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EXPEDITION

Winter, 2009

Foundation Provides 100 Inner-City Students With First Time Outdoor Adventures

Parkway Northwest High School, located at 7500 Germantown Avenue, is Philadelphia's first college preparatory public high school committed to the principles of peace, social justice and conflict resolution. The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation



was proud to provide 28 students from grades 9 - 12 with funding for a two day trip to Fellowship Farm in Pottstown whose mission is to develop leaders and partners for a more interdependent, just, peaceful and sustainable world. Fellowship Farm's 120 acres provided the Parkway students a beautiful space for personal growth and team building.



Many students were excited about the opportunity to experience an overnight trip, although they were hesitant about working in the outdoors with classmates they did not know. The first adventure led the group across the farm to a remote cabin site. The journey became a test of group cooperation, trust and leadership as the students quickly realized the trail had become very muddy and they were sinking in with each step. Despite the setbacks, students helped each other across, fished out sunken shoes and warned the back of the line to find a new route. The group split, each finding its own obstacles along the way and later converged at the campgrounds. Being able to overcome the obstacles on the trail, the group had already become stronger, more cohesive and more confident about themselves.



At the campgrounds, the students were assigned areas that needed clearing for an upcoming children's program. Though most of the work was simple manual labor, some of the tasks demanded more than just

Wissahickon Charter School, located in the Germantown region of Philadelphia, serves 400 inner city K-8 students. Our mission is to provide a community of learning with an environmental focus that stimulates the child's intellectual, social, and character development. The 8th grade Outward Bound Wilderness Expedition trip was the culminating experience for the students.



Before the expedition, the 8th graders were excited to go camping in the woods. On the five-day experience, they learned that Outward Bound is much more than a recreational trip. Students began the adventure by separating out all of the "essential" materials that they would leave behind—deodorant, cell phones, shampoo, sparkly hoodies, and packed their hiking packs with everything they would need to survive for five days- wool socks, iodine, shared food, rain gear, etc. They packed into the vans and headed out to the Appalachian Trail near Hawk Mountain.



After hiking to our first campsite, students learned to set up their tarps, make dinner using a whisperlite stove, and participate in the famous "Chow Circle". The first night was spent on cold, but surprisingly comfortable ground. We awoke to rain and students outfitted themselves in blue rain gear and packed up for a day of hiking.

Over the course of the trip, students hiked over 20 miles, set up four different camps on their own, and ate food that they made themselves and carried on their own backs.

One student commented, "I couldn't help but think about giving up. But I didn't. I tightened the straps of my backpack and pulled through."

As they hiked through the rain, sunshine and clouds, students observed things about the natural world, and learned new things about themselves and each other. They traversed rocky ground, learned how to perfect their knot skills, divided labor, kept track of each other, and solved problems. Hiking in single-filed lines, they learned to look out for the last person and not travel too fast or too slow for any members of the group.

(Continued on page 7.)

(Continued on page 7.)

Thanks to your generous support, this year we have been able to reach over 100 inner city students and allowed them the chance to experience the natural world as Kate would have wanted. We now support classes at the Parkway Northwest High School, Wissahickon Charter School and Community Academy of Philadelphia. Our scholarship program is like a snowball rolling down a hill. We are building momentum and reaching many more inner city children. Kate wanted to make a real difference in the life of the children she accompanied to the great outdoors. We continue her legacy by providing scholarships to children and teens to experience the wilderness as we would believe Kate would have liked.

The Foundation has produced a wonderful DVD which helps explain how and why we got started seven years ago. This DVD is the product of much effort, patience, and affection from Kate's family and friends working together with a professional videographer, Norman Einhorn of Unique Video. This eight minute film is sensitive and compelling and includes clips of Kate, some scholarship recipients, Erik Weihenmayer and Kate's friends. Please go to our website www.katesvitekmemorial.org and click on the link to watch the video.

