

# Monarch Butterfly program educates local residents

*Dan Buckley*

Doylestown resident Loretta Shigo has created a program to educate local residents about the monarch butterfly.

Shigo's program is called "Monarch Journey," a hands-on program that teaches about the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. The lesson incorporates live monarch caterpillars and butterflies, and uses photos taken during seven years of in-the-field butterfly studies.

According to Shigo, "I go out and I collect the caterpillars and the eggs from July to October, I collect them out on the fields and I raise them up in cages, feed the caterpillars milkweed (a larval food source for monarch butterflies and their relatives), and when they go through their life

cycle, they eventually turn into butterflies."

The program is 45-55 minutes long, and includes viewing a DVD that shows the caterpillar's metamorphosis, viewings of live monarch caterpillars, and, sometimes, releases of adult butterflies. This is followed with a Q&A and an age-appropriate art activity. Shigo says the reaction has been positive.

So how did Shigo get interested in the world of the monarch?

"I was walking around the fields of my house and I came across my first monarch butterfly caterpillar. I brought it into the house and found out what it was and I learned that it had to eat milkweed, so I collected milkweed... I decided two years ago to develop a program called

Monarch Journeys in order to educate people about this wonderful butterfly. I want people to learn more about it so that they can preserve the habitat that's already here and to create more."

Shigo says the monarch butterfly season is just starting, and she has yet to see any. She says if people see one they can post it on a site she will provide via e-mail.

Shigo is a teacher/naturalist who has been involved in bringing art and environmental education in a variety of formats for more than 10 years. She will be making appearances at the Lambertville Free Public Library in August, and Neshaminy Manor and Pennypack Farms in September.

Visit [monarchjourney.com](http://monarchjourney.com), or contact Shigo at [info@monarchjourney.com](mailto:info@monarchjourney.com) or 267-614-3609.



*Loretta Shigo educates people on the monarch butterfly through her "Monarch Journey" program.*



*Right, local residents can learn about the monarch butterfly through the "Monarch Journey" program.*