

Featured Articles



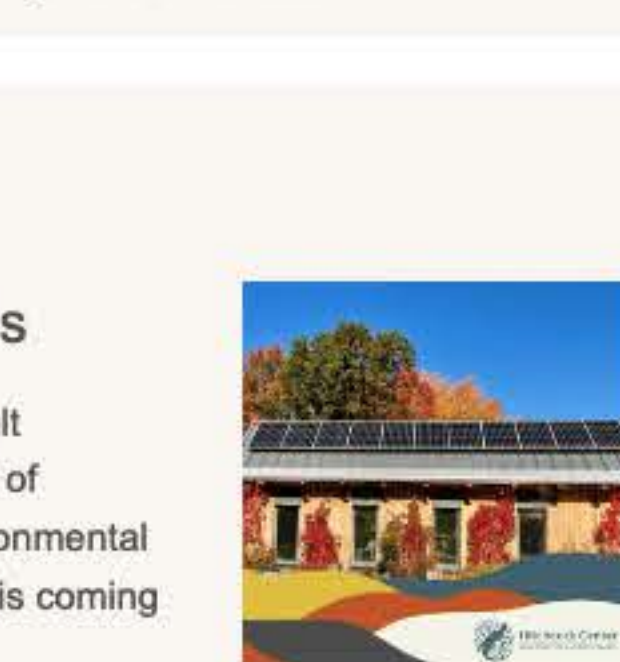
Developing Hopeful, Creative Problem-Solvers
By Billy Spitzer



Hitchcock promotes increased outdoor learning at Northampton Public Schools
By Katie Koerten



Where is the water in Holyoke?
By Monya Relles



Nature, Magic, and the Hitchcock Center
By Natalia Jacobs

Announcements

NEW! Climate Action Series

Our new Climate Action Series is an adult engagement program at the intersection of climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. Season 2 of this program series is coming in 2023! [Learn more.](#)



Heroes Among Us Award

15-year old Ollie Perrault was recognized by the British royal family and the Boston Celtics for her work to fight climate change with a "Heroes Among Us" award! Ollie is the founding member of the local youth-led group Youth Climate Action Now, member of the Youth Climate Summit leadership team, and Hitchcock alum. [Watch her NBC Boston interview.](#)



Thank you for your support!

Here are just a few members of the Hitchcock Center staff to say "THANK YOU!" to all who donated and started a Hitchcock Hero fundraising campaign for Giving Tuesday and support our mission to educate and inspire action for a healthy planet as 2022 came to a close.

Thank you again to [Rare Forms Design/Build](#) for their generous \$3,000 matched gift donation! Rare Forms is a local 1% for the Planet business and the Hitchcock Center is proud to have their support.



In the Community Gallery



Featured artist: Lisa Beskin

When you visit HCE, check out the new photography exhibit by Western Mass artist Lisa Beskin in our Community Room Gallery. Beskin's work looks at some of the natural world's most astonishing secrets; from the hues of aquatic plants, to animals in local lakes.

About her work, Beskin says: "I started taking underwater photographs during the strange pandemic summer of 2020. Mostly unemployed, I was spending a lot of time face-down in a neighborhood lake in Belchertown, breathing through a snorkel and looking through a dive mask. On a whim I bought a waterproof case for my smartphone and began recording that subaqueous world...[Read more.](#)

Upcoming Programs and Events

Second Saturdays

January 14 - Open Saturday hours (10 am - 2 pm) and Saturday Family Science - Join us for seasonal nature and science programs each second Saturday of the month. Designed for children (ages 5-7) with their parents, these programs will explore cool topics in nature. We will be learning while moving, often exploring the woods behind our building. [Learn more.](#)



Third Saturdays with the Animals

January 21 - Come meet one of the Hitchcock Center's animal ambassadors. Designed for children (ages 5-7) with their parents, these programs will include some time with one of the Hitchcock Center teaching animals and a craft. [Register.](#)



School Curriculum Day

January 20 - Come play outside on this day off for Amherst elementary schoolers! Bring a snack, lunch and water bottle and come prepared to play outside, no matter what the weather! *Depending on enrollment, your Kindergarten or 4th grader may be able to join. [Register.](#)



