

Discover Nature

Programs and News
from the ODC Network



Winter
2023



The **ODC Network** is a collection of business divisions with the mission to advance outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan.



FREE ADMISSION—Two Locations!

4214 56th Street • Holland, MI • 49423

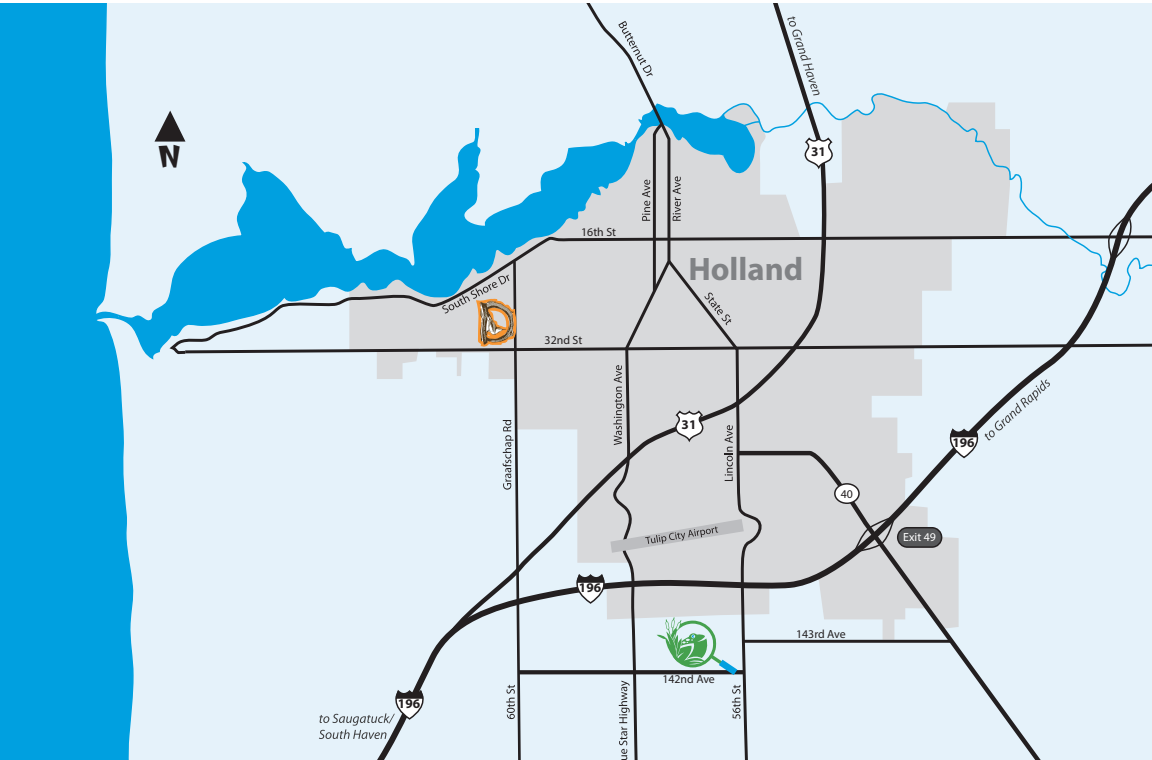


The Outdoor Discovery Center is 155 acres with about 3 miles of trails, located on the south side of Holland, just south of West Michigan Regional Airport. Admission is free! Trails open dawn to dusk—Visitors Center open 10 AM–3 PM, Monday–Saturday.

600 Graafschap Road • Holland, MI • 49423



DeGraaf Nature Center is 18 acres of forest and wetlands located within the City of Holland, just south of Lake Macatawa. Admission is free! Trails open dawn to dusk—Helen O Brower Visitors Center open 10 AM–3 PM, Tuesday–Saturday.



