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WELCOME NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Cultivating understanding and long lasting desired impacts through intentional discourse on early childhood environmental education

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We gaze with constant amazement and wonder at the biological diversity that surrounds us, and our spirits are continually uplifted. We have gained much by observing nature, intensely enjoying and learning from nature's magic. We nurture an art of patience, wrestle with and overcome fears imagined, and embrace both solitude and company of others in the presence of nature. Each of us, in our own way, have taken action to protect and restore lands and waterways and the great variety of life that it supports. We are passionate about extending these learning and transcendent experiences to the youngest of our children, sparking a hope in them of a strengthening regard and love for the natural world.

It was this very hope for the children that sparked our idea for the journal, in germination for more than a year, as our thoughts clarified and became more defined. Then the effort took off rather quickly, with the very willing assistance of those whom we asked to join in the effort - the consulting editors, NAAEE leaders and staff, and countless others who provided encouragement, ideas, and referrals. It seemed as if everyone were waiting for just this opportunity. Just prior to the 2012 Annual Conference of the NAAEE, the decisions and processes fell in place quite easily and logically - a deadline for the first issue was set, protocols were created, templates designed, and announcements and strategies to spread the word about the journal was developed and implemented.

Vision

We envision the journal will serve as a forum to (a) encourage thoughtful sharing of information about important concepts, epistemologies, frameworks, research methodologies, and guiding values, as well as effective practices and policies in early childhood environmental education, and (b) reach an extensive global readership in order to maximize the impact of the thoughtful information. Avenues for the sharing of information may be book reviews, descriptions of educational approaches and programs, research investigations, and development or interpretation of theoretical perspectives. Associations among and between the following variables will be of great interest:

- Young children
- Family circumstances
- Community opportunities
- Policy mandates or recommendations
- Environmental activities, education, or experiences
- Mechanisms or processes related to knowledge acquisition
- Attachment or maintenance of affective dispositions
- Abilities, behaviors, or skills development related to good decision making in a range of environmental contexts;
- Cognitive, economic, and social influences or impacts; and
- Assessment and evaluation methods.

Original research investigations are especially needed. Towards that end, we hope the journal will serve as an important medium in (a) encouraging quality research and thinking, and (b) contributing both conceptual and methodological innovations to the body of literature. Studying the complexities among environmental and social systems, and making links to policy and practice at multiple levels that are most appropriate for young children is the intention.

Core values

At the core of our effort is the development of a worldwide community of learners. We would like everyone to be involved. Translations of articles in other languages are encouraged, and resources in assisting authors with translations in both directions will be sought as we progress. This is also the reason why the journal is available for free to the global audience.

We value a process that will nurture authors. While a rigorous process will be applied in the review of submitted manuscripts, our reviews will be constructive,

providing authors detailed and specific instructions in improving the submissions until it is fit for publication.

We believe this journal can be an important conduit in promoting inclusion of all children and people, social justice and tolerance, and selflessness in service of others. These themes are natural overlaps in early childhood environmental education. Written work addressing intersections with the aforementioned themes will be especially appreciated.

And, finally, we want to support all in reading, reflecting, and engaging in discussions about early childhood environmental education. We believe parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, policy-makers, advocates, and both public and private organizational leaders can all nurture understanding and ultimately the positive impacts that we wish to see. Towards this end, we intend to promote written work that emphasizes practical suggestions that affect multiple domains, levels, professions, sectors, and systems.

Concluding remarks

We welcome you to read this inaugural issue and we welcome you to join in our effort in promoting effective early childhood environmental education. Please join us in contributing your written work, assisting to spread the word about this journal, and taking steps in promoting effective early childhood environmental education practices at all levels.

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