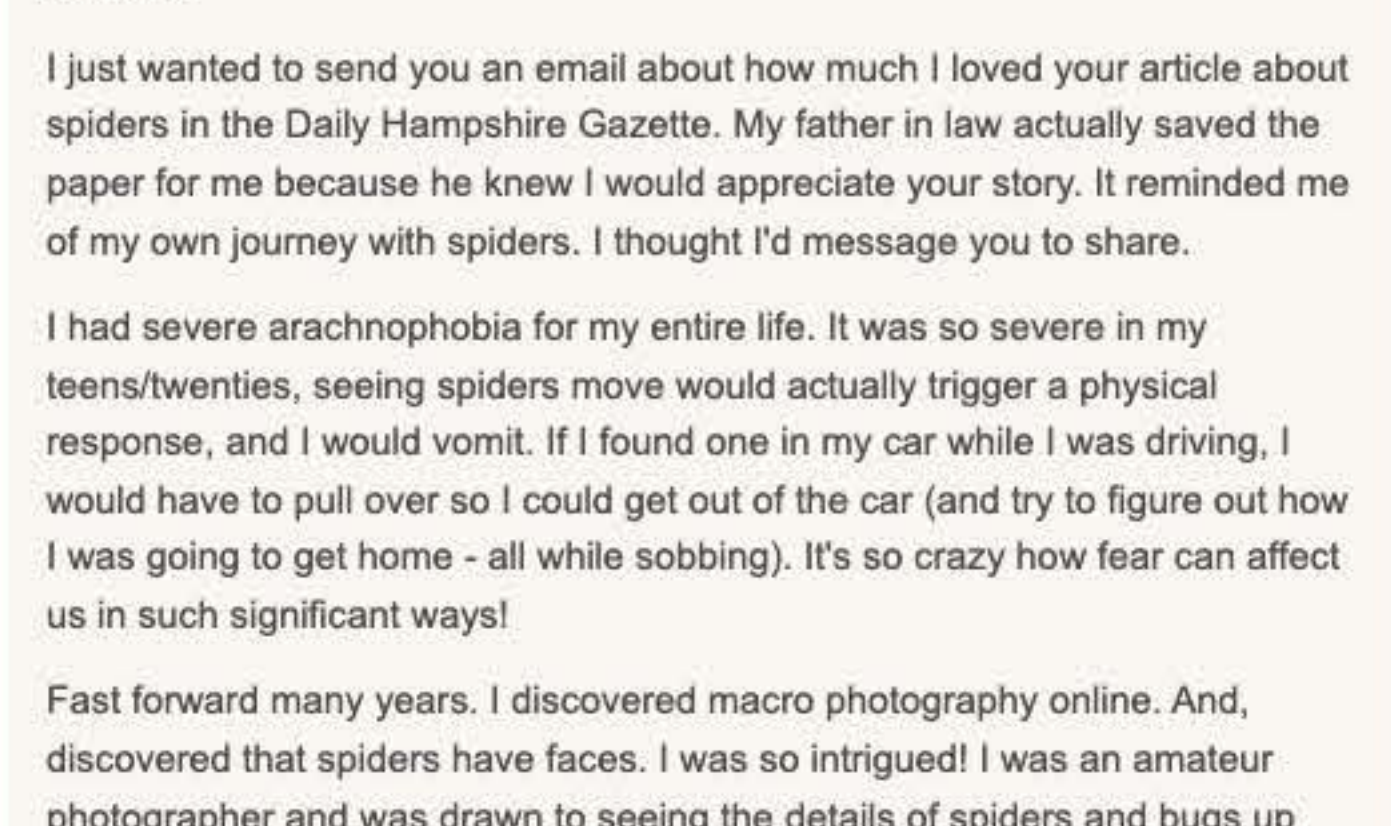
Nature Summer Camp 2023

It's already time to start thinking about summertime child care, and we hope to see your kids at Hitchcock Nature Summer Camp 2023. Registration opens on Tuesday, January 31 at 8:00 PM. [More info.](#)

