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## High Park Nature Centre fosters safe, valuable outdoor nature connections during challenging times

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**[Toronto, Ontario]** – Amid the rapidly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the [High Park Nature Centre](#) (HPNC) has pivoted to a hybrid programming model to continue fostering safe and valuable nature connections between Torontonians and nature at High Park and beyond.

Based on staff comfort and availability, the number of participants registered in various outdoor nature programs, the public interest shown in them, and the ease of ensuring adherence to various COVID-19 related safety measures, the Nature Centre has decided to offer some of its programs in person with the rest being offered virtually.

“We recognize the need for individuals and families to have some respite during these uncertain and trying times,” said Sara Street, Executive Director of the High Park Nature Centre. “More importantly, building outdoor nature connections have never been more valuable to the public than during the pandemic.”

According to Ontario’s latest public health guidelines, the Nature Centre’s fully outdoor programs are classified as among the least-risk activities for people to participate in. Nevertheless, HPNC has adopted additional COVID-19 related safety measures like limiting capacity, requiring proof of vaccination from all in-person participants aged 12 and older, masking at all times even when outdoors, maintaining physical distancing, and more.

Apart from the HPNC’s nature mentorship program and all nature clubs for those of school-going age and older, all other nature programs will continue being offered as a virtual option at least until January 31.

Despite being virtual, the HPNC takes great care into ensuring that its virtual program offerings are as engaging and meaningful as possible. In the past, participants, parents and schoolteachers have all praised the educational and rewarding nature of virtual nature programs offered during the pandemic.

“The presenters from the Nature Centre were perfect,” said one schoolteacher whose class participated in a virtual school field trip this past year. “We participated in other virtual sessions during school closures, and this was the best.”

Provided the city and provincial guidelines remain unchanged, the Nature Centre will return to offering all its previously scheduled in-person programming with some possible changes in February, contingent on the continued health of staff and their families.

For more information on which programs are currently being offered in person or virtually, please visit the [High Park Nature Centre’s website](#).

**Media contact:** Rohith Rao, Fundraising and Communications Coordinator, [r Rao@highparknaturecentre.com](mailto:r Rao@highparknaturecentre.com)

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The [High Park Nature Centre](#) is a charitable organization that was established in 1999. Our mission is to promote awareness and respect for nature through year-round, hands-on outdoor nature education and park stewardship. Nature Centre programs inspire a sense of wonder, knowledge, and respect for High Park’s natural systems; restore human connections to local plants and animals; and engage visitors in ecological restoration activities to ensure a sustainable future for High Park for generations to come.