environmental education. With the discussions came the beginning of the *Green Team* and a focused intention to look at the school's energy use and how its history in sustainability could guide its future mission in ecology. Out of these meetings grew this project:

The *Green Team* as part of the greater Upland Hills School community seeks to further the history and leadership of teaching sustainability as a model of living by generating 100% of our electrical needs through renewable sources.

*Green Team* objectives will be reached by:

- Utilizing a combination of solar and wind power.
- Changing UHS behaviors to ensure the school is operating at peak efficiency.
- Creating a curriculum of sustainability that is directly tied to State of Michigan benchmarks.
- Carrying this curriculum to other schools and communities through professional development and educational partnerships.

The Green Team is chaired by Tom Tomich, UHS Board of Trustees and Linden Middle School educator; Ted Strunck, UHS oldest group morning meeting teacher; Janet Hartmann, UHS parent and member of the Lake Orion Downtown Development; Lori Pinkleton, UHS parent and EAC Board member, Jim Leidel, Energy Manager of Oakland University, and Robin Michel, UHS parent.

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## Kids Helping Kids

The children in Jean's Group are proving that a little tooth fairy money can go a long way in the world. All year long they have been collecting the funds received from an unending stream of baby teeth falling out, accumulating \$57.83 plus matching funds from Jean. Through a partnership with "Kids 4 Afghan Kids" fostered through alumni mom, Carol Yamasaki, the students bought school supplies for children at a school two hours outside of Kabul, Afghanistan.

Carol recently returned from a trip to the school in Afghanistan. She brought pictures and stories of what life is like for these children, so that our students could start to appreciate how different our cultures are and to begin to build bridges through that understanding. The children drew pictures of Upland Hills to send with the school supplies, which Carol is shipping with clothing that she collects.

For those of you who might like to become involved in this effort, Carol is seeking simple clothes in good condition, for example, boots, shoes, warm winter clothing, snow pants, fleece (no jeans, please), and basic school supplies. She will be sending another shipment by the end of the summer. For more information, please call her at 248-628-3099.



Have a great summer!

Remember to play, eat ice cream, laugh, dream and  
take good care of your friends.



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