

Niagara Nature Alliance Network Meeting Minutes

Monday May 14, 2018 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care, 1812 Sir Isaac Brock Way, St. Catharines

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Acceptance of Agenda and Additions
 - Accepted with no amendments
3. Niagara Updates
 - Naturalized Playground Initiative
 - Bus Tour – The Niagara Bus Tour took place October 14th with 29 participants who had a chance to explore the outdoor playgrounds of 5 child care centres: Fort Erie Regional Child Care, A Child's World – Woodlawn, Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care, A Child's World – Glenridge Hill and North-End Cooperative Preschool. Participants offered great feedback about the advantages of sharing experiences, ideas and being able to network with one another.

Helene Randle, Executive Director of Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care Centre share a few words of her experience during the bus tour.

4. Presentation from Links for Greener Learning – Patricia Russell – Program Manager
 - <http://www.linksforgreenerlearning.org/> www.summerworkshopsigl.com
contact@linksforgreenerlearning.org prussell@linksforgreenerlearning.org
 - Powerpoint presentation included information on the following:

What is a Community Garden? Growing Diversity Gardens, Benefits of a garden, Workshops and Cooking classes, Learning Gardens, Eco-kids summer workshops, Ready, Set, Grow challenge, Greener/Waste-free Schools, Children's workshops in schools and Annual Earth Expo Day. – business cards provided to connect for further information

5. Presentation from Nature School & Education Centre – Jennifer Grimes – Director and staff Jaclyn Giesbrecht, Joelle Kanakis and Tiffany Tierney
 - <http://www.natureschoolniagara.com/> info@natureschoolniagara.com
 - Powerpoint presentation included information on the following:

Forest school specific to different age groups (preschool, K-8, after school with nature), Nature camps offered in the summer on P.A days and March break, Weekend Programs such as the "Explorer's Club" and "Weekend Forest School", Nature Immersion and visiting school programs, Community Connections such as Jane Goodall Foundation, Bethesda and Brock University, and general information and upcoming events

- Forest School Open House taking place May 29th from 4-7pm at Beamer Falls Manor

6. Network Priority Activity
 - Highlighting ideas and suggestions from minutes of previous meeting the next steps for growth of the network – see hot-dotting summary attached for results of Network Priority Activity

7. Roundtable Conversation

- Centres have an opportunity to highlight what they have implemented within site.
- 1. A centre shared their involvement of their Forest School program with Brock University to help raise awareness for the mass amounts of litter turning up in the forest and the impact on the earth. The students set up a table outside of Brock University library with some moving documentation, photos and reflective questions.
- 2. The same centre also shared how their infant program took a trip out to the forest with the forest school to explore and their success with the experience.
- 3. Another centre shared their interest in growing their outreach and becoming a hub for nature education. They are eager to make partnerships and build relationships through the Nature Alliance Network as they also establish their forest schools and various programs.

- Recap of Rusty Keeler sessions
- 1. Naturalized Playground Project Celebration Evening with special guest Rusty Keeler. Participants had a chance to share pedagogical documentation and experiences of how the children interact and engage in their Naturalized Play Spaces. A few centres were also invited to share their story during the evening.
- 2. Loose Parts Session with Rusty Keeler (am and pm). Participants had a chance to explore the grounds of Rosalind Blauer Centre for Child Care's Forest School space and mess about with loose parts outdoors in their Naturalized Playgrounds.
- 3. Creating Outdoor Play Environments for the Soul with Connecting Children to Nature with Pioneer Rusty Keeler. Participants had an opportunity to engage in an interactive full-day session at Balls Falls with Rusty Keeler exploring putting theory into practice with both an informative workshop and hands on loose parts session in the afternoon.

- Upcoming full day session with Juliet Robertson – Beyond the Classroom Integrating Outdoor Learning into Practice: A Playful Approach for Early Learning Educators August 11th including an afternoon Loose Parts session with Playworker Ginette Wilson from the ECCDC.

8. Resources

- Highlight of resources available at ECCDC

9. Venue for Fall meeting – opened the floor to any centres willing to host the network

10. Network meeting evaluation