



# More Space to Grow:

## Support The Arboretum Nature Centre

Help renew a  
community-rooted  
space for learning,  
connection and  
discovery



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GUELPH**



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space for learning, connection  
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The Arboretum was imagined long before the first trail was cleared. A planning committee was formed in 1964, and by 1970, a master plan was in place to create a space where people could learn from the land and reconnect with the natural world.

Since 1978, The Arboretum Nature Centre has quietly shaped how thousands of people experience nature—not just by teaching them that it’s important, but by helping them understand why. This is where curiosity is sparked and meaning begins to form.

This beloved Guelph landmark has become a place of firsts. It’s where a child sees a garter snake for the first time and reaches out instead of recoiling. Where schoolchildren first learned the word “pollinator” before it entered everyday vocabulary. Where Canada’s first pollinator garden was planted, beside the country’s oldest wildlife garden. Where a tiny chickadee, banded right here, is among the oldest ever recorded in Canada.

And it is surrounded by one of the few forests in southern Ontario that has never been clear cut—a rare, living classroom *inside* a university campus.

# A Loved Space Showing Its Wear

Since 1978, the Nature Centre has welcomed thousands of students, educators, families and visitors. And like any educational space that has been well used and deeply loved, it is no longer keeping pace with the demand or expectations of today's learners:

**X** The heating system still runs on oil and is well past its prime.

**X** Bathrooms and classroom layouts are outdated and not fully accessible.

**X** No internet

**X** Limited space prevents us from expanding programs or hosting larger groups.



These limitations directly impact how many people we can serve, and the quality of experience we can offer. Critical, needed updates will ensure The Arboretum Nature Centre can deliver the high-quality, nature-based learning experiences that our community needs now and into the future.



**“You can’t just tell someone that nature is important—you have to let them touch it, hear it, experience it. That’s what the Nature Centre does.”**

*Cathy Alex, long-time Nature Centre educator and daughter of Arboretum co-founder Dr. Jack Alex*



# A Nature Centre for the Next Generation

With thoughtful, respectful renovations, we can preserve everything that makes the Nature Centre special while preparing it to welcome more people for years to come.

- ✓ Flexible, accessible indoor spaces for classes and community programs.
- ✓ Internet and Wi-Fi to support modern learning needs.
- ✓ A new outdoor observation deck overlooking our old growth forest.
- ✓ Upgraded bathrooms and a more efficient heating system.

These improvements will allow us to expand programming, welcome larger and more diverse groups, and offer a higher quality learning experience to everyone who comes through the doors.





## How You Can Help

To bring this vision to life, the Centre requires \$1.5 million in philanthropic support. This is a rare chance to be part of something lasting and deeply rooted in the Guelph community.

Philanthropic support for the renewed Nature Centre offers a chance to leave a visible and meaningful legacy in one of the region's most beloved natural spaces. Whether it's your family name, your company, or a tribute to someone who inspired your love of nature, each naming opportunity connects directly to hands-on environmental learning and stewardship.

## Key opportunities include:

### The Nature Centre building

The most prominent naming opportunity, located at the heart of the Arboretum where thousands of learners, families, and researchers gather each year.

### The forest-edge observation deck

A high-profile feature nestled among the trees, this deck will be a destination for school groups, community events, birders, and quiet reflection.

### The naturalist teaching office

The hub of the Centre's educational leadership, where programs are developed, students are mentored, and research meets public engagement.

### The new donor wall

A prominent installation inside the Centre, recognizing those who make this vision possible and believe in the power of nature-based education.

We also invite donors to support educational programming. From hands-on school visits to immersive public workshops, such gifts create access for more young people and lifelong learners to experience the Centre's magic.



# Let's Build the Centre's Future, Together

Do you remember your first visit to The Arboretum? Maybe it was a school trip, a tree ID walk, or a quiet moment under the canopy. For many, the Nature Centre has been more than a destination—it's been a turning point. A place where people move from simply knowing that nature matters to truly *feeling* why it does.

**It's where wonder turns into understanding, and understanding into care.**

With the right support, the Nature Centre can reach more people, offer more programs, and create even more opportunities for people to interact with nature in meaningful, lasting ways. It has the potential to influence how people think, learn and act—for a lifetime.

All it needs now are the people who believe in what makes that possible. You can help bring this place to life for the next generation.

To get involved,  
please contact:

**Justine Richardson**

Director, The Arboretum  
University of Guelph

[justine.richardson@uoguelph.ca](mailto:justine.richardson@uoguelph.ca)

(519) 824-4120 x 52356



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