2016 Annual Report
A Year of Bringing us Closer to Nature

The call of the wild is present in us all. Our vision at Imago, is to make it possible to heed that call. As we spend time in nature we nurture a desire to make our lives greener. In nature, we find the motivation to do something about that wild thing that we care about. So for Imago, it’s vitally important that we all have a chance to have regular time in nature. Time in nature is an incredibly important motivator for living environmentally friendly lives.¹

The time that we spend in nature not only helps inspire us to become environmental citizens, it also acts as an amazing elixir. Science has shown time and again, that when nature is in our lives, we are happier and we are healthier.²

The relationship that we have with nature is reciprocal (as all good relationships should be). Nature gives us fuller, richer lives, and in turn we are inspired to live in a way to ensure that she can be around for us all, for generations to come.

For these reasons, bringing our program participants closer to nature is a critical component to all of Imago’s work, and this thread is woven into the fabric of all of our programs and offerings. Each of our programs feature key components to make the most of our time in nature together.

**Regular Experiences** - Any time in nature is good, but more time is better. Regular time in nature allows our program participants to truly benefit from the gifts that she has to offer.

**Accessible** - If one component is regular time in nature, then it stands to reason that we should make nature as accessible as possible. For this reason, we manage a FREE urban nature preserve, three miles from downtown Cincinnati. For our school partners, we make sure that many of our programs take place in nature at the school, so that it feels that nature is just around the corner, and not something that is only to be had on a few special occasions a year.

**Wonder and Exploration** - Our camps and hikes are designed to be fun and memorable experiences, full of exploration, discovery and inquiry. We want to make sure that nature is not just something to be admired, but something to be explored, investigated and enjoyed.

Over the next few pages, take a look at what we accomplished in 2016, and see all the ways that our programs help bring us closer to nature, and heed the call of the wild.

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Connecting Urban Youth to Nature

430 students | nearly 500 lessons | over 13,000 collective hours in nature

Imago’s signature programs provide ongoing, regular outdoor experiences for young people who don’t normally have access to nature. We work with partners to bring their students outside AT THEIR SITE - helping to make nature feel close to home. All while reinforcing classroom education with hands-on learning.

“Last fall, many of the lessons in the school garden focused on eating the food we grew. Our garden had several robust basil plants and we spent a week making pesto with all the first, second and third grade classes. Most students had never tried pesto, let alone basil. After picking the basil the students practiced crushing the leaves with garlic, salt and olive oil with a mortar and pestle. We sang a song to help ourselves remember the ingredients. Looking at the green paste, there were quite a few ‘ewwws’ and disgusted faces, but after tasting the pesto they made, the ‘ewww’ excitedly changed to ‘yum’ and ‘more’.

Weeks later in a lesson about seed dispersal, Davian raised his hand at the very beginning of the lesson and asked if we could sing the pesto song. I saved some time at the end and we started into the song. I didn’t even need to remind them of the words. They were all together singing, remembering the pesto they helped to make and the basil they helped to grow.“ - Ellie Falk, coordinator for programs at Pleasant Ridge Montessori

Spring Open House with Doug Elliott

March 5; 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Nationally recognized storyteller, Doug Elliott, brings folklore to life with stories, songs and laughter about the animals and plants in our area. Afterwards we’ll share some of Imago’s successes from this past year, and look ahead to 2017. Please RSVP (513) 921-5124; office@imagoearth.org
Summer Camps

9 Weeks of Summer Camp | 120 campers | $4,575 in scholarships awarded

Imago’s summer camps give our campers an opportunity to create lifelong memories in nature. Each week is filled with exploration, hikes, activities, arts, games and discovery. Our campers have a chance to really get to know the woods and trails at Imago, and learn the ways that we are all dependent upon nature and how we can live in harmony with the natural world.

My favorite part of summer camp was seeing the enthusiasm in the little ones that were hearing the story of the Lorax for the first time. I was shocked that they could ‘get it’ at such a young age. They kept running around saying ‘I speak for the trees’ “- Samantha Abney, summer camp intern

Workshops and Events

19 Different Workshops and Events | 597 Participants

From our urban hikes, to our Day in the Woods celebration, Imago’s workshops invite us to spend time outdoors and celebrate nature.

“I loved our hearty group of hikers for our Winter Urban Hikes. It was the coldest day of winter, and yet we all happily hiked on from Over the Rhine across the river into Northern Kentucky. Going up the hidden steps, filled with snow to the top of Devou Park was incredible” - Danny Korman, owner Park + Vine
Imago’s Earth Center is an oasis of green in the middle of the city. It offers a home to numerous animals and plants, and at just 3 miles from downtown Cincy, a place to easily get into nature while staying close to home.

“On one solo hike in the fall I remember walking on the path close to the Imago building and could hear an owl calling and as I came closer to the sound, I saw a barred owl in a tree to the left of the path on a low branch. It seemed as if it was only about ten feet away from me. I stopped to observe it for a minute or two and the experience was absolutely magical. It was just me and the owl having an interaction in the woods. We look forward to every hike that we take in the woods and love living so close by.” - Kim Brown, neighbor

“Latin@ kids in the neighborhood LOVE coming to Imago! Just being able to hide and jump out, climb on fallen trees, looks for animal tracks; are all activities they can rarely enjoy and Imago provides so many joyous opportunities. Mud, glorious mud! Water! I have never seen anyone get as much pleasure out of the tiny pond! Once when some children were hiding, they found a box turtle, which was also a revelation, not just its existence, but that they themselves found it, it wasn't in a cage somewhere. “ - Nancy Sullivan, neighbor

Our seasonal rituals are among Imago’s original programs and are rooted in celebrating nature and the Earth. Each ritual is a study on how other cultures marked significant Earth events like Solstices and Equinoxes. Then we offer ways for us to share in the wonder that is our planet traveling through the cosmos. For our participants, the celebrations provide a sense of connection, inspiration and renewal.

“This year, we gathered for our Winter Solstice Celebration on a cold late December evening at Imago. We were joined by folks of all ages and spiritual perspectives in a common acknowledgement of the arrival of Winter and the darkest night of the year. As we settled into the quiet nature of this particular ceremony, it was clear that each person present remembered that ancient human knowledge that Winter is sacred. Winter asks us to go inward, to tap into the silence at the center of our beings, to settle down and let ourselves become real still. We breathed together, prayed in our many different ways, and enjoyed the rare opportunity to find a simple quiet moment in the hazed rush of the holiday season. This simple way of being in community is one of the many things that I treasure about Imago.” - Amy Tuttle, Imago board member
2016 Contributors

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Jane Baker
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Fritz and Mary Jo Bazeley
Brian Belkin and Meredith Leahy
Jerry Bellas
Judith Blackburn
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Joseph Carroll
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Jeff and Sandy Wohlfrom  
Xavier University, Dorothy Day Center for Faith and Justice

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Kennedy Heights Arts Center  
Great Parks of Hamilton County  
La Petite Salon  
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Suellyn Shupe  
Susan Ingmire and Lynn Hailey  
Terry Vance  
True Reiki  
University of Cincinnati CCM  
Warsaw Federal  
Wendy Herrmann
2016 Financials

Income in 2016 - $130,322

- Contributions 47%
- Grants 35%
- Programs and Earned 17%

Expenses in 2016 - $117,363

- Programs 60%
- Operations 18%
- Administration 17%
- Land and Site 5%

Contributions 47%

Grants 35%

Programs and Earned 17%

Imago

nature • sustainability • community

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