

## What Are ESC Teachers and Staff Doing During the Pandemic?

by Marilyn Gavitt

ESC teachers are heartbroken over not seeing our students. Like every teacher in Martin County, we are changing to virtual instruction. Practicing CDC guidelines and honoring social distancing, staff reports to ESC each morning to take care of our animals and tanks. We spread out in the media center to plan virtual instruction.

Each grade level has a Google Classroom and our entire curriculum has been uploaded for easy access to students working at home. In addition, we are creating multiple "Creature Features"

where the stars of the show are our own animals. Tune into our Facebook page to view. We are also creating virtual field trips for grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 so students can get the field experience from home.

With most of her custodial duties suspended, Joann is working on things she usually doesn't have time for. She stripped the main tank's platform and re-stained it and now she is planting some beautiful native plant gardens around campus. Sheri is on call and doing what she can from home. John is still tending the boat and helping teachers with their virtual lessons. This is all new for us, but we are in this together!

## Thank you for attending Grandparent's Day!



It was a special day in February when a huge group of children brought their grandparents to the Environmental Studies Center to celebrate Grandparents Day. The rain did not keep over 500 people from exploring the Center and enjoying all the activities. Grandchildren delighted in showing Grandma and Grandad how brave they were by picking up hermit crabs and petting Joey the alligator. The Red Door room was a huge hit with all the new interactive displays

of our Florida habitat including touching a rat snake. Everyone enjoyed the delicious brunch and the wonderful storyteller Valerie Baldwin. Thanks go to the ESC staff and volunteers, the EarthSavers Crew and our sponsors Natalie's Orchid Island Juices and Starbucks for making this a wonderful family day. See you next year!



***Please consider leaving a legacy by naming the Environmental Studies Council in your estate plans.***



## The Environmental Studies Council, Inc.

2900 NE Indian River Drive  
Jensen Beach, FL 34957  
Council Office: (772) 219-1887 x 121  
Center Office: (772) 219-1887

### Mission Statement

To protect and enhance the education programs of the Environmental Studies Center and to promote and extend environmental awareness through community education.

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## From the desk of the President

What a season we are in! I hope as you are reading this that we are not all sheltering in our homes, and instead are slowly returning to a bit of normalcy we certainly won't take for granted!

As my term as president comes to a close, I'd like to take a moment to thank you for all you've helped us accomplish in recent years. In only a few years, the Council has been able to:

- Raise funds for a new sea turtle exhibit
- Renovate the Red Door Classroom
- Enhance the Wet Lab and close water circulation to the tanks for the health of the animals
- Sponsor countless students for summer camp
- Provide a four year college scholarship to one student every year
- Fund a full time teaching position at the Center
- Host thousands of families at the annual Open Houses
- Provide the much-loved annual lecture series
- And so much more!

All of this is because of YOU - the supporters of the Center and the Environmental Studies Council. Growing up in Martin County, the Environmental Studies Center shaped who I became as a citizen and I look forward to the day my son attends the Center as well and learns all about the environment we treasure. Especially in these times, when we're forced to slow down and take a step back - we realize just how important it is to appreciate and protect our Earth.

I am very pleased to introduce you to the future face to this space - our incoming president, Kara Muzia. Kara is a marine biologist and a parent, and is also a former student, camper, and camp counselor of the Environmental Studies Center. In great serendipity, she was a recipient of the college scholarship the Council funds each year. I am excited for her leadership and perspective she will bring to the Council as president and know she will have amazing things to share with you in future issues.



Kim Waser Nash (left) with incoming president Kara Muzia (right)

As we enter our summer season a little prematurely, I wish to sincerely thank you all for your continued support of the Environmental Studies Council. The council is proof that a few thoughtful, committed citizens can make great change.

Best wishes,  
Kim Waser Nash



## Brunch With Us - February 29, 2020



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## Lecture Series

Every year for the past 33 years, the Center has hosted incredible scientists and experts in their field to convey knowledge on our natural world to our community. This past January 31st, at The Lyric theater, we spotlighted the founder and Research Director of Wild Dolphin Project, Dr. Denise Herzing. It was well-attended and so informative, giving glimpses of the life history of the Atlantic Spotted Dolphins of the Bahamas. We hope to keep going for decades to come!



ESC is proud to congratulate Rohan Jakhete as the winner of our Science Fair Stokes Award.



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## Biology Corner

**D**id you know you could have an owl nesting in your backyard? Eastern screech owls, fairly common in our area, often are our feathered neighbors without us even realizing it! They inhabit small nooks and hollows in trees, and are often hard to spot due to their excellent camouflaging.

Relatively small in size, Eastern Screech Owls are usually less than ten inches tall, about the size of a robin. Their small stature adds to their camouflage.

Despite their name, screech owls have a pleasant low trill call. The sound carries well through the trees, so keep an ear out next time you're out playing in the yard.

Like many animals, Eastern Screech Owl habitat is disappearing. Fortunately, they do make good neighbors as they'll eat pesky insects and rodents.

If you'd like to play host to an Eastern Screech Owl in your yard, consider installing an owl box. Both pre-made boxes and DIY blueprints are available online.

## Did Your Membership Expire?

**H**ave you renewed your membership to the Environmental Studies Council? We need your support!

To sign up, log on to [www.escmc.org](http://www.escmc.org) or call (772) 219-1887 x 121

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