



## "Wow, a Golden Eagle! I've Never Seen A Golden Eagle!"

Discovering Nature With Children

**F**or nearly 30 years, the Environmental Volunteers (EV) has shared the wonders of natural science with children, sparking a lifelong interest in learning about nature. The EV's hands-on science and field trip programs at local parks and county preserves, are delivered to over 10,000 students and their 450 teachers annually in Santa Clara and southern San Mateo counties.

The cornerstone of the EV educational philosophy is that to respect something, one must understand it. Thus it is that the EV offers children hands-on experiences in local natural places so that they will understand and appreciate nature and, eventually, help to preserve the local natural heritage. "Opening a child's eyes to the wonders of the natural world, is a gift to both that child and the environment," said Alison Takata, EV Board Chair. On a recent fieldtrip to Stanford's Jasper Ridge, an excited third grader echoed Takata's sentiments when she was heard shouting, "Wow, a golden eagle! I've never seen a golden eagle!"

EV's more than 170 volunteer docents bring lessons alive by engaging students in tracking a deer, appreciating the tangy smell of the salt marsh, listening to the laughing call of an acorn woodpecker, or observing the vivid orange petals of a California poppy. Teaching in small groups of eight students or fewer, EV programs include: Baylands

Ecology, Foothills Ecology, Marine Ecology, All About Birds, Nature In Your Neighborhood, Water Science & Conservation, Earthquake Geology & Preparedness, and Early California Indians: An Environmental Focus.

The EV teaches that the natural world functions in a complex relationship, and that we have an obligation to understand that balance and preserve it. By providing an up-close understanding of such things as why spiders don't get caught in their own webs, the EV connects children with the wonders of nature. (By the way, the reason spiders don't get caught in their webs is that they only make some strands sticky. And since they designed the web, they know where to step. Kids learn that spiders are the original websurfers!).

In addition to the school-based services, the EV also runs a summer science day camp with Palo Alto-based Keys School, called S.N.A.K.E. (Science and Nature Adventure for Kid Explorers) Camp.

Dedicated volunteers and financial support from the community will ensure that the EV can continue to teach children to understand and appreciate the rich and diverse Bay Area environment. For further information about the Environmental Volunteers, please contact 650-961-0545 or [www.EVols.org](http://www.EVols.org).

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