

Photos available on request

Contact: Martha Gellens at 718.549.3200 x232 or  
marthag@wavehill.org

## **WAVE HILL COMMEMORATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF FAMILY ART PROJECT SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2010**

*Nearly Quarter of a Million Children Touched by Art and Nature in the Bronx*

Bronx, NY, March 26, 2010—Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center, announces plans to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Family Art Project, a nationally regarded program, culminating in a special event on April 25, 2010, in honor of Earth Day. Offered free every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, the Family Art Project integrates art and nature education. A private estate that was gifted to the City of New York in 1960, Wave Hill's mission today is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

Working with a menu of overlapping themes that draws on the seasons, life cycles, life forms, the senses, as well as the characteristics of Wave Hill's landscapes, founding leader Noah Baen has allowed a flexible structure to evolve over time. As the program has grown, Baen has been able to further enrich the weekend offerings by inviting guest artists, who bring a variety of expertise in diverse art techniques, cultural perspectives and insights into exploring Wave Hill's landscape anew. Visiting artists often include those exhibiting in group or solo shows in Wave Hill's Glyndor Gallery. Offered free every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, the Family Art Project typically starts with gathering families for a bilingual story related to the day's project, followed by a group investigation of the gardens and gallery. This may mean venturing into the woodlands in search of tiny seeds, studying the grasses along the meadow, watching water ripple around the lily pads in the Aquatic Garden or observing a red-tailed hawk fly overhead. Lastly, all participants sit together family-style and do art together. The day's project may even culminate in an informal parade through the gardens.

Projects range from "Up Pops Spring", a chance to make pop-up cards and pictures, to "Be a Bee", when kids outfit themselves with wings, antennae and a kazoo to live the life of a bee on an early fall weekend. Once indoors, observations and experiences from the outside are brought to life through newly inspired creations. Children jump right in, exploring natural objects and other materials with ease, picking up materials, glue and scissors. Likewise, parents or caregivers soon give themselves permission to explore the same supplies with their own creativity. In an informal experience that is driven by process, not product, families are welcome to join and leave projects at any point during an afternoon.

### **Anniversary Celebration**

Wave Hill visitors are invited to join in celebrating this anniversary year of the Family Art Project at an afternoon of festivities on Earth Day, Sunday, April 25, starting at 1pm. Families will be able to take advantage of many other opportunities to enjoy the gardens before the celebrations get underway. Visitors arriving before noon can enjoy free admission to the gardens, thanks to the support of Target, which underwrites free Tuesday and Saturday morning admission to Wave Hill, providing public access to the arts in our community. Sunday morning, April 25, is an additional Target Free Day, with all visitors who arrive before noon enjoying free admission.

*MORE/*

## History and Philosophy

Early on, the Family Art Project was molded by founding leader Noah Baen, a visual artist who came to Wave Hill from “Studio in a School.” His mandate was to pioneer a new program that would help engage families in an open-ended, creative exploration of Wave Hill’s garden landscape, recognizing a need that Richard Louv would many years later describe, stating that “a growing body of research links our mental, physical, and spiritual health directly to our association with nature—in positive ways.” (Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*, P. 3 [Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005])

Families are regularly captivated by Baen’s own deep sense of place at Wave Hill, drawn into re-discovering the landscape, gardens and river views over and over again. As the program grew, he was able to further enrich the weekends’ offerings by inviting guest artists, who brought a variety of expertise in diverse art techniques, cultural perspectives and insights into investigating Wave Hill’s landscape anew.

## Impact

The Family Art Project has become a model not just for generations of Wave Hill visitors, but for the educators who regularly visit. Thus, Baen has gotten used to seeing children who started as very young participants at Family Art Projects return as teenaged volunteers. And this winter, he welcomed a visitor who used to come often with her children, and now brings her grandchildren. As Courtney White, Wave Hill’s Director of Education and Public Programs, has commented, “The deeper children connect to nature, the deeper they connect to their own growth. Thus, the Family Art Project becomes a powerful vehicle—extending, as we see, even from generation to generation—for the outer, natural landscape to inform the inner, human one.”

This year, Wave Hill celebrates not just the Family Art Project’s milestone, but its wide reach as well. From the earliest years of the Project, it has sought to build cultural diversity. This past February, for instance, “Parfleche and Bandolier” combined traditions of the native peoples of the Northern Plains and the Woodlands, under the guidance of Nadema Agard, a Cherokee/Lakota artist. Perhaps most obvious, however, is the fact that each project has an English and Spanish title, and finds a Spanish-speaking assistant at Baen’s side. Assistant Leader Martha Barrero, a Venezuelan native who celebrates her tenth anniversary at Wave Hill this year, is often the first staffperson visitors meet when they drop in at a Family Art Project, and helps set a truly welcoming tone for all families.



Credit Joshua Bright



Credit Bill Foley

*MORE/*

## Calendar Listings for Sunday, April 25

### SUN, APRIL 25 FAMILY ART PROJECT ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

What better way to enjoy **Earth Day** than to extol the fabulous Family Art Project, which has inspired legions of families to make art that celebrates nature and the changing seasons at Wave Hill. Now it's time for a 20th birthday party! So, roll down a gentle, green hill, reminisce about your Favorite "FAP" projects and family memories, then create something new. Fashion a flower-pot hat complete with exuberant flowers, bees and butterflies to wear at the festive musical parade at day's end. Be sure to rattle your freshly crafted blossom-shaker as **Spirit Ensemble** plays live, percussive music throughout the afternoon. Music starts at 2PM, and the parade at 4PM. Rain or shine. Free with admission to the grounds. 1–5PM

### SUN, APRIL 25 FAMILY ART PROJECT—SHAKE A FLOWER, WEAR A GARDEN

Shake a Flower, Wear a Garden/*Sombreros con flores*

Make a flower pot hat and blossom-shaped seed shaker for the festive parade. Free with admission to the grounds. 1–4PM

*Wave Hill gratefully acknowledges the generous support of many past and current donors to the Family Art Project. These include Altman Foundation, The Buck Family Fund, Chase Manhattan Bank, Christie's, Citibankers Community Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, Independence Community Foundation, The JM Kaplan Fund, The New York Times Company Foundation, NYNEX, The Ira M. Resnick Foundation in memory of Jack and Pearl Resnick, Target, The James S. and Meryll H. Tisch Foundation and The Frederick S. Upton Foundation.*

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill's mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

**HOURS** Open all year, Tuesday–Sunday and many major holidays: 9am–5:30pm  
*Closes 4:30pm, October 15–April 15.*

**ADMISSION** \$8 adults, \$4 students and seniors 65+, \$2 children 6–18  
*Free Tuesday, Saturday mornings until noon. Free to Members and children under 6.*

**DIRECTIONS** Getting here is easy!  
Located only 30 minutes from midtown Manhattan, Wave Hill's free shuttle van transport you to and from our front gate and Metro-North's Riverdale station, the West 242 Street stop on the #1 subway line, and to and from our free offsite parking lot.  
*Limited onsite parking is available for \$8 per vehicle.  
Complete directions and shuttle bus schedule available at [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org).*

*Wave Hill is an independent, non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The buildings and grounds are owned by the City of New York. With the assistance of the Bronx Borough President and Bronx representatives in the City Council and State Legislature, Wave Hill's operation is supported with public funds through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquariums Grant Program administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the New York State Council on the Arts—a state agency, a Special Legislative Grant recommended by New York State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Hudson River Valley Greenway, the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services and the National Endowment for the Arts.*



#### Target Free Days

Target sponsors free Tuesday and Saturday morning admission to Wave Hill, providing public access to the arts in our community