

## GREENSPACE NATURE CLUB GOING STRONG

Greenspace is very excited about our new education program in partnership with naturalist, Sue Davis. It is called the “Nature Club”. The program focuses on local habitats and conservation areas including forest, streams, coastal prairies, flora and fauna, and the marine environment. It is open to all age groups.

We conducted an interview with Sue about the program and how you can get involved with an extraordinary program and with an extraordinary person.

### What is your background and what motivates you to do this activity for Cambria children and adults?

As an early childhood educator, the work of Richard Louv led me on a path of developing Outdoor Classroom Programs for preschools in Southern California. In response to Louv’s phrase, “Nature Deficit Disorder” Family Nature Clubs are developing all over the world. Here in Cambria I began with workshops for adults before starting the Nature Club. I am very excited that we are attracting all ages as we can be a true “village”.

### How many kids and adults per session?

As word of the Nature Club spreads, we seem to be attracting more young families. Our last meeting included 7 adults and 7 wonder-filled children ranging from 2 to 13 years of age. I like the challenge of providing something for every age and this happens quite easily in a natural setting... people gravitate towards what interests them. In July, we explored the Greenspace Creekside Reserve focusing on closely

observing details of the environment with magnifying glasses. We overturned rocks in the creek to discover what lay underneath, tasted anise, and experimented with the patterns that rocks made when tossed into the creek. We listened with a stethoscope to the trees drinking.



A young Nature Club member takes a closer look at a toyon bush.

### What do you talk about?

I feel that my role as the facilitator is to lead participants to construct knowledge by asking appropriate questions about what we are discovering. For example, on discovering an animal track, I might have us ponder “What size animal? Which way was it traveling? Fast or slow? What do we think it was doing? Where did it go next? Where is it now?” I believe that by asking questions instead of just giving an answer leads to a more stimulated brain and a deeper connection and understanding of nature.

### Where do you go?

We meet at various locations around Cambria. We have explored San Simeon Beach, San Simeon Point and the Creekside Reserve. Our next meeting will be on Sunday August 19th from 3-5 in the afternoon and we will meet at San Simeon pier and build ephemeral nature designs together using sand and other beach items.

### How many miles do you walk?

We have a slower pace than hiking groups because the focus is on the experience rather than distance. This opens our meetings to more young children and nature loving adults who may not be able to walk far.

### **What do the kids learn?**

My hope is to instill a real sense of wonder in children. Helping them discover the wonders of nature will lead to future stewardship. With the excitement of discovery, we can lead children through a process whereby they seek and acquire knowledge and a passion for life long learning.

### **What is the take-away message for parents?**

Well...the same that is good for children is also good for adults. I think that we all could benefit from slowing down and spending intentional, quality time in nature. Indeed, doctors all over the world are beginning to prescribe time in nature to help treat high blood pressure, depression, and other health issues. I encourage the adults to follow the pace and interests of the children to rediscover their childhood fascination with the natural world. For the adults I also like to include good conversations.

### **Does it cost anything?**

The Nature Club is free to everyone. I volunteer my time because I am passionate about the value of deeper nature connection. I also benefit from the time spent together as it increases my own Vitamin N (Nature), and I enjoy sharing ideas with adults and children.

### **What should the participants bring with them?**

Wear comfortable layers suitable for exploring outside. A snack and water is a good idea. I encourage those interested to be on the Nature Club email list and a week before the 3rd Sunday I send out an email with details of where to meet and what to bring.

### **Can parents and kids attend more than one event?**

My intent is for this be an ongoing group of people that get together monthly to explore deeper nature connection together. Come and check it out and see if it suits you.

### **Is the program open to all ages?**

Yes. I like the idea of a multi age group and that is sometimes a challenge in Cambria. The village concept where each age group has something to contribute intrigues me. I definitely identify with the

role of the “elder and mentor” and I am refreshed by what the younger participants have to offer.

### **To join Greenspace’s Nature Club:**

Contact Sue Davis at [mdavis5855@gmail.com](mailto:mdavis5855@gmail.com) for information and meeting locations. Nature Club takes place the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month from 3-5pm.

## **BOOKS THAT INSPIRE NATURE CONNECTION**

Sue Davis will be at the Cambria Public Library on Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> from 3-4 PM to share her thoughts on how she uses books in an outdoor setting to foster curiosity, creativity, and constructive learning. Event is appropriate for school aged kids to adults.

## **OCEAN FAIR AT SAN SIMEON BAY**

Come join Greenspace at W.R. Hearst Memorial Beach at San Simeon Bay on Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Coastal Discovery Center’s Ocean Fair. There will be activities for all ages, including a special guest appearance by Sammy the Steelhead! Grab some Boni’s Tacos and interact with organizations from all over the county.

## **COASTAL CLEANUP DAY**

Mark your calendars for September 15 9 AM to 12PM when ECOSLO’s 34<sup>th</sup> annual Coastal Cleanup Day kicks off! There are 30 locations to choose from on the Central Coast. Greenspace member Dave Bidwell will be hosting the Moonstone Beach/Santa Rosa Creek/Shamel Park location. Check out the Greenspace Facebook events page or ECOSLO’s website to register at a location of your choosing.

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The North Coast area of San Luis Obispo County is a national treasure. Greenspace will protect and enhance its ecological systems, cultural resources and marine habitats through land acquisition, education and advocacy.