

## BEAR CREEK NATURE CENTER TEAMS WITH COMMUNITY OUTREACH

*For Chatt Hills Resident Day on August 27, 2022*

A team of enthusiastic staff, volunteers, public officials, and service providers welcomed guests to the free Chattahoochee Hills Resident Day at Bear Creek Nature Center on August 27.

The event was co-hosted by Bear Creek Nature Center and the Chatt Hills Community Outreach Team as a way of introducing residents to the Nature Center and connecting them to their public officials and services in Fulton County.

### Community Outreach Welcomes Guests

Outside on the ample covered deck of the Nature Center's lodge, a variety of informational tables were staffed by knowledgeable staff and volunteers.



*Residents explored the many service providers.*

Chatt Hills councilmembers Ruby Foster (1) and Laurie Searle (3) welcomed guests at the check-in table, which included information about the city's newsletters, free giveaways with the city's contact numbers, and snacks and water. Parks Commissioner members Chip Denton, Clifford Blizzard, and Diana Wilson, were also there to support the event.

Chatt Hills Community Brickworks Library Director Nan McGuffey offered an overview of the all-volunteer library, a sample of favorite children's books, and a list of upcoming craft workshops.

Chatt Hills Fire & Rescue members were on-hand with their fire and rescue vehicle to provide safety support, if needed. As it turned out, they received a call from elsewhere in Chatt Hills and demonstrated their quick response.

Fulton County was well-represented with staff from the Department of Behavioral Health & Development Disabilities, who offered program information and updated locations for COVID-19 vaccine sites; the Department of Voter Registration, who offered information about voting and poll workers' registration (they signed up six volunteers to work Chatt Hills polls); Fulton County Commissioner Khadijah Abdur-Rahman, the current representative for district 6, who offered information and about the Fulton Fresh Mobile Market initiative as well as free produce giveaways; and Marvin Arrington, Jr, who will become the district 6 representative in 2023 once the re-districting takes effect.

### Nature Center Welcomes Guests



*Councilmember (1) Ruby Foster, Fulton County Commissioner Marvin Arrington, Jr. (6), Bear Creek Nature Center Director Norma Lewis, Councilmember (3) Laurie Searle, Councilmember (4) Camille Lowe.*

Bear Creek Nature Center Director Norma Lewis greeted visitors and public officials with Southern charm and a sense of pride in the Nature Center. She said the Nature Center opened in 2020, but due to the pandemic, it was a "soft-opening," so many citizens were unaware that the Center had opened. When Councilmember Foster approached her about hosting a residents' day, Norma saw that as a way to introduce the Nature Center to residents.

Commissioner Arrington said his children had visited the Center often when they were younger and he recognized the benefit of connecting kids to nature at a young age. He informed Norma of several county programs that might benefit the Center, as well as grants that might support the Nature Center's programs.



Nature Center Volunteer introduces Commissioner Abdur-Rahman to a resident snake.

Commissioner Abdur-Rahman toured the live exhibits inside and encouraged by a friendly and knowledgeable volunteer, got up close and personal with a resident snake.

Several families and their young children visited the Nature Center for the first time. The children grew wide-eyed at the exhibits of snakes; but grew ear-to-ear smiles at the adorable Axolotls – one of the Nature Center’s newest resident amphibians.



Axolotls at the Nature Center

Bear Creek Nature Center and the Chatt Hills Community Outreach team thank the 70 staff, volunteers, public officials, and residents for participating in the Chatt Hills Residents Day at Bear Creek Nature Center.

## BEAR CREEK NATURE CENTER BAT FEST DRAWS BIG CROWD

Bear Creek Nature Center’s Executive Director Norma Lewis reported that this year’s Bat Fest on September 10 was a huge success with 323 people at the event despite the weather! Partners in the event were:

GA Department of Natural Resources (Trina Morris), provided talks on the bats of GA and current threats to bats and how we can help. DNR volunteers and grad students from UWG provided a fun bat netting game that introduced visitors to one of the most valuable tools for bat research and how researchers collect information once the bats are caught. Sadly, it started raining just as it was getting dark enough to set up the anabat bat detector and the thermal imaging camera as well as the demonstration net, so those didn’t happen this year.

A-Z Animals (Vicky Smith) program “Batty about Bats” provided a fun introduction to bats and allowed visitors to meet a bat close up. USDA Forest Service (Dennis Krusac) provided a wonderful display of the significance of bats around the world. Southern Conservation Trust (Charlee Glenn) had a fun activity to teach families how mother and baby bats find each other when mothers return to the nursery colony after foraging at night. In addition, there were bat crafts and canoe rides that stayed busy all afternoon and evening. Two food trucks, Jalapeno Express BBQ and Snacks on the Go, added to the festivities and were very popular with the visitors and exhibitors alike.

To learn more about the Nature Center visit:

Website: [www.bearcreeknaturecenter.org/](http://www.bearcreeknaturecenter.org/)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bearcreekATL](https://www.facebook.com/bearcreekATL)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/bearcreekatl/](https://www.instagram.com/bearcreekatl/)