On the bottom of this page, you will see a "Save The Date" card. This summer, Kate would have been 30 years old. Frank and I remember our 30th birthday parties and there is no doubt we would have thrown a bash for Kate. Please mark your calendars and plan on celebrating with us in honor of Kate at the "Under the Tent Event" on June 27th at Here to Stay Farm.

John Ellen

6th Annual Under the Tent Event at the Stoogeum

On Saturday May 31st under clear skies, the Foundation supporters were treated to an unforgettable stroll down memory lane. The Stoogeum, owned and operated by Gary Lassin, is a private museum of Three Stooges memorabilia and collectibles and served as the venue for the 2008 Under the Tent Event.

The 175 attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner catered by Culinary Concepts; were amazed by the magic of Bill Kerwood; were challenged by a Three Stooges trivia game and were entertained by the Stoogeum's exhibits and movie theater. The evening and ad book raised almost \$80,000 for the Foundation's ongoing scholarship program.



Left: Gary and Robin Lassin



Above: Dan Dratch, Rachel Heller, Kristyna Dratch, Corey Heller, and Josh Goldstein



Left and Above: Magician, Bill Kerwood wowing the guests

SAVE

THE

DATE

June 27th 2009

Details to follow

8th Grade Wissahickon Charter School Students Write Poems About Their Outward Bound Experience

A backpack is a struggle that pays off, hard work.
A tarp is a roof, shelter, a household.
Friends are people that are there in time of need and comfort.
Rocks stand for "Never back down. Keep going."
Footprints are a path to a new start.
Communication builds a connection.
Teamwork keeps us together as a whole.

Red = pain
Yellow = no name
Green = go for it if you can

Thanks Outward Bound!

Rocky paths.
Leaves so red
Hiking for water, not there.
Fallen trees.
Tarps where we sleep.
Stayin in the wild.

Wanting to go home.
Never being alone.
Someone getting hurt.
Feeling real bad, even a little sad.
Can't stop the tears coming from his eyes.
Stayin in the wild.

The last night was awesome.
Sitting by the fire.
Everyone happy, laughing and crying.
Giving out badges.
Expressing and revealing hidden feelings.
Sharing what was great about a family member, a friend
This is a memory that will never end.
Outward Bound!!!

I'm Out of the Woods

It started on the first day.

They wanted me to...
sleep on the cold, hard ground.

They wanted me to...
Eat dry, not very saucy spaghetti.
All the while it had dirt in it.

They wanted me to...
Sleep under a tarp on a ground sheet.

They wanted me to...
Go fifty feet in the woods and pee.

The first day ended.
The second day began.

They wanted me to...
Hike multiple miles.

They wanted me to...
Find a campsite that wasn't on the trail.

They wanted me to...
Set up the tarps and ground sheet by myself.

They wanted me to...
Cook my dinner and find water.

They wanted me to...
Clean pots with water.

They wanted me to...
Exercise early in the morning.

They wanted me to...
Stink for five days.

They wanted me to...
Deal with the outdoors

They did it, so I tried it.
It wasn't so bad.

You thought that going on a 5-day backpacking trip would be so much fun to do. But as soon as you got there you knew it was not for you. You were separated from your friends, then you made new ones on the trip. You weren't happy about all the hiking, but became stronger in the end. You didn't enjoy the pain in your feet or the food you had to eat, but you got through it. You didn't think you would like your instructors, but you will remember the time you spent together. At the end of the trip you knew you just completed the adventure of a lifetime and you'll never forget it!!

KSMF Provides 100 Inner-City Students With First-time Outdoor Adventures

(Parkway Northwest Charter School continued from page 1.)

individual thinking. The students quickly designed creative strategies to work together and finish their assignments. After cleaning up, walking back to the living area and eating dinner, there was a campfire which, for many students, was their first campfire experience.

