

Earth Day Celebration at the TREE Center

SANFORD - A brisk, damp day on Saturday, April 23 didn't stop anyone from enjoying some time out on the lake and up on the climbing tower at this year's Earth Day Celebration event at the TREE Center in Sanford, Maine. Thanks to its lakeside location and 2.5 miles of trails, the TREE Center made for the perfect place for the community to spend the day in honor of Mother Earth.

In collaboration with Sanford Science and Discovery Center and Wentworth Greenhouses the TREE Center offered a variety of outdoor activities and educational instructions. While waiting to climb the 45-foot Climbing Tower participants created Recycled DIY Chalk Bags and took a Carbon Footprint survey in which they were able to determine how much carbon energy they use on a daily basis. Tips to minimize waste, energy use, and overall better practices for the environment were provided by Rebecca Fisher, Adventure Group Coordinator and Rock Wall Specialist at the TREE Center.

Those who chose to spend most of the day on Bauneg Beg Lake were given free access to the TREE Center's tandem kayaks. Upon returning from a leisurely paddle around the lake, they were greeted with S'mores and a toasty campfire in the lakeside fire pit. Jon Stimmell, Teambuilding, Leadership and Recreation Manager was on hand to help out those new to kayaking. Also set up at the lake was a Water Testing Workshop where participants were able to test the pH balance of the lake and "sift" through the mud on shore for little water critters.

The Sanford Science and Discovery Center provided an educational and interactive indoor activity with their popular Augmented Reality Sandbox. The sandbox allowed children to change the topography of the map by leveling out the sand or creating piles. The topographical map also showed where and how water pools due to run off from higher elevations. It had the parents and the children mesmerized.

Wentworth Greenhouses brought a little color to the overcast event thanks to their generous donation of organic soil, flower and vegetable seeds, and compostable Seed Starter Pots. Children and parents alike enjoyed being able to get their hands dirty and looked forward to watching their plants grow at home.

Community members who were looking for a more leisurely way to celebrate Earth Day took to the TREE Center's 2.5 miles of universally accessible trails and absorbed the sounds of the streams, the beauty of the budding plants, and said "Hi" to a couple squirrels along the way.

The TREE Center is already looking forward to next year's Earth Day Celebration. The TREE Center is a social enterprise of Waban and can be seen at www.treecenter.org.



The Signore family and friends plant seeds in compostable seed starters to "Spring Into Planting" for the Earth Day event at the TREE Center. Photo Meaghan Ayer