



Mary Grande, a Wildlife Outreach Coordinator from the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife, having the families explore a bird beak activity.

RHODE ISLAND ARMY NATIONAL GUARD



Earth Day Celebration

by Elizabeth Stefanik

Even with the rain dampening the day, the Earth Day festivities continued on! On April 21, 2017 the Environmental Department teamed up with the Rhode Island National Guard's Family Support to bring the military families a fun-filled, educational celebration. This second annual Earth Day/ Bring Your Child to Work Day focused on pollination. Pollinator species are critical for overall ecosystem health, not to mention one out of every three bites of food exist because of precious pollinators!

We had three experts join in to speak about birds, bees, and native pollinator plant species. Mary Grande, a Wildlife Outreach Coordinator from the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife, introduced the 18 National Guard adults and 38 children, to our feathered friends who aid in such an important natural process; pollination. Her bird beak activity really kept the children engaged. Lynn Davignon, an active member of the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association followed, spreading her vast knowledge about bees, this really got the crowd buzzing! She showcased some important beekeeper tools and even brought some local honey for all to taste. Then, last but not least was Gary Casabona, a Rhode Island State Biologist from the Natural Resource Conservation

Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. He educated the audience about native pollinator species while assisting in planting a perennial garden on the Second Parade Field at Camp Fogarty.

Along with these great presentations, recycled art activities were crafted, this process of "upcycling" highlights the potential beauty in everyday discarded materials. Families made wind chimes using household collections of metal cans, goofy creatures out of old plastic bottles, and compiled tie-dyed paper flowers. Ms. Pereira, the Rhode Island Army National Guard's Energy Manager, highlighted some significant energy savings from RIARNG's ongoing LED light conversions across the state. This LED light conversion project won honorable mention by the Department of Energy Resources, 'Lead By Example' Awards. Mr. Dalpe compiled a display of Rhode Island Threatened and Endangered Species, which really shed light on the loss of some beloved plants and animals, some of them pollinators, right in our back yards. The event's success can be attributed to all the families and volunteers who came out to support the RING and the wonderful natural world all around us!



Lynn Davignon, an active member of the Rhode Island Beekeepers Association passes around a honey comb, crafted by the honey bees.



Children engaged in hummingbird presentation.