The next morning, Fellowship Farm facilitators led the students through discussions and team building activities. All of the activities encouraged trust and cooperation amongst the students. One team building activity was the ropes course which was a series of obstacles that challenged them to create solutions together.

Ninth grader Akeem Patterson commented, "I learned to develop trust in other people on this trip. My teacher told me that before you can trust somebody, you have to trust yourself."

By the end of the trip, many of the students wanted to stay longer. They had made new friends, adjusted to a new environment and many had a new appreciation for the outdoors.

Kendall Wilkerson said, "Two days without electronics really helped me think. The fresh air during the day and crickets and stars at night changed my perspective on the world." Tenth grader Akua Whitaker said "I have friends who have never been out of the city let alone to a camping ground. On a regular basis, we are not exposed to these kinds of activities. I was able to learn more about myself and my classmates while having fun."

(Wissahickon Charter School continued from page 1.)

Students spent the evenings setting up camp, cooking over a fire, listening to the wilderness and discussing life lessons with their instructors. They came back from this educational experience with increased self-confidence, a new appreciation for each other, and a familiarity with the outdoors that will stay with them as they take the important steps towards high school. "I think this trip helped everyone learn more about themselves and see life from a different angle," reflected another student.

We are so grateful to the Svitek Foundation for the opportunity to provide these students with this experience.

—Written by Chelsea Koelher, 8th Grade English Teacher



CAP Students Describe What Their North Carolina Outward Bound Experience Meant to Them



This past summer, another 10 students from the Community Academy of Philadelphia charter school attended North Carolina Outward Bound on scholarships provided by the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. Excerpts from letters the students wrote on their return to school are included below.

"One of the things that dramatically changed me was hiking deep into the night finally stopping at 3:00 a.m. With my feet covered in blisters, it taught me to never give up no matter how hard my current situation may be. Another thing I learned was how to accept help from other people. I used to think accepting help was a weakness but now realize it actually helps people bond with each other."

– Albert Sepulveda, 12th grade

"My feelings towards my friends and family are good because Outward Bound helped me realize that friends and family are very important in my life. Most of all my behavior has changed tremendously. I have become more outspoken, but in a good way. I am more outgoing and not so shy anymore."

– Iliana Lopez, 12th grade

"While at Outward Bound I learned that things we do in our everyday lives affect nature. On the 3rd day of canoeing, we came upon one of the rapids. I saw a bunch of weird bubbles that reminded me of soda foam mixed with dirty soapy water. My instructor told me that it was from people dumping things into the river. From that moment on I started taking the "leave no trace" procedure much more seriously."

– Dat Dang, 12th grade

"The last thing I learned was that I could be dependent on just myself. I experienced this during the solo event. I am never alone so it was awesome to do that."

– Briana Berry, 10th grade

"Rock climbing changed me. I learned how to trust people and believe in myself. I often thank God that I didn't hurt myself. I made so many new friends and my counselors were great."

– Gardeliz Centeno, 10th grade

"My favorite part of Outward Bound was definitely the mountain climbing. I never thought that I would be able to pull up my nerves and pull myself up a mountain. My most difficult time occurred when I had to allow myself to trust someone to ballay me down a mountain. That first step was the hardest which is the same in actual life. I now know and understand that in life, the first step of a new endeavor is always the hardest. I have a totally different perspective on life's little difficulties. Everything seems much easier now because, seriously, I climbed a mountain."

– Amber Buck, 11th grade



"I am more open with my opinions on things. During Outward Bound we had something called "Dinner Circle" where we expressed our ideas about what happened throughout the day. At first, I was quiet, but as the days went on I became more open and comfortable with the people around me."

– Melanie Nieves, 10th grade

"During my trip to North Carolina, I learned how to apply my ideas and thoughts to others, cook and most importantly patience. The best thing I learned there was to apply my ideas and thoughts. I never thought I could help people with my opinions. Now I know my ideas could actually help others. Now I think I can talk to and communicate my ideas to people much better than before."

