



April 17, 2010

Dear Friends,

Each spring the Arboretum undergoes a re-awakening. Trees break bud. Leaves unfurl to begin their photosynthetic mission. Simultaneously our volunteer guides begin their educational mission: inspiring over 500 Vineyard school children with the wonder of nature. And it matters now more than ever.

In an increasingly programmed and electronic world, kids are simply not experiencing nature. The bestselling book *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv, details the staggering divide developing between children and the outdoors. Perhaps, he posits, the alarming trends of childhood obesity, attention deficit disorders, and depression are related.

How will children come to value nature when they have limited opportunities to be *in* nature?

The Arboretum addresses this concern with eight youth education programs where students explore natural science. We have just one part-time staff member and over twelve enthusiastic volunteer guides.

Remarkably, our school group programs are free of charge! We do this as a commitment to our island community and with the knowledge that we are encouraging young people to experience and value the natural world. Recently we received this letter:

“In this climate of funding limits, your free programs and expertise are much appreciated! The Polly Hill Arboretum is a wonderful resource for education—students *and* adults! Betsy Dripps is an excellent teacher who fosters enthusiasm in young children and makes us all want to learn more about nature. Thank you!”
—Judy Baynes, first grade teacher, Tisbury School

We send you this appeal asking for your help to maintain our Arboretum programs as we engage in our important work of connecting people and plants.

Timothy Boland

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Timothy M. Boland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first name.

Executive Director