



# expEDITION

Winter, 2024

## KATE SVITEK NATURE PLAY AREA



For 37 years, the Svitek family lived in a home adjacent to the Robbins Park Environmental Education Center, a 38-acre Upper Dublin, PA park and nature preserve which is run cooperatively with the Upper Dublin School District. As children and adolescents, Kate and her brother, Michael, were fortunate to spend long and wondrous hours exploring, learning, and playing in this idyllic space with their friends.

Robbins Park hosts the Kate Svitek Nature Play Area that shares comparable environmental preservation interests that Kate embraced. There are also 125 different elementary class courses that enable students to study and experience nature, enjoy unstructured play, and benefit from healthy living courses and attentive thoughtfulness. The community is also welcome to visit the center from sunrise to sunset.

A directional sign at the park informs attendees of ongoing happenings. It reads: Experience the log balance beam; enjoy the stump walk; stare up through the tree canopies; sort the various pine cones; or read a book. Follow the path to the Kate Svitek Nature Play Area, among giant Oak and Beech trees, to enjoy the listed activities and more.

In June 2023, a Mom and her two children spent time at the Kate Svitek Play Area. She sent the following note and photo to Ellen Svitek after their visit:

*"I just wanted to write to thank Kate's Foundation for the peace and fun you gave me and my kids when we stumbled upon the Memorial outdoor center at Robbins Park. It was a blast and simple and soothing at the same time. Our favorites were the log roll and walking across the tree stump. I know we will visit many more times. Thank you for creating such a special place to share Kate's love of connecting people with nature and helping us slow the pace of life."*







Thanks to support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, the RIVERSPORT Foundation was able to provide 17 scholarships to the RIVERSPORT Ultimate Adventure Camp.

The Ultimate Adventure Camp introduces eight- to- thirteen-year-olds to outdoor recreation in an urban setting- downtown Oklahoma City. Activities include climbing, kayaking, whitewater rafting, surfing on a Flowrider, snow skiing on a simulator and more. RIVERSPORT believes outdoor recreation improves the mental, physical, social, and financial health of individuals and the entire community.

Through the Thrive Outside OKC initiative, we partner with organizations- including Title I schools, youth development programs, and justice and foster care agencies- to ensure we are providing access to outdoor recreation for children who would not normally have the opportunity. In 2023, Thrive Outside OKC and our funding partners like the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation provided over 461 camp scholarships- 17,720 hours of outdoor recreation to Oklahoma City's youth. Scholarship recipients love their summers at RIVERSPORT. Ultimate Adventure Camp is their first experience on a boat, snow skis, climbing wall, or surfboard. Participating in new and once out-of-reach activities expands the possibilities for their future. All scholarship recipients qualify for free school lunch. 60% identify with a race under-represented in the outdoor sector.

Parents attest that campers are exhausted at the end of the day; and the next morning, they wake up excited to return. Many of the parents are single moms in a justice diversion program, foster parents, or grandparents raising their grandchildren. Knowing their kids are safe- and having fun- affords these parents the energy and time to focus on their workday and the daily struggles facing families in low-income households. Parents depend on the RIVERSPORT Ultimate Adventure Camp and are already inquiring about the 2024 summer.



# Message

Dear Friends,

This is the year that every parent who loses a child dreads. In February, Kate will be gone longer than she was alive. It is really hard for me to wrap my head around that thought.

Where did the years go? I am so glad that we have this Foundation, a wonderful tribute to Kate, to help keep Kate's dreams alive. We could not have accomplished all that we are able to do without your support and generous donations.

We had another successful year because of you. Our Annual Appeal raised \$62,450.69. Sip n' Shop VI raised \$11,479.51. Grants raised \$2500. Contributions raised \$9,216.31. Cards raised \$550.54. Giving Tuesday raised \$1,046.71. East Oreland Neighborhood Association raised \$440. at a bon fire fund raiser for the Foundation. This year our grand total raised to date is \$87,683.76. We gave out \$182,053 in grants to 48 organizations whose reports are featured in this newsletter.

Thanks so much for your financial support.

With our deepest gratitude,

*Ellen for Frank, Michael and Bob*

Ellen for Frank, Michael and Bob Clair (Kate's Pop-pop)

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram:

[@svitekfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/svitekfoundation)

and to visit our website:

[www.katesvitekmemorial.org](http://www.katesvitekmemorial.org)



# SIP & SHOP

On February 12, 2023 our loyal supporters from South Florida gathered at the Evelyn and Arthur store in Palm Beach Gardens for a day of shopping and fundraising for the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. Evelyn and Arthur donates 20 percent of all purchases back to the Foundation. Proceeds from the day were \$8,800 and Evelyn and Arthur generously rounded up the amount donated to \$10,000. Friends who were unable to attend sent checks totaling \$1,479.51 for a grand total of \$11,479.51!!

We hope to see you all on Sunday, February 11, 2024 for Sip and Shop VII.



## SIP & SHOP VII

*Meets*



**February 11th, 2024**

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**EVELYN & ARTHUR** 10937 N. Military Trail  
Palm Beach Gardens

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Join us from 11am-4pm. Shop Sip n' Shop VII then attend your Super Bowl LVIII party in style!



20% of all purchases given to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation



Featured Left to Right: Marcia Markoff (co-chair of Event), Lauren Emert (manager of Evelyn & Arthur Palm Beach Gardens Store), Ellen Svitek, Adrienne Weissman and Bernice Glaser (co-chair of Event).



Again this year, with support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, BYM camps provided opportunities for enrichment and leadership building in a wilderness environment. Our STRIDE program is committed to ensuring that young people from all racial, geographical, and economic backgrounds can benefit from a happy and exciting outdoor, nature connection camp experience.



The \$3,000 grant received from Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation was an important investment in our Philly STRIDE program, and helped to underwrite the 2023 2-week camping experience for Philly STRIDE campers. These individuals had a wonderful summer!

BYM's STRIDE program continues to create communities of genuine diversity, equity and inclusion, while advancing leadership skills and ongoing connection with nature and the environment. STRIDE CITs and counselors provide campers with in-camp role-models, and a pipeline for more diverse campers and staff at BYM Camps and throughout the camping industry.

Thank you for your support!



The Sauvie Island Center hosted ten weeks of spring field trips, providing nearly 900 elementary school-aged children the opportunity to spend a full day exploring and learning on the grounds of Topaz Farm.

Thanks to our many supporters, we are able to keep costs down for paying schools and offer scholarships to low-income schools. As stated in our application, much of our funding in 2023 was limited to schools located in Multnomah County. Funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation allowed three third-grade classes from the Tigard-Tualatin School District in Washington County to participate in farm field trips. James Templeton Elementary is a new school partner, and since schools reopened after the pandemic, we have worked to broaden our reach outside of Multnomah County.

In general, more than half of the students served through our scholarship program were from low-income neighborhoods (served by Title 1 schools), where the majority of students identify as BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color). At James Templeton, nearly half of the students identify as BIPOC and fully 100% qualify for free/reduced lunch (Title 1). According to the American Psychological Association, children living in poverty are more likely to experience low academic achievement, health issues related to poor nutrition, and social and emotional development difficulties. Historically, the environmental education community has marginalized people of color, leaving them feeling disconnected from nature compared to their white counterparts. A recent summary of research by the National Start Alliance shows that, for elementary school students, outdoor, place-based education programs like ours can improve academic performance, reduce stress, and provide other mental and physical health benefits. Our program seeks to address these disparities by providing free field trips, including transportation and classroom visits to low-income schools, where children of color make up the majority of the student body.

By introducing children to healthy food and the preservation of natural areas and farmlands, we will deepen their connection to the land and food system, thus increasing their ability to take an active role in these matters in the future and make more informed dietary decisions. Our educator partner and research agree that our hands-on, place-based programs provide more meaningful education opportunities, which simply cannot be replicated in a classroom.

A visit to the farm on a spring day, like the days on which we hosted James Templeton 3rd graders, brings to life the Next Generation Science Standard lessons that students have been studying all winter. Students also taste fresh vegetables and tend to our Grow Lunch Garden. To the right, 3rd graders are trying mustard greens. Every field trip is a new adventure as we dedicate a whole day to exploring three of the five different parts of the Sauvie Island Center's curriculum.



We end our field trip days with a closing circle. We invite students to share stories or their favorite parts of the day. Many told us that they tried - and would eat again! - vegetables they had never tasted before. Others enjoyed learning something new. Below are comments from students who visited the farm in the spring of 2023.

*"I really enjoyed tasting different flowers. That was so cool!"*

*"Now I really like bees and I want to help them because they help us!"*

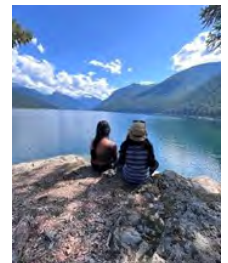


Thank You to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for supporting North Cascades Institute's Youth Leadership Adventures (YLA) program!

YLA provides accessible opportunities for teens from historically underserved communities to get outdoors and develop a love for the natural world through multi-day backcountry trips.

During two 9-day trips in July and early August, participants canoed on Ross Lake in North Cascades National Park, each paddling more than 30 miles. In addition to learning the necessary skills for canoeing and camping, participants spent a day doing volunteer work with Park staff, maintaining a section of Big Beaver Trail by clearing brush, removing rocks, grading, and building a turnpike. Through this hands-on stewardship work, immersion in the natural world, and interactive lessons taught by our talented instructors, this year's participants overwhelmingly reported positive experiences, personal growth, and intentions to continue utilizing their new skills. On post-program surveys, 100% of students reported that they now feel a sense of connection to the natural world, that they feel confident seeking out outdoor spaces in their community, and that they feel comfortable and confident spending time outdoors.

*"During this nine-day trip I can say that I came back being more self-aware. I realized that I am someone who is observant as a leader. I made friends with whom I share a special bond. Lastly, I got to come back with the skills and knowledge to do outdoor activities." – 2023 participant*



We originally scheduled three trips for the 2023 season, but unfortunately had to cancel the third due to a wildfire which has significantly impacted the Institute and our late summer/fall programming. While it was disappointing to have to cancel the final trip of the season, the other two trips were incredibly successful and deeply impactful to the 17 diverse high schoolers that participated.

Funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and other generous supporters makes it possible for us to offer this program to teens who otherwise wouldn't have opportunities for deeply immersive wilderness experiences, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to continue to recreate outdoors for years to come. Many thanks!





Support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation allowed the Watersmith Guild to provide FirstWaves programs for 109 underserved youth throughout 5 regions of Pennsylvania.

The project included 16 events and 43 education modules that forged a connection between watershed conservation, outdoor recreation, and digital media to inspire positive change. One youth participant described, “I got to stand [on the board] for the first time, and everyone was really proud of me. My heart just blew up, and I was so proud of myself!” Another explained, “First Waves definitely opens a lot of knowledge and opportunities for kids. We even got to go river surfing and do marine biology. That’s honestly a once-in-a-lifetime thing to do as a kid!”

One highlight of 2023’s project included the first native mussel survey of Allegheny Islands State Park in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. This conservation initiative was part of the First Waves Pittsburgh program and included youth from environmental justice areas throughout the city.



Youth had the chance to work alongside biologists to survey native mussel species in this ecologically significant area. Since Allegheny Islands is only accessible by water, First Waves youth and volunteers used standup paddleboards for access. Elise Henshaw, a conservationist with the Fish and Boat Commission described, “I think it’s so important for the next generation to get their hands dirty and learn in this way because these are memories they’re going to carry with them the rest of their lives. They might be sharing what they learned with their kids or grandkids someday and helping to pass the message of conservation along.”

Another milestone for the Watersmith Guild and First Waves in 2023 was receiving the Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence. Watersmith founder, Ian Smith, explained “We are extremely grateful to receive this prestigious award that acknowledges the amazing work of our partners, volunteers, and supporters of this program.” The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation has been instrumental to the Watersmith Guild in these achievements and has helped empower hundreds of underserved youth to experience and contribute to the natural world.



