

veloped from a project by the adults for introducing children to stories about beneficial insects. It resulted in a photo of two participants (Barbara and Anika) appreciating a flower, and a poem, “The Honey Bee” in celebration of bees.

The entry originated from an assisted living facility for seniors during and after a storytime session for a class of preschoolers. The “grandmas” at the facility had been reading stories to the children about insects — to overcome their negative attitudes about insects. The children selected the honey bee as a favorite insect. The original poem and nature walk followed. **Further this entry was chosen for inclusion in a college professor’s upcoming book on intergenerational activities.**

The Honey Bee

Honey bees fly in trees,
And they land on the leaves.
There are many different types~
But most have yellow and black stripes.

Bees make very good honey,
That’s yummy in our tummy.

There’s a Queen Bee, but not a King,
Be careful ~ because she can sting!

They make a buzzing sound,
And can be found all around!

From 2014 for the Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder Contest

1) **Art: “The Red Fox”** painted by Matthew age 15 from the team of Matthew and Mary, his mother. This evocative painting of a red fox traveling out on a winter’s night shows Matthew’s deep passion for



both painting and Nature. It was inspired by a view of a red fox captured in the family car’s headlights. Of it Matthew writes, **“This experience has always stayed with me. Making the painting reminded me of how incredibly beautiful nature is, if you can take the time to admire it.”**

2) **Poetry: “Backyard Wonderland”** by Ana age 18 and Elizabeth, her teacher.

This poetic effort transformed a spring morning in her backyard into a view of utopia. Ana writes, **“It was special working on an intergenerational team because I was able to see how someone older than me views my poetry. [It] really made me put how I felt about nature into words. I had to try and think about the little things in nature that affect me personally on an everyday basis.”**

Backyard Wonderland

A beam of light breaks
through the thick clouds,
Illuminating the colors.
Reflecting the beauty into my spirit
bright green leaves, glossy from the dew
A rainbow of flowers
The maple trees pump out their sweet perfume
Birds chirp,
squirrels race in the branches
When I think of the word utopia,
this is what comes to mind
Complete harmony
Who knew my backyard
was this beautiful?

SUGGESTED PROJECTS FOR CONTEST ENTRIES

Art: Intergenerational Mural or Coloring Pages

A group of students could create a mural in conjunction with an artist and an environmentalist about a special wild natural place associated with Wonder. Students in Maryland created a mural about the wildlife Rachel Carson saw and heard around her White Oak, Maryland home—which she called a place for Wonder. Students in Mozambique created a mural focused on marine life in the sea around them. (Described under 2015 contest winners)

Coloring pages can feature a favorite bird, butterfly or insect encircled by drawings of food sources and habitat.

English: Intergenerational Writing Project (a Poem, or Essay)

The teacher can assign an essay project involving students interviewing parents or other adults about what they have experienced in nature that has generated wonder and comparing the adults’ experiences with their own.

The teacher can assign the students to write about a sense of wonder experience (as an essay or a poem) and have the teacher represent the older generation’s contribution in the form of an editor

History: Intergenerational Time Travel

Students can explore the natural history of a neighborhood (trees, plants, wildlife, etc.) from an earlier time, in conjunction with members of older generations who remember how it used to be and/or from historical records.

Science: This interspecies/intergenerational project could be from the perspective of a wild bird/squirrel/tree/butterfly/other in the student’s neighborhood or state. It could involve working with a science teacher or volunteer scientist.

1 Carson’s best selling books include *Under the Sea-Wind*, *The Sea Around Us*, *The Edge of the Sea*, *Silent Spring*.

2 History of the Contest: The original Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder Contest was created by the US Environmental Protection Agency and run by them from 2007 to 2013. The Contest, with the addition of a secondary option, a “Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild” focus is run by the Rachel Carson Landmark Alliance, a 501(c)(3) educational organization. The Contest now involves adults and children in an intergenerational sharing of nature’s wonders and benefits.

3 In addition to beauty, inspiration, and strength, nature is the basis of our food supply, life support systems (soil formation, clean air) and regulatory systems (climate, disease, water). These essential ecosystem services depend on healthy natural environments and biodiversity to remain functional. Threats to ecosystem services have been linked to human activities (from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). If the loss of plants, animals and their ecosystems continues at the present rate, E.O. Wilson, renowned ecologist, predicts “the world as we know it will unravel.” (Tom Friedman, *NYT*, 9-7-16)

Go to www.rachelcarsonlandmarkalliance.org for reading tips

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The Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder/ Sense of the Wild Contest for 2016

“If a child is to keep alive his sense of wonder... he needs... at least one adult who can share it.”