ODC Nominated for *Women of Color GIVE* Grant

This past fall the ODC Network was selected as one of the top five nominees—out of 38 local non-profits—to apply for funding from a Women of Color GIVE grant totalling \$56,000. In December, during a competitive grant pitch night, ODC presented on expanding Indigenous Peoples programming and renovating our Cultural History Center in 2023. The funds awarded to all five nominees in December ranged from \$3,000 to \$25,000—stay tuned for a future announcement of the final award ODC received!



ODC staff and board members at the WOC GIVE Event on October 6th, 2022

and helping address any racial, social or equity gaps.

In the autumn of each year, WOC GIVE members open up their grant application process. Only members, who each contribute to the fund quarterly through their own private dollars, can nominate and vote for an organization.

ODC will use WOC GIVE grant funds to:

- Update the Cultural History Center (CHC) exhibits, artifacts, and replicas through consultations with local Indigenous Peoples
- Expand the youth and adult programming offered at the CHC to elevate the voices of Indigenous Peoples locally
- Cover the cost of transportation for schools so more BIPOC students can engage in the programming offered

Women of Color GIVE is a philanthropic collective of women, from diverse cultural backgrounds based in West Michigan, to support the advancement, development, and promotion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) on the Lakeshore (Ottawa and Muskegon counties).

WOC GIVE is helping to change the charitable giving landscape by adding more diverse voices to the formal philanthropic narrative

ODC recognizes that native communities hold economic, social, and cultural power in all societal contexts, and seeks to grow relationship building and consulting work with local Potawatomi tribes to advance equitable cultural storytelling.

Join us for a Program!

In the following pages, you will find titles or descriptions of our community programs available in the upcoming months. Look for more on our website or Facebook!

Program Locations

Programs may be held at the **Outdoor Discovery Center**, at **DeGraaf Nature Center**, or at **various other parks** and natural areas in our community. Attend programs closest to you— or discover new places in our community. All locations are listed next to the program title—when necessary, the address and details can be found in *italics* beneath the program description.



Outdoor Discovery Center
4214 56th Street
Holland, MI 49423
outdoordiscovery.org



DeGraaf Nature Center
600 Graafschap Road
Holland, MI 49423
degraaf.org



Other Locations
*Addresses listed beneath
program description*

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 <i>ODC & DeGraaf Visitors Center Closed</i>	3	4 Nature for Tykes	5	6 Knee-high Naturalists	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Knee-high Naturalists	14 Birds of Prey Photo Shoot
15	16	17 Explore a Story	18	19	20 Knee-high Naturalists	21
22	23 Homeschool- Winter Ecology	24	25	26 Owl Prowl	27 Knee-high Naturalists Women In Nature Clay Workshop	28 Snowshoe Hike
29	30	31	1	2	3 Knee-high Naturalists	4 Family Ice Fishing

February

5	6	7	8	9	10 Knee-high Naturalists Superb Owl Prowl	11
12	13 Homeschool- Birds	14 Explore a Story	15	16 Snowshoe Hike	17 Knee-high Naturalists	18 Great Backyard Bird Count
19	20	21	22 Nature for Tykes	23	24 Knee-high Naturalists	25
26	27	28	1	2	3 Knee-high Naturalists	4

March

5	6 Homeschool- Maple Sugarbush	7 Explore a Story	8	9	10 Knee-high Naturalists	11 Maple Sugar Time
12	13	14	15 Nature for Tykes	16	17 Knee-high Naturalists	18 Maple Sugar Time
19	20	21	22	23	24 Knee-high Naturalists	25
		28 Nature Puppet Show	29	30	31 Knee-high Naturalists	

Find the right program for you at a glance with **suggested age ranges** at the top of each description. These are flexible with ability and attention span.

Nature for Tykes (ODC)**Ages 2-7**

Bring out your little tykes to learn more about nature. In each program, you and your little tyke will have the opportunity to explore together. This winter we will be learning about tracks and scat, snow, and birds of prey! Please dress for the weather.