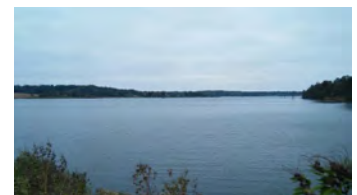
As a community based outdoor behavioral healthcare organization, we utilize the local forest preserves and natural areas. Adventure Works utilizes outdoor behavioral healthcare programming as an effective alternative to traditional counseling to help youth develop social skills, reduce behavioral problems (such as delinquent behavior, substance abuse, and interpersonal problems), overcome psychological problems, and experience psychological resilience. Through holistic programming, Adventure Works teaches youth life skills necessary to become self-sufficient, confident and mentally healthy adults.

Adventure Works provides adventure-based interventions to individual youth and their families to treat or address challenges related to mental health. Adventure Works’ programming relies on adventure therapy, which is defined as any engaging activity that helps clients explore their unknown to create insightful and remarkable experiences. Adventure Works believes that adventure therapy is best experienced outdoors within the context of a therapeutic relationship. Additionally, Adventure Works provides traditional therapy as clients’ needs dictate. One of the tenets of adventure therapy is “challenge by choice,” which means the client’s wishes are honored during therapy.

Adventure Works is an industry leader in providing mental health treatment through outdoor behavioral healthcare and in 2017, Adventure Works earned national accreditation as an outdoor behavioral healthcare (OBH) program by the Association of Experiential Education (AEE). As a nationally accredited AEE-OBH program, Adventure Works offers evidence-based treatment and is committed to adhering to above industry standards of ethical care, treatment evaluation and risk-management practices that have been developed exclusively for outdoor behavioral healthcare programs.

Due to Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation's generous donation of \$4300 this year, Adventure Works was able to provide much-needed services to clients who would otherwise not be able to afford it. Through this funding, Adventure Works can reduce the barriers to mental health treatment and ensure that all youth have access to innovative treatment in an outdoor setting.

We are so grateful for your continued support and the impact your gift has had on our community!







Our partnership with Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation has been vital this last year in continuing Chicago Voyagers' impactful programming. Your support has helped CV continue our mission to empower youth impacted by injustices through adventure therapy programs that foster healthy relationships and skills for life success. Thanks to your generosity, youth across Chicagoland can reach their full potential and expand their belief of what is possible. Your foundation's generosity has helped CV impact 217 youth so far in 2023, 95% of whom are from low-income households.

Additionally, we've provided 1,085 program hours across ten youth-serving agencies. The demographic breakdown of those we served so far this year is: 49% Latino, 29% Black, 7% white, 1% Asian American. Thirty-six percent of those we serve have special needs.

Below is a quote from a youth participant, Alexandra, who shares about the impact of an overnight trip experience she had at Starved Rock. As you read through Alexandra's story, I hope you feel proud knowing that you helped make this possible.

*"Voyagers has helped me build trust little by little, one step at a time. I feel that there is more to the world and having the ability to see different things such as Starved rock has been such a blessing to me. It has pushed me out of my comfort zone and has shown me how physically and emotionally strong I really am."*

*"One of the overnight trips is one that I will never forget. The trip and all the activities taught me I can do this and never give up. It taught me that I have more support than I thought I did. I also love to see that it helps everyone else in this program. More importantly it has been helping me cope with my past and it has helped me heal."*



To date, CV has served more than 5,300 unique youth and successfully completed more than 1,300 outdoor adventure therapy programs. 92% of youth in our programs show a significant increase in responsibility, likewise 94% increase in confidence, and 92% in teamwork. Youth involved in our programs also show a 0.7 increase in GPA and a 65% decrease in in-school disciplinary actions compared to youth not in our programs. 100% of youth participants were taken outside of their neighborhood into a new environment and engaged in physical activity to promote health and well-being.



Thank you for making our work possible! We truly could not do this without you.



camp kesem

On behalf of the administrative team of Camp Kesem at Stanford, we would like to thank you for your continued support.

Founded and run by Stanford students, Camp Kesem is a week-long, overnight summer camp for children whose lives have been affected by a parent's cancer diagnosis. All 140 of our campers, aged 6-18, are united by the common thread of having a parent who currently has, is in remission from, or has passed away from cancer. Evidenced through positive feedback from all our campers, families, and counselors, Camp Kesem has empowered thousands of Bay Area children by increasing their self-esteem and embracing them in a supportive and loving community. Camp creates a comfortable, inspiring space for campers to share their cancer experiences with peers who empathize with them. Our fundraising efforts allow camp to be completely free for families served, so that families who otherwise would not be able to afford to send a child to camp because of their cancer-related medical expenses can attend.

Last summer, we were able to host camp at YMCA Camp Jones Gulch in the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains. Following years of hosting Kesem online during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been wonderful to be able to return to camp in-person. We hosted Carnival Day, went zip-lining, and canoeing in the pond with the backdrop of redwoods. Outdoor games in the field included soccer, archery, and Gaga ball. We held campfires every night complete with Kesem songs and s'mores. Our more senior campers went on hikes in the nearby woods and bonded over time spent with one another and their counselors as part of the Teen Leadership Program (TLP). TLP focuses on teaching teens to engage meaningfully with nature and involves a number of outdoor leadership activities.

Within our cabins nestled in the hillside, counselors engaged campers in nightly cabin chats, where the floor was open to campers to share their experience with their parent's cancer, seek companionship, or simply share the best part of their day. Our Wednesday evening Roots program in particular gives campers a dedicated space to open up, be vulnerable, and find support in their peers and counselors. Camp offers campers the chance to escape from their everyday lives, spend time with a supportive community, and enjoy the outdoors.

Thank you again for your support.



# Grassy Waters Conservancy

Supporting the Everglades in West Palm Beach

The Grassy Waters Conservancy and Grassy Waters Preserve are grateful to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for funding a 10-week summer internship for Olivia Benson, an environmental studies major at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University.

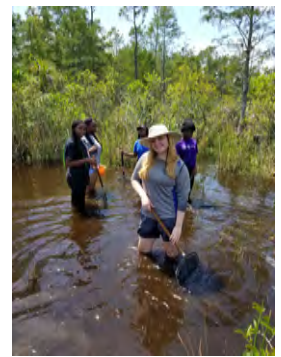
As part of her training at the start of the summer, Olivia became certified in two nationally recognized environmental education curricula, Project Learning Tree and Project WILD. She co-led a total of 22 programs (14 pre- and post-visits; 5 field trips; 3 virtual field trips) for summer camp students from eight local City of West Palm Beach school and community center sites. Programs focused on Everglades habitats and species and the importance of the Preserve's wetlands as the City's freshwater supply.

Olivia also completed an original legacy project that will continue to serve the educational mission of the Preserve. For her project, Olivia created two Young Explorers Backpack Learning Kits (one English-language version and one Spanish-language version) designed for very young children (3-5 years) to use while visiting the Preserve's Cypress Boardwalk Trail.



Teachers, home school groups, and parents will be able to borrow a kit to guide young children through three learning stations, each featuring age-appropriate picture books and an assortment of engaging, hands-on activities based on Florida state standards for Birth to Kindergarten. For several activities, Olivia created original, full-color illustrations for a series of plant pattern-matching cards and a children's story book about how seeds travel.

About her internship, Olivia says, "this opportunity has brought me so much ecological/scientific knowledge I will use in my academic career. I learned so much about the ecology of the Everglades and just how significant this vast, interconnected ecosystem truly is. My favorite parts of this internship were the moments in which I saw children experiencing this environment in a new way, seeing it in a whole new light. I always loved getting in the water and watching kids' reactions – many of which were experiencing this kind of wilderness for the first time. This was the best internship I could have asked for, thank you again for this opportunity."



With support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Exploring New Horizons (ENH) served over 7,500 students last year, 40% of which were from schools in socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

During the year, ENH increased outdoor educational equity in the greater San Francisco and Monterey Bay Areas with a focus on Contra Costa County and the Mt. Diablo Unified School District (one of the largest in California). Partnering with the Mt. Diablo Education Foundation allowed us to engage more Title 1 schools and to better understand the obstacles that prevent some schools from attending.

We are proud to report that we met all three of our objectives:

- Create better access for students from lower-income communities
- Empower students and strengthen their school communities
- Increase knowledge of forest and coastal ecology, food webs, and cycles and interest in learning about science and environmental stewardship

The following was unsolicited teacher feedback after their trip to ENH:

*"The outdoor education experience at camp offers students an opportunity to learn and grow in ways not possible in a traditional classroom setting. There is a big push in education right now to build thinking classrooms where students can think about their learning and be critical of their thinking. ENH provides so many opportunities for the students to practice independent thinking and collaborative problem solving in ways that relate to the real world. To be able to experience the beach, tide pools, and redwood forest within a 3 day trip is very special for our community who otherwise may not have had the opportunity to experience even one of these on their own, outside of school. Over 80% of our school community is considered economically disadvantaged so most of our 5th grade families would not be able to afford the cost of camp on their own. However, with the support of generous donors, the cost of camp for each family has been reduced, allowing access to camp to more students each year."*







Neighborhood Bike Works capitalizes on the inherent fun, joy, and freedom a bike provides to teach youth how to fix bikes, we provide opportunities to earn bikes, and allow folks to

explore new outdoor places by bike. The support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Fund significantly boosted our Youth Bike Education and Empowerment Program (YBEEP), resulting in enhanced mobility for young Philadelphians, the exploration of new outdoor locations, and the creation of valuable paid job training opportunities for 35 youth graduates. FY23 was a year of recovery for us in terms of programming provided and impact numbers. We served more youth, awarded more bikes, and rode more miles than we have in the past 3 years.

FY23 results:

- 150 youth engaged in ride and repair programs
- 85 students learned how to maintain their bikes through our Earn-A-Bike program
- 157 youth received bikes through our programs
- Youth collectively rode 5,922 miles

Our programs such as Freedom Riders serving 27 youth, Mountain Biking Skills serving 9 youth, BMX Skills serving 8 youth, a multi-day camping trip that included a 90-mile ride to and from the campsite for 10 NBW youth, and Ride Club serving 28 youth all exposed youth to natural areas and encourage physical activity. We found that 87% of youth surveyed reported that they plan to ride more as a result of their NBW class and 98% of students reported they feel more confident riding their bikes. We distributed 157 bikes to youth graduates. Each of these bikes represents transportation, independence, and fun.

Our Youth Council organized Holiday Bike Build, in which 15 youth earned paychecks refurbishing 72 bikes and distributing them to those in need in our community. The impact of this program is all encompassing; youth earn a decent wage, gain more confidence in their mechanical skills, have opportunities for public speaking at the giveaways, and get to give back directly to their communities all while demonstrating their leadership abilities.

In June 2023, we celebrated a significant milestone with an in-person fundraiser at Tricycle Café and Bike Shop in Conshohocken, marking our return to in-person gatherings after a four-year hiatus. The event included a youth-led bike ride along the Schuylkill River Trail, and a remarkable young participant delivered a powerful speech that left a lasting impression on everyone.

An excerpt from the youth's speech entitled "Progress Through Pedals:"

*"I'd like to say that by no means am I a great cyclist, but thanks to Neighborhood Bike Works I am confident that I'm incredibly close to that ideal. My sister and I recently moved to Philly and that meant a new school, making new connections, and essentially starting over from near zero. Through my school's principal I discovered NBW and along with it came an abundance of people I now consider great friends, and of all of those faces stands out one, my teacher and friend, [Youth Programs Instructor] Kiyoshi. See Kiyoshi has taught me many things such as how to ride a bike, parts, fixing bikes, and even more as his teachings didn't stop at bikes. He encouraged me to become less awkward, be more outgoing and to be more confident in myself and my abilities. This isn't simply one person, but everyone at the shop because all of them together form the welcoming environment that provided me solace after a school day."*

This speech brilliantly illuminates the profound and immediate impact of our youth programs. However, it goes beyond that; it serves as a testament to the hidden, yet invaluable, long-term gifts that emerge from our work. The speech underscores the enduring rewards of personal growth and development, the emergence of strong leadership qualities, an unwavering commitment to community, the forging of deep and lasting friendships, and the remarkable willingness our youth demonstrate time and time again to step boldly out of their comfort zones. It speaks to the transformative power of our programs and the extraordinary potential within our young participants.



