

MOTHER'S DAY OUT PRESCHOOL Helps Our Community in So Many Ways

By Nicci Sternitzky and the Elm Grove Beautification Committee | Courtesy of Mother's Day Out (MDO) preschool, lead by Tracey Magyar

The soil just outside the front doors to Mother's Day Out preschool is being worked in preparation for those beautiful yellow, black, and white striped caterpillars that have captivated all of us by metamorphizing into the beloved orange and black monarch. For many of us, one of our fondest memories of school is observing monarch butterflies in the classroom and learning about metamorphosis as these remarkable creatures transformed from caterpillars to butterflies right in front of our eyes.

This spring, Elm Grove took the Mayor's Monarch Pledge for the first time. This program began in 2015 to help municipalities in Canada, the US, and Mexico engage in monarch conservation. The program has three levels of attainment: signatories commit to 3 actions, leadership circle commit to 8 actions, and champions circle commit to 24 actions. There have been over 600 communities that have taken the pledge, but only 8 that have earned the highest distinction. Elm Grove aims to become only the 9th in the country to do so.

Mother's Day Out (MDO) preschool, lead by Tracey Magyar, has committed to helping Elm Grove attain this honor by incorporating a monarch curriculum into their teaching AND installing a monarch garden. Tracy, her staff, her students, and Jim, the building's maintenance custodian have already set to work removing three aggressive non-native ground covers from a planting bed in order to fill it with milkweed and nectar sources suited to the beloved IUCN Red List monarch species.

The curriculum offered by the National Wildlife Federation is age based and covers topics from preschool to high school. The students at MDO will use the curriculum to learn observation in the garden, color mixing, and the monarch life cycle. Learning about monarchs at a young age will hopefully instill a sense of awe that will continue and help combat the 85% decline in numbers since the mid-1990's.

If you would like to be involved in helping Elm Grove achieve the Monarch Champions Circle, please reach out to the [Beautification Committee at Beautification@elmgrovewi.org](mailto:Beautification@elmgrovewi.org). There is something for every person in our community to do to help us attain this coveted and worthwhile goal so that future generations can be as inspired by the beloved monarch butterfly and its beauty as we all have been since childhood.

The committee would love to help mentor all of our Elm Grove schools through the process of setting up their very own monarch garden.