Wednesday, January 4 • Theme: Tracks and Scat

Wednesday, February 22 • Theme: Insects in Winter

Wednesday, March 15 • Theme: Birds of Prey

10–11 AM • Registration required • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members



Find more program details and register at outdoordiscovery.org

Knee-high Naturalists (ODC)**Ages 3-6 Drop-off**

Knee-high Naturalists introduces the wonders of the natural world to young children. Crafts, activities, books, snacks, live animals, and outside exploration will be incorporated into their nature-based learning experience.

Parents can drop off their 4-6 year old or stay with the class. Parents or guardians are asked to attend with their 3 year old to help with bathroom use and transitioning into a group learning environment.

Friday, January 13

Friday, February 10

Friday, March 10

Friday, January 27

Friday, February 24

Friday, March 24

10–11:30 AM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child, \$5 for members

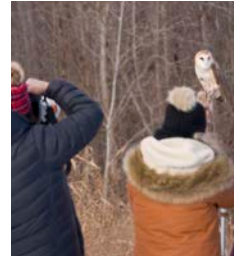
Birds of Prey Photo Shoot (at ODC DeWitt Birds of Prey Center)**Ages 10-99**

For this photography program we will take four of our birds of prey out of their enclosures and perch them on natural branches, trees, and stumps. Then photographers can go wild as they take up close pictures of these amazing creatures. All of the birds will remain leashed throughout the program. This is a great chance to get those close-up shots of owls that seem impossible to get in nature. Registration limited.

Saturday, January 14 • 10–11:30 AM

Registration required • Fee: \$30 per person, \$22.50 for members

Location: DeWitt Birds of Prey Center, 4274 56th Street Holland, MI 49423

**Homeschool Class—Winter Ecology (ODC)****Ages 6-10 Drop-off**

Michigan winters can be hard. Our local flora and fauna have some amazing ways of dealing with our cold temperatures and snow. Some animals even come to Michigan for the winter! Join this program to learn all about our local winter ecology. This drop-off program is geared for home schoolers ages 6 - 10. Please bring a water bottle and a snack. Dress for the weather as the majority of the program will be held outdoors.

Monday, January 23 • 10 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$10 per participant

**2023 Summer Camp Registration Opens February 1**

If you're looking for a fun, adventurous, outdoor summer camp option for your 4-16 year old, look no further! We have 8 weeks of more than 20 half-day camps for various age ranges this summer. Registration opens February 1 at 9 AM!

In January, camp offerings will be listed on our website to give you time to plan before registration. Camps fill up fast so make sure your membership is up to date and you have access to your Doubleknot account before February 1!



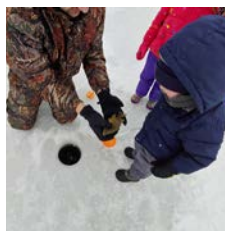
If you have any questions, please contact us at camps@outdoordiscovery.org

Family Ice Fishing (ODC) Ages 0-99

Come wet a line in an ODC pond during this catch-and-release ice fishing day. All materials are provided including fishing poles, tackle, and bait. This is an open format program where visitors can fish as long as they would like. Dress to be outside for at least one hour. Participants will be able to use the Center's equipment up until 12 PM.

Saturday, February 4 • 10 AM–12 PM

No registration necessary • Fee: \$6 per fishing pole, \$4 for members • Ice condition dependent



Homeschool Class–Birds (ODC) Ages 6-10 Drop-off

We're flying with the birds today. We'll be going bird watching around the property with the help of binoculars, observing all the birds at our feeders, and meet some of our resident raptors up close and personal as we study birds at this program.

Monday, February 13 • 10 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$10 per participant



Nature Puppet Show (ODC) Ages 0-7

You're invited to join us for a puppet show! Let's learn about wild animals and their habitat homes. After the show, stick around to meet some live Michigan animals up close. Please dress for the weather.