CENTER of  
AQUATIC  
SCIENCES

This year, the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation made it possible for 11 youth and mentors from the Center for Aquatic Sciences' Community And Urban Science Enrichment (CAUSE) youth development program to travel to Virginia and go whitewater rafting and ziplining. CAUSE youth, representing Camden City high schools from grades 11 & 12, serve as guides for on-water kayaking at home on the Delaware River in Camden, but their August 2023 trip to Virginia was a first opportunity for all of the youth who participated to use their paddling skills on whitewater. Youth enjoyed their morning on the river- participants said that rafting was the highlight of the trip! CAUSE youth also experienced local aquatic animals and ecology in Virginia as they toured the Aquatic Resources Education Center in Washington DC, then visited the One World Connected exhibit at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum for a wider perspective.







This summer, thanks to generous funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Riverbend was able to offer Habitat Management

Internships to four college students studying in the environmental field.

At the heart of our mission of environmental education, lies a deep understanding that everyone benefits from time spent in nature and from feeling connected to plants, soil, and all that the natural world has to offer.

Welcoming young people to work outside caring for our 30 acre preserve each summer is a wonderful way for students to gain hands-on experience, apply what they are learning at college, learn new skills, and learn about themselves and the kind of career they want to pursue.

The best way to show the impact of the funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation is to share the words of the interns themselves!

*“Riverbend gave me the priceless opportunity to interact with the environment in my backyard. I learned so much about the native species of Pennsylvania and their respective impacts on our ecosystem. It was so fulfilling to repair ecological damage and better the environment for future generations. I got to meet passionate, like-minded individuals who share my enthusiasm for the outdoors. The effects of our work were immediate: pollinators would almost instantly come to enjoy our plantings and we unearthed so many native seedlings hidden under layers of invasives. The level of understanding and closeness I developed with the local ecosystem was unbelievable and I could never have gotten there without my time as a habitat intern.”* (Emmanuelle Barbash, University of Pittsburgh, Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences.)

*“Working at Riverbend was the best way I could have spent my summer. I learned so much about native plants and wildlife, how healthy forests and meadows should look, and all the work that goes into land stewardship. I also learned a great deal about the effects of invasive plants and how to control them. Working outside to*

*improve the quality of the land by removing invasive species, building natural soil erosion prevention setups, and planting trees, shrubs, and flowers made me realize that I want to continue working in similar outdoor roles after college. I feel that the work I put in this summer was meaningful to me and to the environment. It was a very fulfilling role, and I am grateful I got the chance to work at such a wonderful place.”* (Claire Becker, Temple University, Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience, Minor in Environmental Studies.)

*“While interning at Riverbend, I acquired numerous important skills for my career and also just everyday life. I learned how to work in different outdoor conditions, how to identify common invasive species, how to identify native species, and how to use different tools as well. I also just genuinely loved my experience working with the team at Riverbend and would recommend anyone to get involved there. Lorna taught me hardwork and determination by clearing invasives and replacing them with native plants. The work was extremely rewarding and I am so lucky to have been a part of it. I can now take all the knowledge I have and use it in my future careers in habitat restoration and conservation!”* (Donna Forbes, University of Rhode Island, Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Management.)

*“I really enjoyed coming to Riverbend and working with everyone there. Seeing all of the progress we made over the summer and working to make Riverbend a better place was truly something I have never experienced before. The grant allowed me to participate in this internship, and I am very glad I was able to be a part of it this past summer.”* (Julia Battista, Millersville University, Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology.)



Our 8-week summer nature camp promotes environmental awareness and understanding through educational games, art and science projects, wildlife study, and exploration of the streams, ponds, forests, and meadows

at Welkinweir, our 224-acre nature preserve and headquarters. The majority of the camp day is spent outside, with campers being led by counselors who enjoy working with children in an outdoor setting. The camp days are planned, with counselors leading most of the activities, relating to the weeks’ nature / environment related theme. The counselors are sometimes assisted by volunteers, primarily Pennsylvania Master Naturalists trained volunteers who are required to accumulate a certain number of service hours annually to maintain their naturalist designation. To add to or reinforce a particular theme, we have used professional, non-formal educators as guest presenters, which has been generously funded by the Kate Svitek Foundation. These guest presenters add expertise beyond what our counselor staff can offer. The funding by the foundation allows us to keep our camp competitively priced, while adding value to our camp offerings.

This year’s camp featured a number of returning presenters, including the Ryan the Bug Man, a perennial favorite, Professor Bob’s Hands-on Science, and raptors and other non-releasable animals from Indian Run Environmental Education Center. We offered two themes this year that have been out of rotation for a while – one was an art week and the other a Native American week. For the art week we had Hilary Vadner, a potter and photographer, who teaches at Artist Days at the nearby Great Marsh Institute. She worked with the campers to create clay animal figurines. We hosted two guest presenters for Native American week: Carla Messinger, Native American Heritage Programs, a descendant of the Lenape people who remained in the region. She presented on the Lenape way of life and culture using a wide range of visual objects, followed by jewelry making with glass beads. Steven Carty, Pinelands Basketry, led the campers in a basket making activity, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all ages of campers!



Our sincerest thanks and appreciation for the funding to support this activity.

Copper River Stewardship Program was held from June 13-22, 2023. The purpose is to give students from diverse communities a watershed-wide view, and help them learn to be stewards and advocates for a healthy world. Seven high school students from Alaska's Copper River Basin joined three from the coastal community of Cordova for a ten day journey through the watershed, from glaciers to estuaries.

The theme of the program this year was "Macroinvertebrates: No Bones? No Problem!" The team learned about the rich variety of life forms in all the habitats we visited, including sampling, identifying, and logging their discoveries on the online database Survey 123. The journey started on the vast Copper River Delta, where the river flows out into the Gulf of Alaska. The crew met with biologists who introduced macroinvertebrates, then they waded into the estuary armed with nets and sampling trays.



Another highlight of the trip was a 2-day crossing of Prince William Sound on the schooner Aurelia. The crew/owners of the boat were responders on the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in 1989, and shared their stories as we visited the site of the spill. From there we headed into the Copper River Basin and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. We spent an afternoon exploring a glacier lake then paddled down the Kennecott River. The next day, we hiked out onto the glacier itself in search of more macroinvertebrates. The landscape of rock and ice seemed to be barren, but on close observation we found ice worms, algae, and balls of moss teeming with life.

Highlights from the program evaluation:

*"I didn't know that there were so many different types of invertebrates that lived in just one small body of water, and how different species indicate the quality of water."*

*"I would choose a career as a trail guide- I love hiking, meeting new individuals, and the peace nature brings to the loops in my mind."*



We cannot thank the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation enough for their continued support of the Schuylkill Center. With an emphasis on immersive outdoor exploration, discovery, and wonder, Schuylkill Center summer camps give kids the opportunity to totally unplug in 365 acres of forest, fields, streams, and ponds while exploring nature through hands-on discoveries and play.

This summer was truly the first summer since the Pandemic where our campers received daily doses of Vitamin N, nature, vital to their development. Thanks to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, the Schuylkill Center purchased equipment and supplies to expand our efforts to inspire new connections to nature with our community.

Your support allowed us to bolster our outdoor recreation gear significantly this summer:

1. We were able to purchase brand new fishing supplies. We obtained new sets of hooks, bobbers, tackle gear and more. With this our older kids (8-12yrs) took to our pond, Winddance Pond, to try their hand at fishing. The kids in our (8-9 yrs) Radical Raccoon group caught the first fish of the summer with much excitement!
2. We were able to purchase child sized gloves that were used across the board this summer. The younger children were often found at Pine Grove using the gloves to climb trees and move limbs to construct forts without fear of splinters. Our 6-12 year olds utilized the gloves to also participate in stewardship activities including removing invasive plants and helping to lay down wood chip paths.
3. GPS Units were purchased to begin programming for our older kids for both orienteering and geocaching.
4. Propane was purchased to allow our 10-12 year old campers to learn about campfire cooking and enjoy meals when they camped overnight here at the Schuylkill Center. Our younger 4-9 year old campers learned how to make candles out of Mullein and used the camp stoves with propane to melt wax and dip mullein.
5. New tents, rain flies/rain covers, sleeping bags, and storage bins were purchased in order to replace older more worn tents and gear to provide for our 10-12 year old campers overnight camping.

Thanks to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, this summer was one to remember because our campers were truly present to appreciate the wonder of the outdoors.





To Ellen Svitek and Foundation Trustees:

The Harris Center for Conservation Education is very grateful to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for the generous grant of \$3,600 received in April 2023.

The grant money was used to pilot a program to include two special education teachers to address students with behavioral issues or other special needs who attend summer camp. Our 3-week summer nature camp program is available for children

pre-K to 8th grade – kids are divided into age-appropriate groupings and explore the outdoors with nature-themed activities throughout each week. This past summer, we welcomed over 200 adventurous kids to our grounds to explore and play in the surrounding fields, forests, ponds, and mountains. We savored every moment of sunshine (during an otherwise rainy season) that included a new camp session, Art & Writing on the Wild Side.



Our team of highly experienced camp counselors, many of whom are school teachers during the school year and our Harris Center teacher-naturalists, are finding that COVID has had an effect on children attending our winter and summer camp. Some students utilize one-on-one paraprofessionals during school and need similar support while at camp. Others have special needs that make transitions during the day or participating in a group meeting difficult. This can affect the camper and other participants as well. Having two special education experts on hand, made for a smoother experience for both campers and counselors. These specialists served as one-on-one help for students who needed it and as “floaters” who addressed issues dictated by the day and individual campers’ needs. One happy parent told us without the additional support provided this summer, her son simply could not have succeeded at camp!



Thank you for providing this valuable funding so we could include kids who could experience the outdoor world, and who otherwise might not been able to attend!



The Headwaters to Ocean summer camps at Prince William Sound Science Center in Cordova, AK, were a fantastic success this year. This was made possible by your generous support; we cannot thank you enough! We truly believe there is nothing quite like summer camp, where kids can play, explore, be curious, and grow. Our campers all experienced something new, exciting, and engaging this summer. We were able to host eight summer camps with hands-on, feet wet education about the place we call home. Our 2023 programs included three new options for young explorers: Dino Mania, Science Superheroes, and Nature Art. We held two sessions of our H2O (Headwaters to Ocean) Day Camp, we had an overnight camp for middle schoolers focusing on restoration, and we hosted a new Day Camp Girls Exploring Marine Science (GEMS). Campers in all camps met with scientists, explored the rainforest, visited glaciers, waded through wetlands, investigated ocean ecosystems, and learned that from Headwaters to Ocean, it’s all connected.



The photos below show some of the fun experiences’ campers had throughout the summer. In the Science Center’s vision, our region maintains resilience by fostering strong connections between self, surroundings, science, and society for all members of the community. Education, for all ages, is a cornerstone of this vision. Thank you again for your generous support in helping us create lifelong memories for the next generation of nature-smart leaders.



**Thanks to Damon Kardon**, our social media guru, who sends out amazing monthly updates! If you do not receive them and want to, please send your email to Ellen at [esvitek@comcast.net](mailto:esvitek@comcast.net).

