



Volunteer Training--Easy as 1-2-3!



1) Get out on the trails! Sign up to assist on walks and see what CNI's programs are like first hand. (This can be done anytime - before or after sessions 2 and 3)

2) Attend CNI's Introductory Class on Dec 15th at Temescal to find out all about CNI, and learn the preliminary tools you'll need for the trails.

3) Attend CNI's Secondary Class on Dec 15th to gain valuable information about plants, animals and other topics needed for leading nature walks.

For more information or to register, please contact us at 310-860-9484 x102 or email volunteer@CNI-kids.org

There will also be a January 15 class at FRANKLIN Canyon!

Please forward this info to your friends and family!

Save the Date--A Party for You!

Join us for fun, food, merriment-and recognition!

CNI is honored to have each volunteer's involvement and would like to honor you with a Volunteer Party Saturday, January 24 at 2PM. We'll meet at the beautiful home of docent Mel Kay.

For more information or to RSVP, please call 310-860-9484.



90 Second Enrichments

Keep an eye out for additions to the weekly emails that help us learn more about **seasonal changes**. This will be an exciting addition and should be a help to docents and nature enthusiasts alike!



Ring! Ring!



We'll be instituting some changes to the Volunteer calling policy. **Lead volunteers will be making occasional phone calls** to support the Volunteer Program. You can still contact appropriate CNI Staff (see below), but you will be hearing from fellow Volunteers.

Your Contacts

Please call **Tonya** for walk information and to sign up.
Call **Melanie** if you experience on-the-walk emergencies.
Contact **Allison** regarding other events.

All three may be reached at 310-860-9484.



Butterfly Garden Watering Party



Stay tuned!

In January, CNI will host a Butterfly Garden Watering Party to check on the success of our butterfly garden! All volunteers will be invited to attend.

Urban Nature Week: We thank you!!

Wow!

You all did such a wonderful job making Urban Nature Week such a success.

THANK YOU for your hard work, diligence, and support of CNI in such a wonderful way!



New Opportunity



CNI is now opening up **Urban Nature Hunts** (the newest component of our Outreach Discovery Program) to volunteers!

Become a Nature Hunt Leader and **teach children how to identify signs of nature in urban environments.**

Please call the office if you're interested!

In the News

CNI was recently featured in a wonderful LA Times article!

Enhancing education through nature

The Children's Nature Institute's directors are anticipating a difficult year because of decreased funding from major donors who have been affected by the economic crisis.

By Scott Gold
November 23, 2008

When Matt Kamin took over as executive director of the Children's Nature Institute in April, he knew he was stepping into an important role. But he didn't understand the true effect of the institute's work until a few weeks later, when he found himself rumbling down the 10 Freeway with 60 rambunctious children from Boyle Heights.



"They were all screaming," Kamin, 32, said with a smile on a recent morning. "You know how it is -- madness."

Read the [complete story here](#).

Docent leading Docents



We can all learn from each other. Consider sharing your "trail tricks" by **leading a walk just for other docents** so they can learn from you!

Call CNI or [e-mail us](#) if you'd like to lead a "Docents Leading Docents" walk.

Grandma Bette's Corner

A Two Hour Walk with Grandma Bette
By Bette Simons



Often, it's a boy who wants to get ahead of me as I lead a string of first graders up a hill in our California chaparral forest. I use my firm voice acquired during my younger days as a teacher to stop the renegade from passing me. Then I like to say, "Do you want to be the leader? That's

great! Maybe you will be a wonderful leader some day. But first you must learn how to follow."

As a grandma, I move slowly, but that is entirely appropriate when **learning from the great outdoors**. It proves helpful when teaching young visitors the value of being still for observation.

The Children's Nature Institute, located in the Santa Monica Mountains in Southern California, is a nonprofit organization that teaches schoolchildren about the local mountains that are so close to their urban home. If 75% of the children at a school are on the free lunch program, the Institute gives the kids, their teachers, and their parents a free bus ride and field trip to explore the area. We are a collection of nature experts, child care professionals, and young-to-old volunteers, happily welcoming bus loads of students to the particular park site that has been chosen for them.

Many of these children have never been in the mountains before; they have never before left the inner-city chaos, pollution and concrete. Prior to their trip, our Wonder Mobile visits their school and introduces them to a bevy of items to prepare them for what they might find in nature's playground. From animal skulls to stuffed birds to tarantulas, they are intrigued and eager to see more.

No child thinks of asking if we will see a shark in a stream or Big Foot on the trail. They are thrilled enough to **spot a red tailed hawk, darkling beetles, spider webs, and a packrat's nest**. They are satisfied after learning how to identify our great trees, kiss their hands to talk to the birds, and rub a leaf of sage to release its smell.

One day, I suppose I will have to turn in my old hiking boots and stop volunteering. But I know that the children I've walked in front of will someday be leaders themselves, teaching others about the wonders of nature and how to care for it.

How glorious a greeting the sun gives the mountains! ~John Muir