Tuesday, March 28 • 10–11 AM

Registration not required, but appreciated • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members

Celebrating Ms. Ruth's 20 Years with ODC Network



Ruth Cronk has spent her entire career as a teacher. She retired from teaching in 2001 after more than 30 years in Zeeland Public Schools. By 2002, she was already looking for ways

to help kids learn and found the fledgling Outdoor Discovery Center as a great outlet. Ms. Ruth was instrumental in our first Water Festivals and quickly became a part-time naturalist for us. Her energy, creativity and wonderful way of connecting with elementary kids was a huge part of the growing success in our early years.



One of her key contributions to the organization was in our preschool nature programs currently called *Knee-high Naturalist*. Originally named "Nature School", Ruth, her sister Bonnie Ryzenga, and friend Vicki Miller created a fun class that is the foundation for what is the ODC Preschools. Through creative play, active learning, nature-themed books and highly sought-after snacks, Nature School programs helped us identify the need and demand for more nature-based educational opportunities in our community.

Today, Ms. Ruth is an instrumental part of our Education Network. She works with educators and students to help them incorporate nature-based learning into their normal school day. We couldn't be happier to have Ruth Cronk sharing her years of experience with the next generation of students and teachers.

Thanks for all you do, Ruth!



Knee-high Naturalists (DeGraaf)

Ages 4-6 **Drop-off**

Knee-high Naturalists introduces the wonders of the natural world to young children. Crafts, activities, books, snacks, live animals, and outside exploration will be incorporated into their nature-based learning experience.

Parents can drop off their 4-6 year old or stay with the class. Parents or guardians are asked to attend with their 3 year old to help with bathroom use and transitioning into a group learning environment.

Friday, January 6

Friday, February 3

Friday, March 3

Friday, January 20

Friday, February 17

Friday, March 17

10-11:30 AM • Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child, \$5 per child for members



Friday, March 31

Find more program details and register at degraaf.org

Explore a Story (DeGraaf)

Ages 1-7

It's time to round up the little ones and come to DeGraaf Nature Center for Explore a Story! We'll be introducing kids to the outdoors through books and outdoor adventures. We'll read stories, take hikes, meet animals, and have lots of fun. Dress for the weather because we'll be heading outside to experience the nature around us.

Tuesday, January 17

Tuesday, February 14

Tuesday, March 7

10-11 AM • Registration not required, but appreciated • Fee: \$6 per child, \$4 for members

Great Backyard Bird Count (DeGraaf)

Ages 6-99

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world. A naturalist will be in the Nature Center monitoring the feeders for the duration of this drop-in style program. They will help ID common birds at the feeders and talk about the importance of this annual count.

Saturday, February 18 • 11 AM-2 PM • No registration necessary • Fee: FREE



Sustainability Updates

New Collaboration With Saugatuck

Our sustainability team recently forged a new connection with Saugatuck Township to identify and implement sustainability opportunities in their community. Early efforts of this new partnership include a focus on strategies to improve access and affordability of environmentally friendly services for residents including recycling, composting, and waste reduction.

The team was honored to support township officials as they hosted a community conversation on Single Collection Waste and Recycling Service opportunities. The event, held at Saugatuck High School in October, included back-to-back presentations from our Sustainability Manager, public feedback activities, and opportunities to connect with township officials and local experts.

ODC and township staff were impressed by the turnout and many community members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to ask questions and share their perspectives.

Home Energy 101



We are proud to support the Holland Energy Fund's new Home Energy 101 Program. This initiative is designed to reduce Holland residents' home energy use and utility bills while increasing the value of their homes.

The program begins with a 60-90 minute Home Energy 101 session along with up to \$300 in free energy saving supplies. Sessions are led by trained home energy advisers from local nonprofit partners like ODC!

To learn more or sign up for an education session visit hollandenergyfund.com

Project Clarity Celebrates 10 Years of Water Conservation and Restoration in 2023



Project Clarity was and continues to be a community-wide partnership committed to improving the health and clarity of Lake Macatawa and the Macatawa Watershed.

This project will have a lasting, profound impact on the local economy, environment and community as a whole. Work over the last 10 years has focused on restoration projects, best management practices, and education.