CLA

On Sunday, June 18th, seventeen quiet, unsure teenagers timidly walked into the lodge at Lacawac. On Friday,

June 23rd, seventeen excited friends enthusiastically shared their life changing experiences during their week at Conservation Leadership Academy (CLA) with their families during the closing program. The time in between those two days was packed full of new experiences for each camper. During the week the campers participated in programs led by local conservation professionals. Some favorites included water sampling on Lake Wallenpaupack, Lake Lacawac, and Wallenpaupack Creek, analyzing the samples, visiting a fish hatchery, and geocaching. The highlight of the camper's week was kayaking on the Delaware River. Along the way they learned about the geology and natural history of the river, saw Bald Eagles and several other animal species, and enjoyed swimming during our lunch stop. One camper noted, "I met so many new people and did so many new things."

Along with being introduced to careers and professionals, campers participated in leadership activities that aided in building relationships and strengthening self-confidence. One activity enjoyed by all was learning how to canoe and work with a partner. As the evening light faded many quiet conversations could be heard over the water. According to one camper, "It was great, I loved all the things we did. I really loved being on Lake Lacawac and the Delaware."

Campers had many new experiences, some being away from home for the first time. As one camper stated, "I learned a lot about things I didn't even know existed and this experience has taught me a lot." We have a screen free policy for the week which provides a refreshing escape from the hustle and bustle of the world and allows campers to experience nature, build self-confidence, and learn valuable communication skills. "The only sad thing about this week is that we only had a week" commented a camper at the end of his time at Lacawac.

At the core of CLA is the nurturing of the next generation of earth stewards through conservation practices, "My week at camp was amazing. I made new friends, I was outside a lot, everyone was nice, the meals were amazing, it was perfect.

Thank you to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for the support of CLA! You truly make a difference and help us shape the next generation of Earth stewards!

This summer, we embarked on an incredible journey with over 128 young nature enthusiasts from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade. Our immersive day camps included over 6 weeks of exploration-based nature day camps and 2 weeks of Art camp. During this time, we allowed campers to discover, create, and learn amidst the beauty of the natural world.

Our campers enjoyed a safe and fun environment where questions and observations were encouraged and celebrated.

Campers dove into fun and educational games that brought critical components of our ecosystem to life. They unraveled the mysteries of the food web, gained insights into water quality for macroinvertebrates, and learned what plants and animals need to survive. Through interactive play, they developed a deeper understanding of our environment. We didn't just immerse campers in the wonders of the natural world, but we empowered them to become leaders of tomorrow by fostering leadership skills through games and activities.

Past campers who have aged out of camp were invited back to participate in camp as junior counselors. Not only was this a great experience to teach life skills such as leadership, interpersonal communication, and responsibility. But it developed a greater connection between campers and counselors. We appreciate all the hard work and effort they put forth this summer and their ability to be fantastic role models for our younger campers. We are also extremely grateful for our amazing volunteers which aided our nature day camps this summer. You have brought great leadership skills, creativity, and your passion for the outdoors to camp.

Our Day camps all have a screen-free policy, which provides a refreshing escape into the embrace of nature. From exploring the secrets of salamanders, capturing the beauty of Lake Lacawac on canvas, Taking water samples, and much more, our campers could take time for themselves and delve deeper into their interests with hands-on experiences that left a lasting impression.

At the core of all of our camps is a commitment to nurturing the next generation of earth stewards. We instilled this importance with our Leave No Trace policy, teaching campers to respect and protect our natural spaces. We are truly grateful to have had the privilege of educating our campers!

We had many positive responses from parents and campers. Here are a few quotes:

*"It's a lot of fun, learn a lot, make new friends, and enjoy being outside a lot. Definitely would recommend!"*

*"Yes, my son attended 8 different camps this summer at various locations and various subjects and this was his favorite!"*

*"Counselors were professional and caring. The site is beautiful and offers many opportunities for learning and exploring."*







The mission of Camp Attaway, a therapeutic day summer program in Maryland, is to provide children with severe emotional and behavioral challenges the opportunity to have fun and successful connection with others.

While Camp Attaway involves everyday camp activities, the therapeutic themes of our camp are woven into every activity.

Our nature program has been a core element of camp, and the nature activities have had a far-reaching impact on our campers. Research supports time in nature as reducing stress and promoting cognitive development in children, and we see the potential for these effects in our campers. Thanks to the generous support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, our nature program remains strong.



After every summer session, when I meet for the post camp conferences with parents and campers, I ask them about their thoughts about the nature activities. This year, a camper, a 10-year-old boy, responded, “Kids don’t go outside a lot. They need to know about nature, because the more you know about the world, the more you care about the world. Because the world is nature.”

During our first week of camp, we focus with our children on social skills to facilitate connections with others, some having success with making friends for the first time in their life. A message we instill in our campers is that you have to give in order to receive. In line with helping our campers



develop a strong sense of stewardship, we returned to our yearly tradition of planting seeds. Campers selected the seeds they wished to plant and then spent the remaining days of camp caring for their plants, periodically checking on the plants and attending to their needs.



The lessons learned during this activity helped campers see the importance of caring for something in addition to themselves. In line with taking care of our natural world, another tradition we brought back involved creating bird habitats and feeders by reusing and recycling items, such as milk jugs, coffee cans, and soda bottles.

In line with our therapeutic theme of team work and interconnectedness, our second week involved activities that represent the fragile and interdependent relationship of all life on this planet. In line with this theme, we are brought back our biosphere building activity. Campers re-used materials to construct a small-scale representation of the earth. Campers learned how all organisms are dependent on one another (and on the earth’s resources) for survival and homeostasis. Further, campers took these biospheres home at the end of camp, as reminders of their experience and the core concept of interdependence of all organisms on our planet.

Additionally, to further reinforce the concept of life working together, we introduced a new project, Science Habitat Dioramas, which explored the reliance of all living things on each other to thrive and survive. The camp theme this year was “AttaZoo,” with each small group representing the different exhibits of AttaZoo, such as the mountain animals, rain forest animals and ocean animals. Small groups worked as teams to create a nature diorama to represent their zoo exhibit. Finally, campers participated in our Predator and Prey game! In this game, the campers became parts of a simulation which demonstrates the relationships between living things in the environment. This game allowed our campers to practice flexibility, coping skills and cooperation.

Our third and final week of camp involved direct use of coping skills through our nature activities. During the nature walk at our field trip to Patuxent Research Refuge Center, campers engaged in a BINGO picture scavenger hunt, building their “feeling muscles” while coping with environmental elements that they tended to avoid during the school year (heat, bugs, dirt, and unexpected things happening).

Thank you Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for supporting our nature program that we strongly believe will leave a life lasting impression on our campers!



Thank you again for your support of our summer camp programming at Friends of Zenger Farm in Portland OR. Thanks to your financial contribution we were able to reach 12 Rose CDC families! Below you'll find testimonials and comments from families who participated in the 2023 summer camp program. We reached 363 youth during camp in 2023. Campers have spent their time this summer building meaningful connections with land and building personal practices of environmental stewardship. Our Summer Camp programming is a container for campers to learn, grow, play, and foster long-lasting, personal relationships with nature.

#### Family Feedback:

- Attended camp for years, this was their favorite year! Loved the group collaboration and involvement with activities. Lunchtime was enjoyable with shared space and choices. Loved the cooking and fresh snacks from the farm.
- The camp director has been incredibly supportive of our child's needs, and we are so grateful they've found a place that feels comfortable to them to attend and be them self. Everyone at Zenger we've talked with has sought to understand how we can work together to ensure a great learning experience for our child, while still making sure we're helping our child create space for peers to also enjoy their camp time. I wish we could bottle some of the practices you all use and sprinkle them around to other educational settings we interact with!! Thank you so much for a welcoming and educational camp experience!
- Our kiddo really enjoys the staff - they're mature, respectful, fun and patient - they treat our kiddo like an important person, and we notice the difference here compared to other camps. Much admiration and appreciation for you all!
- Having a space that encourages my kids to explore and have fun in nature! A space that celebrates and fosters my kids' curiosity. I love that my kids are not the only Black kids in the camp and the diversity that Zenger is committed to is reflected in the campers AND the staff!



#### STRAYER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Two select groups of Strayer Middle School eighth graders took part in a unique educational experience at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Wallops Island, VA. This was the first year that we took two separate trips in May & June because we had so many qualified students. Students spent four days learning both in the lab and immersed in the field, gaining a great appreciation for the outdoors, the marine environment, and their role in it. The students actively participated in an array of classroom lectures, field trips, and hands-on activities. Before each field trip students were prepared by the station's instructors with a 30-minute lesson about the natural resources they would be seeing up close and then taken by bus which dropped us off right into that environment. Specimens captured on the oceanographic boat trip and from the intertidal

zone were studied either in the field including a juvenile shark, a male seahorse and a mantis shrimp or if they were hardy enough to withstand the trip such as crabs, shellfish and aquatic plant life, in the lab that evening before being released back to their habitat. A brief and windy walk around the Wallops Island sand dunes allowed students to see firsthand how a barrier island helps protect the inland. On a second, and less windy visit to the beach, students collected several bags of trash as their contribution to a cleaner and safer environment. The students explored the salt marsh to learn how life is determined by the inches it lives above sea-level before diving into the marsh mud themselves. On our final excursion we walked to the Assateague Lighthouse to view forest succession. What they learned by living these experiences could not be matched in a classroom. We heard time and again that the thing students loved most was the chance to apply what they learn in class to a real world experience. Thank you for financially supporting our students who participated in this hands-on, wet-feet educational experience.

"Thank you for the wonderful Wallops Island Trip. My daughter loved it and so many kids/parents had amazing things to say. They learned a ton and will never forget the experience."

- Parent of participant







# Wissahickon

## CHARTER SCHOOL

Each year at Wissahickon Charter School, when our students return from the Kate Svitek Memorial Expedition, we witness a remarkable transformation in their confidence and leadership abilities. Many of them surprise themselves by excelling and taking on leadership roles in challenging situations, fostering a newfound motivation to persevere and excel within the school environment.

The experience also fosters a sense of unity and collaboration among our students, as they return with enhanced teamwork skills. They express a heightened level of compassion for their peers, developed through the necessity of working together in a different and demanding outdoor setting.

This transformative experience allows a group of children from the city an opportunity to embody Kate's love for the outdoors and her dedication to fostering a deep respect and passion for nature within themselves. The expedition not only honors Kate's memory but also embodies her vision of instilling a profound appreciation for the wilderness in the hearts of young learners.

Enclosed, you will find detailed accounts from our students, reflecting on the impact of the expedition on their personal growth and interpersonal skills. We are deeply grateful for your continuous support, which has played a pivotal role in empowering our students to flourish and thrive in various aspects of their education and personal development.

What is one thing you learned on this trip?

*"I learned how to be ready for anything."*

*"I learned how to set up a tent and all the skills and tricks to camping."*

*"I don't hate the outdoors like I thought I did."*

*"Hard stuff is easier when you work together."*

*"I am strong."*

The best part of the trip was?

*"The arrival to the campsite after the long hike. The relief was the best!"*

*"All the laughing after walking a long hard day."*

*"The best part of the trip was when we would all help each other and when we were laughing together."*

*"The hike was the best because everyone was motivating each other."*

Thank you, Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation



Thank you!! We are deeply grateful for the financial support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation in 2023. Helping our students "Reveal the Possibilities Within," is our primary mission - and is at the core of every program at 100 Elk Outdoor Center.

In total, the funding we received from Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation enabled 297 students to experience our programming: high and low ropes challenge courses, team and character building, canoeing, an exploration of horsemanship, archery, climbing, hiking and an introduction to wilderness ecology. Most importantly, students overcame limitations and "revealed the possibilities within" themselves.

The following activities were part of the 100 Elk Outdoor Education programming in 2023:

1) Challenge activities, including two high ropes courses and a zipline, archery and horseback riding.