– Tiffany M. Diaz, 11th grade

"The most important thing that I learned was that I was capable of completing such a demanding course. I went through diverse weather conditions. I also hiked for long periods of time and learned the art of brush pushing. Overall, this experience was difficult, but rewarding and fun. thank you for the fantastic opportunity you have given me."

– Manuel Martinez, 10th grade

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

Thank you for your generosity. During my North Carolina Outward Bound experience I faced a lot of different and challenging things. This school created an impact on my life. I realize that things can be easy for me at home, but once away from home is a really different situation and not necessarily easy. things are beautiful outside of the place you grew up in. You just need to accept things and move on.

I learned a lot of different things such as making good decisions, dealing with adversity and overcoming fears. The Outward Bound course involved a lot of decision making and I just had to make the best possible decision for myself and my group when needed. Whether it was leading the group or setting up my tent at night. These new decision making skills were practiced often. All of the things I learned on course I took home with me and still practice to this day.

I can remember when I did river rafting and was really scared of flipping the canoe and hitting my head on a rock. this thought was overwhelming to me. It was all in my head and with the support of my team mate, I was able to work through the fear and canoed to my heart's content. Now when I think about it I smile about it because I am thankful for this wonderful experience you provided for me. Thank you very much again. You have no idea how much this course has helped me.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Cuadrado, 12th grade



Foundation Supports Second Offering of WVU Parkersburg Environmental Course



What is better than camping throughout the beautiful state of West Virginia for an innovative course at West Virginia University Parkersburg?

Returning for a follow-up learning experience! That is exactly what WVUP Professors Phil and Denise McClung did when they selected ten students to begin this second journey into the mountains of West Virginia on May 11 – 16, 2008.

Stopping first at the Kayford Mountain mine site, the team heard from renowned expert Larry Gibson about the devastation from mountaintop removal mining (MTR). Even strong winds and a tornado warning did not prevent students from gaining a powerful awareness of the harmful impact of MTR.

Other stops included Hawks Nest Dam to speak with power plant representative Dan Barnhart about hydropower; Cranberry Glades to tour the bogs, plants, and animals; and Greenbank National Observatory to view the telescopes. The list of rewarding visits continued, with excursions to Cass Railroad, the top of Snow Shoe and Seneca Rocks, Seneca Caverns, Dolly Sods, the wind farms on Backbone Mountain, Blackwater Falls State Park, and Coopers Rock.

The students evolved not only in their increased concern for the environment, but also in their ability to work together as a caring group and in their individual journeys of self-discovery. They participated in numerous team-building activities including a high-ropes Challenge Course developed by WVU.

While the natural environment provided many wonders, it is no wonder that this course – supported by the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation – has been highlighted in the school's recruitment presentations! This outdoor learning experience will lead to recycling and other efforts to make a difference in the future of the community.





Getting To Know Kate

Those who had the fortune to meet Kate all knew what a vivacious and unique person she was. Not only did her sparkling personality shine through, but her intelligence and understanding of her world were immediately evident. This section of the newsletter is being included to give those who did and didn't get to meet her a better understanding of what she stood for and the mark she had made on her world in the short time she lived.

January 18, 2008

Kate and I were in the same grade at GA, but ran in different circles, so it wasn't until the summer between our freshman and sophomore years in college that we got to know each other, as we were co-counselors of the "K-troop" (10 year old girls) at the GA summer camp. Kate and I, having spent so much time passing each other in the halls, were both surprised, I think, at how much we had in common and what a great time we had working with each other and the kids. We both were at college in Vermont, both frequented the same spots in Burlington, both focused on environmental majors. We played off each other well with the kids and made quite a team, making them friendship necklaces that were all the style that year (I still have the one Kate made for me) in our down time.