230 projects keeping over 39,000 pounds of phosphorus out of Lake Macatawa each year

290 acres of critical land protected

65 farms committed to best management practices on over 36,000 acres



Restored 3 miles of streams and waterways

7 wetland restorations created 92 acres of new wetland

Over 1 million gallons of stormwater managed using rain gardens and bioswales



77 acres of native plantings



Installed 5 iron slag phosphorus filters at 3 agricultural sites

Over 200 acres treated for invasive species

Constructed 1.75 miles of 2-stage channels

To learn more visit outdoordiscovery.org/project-clarity



Dear Friends,

Since 2000, ODC Network has been the nature-based community destination for West Michigan. Today, the growth in demand has exceeded our current facility limits. To accommodate this need, a long-standing asset to the ODC - Founders Hall - is being replaced to become the new and improved Herb Eldean Education Center. The building is named in memory of my long-time friend and supporter of the ODC Network.

For nearly 23 years, Founders Hall has served as our only dedicated classroom space for thousands of Community members. The new building will provide a newer and bigger space to support the significant increase in program demand, and have the capacity to serve hundreds more children each day; but, we need your help.

A generous \$500,000 lead gift was donated to get the Founders Hall project started. To complete this project, we must raise an additional \$700,000 over the next 6 months to begin construction in the Spring of 2023. Your year-end gift will help close this gap to ensure ODC Network continues to carry our mission forward.

Gratefully, *Travis Williams*



Owl Prowl (Stu Visser) Ages 6-99

Join us as we hike the trails of Stu Visser Park calling for resident owls. Our naturalist will give a brief intro on the natural history of Michigan's owls and then we will head out and see if we can hear any owls living nearby. Dress for the weather!

Thursday, January 26 • 6–7 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township

Program Location: Stu Visser Trails - 929 Ottawa Beach Rd, Holland, MI 49424

**Women In Nature: Clay Workshop (Holland Area Arts Council)** Ages 21-99

Join us at the Holland Area Arts Council for our first collaborative clay workshop! Ceramicists at HAAC will instruct how to make a custom hand-built tray—no prior experience with clay needed! This program is great for beginners as well as seasoned ceramicists. After our workshop, items will stay at HAAC for the drying, glazing, and firing processes; your tray can be picked up from HAAC after 3-4 weeks. Light refreshments provided. Facility is fully handicap accessible.

Friday, January 27 • 6 – 8 PM

Registration required and limited. To register, please email Helpdesk@hollandarts.org, making sure to include the name of this class (Women In Nature – Clay Workshop), as well as your name and contact information

Fee: \$75 per person

Program Location: Holland Area Arts Council, 150 E 8th St, Holland, MI 49423

**Snowshoe Hike (Bysterveld Park)** Ages 0-99

We are partnering with Allegan County Parks to offer a family snowshoe hike. Hikers will explore the trails of Bysterveld County Park in search of interesting animals and plants while walking in wooden, Ojibwa-style snowshoes. The snowshoes are ideal for people aged 8 years and up. Participants are welcome to wear their own snowshoes and bring a sled for little ones to be pulled while hiking. Be prepared to be outside the entire time hiking.

At least 4 inches of snow base is required in order for the loaner snowshoes to be available to the group. If there is not enough snow we will still be leading a winter walk.

Saturday, January 28 • 10–11 AM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Allegan County Parks, Recreation & Tourism

Program Location: Bysterveld Park - 4171 14th Street, Wayland, MI 49348

**Superb Owl Prowl (Sanctuary Woods)** Ages 6-99

Hike the dune of Laketown Township's Sanctuary Woods in search of resident and migratory owls. The group will try to call in Eastern Screech, Barred and Great Horned Owls as they hike. Flashlights are welcome. Dress for the weather! Please note this hike does include approximately 170 stairs up a dune.