2) Community-building activities, including canoeing, low ropes courses and team-building sessions that focus on problem-solving, improving communication skills, and fostering and supporting friendships.

3) Ecology activities, which help foster a love for and understanding of the outdoors, Eco hikes that encourage the sustainability of our forests along with survival skills, and engaging in group games that simulate how ecosystems and the food web work.

On the final evening of a 100 Elk Outdoor Center program, students and chaperones are invited to share how they experienced or witnessed "Revealing the Possibilities Within", how they saw "feeling loved and valued" - in themselves or their peers, and gratitude. This is what our participants had to say this year (below):

*"I did not think I could make it to the fifth rail on the high ladder, but I did"* (Sopris student)

*"The staff connecting and quickly knowing our kids was impressive."* (Sopris teacher)

*"... I just want to say how grateful and impressed I am with this program... I have seen our students be kind to each other, support and cheer for each other, and help each other in ways I haven't seen before... I would like for all of you to bring this back to school with you and treat each other the way you have while you've been here. And I want to say thank you to the 100 Elk staff, this has been an amazing experience."* (Sopris Elementary School Principal)

*"I loved seeing kids climb up the pole to do the Zipline. They were clearly scared, but saw their confidence build when they wanted to go again."* (Manhattan Middle School chaperone)

*"I saw a kid who swung over the 'Lava pit' during 'Spy School', who thought they couldn't make it, and the smile after they did, meant everything."* (Manhattan Middle School chaperone)

*"It was so wonderful watching these kids experience things that they would never have gotten a chance to otherwise. Just watching them make those memories was so worth it."*

(Tollgate Elementary teacher)



**G**row Portland supports schools and communities by facilitating hands-on garden experiences, fostering connections to food, nature, and each other.

Grow Portland was able to extend the reach of our summer programming and summer and fall harvests in our partner school gardens while mentoring and working with youth through Summer Internships. We partnered with 2 interns from Lents Youth Initiative (LYI), 1 from Reed College and 1 from Lewis and Clark College as they worked with us in school gardens over the course of the summer. We began the summer with 4 total interns, though one LYI intern did need to leave, midseason. The other 3 finished strong, helping us tend to our garden spaces and harvest dozens of pounds of food that went directly to school families. Interns helped with overall crop management, harvests, weeding, watering and coordination of harvest donations with school food pantries and summer nutrition programs. They helped ensure that the gardens are flourishing and full of food when students return for Garden School in the fall.

Interns also participated in summer programming, aiding Garden Educators in teaching students in the garden. Grow Portland summer programming happens in partnership with existing programs through the David Douglas School District, IRCO SUN and Campfire. We run garden programs for at least 4 weeks each summer, often more. Interns helped summer students learn about the garden while tending the land, harvesting food and playing together. Interns participated in our daily efforts to provide meaningful outdoor experiences to K-5 students while helping to maintain thriving diverse ecosystems on school grounds. With the guidance of our interns and staff, students were able to learn, hands-on, about the natural world around them. They harvested seeds, explored the world of insects, learned about wild birds and participated in the summer garden bounty.

Our Reed intern, Cecile, partnered with Grow Portland's Site Coordinator and an Indigenous farmer and consultant to further our native planting plan and signage project in the gardens. She helped choose and install native plants in the gardens to enhance educational opportunities in those spaces, even when our educators are not present. She also took on a grant writing project to learn more about how we sustain the organization.

Interns received a stipend for their work in addition to building skills in gardening, food access expansion, and outdoor education. They were a huge help in expanding upon our current school garden programming while providing opportunities for local youth to become local environmental leaders. This summer, interns worked an estimated 450 hours in our school gardens! They aided in harvesting roughly 50 pounds of produce which was immediately donated to students and their families through direct access or schools' food pantries.

With the support of our summer intern program, we were able to expand our efforts in offering quality environmental education and food support to students at our partner schools. Coordinating this level of summer interns was a new opportunity for us and the additional funding allowed our staff to have time to communicate with and support interns in a robust way. We were able to include interns in our weekly planning meetings and integrate them more deeply into our summer team. Our Lewis and Clark intern, Gwenn, commented in their exit interview that they felt very supported and had what they needed to succeed in their internship thanks to the leadership of Grow Portland and the funding from your foundation. We are grateful for the support of the Kate Svitek Foundation to help us successfully complete this project!

Thank you again for your support!



**W**e allocated the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation grant funds to expand LEAP's paid internship, guide-in-training and scaffolded mentorship opportunities for young people interested in outdoor adventure leadership. In past years we have had 1 paid intern working alongside our team of professional river guides. This year, with increased funding, we were able to offer paid internship placements to four people between the ages of 17-19. Working closely with our guide team, the interns practiced river rescue situations, learned how to row the large gearboat rafts, set up camp, helped prepare meals, and facilitated

conversations during circle time each morning and evening. Each internship lasted from 2 to 3 weeks on the river this summer. We hope that some of these interns will join us as full members of our paid river guide team in future seasons."







On behalf of the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA) and the 172 teens who took part in the 2023 Youth Backcountry Camp (YBCC) Program, we want to thank you for the continuous encouragement and support of the

Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. Your generosity supported regional teens as they achieved life-changing accomplishments and gained heart-warming stories to keep forever.

Over 17 four-day backpacking adventures, youth were challenged to gather and filter water, cook elaborate meals over small stoves, and set up tarp shelters, all while carrying a 30lb pack, hiking up steep terrain, and sleeping on the ground. Between these moments of challenge and structured risk, 91% of teens found reward in their realized resilience, nature’s solace, and unplugged play with their peers. In one such moment this summer,

a group of 10 teens participated in an activity that has become a staple of the final night of YBCC trips. The group shared positive affirmations with each other, often surprised and validated by their peers’ observations.

Afterward, a camper confidently reflected on their experience, “I never thought of myself as a leader, but now I can see that I am one.” Campers came out of their shells in entirely new ways, emerging as new leaders, forming new friendships, and supporting each other to be and love their authentic selves.

For 86% of campers facing barriers to outdoor recreation and education, the transformational power of the outdoors was only possible thanks to the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation in 2023. Funds provided by the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation went towards tackling these barriers by providing gear, food, transportation, and instruction for these youth so they could attend the Youth Backcountry Camp program for free and reduced costs.

Thank you for another great summer connecting kids with the natural world.



Students and teachers from Apple Valley High School attended Laketrails Base Camp in the northernmost area of Minnesota this past July with the aid of a grant from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. Many of the students had never been camping before, and the wilderness of

Lake of the Woods provided quite a challenge for their first time in a canoe and tent. Students learned to start a fire, set up a tent, cook over a campfire, and paddle a canoe in wind and waves. While learning basic, simple survival skills, students gained confidence and discovered that they’re capable of much more than they knew.

Apple Valley High School is located in the Twin Cities Metro area of MN, far from the northern reaches of the state. The Northwest Angle region—where Laketrails is located—actually lies north of the Canadian border and is an extremely remote area. While at camp students experienced 9 days away from the confines of the city with many of them seeing the stars and Northern Lights for the first time. Canoe trips lasted 5 days and provided opportunities for journaling, finding personal strengths, and having fun living in the outdoors.

Comments from Apple Valley students included the following:

*“We were able to get a learning experience, however, it didn’t feel like a typical “learning experience” because we were outside the four walls of the classroom. I liked being part of a smaller group because we were able to connect with classmates we normally would not have known had it not been for the canoe trip. Coming away from this trip, I feel like I want to be outside all the time. We learned to be observers of nature as well as observers of ourselves.”*

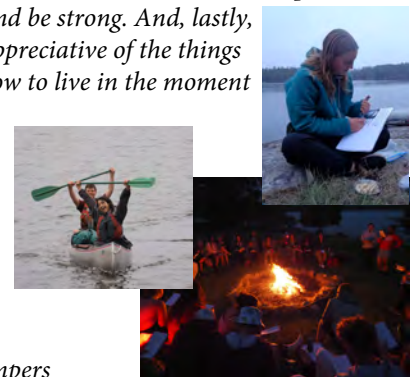
*“This trip was irreplaceable! Although learning at school is important, something like this is a once in a lifetime experience that took things to the next level. I would highly encourage anyone, no matter what their experience is in the outdoors, to take a risk and go on this trip. I loved the opportunity to be so close to nature and to each other!”*

*“My time at Laketrails helped me bond with new people and also to meet other people from around Minnesota. It also pushed me a lot to learn new skills and be strong. And, lastly, it also just taught me to be appreciative of the things around me and taught me how to live in the moment and ‘be here now.’ ”*

Parents also noted the difference in their kids after the wilderness experience. One parent commented,

*“Our son came home with a ton of excitement! He felt welcomed, comfortable, and connected with his fellow campers and trip guides. He was able to have an experience that he may never have had or even been interested in if it were not for this program. Prior to Laketrails he spent a lot of time with video games, but this challenged him—made him step out of his comfort zone, and succeed. He learned life skills that cannot be taught, only learned through experiencing nature in this way.”*

Apple Valley students and staff, as well as Laketrails Base Camp, are extremely grateful for the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation!







Something Good in the World is incredibly grateful to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for supporting our outdoor education programs again this year in both New York and Hawai'i!

In NY, the Ossining Children's Center Kindergarten summer programs focused on the water cycle, heading into the cooling

woods to learn about healthy stream and pond life, following their water source all the way to the Hudson River. Not only did the students discover wildlife firsthand, but also for many of them, this was their first time ever in the woods. We smiled when they told us how they wanted to stay in the stream forever, how this was the most beautiful place, how happy they felt, and how they never want to leave. In addition, the students visited a local family farm to learn about the origins of their foods, and to plant seeds to bring home in potted gardens to grow their own veggies. Later in the fall, a new Kindergarten class was introduced to the woodland trails for their first experience, discovering fallen leaves, mushrooms and a rushing stream, and learning how to navigate with their bodies over rocks and logs. Thank you for making it possible for young children from urban environments to access wild spaces, where learning is always fun!



In Hawai'i, Pre-K through Grade 4 at the Volcano School of Arts & Sciences also had the chance to be able to learn in nature's classroom every week! In the district of Ka'u on the Big Island, over 1/3 of families live below the poverty line and are food insecure, and with more than half of students identifying as Native Hawaiian, it's crucial for young students to learn how to grow healthy fruit, veggies and herbs in their own gardens. Restoration of forests through planting endemic and indigenous plants is equally important, to bring back native insects and birds, and protect the coral reefs from run-off. Thanks to your support, students are discovering the interconnectedness between all living things in their island paradise, and teachers tell us their favorite day is always "Mala (garden) Monday!"



The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation generously granted \$3500 to Peak 7 Adventures to further our Basecamp Program serving youth

from King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties in 2023. We didn't quite hit our fundraising goals for the Basecamp Program, and chose to downsize our big goals based on the level of funding we received across multiple funders. We utilized all the funding provided this summer rather than reserving funds for 2023.

I am pleased to report that our Seattle team, utilizing the Black Diamond Camps Rainier Campus, served 334 youth participants this summer. Our objective with our Basecamp Program is to provide an 'on-ramp' to outdoor recreation by offering an introductory stand up paddleboarding program on local lakes that would lead to 2 night/ 3 day Basecamp experience.

Our goal is to gently introduce youth to the outdoors to reduce the fear and anxiety many youth experience when exposed to wilderness settings with a lack of accustomed amenities.



Some youth participated in rock climbing or stand up paddleboarding only, while others participated in a full basecamp program which included paddleboarding, hiking and rock climbing experiences. We started strong, and we look forward to further developing this program in the coming program season!

Youth served included children 8 years old and up. Clients served by our Seattle program in 2023 included Hand in Hand, Vine Maple Place, Tacoma Rescue Mission, Mary's Place, New Futures, New Horizons and more.

Thank you for your support and partnership in serving the needs of youth! We look forward to continuing a partnership with you in the future!







