

PEOPLE OF ACTION

Ed Krishok

Managing Director, Urban Ecology Center

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(Member since 2008)

“In an ideal world, the best way to describe the relationship between humanity and nature would be harmony” says Edward Krishok, Managing Director of the Urban Ecology Center (UEC) in Milwaukee. Ed has been a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee since 2008 and served as club president (2018-2019).



Ed’s relationship with nature goes all the way back to his childhood, in Staten Island where he grew up. He often spent time running around in the wooded wetlands and mastering the art of catching salamanders and frogs. After graduating with a law degree from Vanderbilt University, he started his work in the corporate world.

While enjoying nature was a big part of his childhood, Ed was formally introduced to the UEC during his tenure at Harley-Davidson. He spent 17 years with the world renowned motorcycle manufacturer, including serving as Vice President & General Counsel of Harley-Davidson Motor Company and Managing Director of International Legal Affairs, before making the jump to the nonprofit world. Harley-Davidson invested in the center and encouraged Ed to get involved.

Ed initially took on a two-year term as Managing Director of the UEC, but when the pandemic hit, he worked with his team to pivot the center’s activities and engage the public through virtual events and programs. The center still publishes numerous educational videos, blogs, tips and tricks, allowing people to learn about a broad range of subjects such as the importance of sustainability or even snack tips. The UEC continues to bring people together and teach them about nature and its beauty while following the social distancing measures in place. Ed recognizes that caring for the environment is something we can all do. “We are actors in the natural world but we’re just a part of it, we’re not the whole show,” he points out.

Ed is inspired by the sense of community the center creates. The center launched the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project (NEEP) in September of 2019, which establishes partnerships with Milwaukee schools situated in the neighborhoods around the UEC’s different establishments. Through these partnerships, UEC has supported taking part of the school’s science curriculum outdoors. These programs build awareness and break down barriers between residents and the city’s nature. “What’s inspiring and energizing is seeing the kids who connect with the park, come back

on a regular basis with their families and take some ownership and connection to the park. Seeing the relationships the young people are building with the park is inspiring,” says Ed.

In his free time, Ed of course enjoys being in nature. He likes taking walks through town and through Milwaukee’s parks. He especially enjoys walking along water, having grown up on the East Coast, which he can do here in the Midwest thanks to the many beautiful waterfront walking opportunities Lake Michigan and surrounding rivers offer. He also appreciates a nice meal and conversation with family and friends and sometimes escapes further North, to Washington Island, where he and his family own a cabin.



Editor’s Note: Rotary People of Action is a bi-monthly series written by a group of Rotarians. This feature was written by Kimberly Kane.