Friday, February 10 • 6:30–7:30 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Laketown Township

Program Location: Sanctuary Woods - 4750 66th Street, Holland, MI 49423

**Snowshoe Hike (Dragonflies Discovery Preschool)** Ages 0-99

We are partnering with Park Township to offer a snowshoe hike. Hikers will explore the natural areas surrounding Cooper-Van Wieren Park in search of interesting animals and plants while walking in wooden, Ojibwa-style snowshoes. The snowshoes are ideal for people aged 8 years and up. Participants are welcome to wear their own snowshoes and/or bring a sled for little ones to be pulled while hiking. Please meet at the Dragonflies Discovery Preschool parking lot.

Be prepared to be outside the entire time hiking. At least 4 inches of snow base is required in order for the snowshoes to be available to the group.

Thursday, February 16 • 5:30–6:30 PM

Registration required • Fee: FREE - sponsored by Park Township

Program Location: Dragonflies Discovery Preschool - 30 152nd Ave, Holland, MI 49424

Homeschool Class—Spring in the Maple Sugarbush (Van Raalte Farm)

Students will learn about the early signs of spring such as bird migrations and wildflowers. They will also learn about the parts of a tree and how trees make sap. Students may tap a tree or help gather sap to take to the evaporator. They will also see the evaporator in action and taste the final product!

This drop-off program is geared for home schoolers ages 6 - 10. Please bring a water bottle and a snack. Dress for the weather as the entire program will be held outdoors.

Monday, March 6 • 10 AM–12 PM

Registration required • Fee: \$10 per child

Program Location: VanRaalte Farm Park - 1076 E 16th St, Holland, MI 49423

Ages 6-10 Drop-off



Other Locations

Maple Sugar Time at Van Raalte Farm

Saturday, March 11 & 18, 11 AM–3 PM

This family-friendly event takes place at the City of Holland's Van Raalte Farm where the sap will be flowing and the sugar house steaming! Join us as we tap trees, gather sap, and watch the evaporator boil the liquid down into real maple syrup. There will be lots of activities for the kids and maple snacks available for purchase. *No registration necessary • Fee: \$5 per vehicle*

Program Location: VanRaalte Farm Park - 1076 E 16th St, Holland, MI 49423



Thanks to our
Maple Sugar
Time Sponsor

**MICHIGAN
FORESTRY CO.**

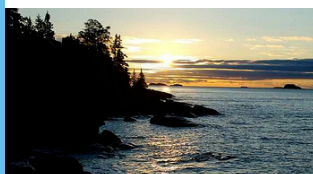
We need volunteers! Please email Mike Graves at mikeg@outdoordiscovery.org



Experience the World with the Explorer Network

What's on your bucket list for trips? We may just be planning to visit a place you have always wanted to go!

2023



Isle Royale National Park • July 2023 | Michigan's only National Park, Isle Royale National Park will be a destination for a small group as they hike and explore this remote but beautiful island in Lake Superior in July 2023. We will stay at Rock Harbor Lodge and take day trips to places such as Scoville Point, Tobin Harbor, Lake Ricki and Rock Harbor Lighthouse as we unplug and take in the island's beauty.

2024

Alaska • June 2024 | On our Epic Alaskan Adventure, you will experience Glacier Bay National Park including the unforgettable wildlife such as sea lion, bears, otters, and many bird species. The next leg of our trip will be to Redoubt Mountain Lodge and Lake Clark National Park to take in the remote beauty of the area. Daily treks may be taken by paddle board, kayak, hike and helicopter to experience this under-visited part of Alaska.

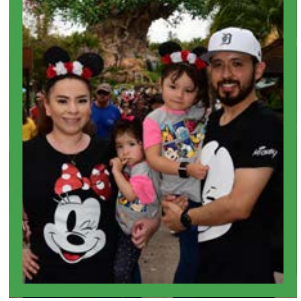


Alaska • September 2024 | In the fall, go on a Coastal Alaskan Adventure where you will see Glacier Bay National Park at the end of the season. The park, Tongass National Forest, and numerous islands will be our focus as we adventure daily with expert, private guides. Sea lions, bears, wolves, otters, whales and numerous species of birds can be found on a trip like this!

