

Evergreen Center honored by Rural Maryland Council

[Teresa McMinn](#) December 17, 2019



The former Evergreen farmhouse, which is now a museum. (Submitted photo)

MOUNT SAVAGE — While modern technology is vital to help a community prosper, important lessons can be learned from an old-fashioned way of life, Sue Rudd said.

That's why she nominated Evergreen Heritage Center, a 130-acre farm and forest dedicated to historic preservation, environmental conservation and education, for the Rural Impact Award for Outstanding Community Development.

EHC blends the latest scientific advancements with traditions from the "old days," said Rudd, an administrative assistant at AES Warrior Run.

"It's just amazing to see everything that they do," Rudd said of EHC.

Rudd volunteers at Evergreen, and her employer is one of the facility's sponsors.

The Rural Maryland Council at its annual meeting earlier this month selected EHC for the award because of its impactful education and community programs, and collaborative work with partners in the academic, business and public service communities to develop several new green facilities for program and community use including high tunnel, passive solar and

traditional greenhouses; a learning center; sawmill and wood shop; two timber-frame pavilions and three sets of off-the-grid restroom facilities.

“We were thrilled to have been selected for the award,” Janice Keene, president of the foundation, said. “The award was so meaningful to us.”



This photo, taken in 1864, shows Janice Keene's great-great-grandparents, Mariah and Joseph Arnold Trimble, who purchased the property now known as Evergreen Heritage Center in 1869. (Submitted photo)



Janice Keene's grandmother, Virginia Trimble, is shown on the family's Evergreen farm in the 1920s. Keene's grandfather, Victor Trimble, is in the background. (Submitted photo)



Janice Keene as a child with her mother Marianna Trimble Keene in the double parlor of the farmhouse. (Submitted photo)



Janice Keene at age 2 on her family's farm. (Submitted photo)



Janice Keene

“The foundation’s educational programs have grown from serving 26 students in spring 2008 to more than 9,800 this year, she said. Testing indicates EHC science enrichment programs have consistently increased student science literacy by 25% to 50% and have also increased student interest in science, technology, engineering and the math field, Keene said.

She was raised on the Evergreen property, which her great-great-grandparents, Joseph Arnold Trimble and his wife Mariah, purchased in 1869.

Although relatives, especially her grandmother, showed her how to work on the farm, Keene realized other kids didn’t understand where food comes from.

So, she established the EHC Foundation, a nonprofit, in 2008 to provide educational programs for children in areas, including Allegany and Garrett counties.

EHC early childhood programs focus on food and nutrition, Keene said.

“The facility is also expanding its uses, she said.

EHC will host weddings and events in its newly restored barn, which now includes a 600-square-foot deck that provides a view of the property’s orchards and woods, as well as a nearby pond and 900-square-foot timber-frame pavilion.

The venue will also feature handmade cherry wood tables, a rustic bar, parking lot that accommodates more than 100 cars, and a bridal room.

Keene also talked of a new agricultural museum, funded in part by the RMC, expected to be completed by June. It will feature more than 200 items, including a Civil War-era hay wagon, various plows, two sleighs and antique tools. “They’ve been used on the property for the last 200 years,” she said.

Learn more at evergreenheritagecenter.org.