-Rachel Carson,
The Sense of Wonder



An intergenerational celebration of nature

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Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson, American scientist and gifted writer¹ is credited with launching the modern environmental movement. Carson also is renowned for *The Sense of Wonder* a short book that underscores the value of adults sharing with children the delights found in Nature and of the life-long benefits that can follow. **“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”** (Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder*)



ABOUT THE CONTEST

An Invitation to Teachers,* Parents and Others

Our 2016 Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild Contest² invites intergenerational participation by students and adults under the guidance of teachers, parents and mentors to experience the Wonders of Nature and to communicate the joy that they find there via literature (essay or poem), art, photography, dance, music, or mixed media. The Contest lends itself well to a variety of classroom and family-type projects.

Experiencing Nature’s Wonder

Examples of Sense of Wonder experiences are: Hiking in the woods, watching the night sky, looking for birds, taking a beach walk, listening for frogs, listening for crickets, watching fireflies, watching bees and wasps gathering nectar from flowers, planting a pol-

¹*Contest activities have been combined with existing curriculums by teachers using the RCLA web site for background. Participation should not add to the teacher’s work load.

inator garden, etc. (see *The Sense of Wonder* by Rachel Carson, 1965 for further information)

Students returning from vacations may call on memorable experiences in the natural world as a basis for creative assignments and winning Contest entries. Students without such experiences can be introduced to Nature as a source of Wonder through opportunities to perceive the excitement, mystery and fun that can be found in activities such as those appearing above.

A Sense of the Wild (Our term for Nature’s Services)

The Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild is an optional, secondary/alternative category to the Sense of Wonder, only. It involves the delight of being in Nature (Wonder) expanded to include Nature’s benefits to individuals and to society that can be measured, given monetary values (or determined to be priceless) and that are not man-made. They include pollination, soil formation, water purification and such services as: Bats that can consume up to 1,000 mosquitoes an hour and can eat agricultural pest insects thereby saving farmers billions of dollars (“As Zika fears rise, mosquito-gobbling bats are welcomed” *NYT* 7-5-16), trees that can promote healing when patients’ hospital windows face a view of green branches instead of a brick wall. (See RCLA brochure “Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild” for details)

Awareness of Wonder and the Value of Nature

Encouraging young people to focus on Nature’s Wonder alone or in combination with a Sense of the Wild³ is a worthy goal for educators and parents. **“The more clearly we can focus on the wonders ...about us, the less taste we shall have for destruction.”** (Rachel Carson)

Contest Entry Parameters

Students in conjunction with their teachers, their parents, other relatives, or mentors as part of an intergenerational team of at least two (one older and one younger person) can express delight in and/or appreciation for the natural world.

Entries can focus on either category: “a sense of wonder” only or “a sense of wonder/sense of the wild.”

A Contest entry may be in the form of one (or a combination) of: Essay, poem, art, photo, dance or music.

November 1, 2016 is our tentative deadline for this year’s Contest entries.

Winners will receive a certificate and a special gift. Their entries will appear on the RCLA website.

For details and contest entry form see RCLA web site www.rachelcarsonlandmarkalliance.org

Why is Intergenerational Participation Important?

Older generations with more exposure to Nature can share their positive experiences and encourage younger ones to keep their Sense of Wonder strong. Older generations’ Sense of Wonder can be rekindled through contact with the younger generation. By having fun and working together the generations can learn from each other and inspire each other.

RECENT WINNING ENTRIES

From 2015 for the Rachel Carson Intergenerational Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild Contest

1) **Art: Butterfly Window** (Sense of Wonder category) Created by mother and son team (Theresa and Graham) They started growing milkweed plants for monarch butterflies in their garden and shared information about the monarch migration with neighborhood children. They then became interested in different butterfly species. The mother, an artist, learning of the Contest developed the intergenerational project as an original way to focus on butterflies and share a fun activity with two young boys, Graham and his cousin Gabriel. The boys did free form painting on several sheets of paper. Those sheets were next cut into butterfly shapes by the mother. The boys created the final design on a window frame.



2) **Art: “Tofo Bay Diversity-Celebrating Nature in Africa”** (Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild category) This mural appearing on the perimeter wall of a family’s sea-side home is from Mozambique. The entry came from a team of 47 individuals — school children and local artists to honor World Oceans Day. With 60 individual drawings the mural illustrates the diversity of ocean life. It resulted from a 4-day long joint family-school, intergenerational and inter-racial project. As described by 11 year-old team member, Naledi, **“Students in my school worked with two artists to develop the ocean mural. The adults helped us put the outlines on the wall and we coloured the pictures. After doing the art work we celebrated on the beach with kids from other schools and shared nature experiences with them. It was so beautiful. We live in nature — but sometimes we forget to celebrate it.”**

3) **Mixed media: Photo, “Smelling the Cone Flowers” and Poem, “The Honey Bee”** (Sense of Wonder/Sense of the Wild category). The entry came from a team consisting of some of the oldest and youngest contest participants. They included Barbara (84), Ann (85), Laura (33), along with Anika, Atara, Porter and Noa (ages 3-4). It was de-