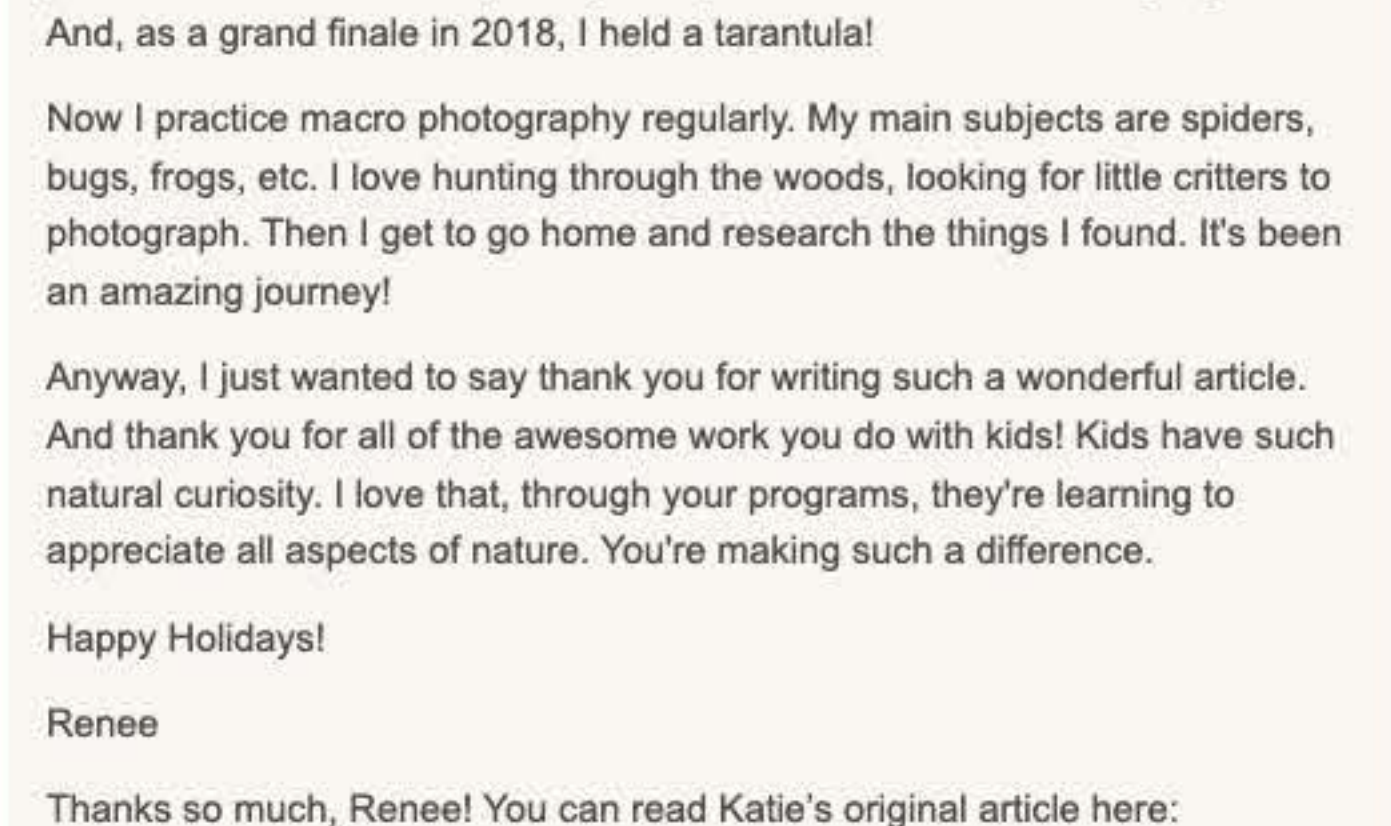


[See more on our program calendar](#)

Social Media Highlights



January 12: Our afterschool students will be sledding today!



December 13: Hitchcock educator Katie's last Earth Matters column was about turning her arachnophobia into arachnophilia, and passing on an appreciation for spiders to her kid and students. Katie received an incredible email from reader and photographer Renee Hill, who used her craft to get over her own fear of spiders.

Renee sent us this recent image she took of a jumping spider along with this email:

Hi Katie!

I just wanted to send you an email about how much I loved your article about spiders in the Daily Hampshire Gazette. My father in law actually saved the paper for me because he knew I would appreciate your story. It reminded me of my own journey with spiders. I thought I'd message you to share.

I had severe arachnophobia for my entire life. It was so severe in my teens/twenties, seeing spiders move would actually trigger a physical response, and I would vomit. If I found one in my car while I was driving, I would have to pull over so I could get out of the car (and try to figure out how I was going to get home - all while sobbing). It's so crazy how fear can affect us in such significant ways!

Fast forward many years. I discovered macro photography online. And, discovered that spiders have faces. I was so intrigued! I was an amateur photographer and was drawn to seeing the details of spiders and bugs up close - details I had never realized were there. But, I was terrified of spiders; which was a problem when trying to get close enough to them to take their picture haha! With the help of my therapist, I started desensitizing myself. And, as a grand finale in 2018, I held a tarantula!

Now I practice macro photography regularly. My main subjects are spiders, bugs, frogs, etc. I love hunting through the woods, looking for little critters to photograph. Then I get to go home and research the things I found. It's been an amazing journey!

Anyway, I just wanted to say thank you for writing such a wonderful article. And thank you for all of the awesome work you do with kids! Kids have such natural curiosity. I love that, through your programs, they're learning to appreciate all aspects of nature. You're making such a difference.

Happy Holidays!