To learn more about these and other trips, go to outdoordiscovery.org/explore

Discover Nature • *Descubrir la Naturaleza*

La familia Rodriguez: A bilingual Mexican-American family perspective on nature-based preschool education with Alma Rodriguez, mother of a child currently enrolled at Dragonflies Discovery Preschool.



When did your family first experience nature-based preschool?

“In fall 2021 we had our 3-year-old and 4-year-old daughters at Little Hawks. The girls love playing outdoors, however it was an adjustment dropping them off with new teachers at a new school where we didn’t know the families. My four year old easily bonded with new friends, enjoyed exploring the nature trails, and her love for book story time grew. My three year old enjoyed singing song rhymes and learning about the animals at ODC. This school year we have a kindergartner and our four year old at Dragonflies. The energetic, warm, and welcoming teaching staff influenced our decision to come back for year two.”

What is important for your family when it comes to early childhood care and education?

“In our culture, generational family belonging, trust, and teamwork is important. Us Latina moms tend to be a little more overprotective—that’s why we choose to not take our children to daycare. Many wait until kindergarten to send children to school. There’s a lack of trust when it’s not family. The generational family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins are always involved in raising young children together.

My extended family and I own and work full time at Ramirez Bakery, so we always have to juggle business and family priorities. I’m grateful that the teachers at ODC Preschools have become part of our trusted community to educate and care for my children.”

What did you first think about outdoor learning and how do you feel about it now?

“At first I was concerned with my daughter going outside in all types of weather—especially during the winter when it gets really cold. I thought it meant kids would get sick more often. In my culture we tend to keep children indoors during the winter months or in rainy weather. I was also concerned about the children getting dirty. Now I learned it is good for them to play and get dirty—I appreciate that the teachers

encourage them. My daughters aren’t hearing “no” about messy play time and I hope that is an example for the rest of my family. I like that children learn with all their senses. They are visually learning about the world and exploring it—versus what is taught in a traditional classroom. One thing that helped my children feel comfortable learning outdoors in cold weather are the hand warmers—they loved them! They were also motivated by going on treasure hunts for “gems”.”

Any words of encouragement for families interested in signing up soon for next school year?

“I understand that at first families (with really close bond attachments) might have a hard time with the idea of having their preschooler away from home. However, I found out that the nature-based preschool environment is a good transition because kids naturally want to play outdoors. Kids have more freedom here—

to play, learn, and have fun! The fear of something new goes away once routine sets in—great way to get ready for kindergarten all-day programs. I recommend ODC preschools because there are 3-4 teachers in each classroom—children get individual attention. Other schools are limited in that way where they don’t have enough teachers. Here, all the teachers are highly involved with the kids. I’ve personally seen this in action through the parent classroom volunteer time I’ve participated in. I notice that even on nature hikes all kids are encouraged, even the slower walking ones that get distracted, no child gets left behind.”





Downtown Holland Campus
130 Central Ave, Holland, MI 49423



Outdoor Discovery Center
5678 143rd Ave, Holland, MI 49423



North Holland Campus
30 N 152nd Avenue, Holland, MI 49424

Registration for 2023-24 School Year Opens January 12

Registration for our preschools will open online on Thursday, January 12 at 8:00 pm

Visit our website to learn more about class sessions offered at each location, tuition cost, scholarships and GSRP options, and to add your name to our contact list to receive registration information and announcements via email.

Half-day and full-day sessions are offered for 3- and 4-year-olds at our three locations. Children must be 3 years old on or before September 1, 2023 to enroll in 3-year-old classes, and 4 years old on or before September 1st to enroll in 4-year-old classes.



Scan the QR code for the registration page on our website!

Questions? Please contact the ODC Preschools Chief Administrator
Jayne Schutter
jayne@outdoordiscovery.org

Seedlings Moves Locations to Stow Building Downtown

When our second ODC Preschool, Seedlings, was launched in fall of 2020 our logo was inspired by our nature-based, early childhood education focus. In the 2.5 years since the seed was planted we have established our root system in the community and continue to develop.