As a result of the grant from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, we were able to bring 18 students from Newark on two extended expedition courses during this summer; one to explore and hike

Mount Washington in New Hampshire, and a second course to have students cycle through Baltimore to visit green spaces and various city landmarks. These trips represented a return to extended outdoor programming in collaboration with our community partners in Newark. Students on both trips had a chance to engage in a wide variety of outdoor activities, including cycling, hiking, camping, and learning about native plant and animal life in green spaces outside of their normal city environment. While many of the students described the experience as challenging, they also noted a tremendous amount of personal growth, appreciation of the opportunity to push beyond their comfort zone, and an appreciation for the different pace and calmness of being in nature.



The trip photos and reflections have been very well received by our donors and supporters, who are eager to see us return to our roots of being able to hold regular, in person-extended courses for students who need social-emotional learning and outdoor education experiences more than ever following years of isolation.



We are already in the process of planning additional trips for the coming year, and are fielding renewed program requests from our school and community partners who are eager to have the youth they work with participating in outdoor and experiential education programs again. We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of your Foundation to allow us to continue to offer high quality, transformative outdoor programs to the students from Newark that we work with!



Thank you for supporting NOLS students with the Kate Svitek Memorial Scholarship. This year, the scholarship was awarded to 19-year-old Griffin and 28-year-old Sandeep. Griffin completed a Rocky Mountain Rescue Semester course in the Winter, and Sandeep completed a Himalaya Backpacking course in the Spring. Both students demonstrated exemplary expedition behavior and leadership skills, as evidenced by their glowing post-course evaluations.

Since graduating from high school, Griffin had been working as an Emergency Medical Technician in their local town in Massachusetts. This NOLS course, which included a Wilderness First Responder certification, has empowered Griffin to return to the front country with more risk management skills and confidence as a medical professional. With the future goal of an exciting career in search and rescue, attending this NOLS course was a crucial stepping stone for Griffin.

A Nepal native, Sandeep was excited to attend a NOLS course right in their backyard. With years of experience as a whitewater river guide, a NOLS backpacking course offered an opportunity to add technical mountaineering skills to Sandeep's repertoire. Sandeep found this NOLS course so inviting and impactful that they are now awaiting admission to a NOLS instructor course. This demonstrates Sandeep's commitment to wilderness education at the highest standard.

Experiences like these would not be accessible to Griffin and Sandeep without your generous support. For that, we are eternally grateful for you and your steadfast support for scholarships at NOLS.

As always, comfort zones were expanded, goals were met, communities were forged, capacities were built, and students learned that they are capable of more than they ever imagined. The students whose lives you have changed are out in the world right now paying their NOLS experience forward in countless ways. While you have directly empowered two students this year, the full reach of your generosity cannot be quantified. On behalf of Griffin and Sandeep, we are immensely grateful for your support.





## The College Settlement of Philadelphia

600 WITMER ROAD • HORSHAM, PENNSYLVANIA 19044

*To prepare young people to make a positive impact in the world.*

The \$5,000 contribution from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation is used to off-set the operational costs of running day and overnight summer camp. With gifts from other like-minded donors we are able to offer greatly reduced enrollment fees

making our camp experience accessible to any family that want to send their child.

College Settlement of Philadelphia operates overnight camp programs and day programs for children with financial disadvantages from the metropolitan Philadelphia area. We offer them an enjoyable, educational summer camp experience. Our 'Campership' Fund is a resource to these families so their children can attend our camp at a greatly reduced cost. We do not want to see any child be left out simply because of their economic situation.

College Settlement's serves 1,000 children every summer. 82% of our campers live at or below the poverty level based on school district lunch statistics. Our fee system offers as much as a 90% reduction in the actual cost of camp to children who qualify for free lunch at school and a 70% reduction for all applicants.

According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Community Health Assessment (May 2014), "Philadelphia is the poorest of the 10 largest cities in the U.S., with nearly 1 out of 3 of all residents and nearly 2 out of 5 children living below the poverty line." The report further states that, "Obesity is often due to poor diet and limited physical activity, which are influenced significantly by people's environments and social circumstances... In Philadelphia, 20.5% of children age 5-18 years have a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to the 95th percentile for their age and gender group." A significant portion of our campers come with the diet and exercise deficits associated with urban poverty.

College Settlement responds to those deficits with a comprehensive holistic health and wellness program that is embedded in every camper's day. Our goals will include measuring the success of our ability to provide campers with: 1) Social skills development - how campers strengthen their interpersonal and problem solving skills and gain new conflict resolution tools; 2) Health and wellness - how campers experience the joy of physical activities both individually and in group activities and gain knowledge of healthy foods and life skills; and 3) Environmental education - how campers develop or increase an appreciation and knowledge of the natural world, animals, and ecological factors.

We offer options for recreational activities both familiar and novel. Campers are taught how best to prepare for and benefit from such activities. On staff is an expert in sports science (through our partner organization, the Blackthorn Rugby Club) who, among other things, teaches the campers about warming up and stretching. Safety is emphasized. For swimming, biking, and ropes type activities, specially trained staff members make sure campers are properly taught so they can experience success in a physically and emotionally safe environment. We offer many recreational options with a goal that each child can find a lifelong activity to enjoy.

With a lake, two pools, climbing walls, low ropes courses, biking and swimming programs, we have an abundance of opportunities for children to learn new things, to make friends, and to create memorable successes in their own lives by surmounting challenges they chose to tackle with us. Because this is so rare an opportunity for many of our campers, we also teach our counselors how to bring out the best in each child. Our permanent staff hire, train and orient 60 counselors each summer from 15 different countries and from states all across America and from the Philadelphia region. The staff are trained on how to be mentors, teachers, and guides to the campers. Environmental education is taught by our highly trained Teacher Naturalists as they explore with the campers our 235 acres of wetlands, forests, and streams.

Our camp staff emphasize and teach peaceful resolution skills. Counselors work on these skills with all of their campers, but there are also Camper Advocates who focus on children having the greatest difficulty adjusting to camp life and group living. At camp children can shed the stigmas or stereotypes they may face in school, in their peer group, or even in their family. Everyone has a clean slate, and we pride ourselves in continuing the traditions of inclusiveness and acceptance of differences that have defined our camp culture.

The cumulative positive long term impact that a summer camp experience can have on a child is College Settlement's ultimate goal. It is our intention to embrace the initiatives necessary to measure this kind of improvement to a person and their community.







With support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Los Angeles Waterkeeper (LAW) has continued our robust Healthy Habitats work, which seeks to achieve ecosystem health and resiliency for all the region’s waters so they can support the communities and wildlife that depend on them.

Since submitting our 2023 application, on March 30th LAW has engaged hundreds of volunteers in skill-building, specialized Watershed restoration efforts both on land and on the water, as part of our interconnected Creeks to Coast (C2C) Cleanup Challenge, Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Watch, and recently re-launched River Assessment Fieldwork Team (RAFT).

**C2C Cleanup Challenge**

Since its November 2020 inception, our innovative Creeks to Coast (C2C) Cleanup Challenge has engaged 1,500+ participants in cleaning up more than 5 tons of waste and reporting pollution data on nearly 120,000 pieces of litter. Collecting data on plastic pollution as well as reducing the waste/urban runoff flowing into our ocean, rivers and creeks has had a measurable positive impact on the health of the Watershed. Specifically during the grant period, LAW has engaged 800+ volunteers in collection pollution data on 22,000 pieces of litter and cleaned up 2,000 pounds of trash from LA County. We held 20 volunteer events at 10 sites across LA County. Our signature programmatic event, “Plastic Free July” held cleanups on 4 Saturdays throughout the month, at Santa Monica Beach, Junipero Beach (Long Beach), Compton Creek, and North Atwater Park (LA River).

**River Assessment Fieldwork Team**

Through our recently relaunched River Assessment Field Team (RAFT), 257 volunteers took part in 8 sampling events at 5 segments of the Los Angeles River and its tributaries. As part of the RAFT program, volunteers learned about the history of the LA River, the challenges it faces today, and the vision LA Waterkeeper has for it. Volunteers were introduced to water monitoring concepts, took water samples (for educational purposes only) to test for a variety of factors such as turbidity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, dissolved oxygen saturation, pH, coliform bacteria, and PFAS . After each test, we discussed with the volunteers what the normal range we expect for each of the samples, what the results means, and why they matter in the context of a healthy river. At the conclusion of the program, we will also submit the data collected to the Earth Eco Water Challenge which aims to equip anyone to protect the water resources we rely on and build public awareness and involvement in protecting our water resources.

We’ve also introduced PFAS and coliform bacteria testing, which we send to a lab, to understand the prevalence of PFAS and pathogenic organisms of fecal origin in our waters. All of our PFAS tests came back positive for on average 10 or more different types of forever chemicals. PFAS bioaccumulate within fish and wildlife, and the full impact on humans is not yet known. Coliform bacteria was also present at all sites tested, and indicates that other pathogenic organisms of fecal origin may be present, which is dangerous for humans who may be recreating in the river and contributes to safety challenges at our beaches.

**Marine Protected Areas Watch**

Off our coast, after starting off the year slow due to an onslaught of atmospheric rivers resulting in hazardous weather and ocean conditions, our MPA Watch crew continued its role of protecting our local marine reserves. Since spring alone, we’ve completed 61 survey trips, which play a critical role in supporting MPAs while providing unique on-the-water experiences for volunteers. Over the course of the grant LAW engaged 50+ volunteers from New Earth Life (previously incarcerated youth), Santa Monica College, LA Valley College, Cal State Long Beach, and other organizations. In addition to our normal MPA Watch efforts, we also engaged in a number of sampling activities in support of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). This year saw a fatal increase in demoic acid, from toxic algal blooms, present in our waters with widespread reports of sick sea lions, dolphins and other marine animals. To support SCCWRP, over the summer we pulled numerous water samples from demoic acid hot spots during our MPA Watch survey trips, as well as supported the Marine Mammal Care Center, and kept the public up to date with timely information and reporting guidelines.



**Thank You! Thank You!**

Once again, the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation received a check in the amount of \$2500 from the Joseph Alexander Foundation. Mr. Alexander’s niece, Randi Windheim serves on the board of the Joseph Alexander Foundation and knew Kate when she was growing up.



**L**ucky to Ride successfully ran its Learn to Earn (LtE) program for 2023 thanks to the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and other funders. Lucky to Ride

worked with our agency partners, the Sheridan school district, Denver school district, Big Brother, Big Sister and YMCAs of Denver to bring our hands-on STEM curriculum to students that these groups work with long-term. We served over 120 youth in 2023 for just this program, with the program offered to classes of ten students at a time. Each class enjoyed over 15 hours of instruction broken into five to six sessions.

Over the course of the program, youth received training and hands-on practice in basic bike maintenance skills and safe bike riding skills. Our highly-trained instructors used our curriculum framework to help participants link the basics of bicycles to key STEM ideas like Systems, Simple Machines, Energy, Force, and Friction. The bikes helped our instructors bring these abstract concepts to life for the youth in a practical and fun way. The participants walked away from the program with more than just a deeper understanding of bike safety and maintenance, or even a new interest in STEM concepts. They each earned a refurbished, geared bicycle of their own, a bike helmet, a bike lock, replacement tube, bike chain lubricant and two tire levers. In the low-income communities with which we work, owning a bike can be a rarity. The youth value having something that belongs to them alone.



Furthermore, a bike represents the freedom to move around the city independently. These youth are now able to get where they want to go in a way that improves their mental and physical health.



Furthermore, a bike represents the freedom to move around the city independently. These youth are now able to get where they want to go in a way that improves their mental and physical health.

