



Tenaflly Nature Center Celebrates 50th Anniversary with Gala Dinner & Founders Award Presentation

(Tenaflly, NJ February 14, 2011) – Love to return to nature? The Tenaflly Nature Center (TNC) has been making that possible since 1961 for Tenaflly residents, surrounding area communities and educational/service groups for 50 years. The Board of Trustees is hosting a Gala Celebration marking Tenaflly Nature Center's 50 years of Environmental Leadership at the Clinton Inn in Tenaflly, on March 6, 2011.

Thanks to the group of far-sighted TNC founders, who worked to protect "an Island of Green" in Tenaflly, two generations ago, we have developed an exceptional 400-acre outdoor classroom, actively enjoyed by 23,000 visitors each year," noted Mike Neus. "Our challenge is to keep the founders' vision alive for future generations, providing environmental education and nurturing an appreciation of the outdoors."

The Gala Dinner will include live and silent auctions. Tickets are \$100 per person with all proceeds raised to support TNC's mission of open space preservation and nature, science and environmental education. Aidan Quinn, actor and director, and a local resident, is serving as the event's Honorary Chairman. Classical guitarist Hanan Harchol will provide music for the event.

The Gala Dinner will also include the Founders Award Presentation. TNC will honor past TNC presidents and Alpine's Mayor, Paul Tomasko, will receive TNC's 2011 Founders Award for Conservation. The Founders Award presentation honors individuals who have made sustained contributions to the Tenaflly Nature Center or whose significant efforts have helped to preserve the natural environment in Tenaflly and the surrounding communities. Past recipients include Tenaflly's Mayor Peter Rustin, former Tenaflly Environmental Commission Chair, Byron "Gus" Allen, long-time TNC Environmental Educator, Judith Massey, former Tenaflly Councilwoman Patricia Symonds, 1970s TNC President, Nadine Freiman, and 1960s TNC President, Don Zeiller and his wife, Joyce.

Paul H. Tomasko has served the Nature Center's neighboring town of Alpine 18 years as an elected official and as a member of Alpine's Environmental Commission and Planning Board. He has been a consistent advocate of open space preservation and of environmental protection and sustainability. "Future generations will remember us partly for how we measure up to the environmental challenges of today," he noted.

The Montessori House School, located in Tenafly, is the event's Gold Sponsor. According to Maria Morningstar, Director of The Montessori House school, "With students from age 2-1/2 through 1st grade, our children enjoy Tenafly Nature Center programs each year. Like TNC, The Montessori House School is also devoted to serving Tenafly children and families, and we're thrilled to support TNC as Gold Sponsor of the 50th Anniversary Annual Dinner. I invite other Tenafly businesses and organizations to join us in celebrating this momentous occasion."

For sponsorship and registration information, please visit www.tenaflynaturecenter.org or contact Eileen Pleva, TNC Trustee, at 201-696-8573.

TNC presents classes for K-12 public and private schools throughout New York and New Jersey. TNC has partnered with the Tenafly Public Schools to conduct curriculum-based, experiential programs for 50 years. These programs have helped to shape generations of citizens who care about protecting our local and global environment.

"We are proud of the TNC. Ours was the shining example, and other communities followed with Nature Centers –Closter, Demarest and Englewood. The ecology-environmental awareness is with us now and so much of it has been brought about by the nature centers spread throughout our country -- hundreds of them. ..And, we give grateful thanks to persons like our founding members, for they, at a time when our little Borough in the Valley needed some vision and effort, came forward and provided it." -- Remarks delivered at TNC's 45th anniversary celebration by Don Zeiller, founding Trustee and TNC President, 1965-68.

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**Photo caption:** John Forbes (l) President of the Natural Science for Youth Foundation, and TNC Trustees (l to r), Robert Shull, Mrs. John A. Redfield, Kenneth Gilbert and John A. Redfield, 1971.

