



The Fellowship Report:

Forest-bathing Guide Training in Costa Rica.

I applied to the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy to become a certified Guide in January of 2019. I was in a cohort of 13 other trainees from all over the world. We trained in the mountainside town of San Jose, Costa Rica.

For 14 days we were immersed in the following:

2 forestbathing sessions per day

2 workshops per day

2 communal meals per day

Being immersed in the jungle and led on these amazingly restorative Forestbathing sessions made learning the application of “Forestbathing Invitations” a breeze.

I was already well aware of the positive impact that being immersed in nature had on my wellbeing for a long time. Having the privilege of focusing on the science behind it whilst in the Costa Rican jungle vs. a classroom really drove the message home; NATURE IMMERSION IS A FREE WELLNESS ACTIVITY FOR ALL.

Since becoming a Forestbathing Guide I can proudly say the following:

I led 8 total retreats in the Boston community and on (2) Peddocks Island

I am training a Pastor from Morningstar Baptist Church

I am the brainchild behind our “Microforest” having pitched the idea to local community groups and the Mayor; we were granted permission to develop an empty lot on Norfolk st.

I worked with the landscape architect Liz Lucs to develop a vision for the “healing microforest”.

I have done Forestbathing with our Early childhood classes at the Arboretum. Becoming a Guide has also enabled me to sit on 2 panels stressing the importance of immersing oneself in nature on a regular basis.

Section 2: Questions (There is no suggested length, but please limit to no more than 2 pages)
Please answer the following questions based on your experience:

Becoming a Guide has certified and enhanced what I've already known about the impact that Nature has on my sense of wellbeing and wholeness.

1. **(As a result, in what ways will your instructional (or other) practice change?)** Nature immersion makes me a better person, my sleep is more sound, my agita is at bay, my stress-level drops, I feel connected to the bigger picture and my skin glows. What I learned most profoundly; it's all backed by large bodies of research and practiced in some form worldwide.
2. **(What is the greatest personal accomplishment of your fellowship?)** There are 2 biggies! First, to be asked by my former Pastor to lead a group of Ministers in a workshop to discuss the benefits of "Forest Bathing" was a highlight because we sat in the "Healing Microforest" to do so. In addition, I will be leading 2 Forest Bathing Sessions for them in the Blue Hills this Spring. Second, becoming a Forest-bathing Guide inspired me to dream up the "Healing Microforest" idea.
3. **(How will your experience positively impact student learning in new ways?)** Understanding how to press a reset button in concert with Mother Nature means, presumably, if I am restored I have more to give my students and my thinking is clear and not bogged down by emotional baggage. I can show our youngest learners how to tread lightly and "just notice" the more than human world which fosters curiosity and earth stewardship.
4. **(What are your plans to work collaboratively with colleagues?)** I have offered to do a Forestbathing session for faculty during PD's and will continue to do so. Codman Staff got first dibs on my Peddocks Island retreat and our Music teacher, Libby Galvin attended one.
5. **(Are there issues or challenges in your school, community or the world that you feel better prepared to address with your students?)** Our immediate community is bustling with traffic and noise. Having access to a Microforest gives our school a dedicated space to foster Nature connections with all of our students and the community-at-large.
6. **(How would you describe to a friend the most fundamental ways in which your fellowship has changed your personal and/or professional perspective?)** I would explain to anyone who will listen that the Forest offers MYRIAD mental health benefits! I could rattle off some research, share some resources and invite anyone to join me on a Forest Bathing retreat to see for themselves.