

## Welcome to LINKS!

We are pleased to inform you that your child, and his/her class, is participating in the 2011-12 LINKS program: "LINKS: A Quality Interdistrict Cooperative Program for 4<sup>th</sup> grade". LINKS is funded in part by a CT Department of Education grant from the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Program. This unique program serves as a regional initiative designed to bridge an understanding between students and educators in neighboring communities. Throughout program sessions students will explore issues of diversity and interrelationships on natural, ecological, and cultural scales while studying forest, field, and pond habitats amidst the Nature Center's 40-acre nature sanctuary!

LINKS program fees, school-day transportation, and Norwalk afterschool transportation costs are covered by the grant. All participating classes in your child's school have been paired with partner classes from a school in a different district. This year the New Canaan Nature Center is proud to pair up sixteen 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes from New Canaan Public Schools with fourteen 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes from Norwalk Public Schools for our 18<sup>th</sup> year of this unique program.



Partner classes will participate in a series of educational programs led by New Canaan Nature Center staff. The first School Day Session occurs during the last two weeks of September. Session 2 & 3 will occur later in the school year during early and late spring, respectively. Themes for these sessions are outlined below.

- **School Day Session 1: Habitat Study Basics & Becoming a Scientist – Welcome to your World!**
- **School Day Session 2: Pond Taxonomy – Classifying your world!**
- **School Day Session 3: Habitat Hypothesis & Spring Study – Making Connections in your World!**

Partner class teachers may supplement these environmental education activities with other interactive experiences during the school year and student partners will communicate between sessions via letters and/or school e-mail.

Students will also have the opportunity to attend various non-school day programs as part of LINKS. These programs will reinforce school day lessons and concepts in a fun and interactive manner that students will not want to miss! Parents are encouraged to attend as well on Saturdays. These weekend sessions are an amazing opportunity for students to bond with one another alongside their families and teachers outside the classroom! Themes and dates for these non-school day programs are found below. Please note that limited transportation will be provided for Norwalk students to attend the afterschool series.

- **LINKS Kickoff – Opening your World!** (October 22, 2011)
- **Adaptations and Ecosystems Afterschool Series – Change in your World!**
  - November 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>
  - March 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>
- **Winter Investigation Day** (February 17, 2012)
- **LINKS Stewardship Day & Finale – Caring for and Celebrating your World!** (May 19, 2012).

Details regarding these non-school day programs will follow in October along with RSVP forms to confirm your child's attendance. These sessions are designed to augment the state-mandated minimum program hours for LINKS and provide a fun and educational out-of-school component to the program so please do what you can to keep your child's schedule open for these events.



# New Canaan Nature Center

144 Oenoke Ridge  
New Canaan, CT 06840-4198  
Tel (203) 966-9577  
Fax (203) 966-6536  
[www.NewCanaanNature.org](http://www.NewCanaanNature.org)



We appreciate your assistance in *filling out the attached Emergency Release & Information Form*. By filling out the form you will be affirming your involvement with LINKS and providing us an extra avenue through which to keep you informed about upcoming LINKS happenings. Please return forms to your child's teacher by October 7<sup>th</sup>. All students who wish to participate in any of the non-school day LINKS programs must have a completed and signed Emergency Release Form. Please note all afterschool and Saturday programs are executed by the New Canaan Nature Center as voluntary extension programs and are not considered school programs.

**Please return all LINKS Emergency Release & Information Forms  
to your child's teacher no later than Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.**

The New Canaan Nature Center welcomes your comments and feedback on this innovative program initiative. Please visit our website at [www.NewCanaanNature.org](http://www.NewCanaanNature.org) for more information regarding LINKS. Attached please find the above mentioned LINKS Emergency Release & Information Form as well as additional information on LINKS and its history. Thank you for supporting your child's participation in this year's LINKS program and once again –

**Welcome to LINKS!**

Sincerely,

Geoffrey McCann  
LINKS Coordinator  
[gmccann@newcanaannature.org](mailto:gmccann@newcanaannature.org)  
(203) 966-9577, x38