



Advisory Board

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CENTER FOR NATURALISM

Gaining Your Support for Naturalism

Our mission...

The **Center for Naturalism** (CFN) is a Massachusetts 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization which promotes awareness of worldview naturalism and its significance for personal and social well-being. By means of educational programs, publications and policy development, the CFN seeks to foster the understanding that human beings and their behavior are entirely natural phenomena, and that human flourishing is best achieved in light of such understanding.

Why we need your help...

The CFN is the only donor-supported, non-profit organization now working to promote an explicit, science-based naturalism as a worldview. While many worthy humanist and secular groups take naturalism as their implicit guiding philosophy, none are championing it *per se*, or making its crucial ramifications known. Naturalism is beginning to surface as a viable alternative to faith-based worldviews, and it needs careful nurturing and articulation. This is the ground-breaking and indeed revolutionary project that the CFN is taking on, and we believe it merits your support. We need your help to fund staff, office space, program and web development, and other essentials necessary to maintain and grow the CFN.

What we do and why it's important...

The CFN applies naturalism to a range of policy issues, encourages critical thinking and respect for evidence, and fosters intellectual inquiry outside the academy. We offer courses, workshops and talks on naturalism, host speakers in collaboration with other secular groups, maintain an extensive and regularly updated website on naturalism and its implications (Naturalism.Org), and produce a bi-monthly newsletter. We develop policy initiatives and curricula, publish background papers, and support affinity groups that take naturalism as their guiding philosophy. We also sponsor philosophy cafes as a public service. Such activities and programs are essential if naturalism is to gain recognition as a positive alternative to faith-based worldviews that often deny the importance of science, evidence, and causal analysis.

Our guiding philosophy and purpose...

Based on knowledge from the physical and social sciences, naturalism holds that there is nothing immaterial or supernatural about us which places us above or beyond the natural world. An individual's development and behavior are entirely the result of prior and surrounding conditions, both genetic and environmental; we are not self-made. This crucial insight about causality reveals our intimate connection to the world,

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leads to a compassionate understanding of human faults and virtues, and gives us more control over our circumstances.

As science increasingly demonstrates that human capacities emerge from fully physical processes, it is vital to show that accepting ourselves as completely natural creatures poses no threat to freedom, dignity or personal efficacy. Indeed, naturalism empowers us, while motivating progressive policies in arenas such as criminal law, social justice, behavioral health, education, and environmental sustainability. A thorough-going, consistent naturalism – a true paradigm shift in our self-understanding – is our best long-term hope in countering worldviews that downplay or ignore our causal connections to the world, and that use the myth of the self-made self to justify punitive and counterproductive policies.

Building on materials developed at Naturalism.Org since 1998, the Center for Naturalism was incorporated in Massachusetts in 2003. Since then we've recruited an advisory board of established philosophers and scientists (see top of page 1), obtained our federal non-profit status, and made a good start in developing our programs and activities.

What you can do...

Setting your charitable priorities. We recognize that there are many progressive organizations asking for your support. Unlike most, the CFN has its sights set on the long-term development of a naturalistic worldview, fostering fundamental change in people's understandings of themselves and their place in nature. This in turn will generate support for more enlightened beliefs, attitudes, and social policies. If such a project seems worthwhile, your support can make it happen.

Annual donation. Consider making an annual tax-deductible donation to the CFN. A consistent level of support that we can count on from year to year allows us to budget for programs and events in advance.

Program specific contributions. If you particularly like something we're doing, you can earmark your donation accordingly. Or if you have ideas for a program consistent with our objectives you'd like to support, please let us know.

Further information...

For background on naturalism, its implications and applications, please see www.naturalism.org, and to learn more about the CFN and its activities, see www.centerfornaturalism.org.

To contribute, please visit www.centerfornaturalism.org/support.htm, or mail your donation to Center for Naturalism, PO Box 441705, Somerville, MA 02144.

Many thanks for your support.

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