We had one camper who didn't quite fit in with the rest of the kids in our troop. She was smaller, not very good at sports, one of the very few African-American campers, and (most distressing to her) the only kid in our troop who couldn't swim. She was terrified to

even put her head under the water. Kate decided she was going to help her get past that fear, and began bringing her bathing suit and jumping in with the kids at pool time – probably the only counselor to do so (pool time was our one chance to be away from the kids). She was consistent, going in every day and working with the camper.

The final day of camp, we invited this girl's grandfather to come to the pool (he worked at the school). With everyone standing by and cheering (especially Kate), our camper not only swam, but jumped off the diving board. I've never seen a smile on a little girl's face since that was quite as bright. It was like a scene out of a movie that is too precious to be true, and I've never forgotten it. I'm sure that little girl never did either. Kate's dedication to her was simply inspiring.

Katie Bender Commons



Seventh Annual Golf Outing A Great Success

On September 2, 2008, twenty-three teams of golfers representing national and regional insurance companies and brokers competed in the seventh annual Insurance Industry Golf Team Challenge at Commonwealth National Golf Club.

The Foundation would like to thank our corporate sponsors and our amazing volunteers who helped make this event a financial success: Flat Iron Capital, Belfor, Young Adjustment Company, Wilson Elsher LLP, Keenan Motors and Signature Captive Solutions.

Special thanks to our Gold Sponsors: The Addis Group, AIG, ECBM, HUB International PA, McIntyre Group, McKee Risk, Selective Insurance, Travelers Insurance and TRA.

Thanks to our Silver Sponsors: ACE USA, AmWins, CBIZ, Chubb Insurance, CNA, Cohen-Seltzer, Fireman's Fund, The Graham Co, The Hartford, HRH, Ohio Casualty, Philadelphia Insurance, PMA, US Liability, and Zurich.

After dinner the attendees viewed the recently produced Foundation video. The \$37,000 raised will help the Foundation's Scholarship program.

2008 WINNERS

1st Place Low Gross	Travelers
2nd Place Low Gross	Zurich NA
3rd Place Low Gross	CBIZ
4th Place Low Gross	ACE USA
5th Place Low Gross	Philadelphia Insurance

1st Place Low Net	AIG
2nd Place Low Net	Fireman's Fund
3rd Place Low Net	Selective
4th Place Low Net	Graham
5th Place Low Net	AmWINS

The University of Vermont – Letters from the recipients of the Kate Svitek Memorial Scholarships

October 20, 2008

Dear Svitek Family,

My experience this summer, an experience I may never have had a chance to experience without you, changed my life in so many ways. I truly don't know where to begin.

With your help I was able to stay 2 months in South East Sulawesi, Indonesia, working together with scientists researching terrestrial and marine organisms and their habitat for an international volunteer conservation organization called Operation Wallacea. Currently studying wildlife biology at the University of Vermont, I feel absolutely privileged to have had this once in a life time chance getting hands on experience working with animal data collection in a biodiversity hot spot: the Wallace line. Taking my studies outside the classroom and into the ocean or jungle gave me skills and knowledge I know will help me advance in my field of wildlife biology.

I also just had the most exciting, amazing time. I can now say that I have been chased out of a river by a python, scuba dived beside gliding gentle green turtles, caught and held giant fruit bats, and lived and dived on a boat for a week. I jumped from waterfalls, hiked deep into the jungle, and tested tree frogs for a dangerous virus (chytrid fungus) that has been killing frogs across the world. I sat in a giant, hollow strangler fig tree until the sun set and listened to endemic Tarsier monkey mating calls. I fell silent for days as I followed, studied, and tested my limits with a troop of Macaque monkeys that had been raiding local farms. I saw beautiful sunrises and sunsets from the forest I was helping to conserve. I saw the Milky Way for the first real time: a ribbon of bright light stretching in a great horseshoe across the night sky.