### Program goals and objectives:

The goals of Learn-to-Earn are to:

- Kids have fun on bikes
- Positive associations with outdoor adventure
- Time in nature
- Opportunity to build a new skill
- Be included in group activity and feel connected to their group through the ride
- Want to incorporate cycling into their routine for improved mental and physical health
- Have access to resources to make regular cycling happen
- Use cycling as inexpensive transportation for financial benefit
- Gain independence

In 2023, all of these goals and objectives were consistently met by the youth who completed our classes. Bike maintenance skills (changing a tire, resetting a bike chain, ABC Quick Check) and safe riding skills were measured by instructor observation, pre and post assessment and instructors recorded that over 95% of all participants demonstrated these skills, with most classes achieving 100% success.

### Program Changes and Challenges:

We continue to implement social emotional learning skills. We focus on critical thinking skills, social awareness, emotional regulation and persistence. We recently went through a Theory of Change program to reevaluate our programming and approach. We are finalizing a new mission statement to better reflect the changes in our focus. Moving forward our focus is more on empowering youth with equitable access to cycling. We've recognized there are numerous barriers to accessing the outdoors aside from the more obvious reasons.

### Demographics:

Lucky to Ride serves young people from target Denver neighborhoods in southwest and northeast Denver. Together, 67% of residents of these neighborhoods identify as Latinx or Hispanic, 6% identify as Black or African-American, and 20% live below the poverty level. Most of the focus neighborhoods for Lucky to Ride are majority Hispanic, with some Hispanic/Latinx populations making up 75% or more of the neighborhood.



**W**e are pleased to report that we used the funds you so graciously donated to Saddle of Love to hold a Suicide prevention camp. It was a huge success. The kids developed trust and bonds with each other through our team building therapeutic activities and games which helped them open up to each other about their mental illnesses and struggles. There was a lot of crying and a lot of laughing and lots of supporting and validating one another as they each shared their stories and their daily struggles. Many of

them shared their suicidal thoughts come from being bullied. I think it was very normalizing for all of them to hear each other stories of different races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and friend groups that each and everyone of them have been bullied in one way, shape or form and that they are not alone. They engaged in role-playing and skits on how to handle bullying and how to use the coping skills we taught to manage depression, anxiety, OCD, eating disorders, body, self image, etc.

We know that all research shows that social connectedness is one of the top protective factors against suicide, and these kids really connected with each other and formed friendships that will continue after our camp. They rode horses, cooked every day, gardened, meditated, had a drum circle, yoga and all sorts of activities to learn life coping skills, and practice them in every day life.



We want to thank you again for sponsoring this very valuable camp for these at-risk kids!!





This comes with heartfelt thanks for choosing Camp Rainbow as a grant recipient, once more for the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. It truly is because of your foundation's generous donation of \$4,500 that children that attend our camp can grow in knowledge and enjoy real-life activities in nature.

Camp Rainbow served each week an average of 60 energetic and grateful campers, ages 7 – 14 yrs., from June – August. Our goal is to assist campers in healthy overall development. Much research in child development demonstrates that children benefit from not only the physical activity of being outdoors in green spaces, but that nature generates a more positive, calming, and emotional, well-being.



Beginning in April, Camp Rainbow traditionally sends out camp applications to Montgomery County school guidance counselors, social workers, and police officials. In May, we began preparing for the summer season. Each year we have the pleasure

of having seasoned returning counselors and new counselors that bring creative and innovative ideas to engage the campers. We were pleased to be able to add a new camp counselor that brought excitement in noticing all the little things that might otherwise go unnoticed or taken for granted in nature. It is noteworthy to mention that this year because of your Foundation, we were able to continue to provide our regular nature group activities (10-12 campers each) and add a new nature walk experience for 'early risers'. Campers learned through safe curiosity the differences of safe and unsafe, general entomology (Bee's in particular), animal and plant life safety local to the camp environment. The earlier riser nature walks were so well received that prior to surveying the campers, they requested on their own volition an additional walk. Counselors and campers alike discovered an additional commonality and closer bonding from the walks.



We look forward to next year brainstorming ways to further enlarge our nature walks and activities with developing partnerships with local Perkiomen Watershed, Local Park Rangers, and various other nature experts.

On Behalf of Campers and Staff, Thank you!



Seven minutes; that's how far away Dash Point State Park is from Pacific Middle School in Des Moines, Washington. Seven minutes is a short drive from school, yet few of the middle schoolers had ever visited. That changed for them and hundreds of other young people in South King County this year because of the expansion of Y.E.T.I.'s accessible outdoor adventure programs. With the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation this year, Y.E.T.I. was able to reach more young people with free outdoor recreation opportunities in schools. This was done through our outdoor clubs and other collaborative trips. This meant

that at our 6 weekly school sites and dozens of partners, more young people went: hiking, biking, rock climbing, camping, snowshoeing, and kayaking. They were able to connect with nature and each other in new ways!

Our programs focused on meeting young people where they were and providing them with the resources to try something new. Food, Transportation, Equipment and instruction were all included, allowing young people to try something new, connect with their peers, and fall in love with nature through their experiences.

Fast Facts:

- Based in South King Co. (south of Seattle WA)
- Middle School and High School Trips
- 6 weekly school sites
- 133 Outdoor Trips
- Over 300 Students Served



## FRIENDLY REMINDER

If everyone on our mailing list bought one \$10 card a year we would raise \$20,000! SO, I am asking you, our valued supporters, to think of Kate's Foundation when you want to recognize a birthday or anniversary, a promotion, the birth of a baby, a get well card or memorialize a loved one.

Just go to the website for a form or email Ellen at [esvitek@comcast.net](mailto:esvitek@comcast.net) and let her know who the card should be sent to and for what reason. She will send out one of our beautiful all purpose cards.

Cards are only \$10 each and the Foundation makes \$9.45 per card! Let's support the Foundation instead of your local card shop!



We thank you and the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for your generous support of Achieve Tahoe's 2023/24 Winter Adaptive Snowsports Program. Your support has helped make it possible for us to continue to provide affordable outdoor winter recreation opportunities for people of all ages (4+). Our 2023/24 adaptive skiing and snowboarding classes are set to begin December 1, 2023. Through our winter program, we teach one-on-one half-day adaptive snowsports lessons to people of all skill levels with a wide range of physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities. Each lesson includes lift ticket, customized adaptive instruction, and all sports and safety equipment and supplies needed. Winter 2023/24 classes will run through April 2024 (weather permitting) at Alpine Meadows, Olympic Valley, and Northstar ski resorts in North Lake Tahoe. Last winter we taught 1,987 adaptive snowsports lessons to a record 607 unique participants with disabilities. We expect to exceed these numbers in 2023/24, as program demand is rapidly increasing.

Generous funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation is supporting our 2023/24 program capacity through the purchase of 5 new MIPS youth ski helmets (\$450), and 5 new MIPS adult ski helmets (\$525). All participants are required to wear helmets, and these state-of-the-art helmets will replace 10 aging helmets in our supply. Replenishing this supply helps ensure that we can serve at least as many participants as we did last year and supports our long-standing Commitment to participant safety. Funding was also utilized to purchase spare hats, gloves, and ski jackets (\$325) that we will loan to participants who need them, enhancing their overall experience.

The award also created 8 scholarships (\$1,200), which have already been disbursed to low-income or financially challenged participants who have registered for our 2023/24 winter program. Scholarships create pathways to outdoor recreation for people with disabilities who would otherwise be unable to participate, and provide opportunities for them to build health, confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of outdoor recreation.

We again thank you and the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for your generous support of Achieve Tahoe's winter program.

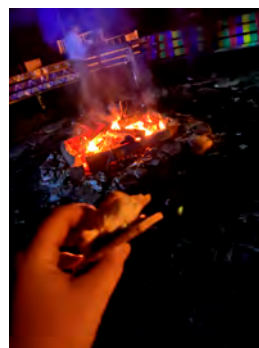
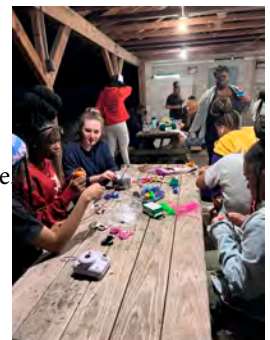


The unwavering support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation has allowed Gateway to the Great Outdoors (GGO) to create profound experiences for over 400 students across St. Louis, MO, and Chicago, IL. Your

generosity has given these children the opportunity to immerse themselves in the unspoiled wilderness, fostering a deep appreciation for nature. With your kind backing, GGO's "Kate's Campers" end-of-year trips have transported children far from city bustle into the heart of the wild. These journeys have been transformative, offering moments of wonder—canoeing through serene waters, making s'mores by the fire, hiking through untamed paths, and waking up to the sounds of nature at dawn. Picture their faces lighting up as they navigate the woods, explore the nooks and crannies, and conquer new challenges like zip-lining through the treetops. These moments, surrounded by the pure beauty of nature, are creating lasting memories and nurturing a love for exploration.

No city skylines, just the pure simplicity of the woods. Each sunrise brings with it the symphony of nature—birdsongs, rustling leaves, and the smell of fresh earth. This immersion in nature is awakening in them a sense of wonder and appreciation for the world around them. As night fell, all the kids came together in yurts, sharing this space to bond, make new friendships, and experience the joys of camaraderie. Here, they learned the essence of kindness, respect, and letting down their guards, resulting in smiles that echoed happiness and freedom away from the daily worries that burden their lives. GGO remains committed to expanding these wilderness adventures, fostering resilience, and instilling a lifelong connection with nature. Through these experiences, children are discovering the joys of the outdoors, forming memories that will stay with them for years to come. None of these incredible experiences would be possible without the generous support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. Your belief in our cause has given these children a priceless gift—the chance to build a relationship with nature that will stay with them throughout their lives.

From the quiet moments to the shared laughter around the fire—thank you for making these moments of connection with nature possible.







We are happy to report on the outcomes of the generous \$3,000 grant from Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation to underwrite field trips at Greenwell Foundation. As requested, the grant underwrote 3 field trips, involving over 50 at-risk high school students in St. Mary's County in rural Southern Maryland. The students and their

teachers spent 4 hours at Greenwell, involved in Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies, cooperative games and robust outdoor activities.

Outcomes included increased connection through cooperative activities, opportunities for conversation and expression, and successfully sharing challenges involving the horses or in the forest. Environmental stewardship lessons will be emphasized this Spring and Fall. Facilitated activities, supportive cooperation and conversations help children make positive progress in their mental health.

We are deeply grateful for our new partnership with the Kate Svitek memorial Foundation, and hope to continue our service together in 2024.



First Descents is deeply grateful for the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation's support of our mission and the young adults we serve. Together,

we have championed the healing power of adventure to improve health outcomes and foster supportive peer communities nationwide. We are honored to partner in this work and are grateful to share the impact of your grantmaking.

The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation's general operating grant of \$2,500 provided integral support in the delivery of First Descents' 2023 core programming and key strategic priorities. In 2023, First Descents hosted 45 programs to serve 540 young adult patients, caregivers, and healthcare workers nationwide. Specifically, this includes 28 oncology programs serving 358 participants, six multiple sclerosis programs serving 60 participants, seven healthcare worker programs serving 87 participants, and four caregiver programs serving 35 participants.

In addition to successful program delivery, First Descents continues to invest in its three strategic priorities: Expand Programs, Build Community, and Prescribe Adventure.



The following testimonials demonstrate the powerful impact of First Descents' programs. A special thank you to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for making these experiences possible.