We are pleased to share that Seedlings Discovery Preschool has moved into its new location at The Stow Building, 130 Central Avenue. As our Michigan State Tree, the White Pine so aptly illustrates with its adaptable root system, we are proving everyday that nature-based education can flourish anywhere.

For more information please contact Seedlings' site director

Kara Green
kara@outdoordiscovery.org



We continue our mission to provide child development-focused early learning using our city scape and the natural world as our teacher and classroom. We are thankful for our partners who so kindly shared space with us in our earliest stages, Hope College and Pillar Church, and look forward to continued relationships with all our downtown neighbors.

To learn more visit outdoordiscovery.org/preschool



ODC Acquires 300 Acres of Natural Area to Preserve

We have recently completed the largest land acquisition in our organization's history, with nearly 300 acres joining our portfolio of protected natural areas. The property, long known as "The Junction," is located just ten minutes south of our Headquarters at the confluence of the Rabbit and Kalamazoo Rivers. This site is bounded on three sides by the Allegan State Game Area and has had a history of being used as a tree farm and private hunting reserve. Most of the site is located within the floodplain of the

Kalamazoo River, boasting a wide array of rare and threatened flora and fauna. Representing one of the largest tracts of private land along the Kalamazoo River Greenway, we hope to make this site a welcoming space for future generations of hikers, paddlers, and students.

Our team and partners have been working for several years to bring this property to the ODC fold. Funding for the project came from part of the settlement over damages from PCB contamination from upstream papermills. Funding for the project was approved by the Kalamazoo River Trustees, who represent five state and federal agencies tasked with distributing the funds to projects within the Kalamazoo River Watershed that will help make up for the recreational value lost due to the pollutants. We have been especially grateful for the work of our partners at EGLE and the DNR for helping develop and review site plans and guiding us through the approval process for the project.

While we are excited to share the property with the community, it will remain closed to the public for now while we work on several site upgrades, such as upgrading and installing trails, signage, and safety features. Our conservation team will work in the coming years to slowly improve the habitat in some areas of the site. While much of the site is in good condition, we will work to combat invasive species and replace aging, non-native trees from the old farming days with more diverse, native varieties. We will share updates on our progress and let our supporters know when we are able to celebrate a grand opening in person!



Bradford Cultural History Classroom Receiving Updates

Thanks to a generous grant from Michigan Arts and Culture Council, the ODC is implementing Phase 2 improvements to our Bradford Cultural History Classroom.

There are two parts to this phase of the Cultural History Center improvements:

- Cultural programs take place year-round so adding a climate control system to the space will make the building more comfortable for students and visitors regardless of season.
- The other project associated with this phase is the addition of a permanent restroom. It will provide year-round access to bathrooms and drinking water to students and visitors.

Both of these improvements will improve the experience for thousands of guests each year as they learn from our staff or explore the exhibits on their own.



MICHIGAN
**ARTS &
CULTURE**
COUNCIL

Funding by the Michigan Arts and Culture Council includes funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

We appreciate their investment in our efforts to help people learn about Michigan's cultural history.



Thank You to 2022 Businesses Sponsorship Supporters

Support from local businesses, corporations, and families are crucial to the growth and success of our events and programs. Through the Business Sponsorship program, businesses commit annually to supporting the ODC Network's event and program endeavors in a completely customizable manner. ODC Network holds nine large events, numerous

programs and camps, and has scholarship opportunities available for preschool students and campers. Businesses are recognized appropriately and receive additional perks for being a part of this unique program. This year, we partnered with 29 businesses. Thanks to all of our Business Sponsorship supporters!

Thank you to our Investor and Leader Business Sponsors!



If you're interested in learning more about the 2023 Business Sponsorship/ Corporate Partnership program, please contact Ashley Van Zee, ashley@outdoordiscovery.org or 616-368-9289



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