On top of all this I have been inspired. I have been inspired by this beautiful life I have seen and only described a small slice to you. More than this though, I have been inspired and deeply touched by the Indonesian people that I met on my adventure to the other side of the world. Going into this trip I felt a bit nervous as I prepared to live in an all-Muslim village. Now though, looking back, I can only smile and remember my peaceful melodic morning wake up call of chanting coming from the mosque and all the friends I have made. These happy smiling people have taught me that all people are just...people. Most are very kind and welcoming. Most will go out of their way if you do the same for them. These people are not trying to degrade their environment. They heavily depend on it to survive and know much more about it than the western scientists who get jetted in and claim to be the specialists. The Indonesians I stayed with showed me the power of community and that a simpler life does not mean a life of poverty and hunger: it means a life full of happiness.

I am striving now to live as the Indonesians do, putting community and family first and just being happy. It is this combination of people and nature that interests me now. My trip has inspired me to steer a bit away from wildlife data collection and instead to animal human relations. I want to help people harmoniously live with nature and all her organisms instead of destroying or exploiting them. This trip helped me discover my future plans, the world outside my little comfort zone, and myself. I thank you deeply for all of this. You have changed my life.

I write you this letter from a year abroad in New Zealand. Another adventure I am not sure I would be having if I had not learned so much about myself in Indonesia. Thank you from the very bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,
Sam Manetti



August 28, 2008

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

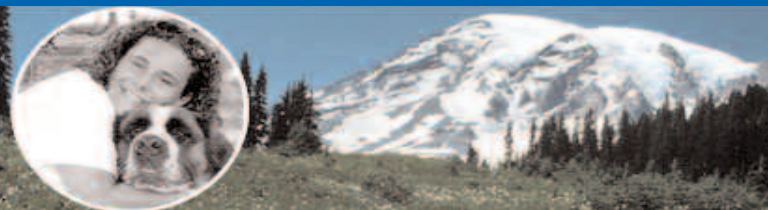
Your generosity has allowed me to spend my summer working in Manhattan for the New York City council on the Environment. While commuting to and from work everyday got tiring after awhile, the sheer pleasure of doing urban "greening" as well as the great people in the organization kept me going throughout the two month internship. CENYC goals are to green our neighborhoods, create the environmental leaders of the future, promote waste prevention and recycling, and run the largest farmers market program in the country, which is what made them a very gratifying organization to work for. This was my first opportunity working for a nonprofit organization and even though I was new to it, they gave me a lot of flexibility as an intern to pursue the things I felt were most important. One of my main objectives while working there was to help promote more environmental education in NYC public schools. I was able to accomplish this by constructing worksheets about water conservation, recycling, and eco-friendly lifestyles for teachers as well as students. Another aspect of my internship was finding more funding for this organization. Writing letters, meeting with business owners and doing research were all incorporated into this. The office work part of the internship was interesting, however the most enjoyable part was when I was able to go out into the field. My favorite day of the internship was the day our organization and many local volunteers refurbished a large public garden in one of the NYC public housing projects. After hours of physical labor the sight of a beautiful garden free of litter and weeds gave me a feeling of great accomplishment.

This opportunity to work with CENYC allowed me to learn more about what I would like to do in the future as well as gain the chance to escape for the restaurant job I have worked at the past two summers. With your help I was able to work in the field of my studies for the first time in my life and broaden my knowledge of urban "greening". I am very appreciative of the scholarship I received. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Sincerely,
Brian Fishler



Check out the new pictures for all of this year's great events!



Please take some time to visit our fabulous website! www.katesvitekmemorial.org

The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation's mission is to provide financial support to individuals, groups, and various institutions whose interests and goals align with Kate's hopes and dreams. The primary focus is to promote and help underwrite a range of activities and education principally related to outdoor and wilderness exploration, study, observation, preservation, improvement, expansion, and enhancement. Please remember Kate by visiting our website and making a tax deductible contribution. All volunteers are welcome to assist in the planning of all activities. Please visit our website at www.katesvitekmemorial.org to learn more about Kate, her dreams and her accomplishments.