*"I can't say thank you enough. This was the most amazing, beneficial experience of my life. I have done nothing but work, school and fight cancer for the past two years. This program reminded me I need to make time for myself and to be outside and to fuel myself with self-love."* - 2023 Oncology Participant

*"Getting an MS diagnosis feels so isolating. You can't trust your body or your future, but the majority of people don't have peers of a similar age and ability to discuss it with. The connections and being able to discuss symptoms with people who truly get it absolutely changed my life and my perspective on the value I feel I lost as a person post-diagnosis. The other participants were incredible and meeting them has mademe feel limitless again."* - 2023 Multiple Sclerosis Program Participant





# Grateful CAP Students Write About Their Outward Bound Experiences

I would like to start this by saying thank you for giving me the opportunity to travel, explore, and live through an interesting adventure. I have never gone camping prior to North Carolina Outward Bound. In complete honesty, it was my first time in North Carolina and traveling anywhere without my family by my side. Compared to most of my family, I enjoy the outdoors, more specifically walking/hiking. Unfortunately, there are not any accessible trails in Philadelphia without a car to get you there. When I first heard about North Carolina Outward Bound and its outreach programs, I was fascinated. I wanted to do something new and that's why I signed up. The trip overall, despite a lot of difficulties, was a time of growth and self-reflection for me. When I first got there, I was nervous and didn't know what to expect. To my understanding, it was the rainiest course my instructors June and Terry ever did.

I was part of the July 12-20th, 2023 Outward Bound group and as previously mentioned my instructors were June and Terry. They were to me, amazing instructors who socialized with us and made the experience of being in the woods all the more bearable. In terms of the other people in my group that is a different case. Unfortunately, some people in my group, despite continuous warnings from our school to prepare in advance, failed to do so. Which led to many setbacks in our course, along with it being the rainiest course of the summer. On my course we mostly hiked as expected and rock climbed. When it came to the rock climbing, I was excited at first. As soon as I started climbing, I got scared and backed out momentarily. However, with the encouragement from the few companions (whose presence was greatly appreciated), I tried again and got pretty far up. One skill that I acquired while on the trip was knot tying, specifically for the bear hang we had to set up after dinner. I didn't expect to actually retain any information from that trip but I still remember it all as if I was still there. I remember the knot method used for the bear hang, how to properly handle a compass with a map, and setting up the knots for our tarps.

From a mental standpoint, at times it was overwhelming due to our ill-prepared group combined with sudden homesickness, at times it was too much. However, because of the friends I had made and already had with me on that trip I pushed through. Traveling with the type of group I had really helped put things in perspective as to the type of people I would deal with in the real world. Some were quiet, reserved and just did their part without saying much.

Other people were similar to that but slightly more social with a select few, this is the category I more so fell under, we did our part and when needed we would be carrying more weight and helped motivate others to push through. Then there were those on the trip who were part of the setbacks we had, barely contributing to help, complained, and expected everyone else to do the work for them. These were the people who I mentioned were ill-prepared. Needless to say, I gained both strength and patience, the strength from all the extra weight I carried both physically and mentally and the patience from having to deal with said setbacks.

My experience with North Carolina Outward bound helped me in many ways. I learned basic survival skills and conquered fears. I gained not only strength and patience but also a deeper love and appreciation for nature. My favorite part from the trip other than the hiking was the personal time we were given midway through the trip. During that time, we had to move most of our belongings a fair distance away from the campsite and did what we wanted during that time. I personally took that time to journal and draw the beauty of nature that surrounded me. I felt the most at peace during that time. Another thing I enjoyed during the trip at certain points was the team bonding. that contained rosemary. Which overall boosted moral and was a easy way we bonded and got to know each other more. It was moments like ones I just mentioned that made me truly want to, if given the opportunity to go to North Carolina Outward bound again. -- Eva

While attending Outward Bound, I created memories that I wish I could relive again. From rock climbing, to sitting around campfires, to even hiking at sunset. These moments made it worth the while. I knew that if i didn't stick out to the mission, I would definitely regret the decision, and i was right. I'm glad I finished the exhibition, and can proudly say that I survived a week and a half in the woods.

I learned some important things about myself while on this trip. I learned that I am naturally amazing at reading a compass and navigating what surrounds me. Throughout the trip, I was referred to as "Mr. Navigator" since I would help a lot in navigating the group to our camp destination each night. I also learned that I love to be by myself, and nature helps with that. On our solo "day," We spent time alone and came to build our character by ourselves. That is what I learned about myself.

This experience changed me a lot as a person. It changed my character, and the way I react to others. I've changed my work ethic, whether that be school work, or job work. I've become more responsible with work and due dates. It also helped grow my discipline. I've grown to be more patient, as well as be more respectful to others. This experience has been nothing but a blessing. Thank you for giving me the chance to attend North Carolina Outward Bound School. -- Alberto

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible opportunity you provided me with the scholarship to attend the North Carolina Outward Bound program this past summer. Your generosity has been a life-changing experience that I will carry with me forever.

The program challenged me in ways I never thought possible, both mentally and physically. From navigating the wilderness to working in a team to overcome obstacles, every moment was a lesson in resilience and self-discovery. Your support allowed me to embark on this transformative journey, and the skills I gained – leadership, perseverance, and a deeper connection to nature – have not only shaped my character but will undoubtedly influence my future endeavors. I am now more confident and capable, thanks to the lessons learned during those challenging and rewarding days at Outward Bound. --Angel

I attended the nine-day rock climbing and backpacking course. My experience while being on the North Carolina Outward Bound was remarkable. It was an experience that was entirely new to me. I learned a lot of different strategies while being on this course and was able to make new long-term friends. There were many challenges that I faced while being on this journey. The first challenge that I overcame at the beginning of my course was getting out of my comfort zone. I challenged myself to talk with the other members who were included in my crew since I had not known them before. Eventually, as the course went along I grew a bond with who are now my closest friends, Angel and Samary. Another challenge that I faced while trying to get out of my comfort zone was my little fear of rock climbing. I was nervous over the fact that I had to put my trust in some of my crewmates while they were belaying me. The outcome of my experience was surprising. I was the only girl within my crew that was able to complete the rock climbing experience. I wouldn't have had the fun experience while being on this course if it also wasn't for you guys! I enjoyed this trip and if I could do it all over again, I would. I've learned a lot while being on this course and soon found nature peaceful to me. There was never a time when I felt like I wanted to go home because I was enjoying every moment of my experience. I'm glad that I was chosen to go on this trip because it has made an impact on my life and how I now handle situations in the real world. --Alyana





# Grateful CAP Students Write About Their Outward Bound Experiences

I am making this letter to thank you for the opportunity to attend NCOBS. Without you offering me the scholarship, I would have never been able to go. To summarize my experience at Outward Bound, to describe it in one word: an adventure. While I was there, I realized how important it is to know what you are made of. To know that no matter what happens, you can do it. I remember a specific moment during the course when this thought came to my head. When I was at the end of the course, we had to do a 7 mile hike. This hike though was the hardest and most challenging hike of the whole course. The thing that made it so difficult was that you were also doing it alone. So at some moments when I was just running and running and running, I thought about "what if I took a wrong turn, what if I can't do it, what if I can't get to the finish line". Moments like those are why I loved this trip. It showed me how much will power and determination I have. It reminded me of who I was and that no matter what was happening in my life I always got to keep moving forwards because if not me then who? While I was there, I had to step out of my comfort zone, push myself to my limits, and then make new limits. This trip showed me that I was not wrong, I love the wilderness and I love hiking and camping. It's also just an experience that words can't do enough justice for. You just have to experience it to understand. The feeling of knowing you are working hard, laughing, having fun, making friends and overall, just relaxing, seeing the stars, and having a break from life is amazing. My favorite part of the whole experience was learning to make a tent, and then every night just hanging out with the boys in the tent, making jokes, laughing, and then going to sleep.

In conclusion, as a student and person, NCOB showed me to push myself, be great, and when you think you can't, trust yourself and keep pushing forward. Whenever you have the opportunity, push yourself out of your comfort zone. --Jordan

Thank you for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I had a fantastic time on the Outward Bound trip in North Carolina. I learned how important time management was/ is, how important it is to be there for one another, and that even when you are put in an uncomfortable situation, you have to push through it to get to where you need to be. I made some new friends while out there and am excited to see where the friendships go. My favorite part of the trip was at a base camp called "Dos Equis." For once, it didn't rain, and we could finally have a campfire. It was like a home, and I'm confident everyone enjoyed their stay there. Now, rock climbing. I've never hyperventilated, nor was I as emotional about something I was so excited about. But this time, I cried—a lot. Every time I would look up at the big rock mountain to climb, my breathing would get faster, and tears came down my face just as quickly. Thank God for our instructor, June. She helped and gave me the space I needed to process my emotions. She explained that I could take all the time I needed and that we would be there awhile. She also said I don't have to rock climb, and nobody is forced to do so. I explained to her that I did want to rock climb and just needed a minute. She agreed and gave me some space to process my emotions. I ate the lunch she offered me with kindness and was ready to rock climb. I had to belay one of my friends, Christopher, who was already prepared to climb. One of the other Instructors (Terry) clipped me on the same rope that Christopher was tied to. Before he went up, I learned what belaying was. I can't explain in words, but I made sure the rope stayed taut so that if Chris were to slip, he wouldn't fall. This was a fantastic thing for us all to learn how to do since we all built trust while doing so. After Chris went up to the top and came back down. Now, it was my turn. I was ready with an ambition to see the fantastic view. I slipped a couple of times, but after getting past that, the view was amazing. I'm terrified of heights, but surprisingly, I wasn't afraid. I looked at the view, and it was beautiful. I looked down, and my heart didn't sink at all. After taking in the panoramic view, I was ready to come down. --Chrismylee

I just want to say how thankful I am for the opportunity you have given me. I overcame multiple obstacles on this trip. The experience I had was incredible from the first minute. I learned so many things like cooking, climbing, rope tying, using a compass and how to be a leader. Every night was pretty cold but I got through it and there were many bugs no matter where we were. At first, we were all scared and nervous about sleeping with the bugs around us, but after the first few days passed, we got over it. The hardest part of this experience was hiking up the mountain and down the mountain. Towards the end of this trip on the last day we had a 7-mile run with multiple groups. The run was around the whole campus up and down the mountains with muddy parts. When I hit the end of the race, there was a little pond where if you wanted to jump in with a life vest, you could. I jumped into the pond with a proud face knowing I was able to finish this course. Now what I like the best about North Carolina Outward Bound was when we did rock climbing. It was so much fun and I enjoyed it. I was able to learn how to rock climb but not only did I learn it, I climbed to the top of the rock and had the greatest view. This experience changed me as a person by showing me how to be grateful and to be a leader knowing when to step up. The experience was amazing and insane at the same time with the rainy days to the sunny days. --Christopher

I would like to thank you for the opportunity that you gave us for the NCOBS trip. I am very grateful. I would like to share what I experienced over there with you. The North Carolina trip was a bit of a struggle for me I had a tough time for the first few days I was homesick and wanted to go home but somehow I managed to push through and lasted the full course it was a bit hard from all the raining that was happening over there and the heavy rain coats, the hiking wasn't really that bad for me because I ride my bike a lot and have strong legs but anyway it was pretty rough walking up steep hills especially when you aren't experienced and halfway done the course I had twisted my ankle making a wrong step but I still made it to the place we were going and kept going no matter what it was a fun experience overall and it was fun connecting with new people. In my opinion I really liked how NCOBS pushes you to go further and out of your comfort zone. It makes you more active and you do a lot of activities out there including tying knots to put up your tents. I really liked this experience and I had a lot of fun. Thank you so much. --Seth


Your generous support made it possible for me to engage in an adventure that not only pushed my limits but also helped me discover strengths and capabilities I never knew I possessed. The Outward Bound experience was amazing, teaching me valuable life skills such as resilience, adaptability, and effective communication. Navigating challenging terrain and facing obstacles created a sense of confidence and independence that has carried over into various aspects of my life. Your investment in me has had a lasting impact, and I am now more committed than ever to strive for excellence in both my academic and personal pursuits. As I move forward, I plan to apply the lessons learned at Outward Bound to my studies and community involvement. Your belief in my potential has inspired me to set ambitious goals for the future, and I am determined to make the most of the opportunities afforded to me. Thank you once again for your unwavering support and for making a difference in my life. --Samaryvette



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