Renee

Thanks so much, Renee! You can read Katie's original article here: <https://tinyurl.com/2yd95yb5>

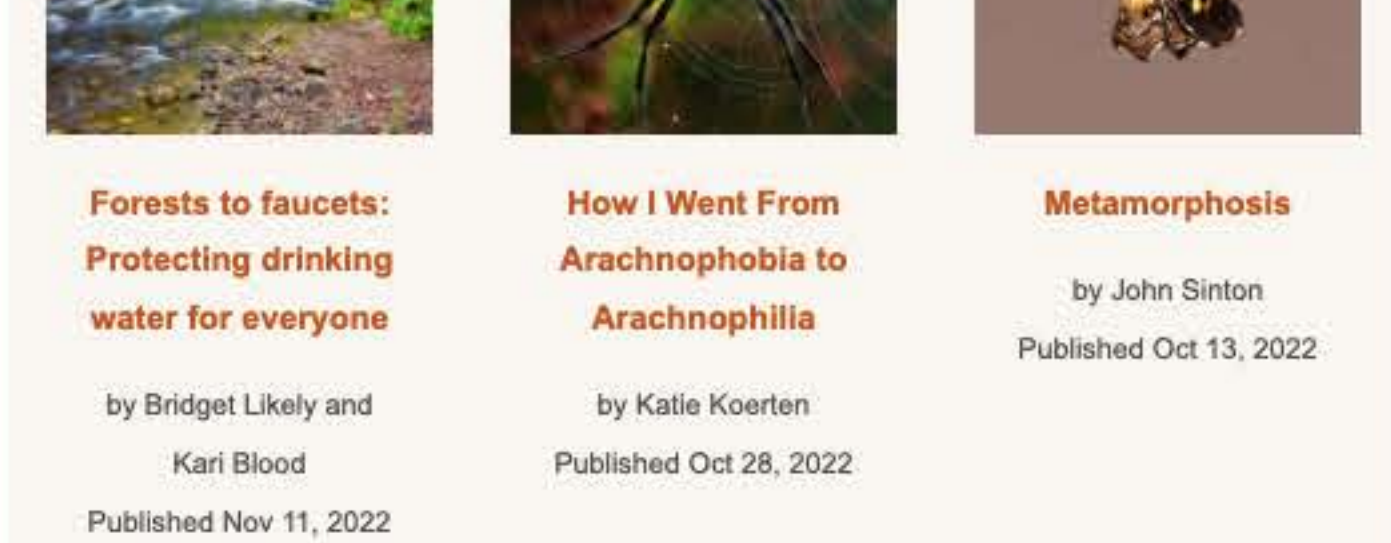


November 23: Our newest youth activists discover Discovery Day, where kids ages 6-12 learned from local activists from Youth Climate Action Now and Hitchcock educator Monya Relles about [#ClimateChange](#) and how humans can hurt and help the planet.

Students learned about youth leaders who are fighting against climate change and did some climate advocacy of their own!

From left to right, their signs say:

- We demand climate justice
- No more gas cars
- Stop chopping trees to the ground
- Do something now!



November 21: Our newest Hitchcock educator Emily Schuttenberg brought stick insects and our three-toed box turtle Ivy to talk about biomimicry and biodiversity with 4th and 5th graders at Deerfield Elementary School's 2022 Math and Science Fest. Thanks for having us, Deerfield Elementary!



October 27: Did you catch this beautiful rainbow over Amherst? Students in our Junior Nature Play Afterschool program pointed and shouted to make sure no one missed it!

[Follow us to see the Hitchcock Center on your daily social media feed!](#)



The Earth Matters Column

Every two weeks for the last 13 years, the Hitchcock Center publishes a column, "Earth Matters: Notes on the Nature of the Valley," in The Daily Hampshire Gazette. Writers include Hitchcock staff and board members, former board members, presenters in our Community Programs series, and friends of the Center.

The Many Lives of Leaves

by Lawrence J. Winship
Published Dec 22, 2022

Why do Animals Communicate?

by David Spector
Published Dec 9, 2022

Long Journey Home: Migrant Birds and Coffee

by Tom Litwin
Published Nov 25, 2022

Forests to faucets: Protecting drinking water for everyone

by Bridget Likely and Karl Blood
Published Nov 11, 2022

How I Went From Arachnophobia to Arachnophilia

by Katie Koerten
Published Oct 28, 2022

Metamorphosis

by John Sinton
Published Oct 13, 2022

[Explore more from the Earth Matters column](#)

[Support Education for a Healthy Planet](#)

MISSION The Hitchcock Center's mission is to educate and to inspire action for a healthy planet.
VISION We envision a world where people, communities and ecosystems thrive.

<p>Hitchcock Center for the Environment 845 West Street Amherst, MA 01002 413-256-6006 hitchcockcenter.org</p>	<p>Hitchcock Center Hours Yard and Trails: Dawn to Dusk Visitor Center and Bathrooms: Monday - Friday 9 AM - 4 PM</p>
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