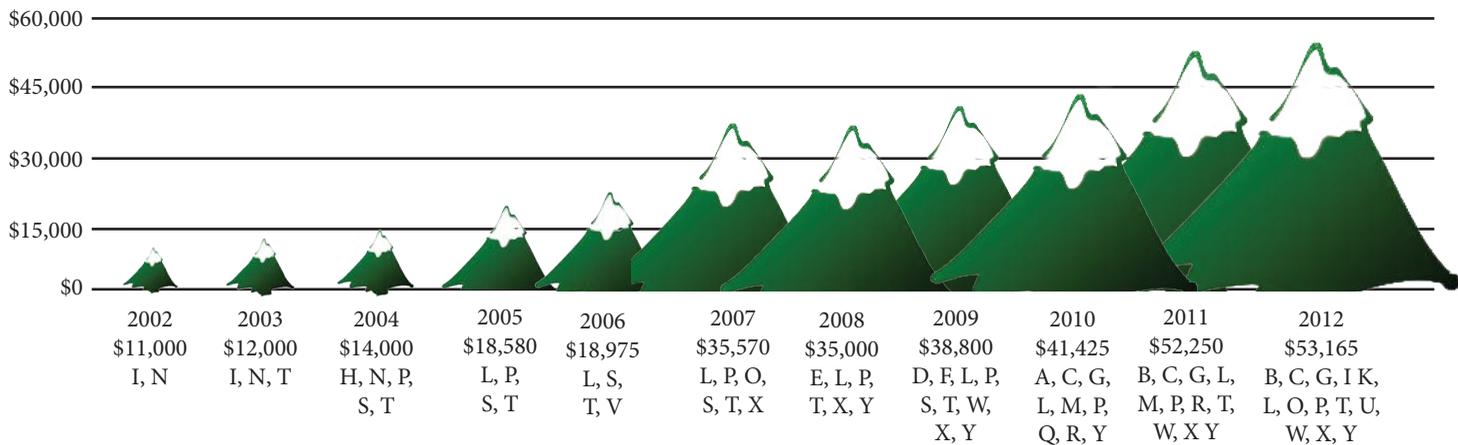




Winter, 2013

## \$330,765 Awarded in Grants Over the Past 10 Years



As a 17 year old high school junior, Kate had a plan for how she wanted to spend her life. Kate wrote that she wanted to spend her life helping people to better understand our natural world and appreciate it in the same way she had.

The mission of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation is to help carry out Kate's dreams for the benefit of others.

In just ten years, over 2000 students have been provided opportunities to experience nature and the Great Outdoors because of grants awarded by the Foundation.

In each edition of the Expedition, we have included thank you letters from grant recipient students which describe their outdoor experiences, camping, and outdoor adventure programs. Receiving these testimonials and thank you letters reinforces the importance of the Foundation's grants.

The mountain range above represents each year of the Foundation's existence, showing the annual amount of grants distributed and the name of the recipient programs.

In 2002, the Foundation awarded \$11,000 to its first beneficiaries, ReSource and National Outdoor Leadership School. In 2012, our grant committee selected 13 applicants for Foundation awards totaling \$53,165. The Foundation has now awarded grants totaling \$330,765 to twenty-five different organizations.

Through generous and continued support of our many wonderful friends and donors, Kate's dreams are being fulfilled.

### Recipients of Foundation Donations

- A. Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia
- B. Camp Attaway
- C. College Settlement Camp
- D. Dragonfly Forest Camp
- E. Fellowship Farm
- F. GreenFest
- G. Green Valleys
- H. Macrieb Consultants
- I. National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)
- J. New Heights Academy Charter School
- K. New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences
- L. North Carolina Outward Bound (NCOB)/  
Community Academy of Philadelphia (CAP)
- M. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (YES)
- N. ReSource
- O. Riverbend
- P. Robbins Park
- Q. Rocky Mountain Institute
- R. Sauvie Island Center
- S. Schuylkill Valley Nature Center
- T. University of Vermont
- U. Urban Blazers Foundation
- V. Urban Green Partnership
- W. Venture Outdoors
- X. West Virginia University
- Y. Wissahickon Charter School

# Message

from Ellen and Frank

June 23, 2012 was a very special evening for the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and for Frank and me. Usually, I am involved in all planning aspects of the annual Under The Tent Event. In the past, I have gathered the ads and helped design the ad book, booked a band and did everything needed to organize the event which was usually held at our farm. However, this year Marsha and Steve Milakofsky and Barbara and Michael Fishbein chaired the book to keep the contents a surprise. Special thanks to Marsha, who went to the post office box, gathered the ads and deposited the checks. The Ad book was so amazing. The sentiments written by so many

friends were very touching. Thanks to Jill Anderson of Anderson Graphics and George Parnes of JAZ Press for the layout and production.

The surprises continued throughout the night. There was a slide show designed by Gates Rhodes which ran during the cocktail hour and the Foundation video also played continuously. The Event committee: Barbara Fishbein, Cricket Snearing, Marsha Milakofsky, Michael Svitek, Mimi Weisbein and Mel Harris designed a mountain range that was displayed during the event. The mountains represented each year of the Foundation's existence, how much money was raised and dispersed and to which organizations. There were very moving speeches by some founders and the piece de resistance was a book designed by Mimi Weisbein and Mel Harris that tells the story of the Foundation's ten years through photos of the various events, testimonials from our grant recipients and moving notes from our founders. I read the book over and over and over... What a treasure.

Thanks to everyone who attended, placed an ad, sent a donation and helped make our 10th anniversary event an evening to remember.

Warmly,

*Ellen*



## CAP Students Recall Their North Carolina Outward Bound Experiences (excerpts from thank you letters)

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

I really appreciate the opportunity you have given me to experience what your daughter loved. The trip gave me a chance to capture the beauty in life and reflect on myself. The solo was the best part, for me, because it gave me time to dwell on what I want to do with my life and how I want to do it. I really enjoyed being in the wilderness. It was an amazing experience because it gives people a chance to actually take in the beauty of the wild, a chance not appreciated by most people. It also gave me a chance to learn more about myself. This helped me have more faith in myself and most importantly, more confidence in myself. The people in Outward Bound helped me not doubt myself and to always push myself, even if I felt like I couldn't. I will never forget the rock-climbing! That was the greatest experience I've ever had, because from those altitudes, I could see everything I hiked and how proud that made me feel. The beauty of the mountains was obviously apparent as well and I could talk about how the beauty overwhelmed me for days. I could not thank you enough for allowing me this opportunity; I took this experience and embraced all of it's aspects. I hope you continue to allow people to experience what I did, but it truly changed my mindset on a lot of things and I fell in love with the wild.

Sincerely,  
Selena Duvivier

...During my Outward Bound course I met people who were nothing like myself, but we all shared an unbreakable bond. Our experiences good and bad as a group brought us closer together. I really enjoyed making it to the top of Pilot Mountain and just looking at what I accomplished. It was a relief to just put my backpack down and enjoy the amazing views.

Sincerely,  
Dajah Schoolfield

...I am very thankful that I was given the chance to participate in the Outward Bound experience thanks to you over the summer. While I was at NCOBS I had a wonderful time and did things I never imagined I would; I hiked mountains, I overcame-most of my fear of spiders and my fear of thunder & lightning and I successfully used a map and compass to find my way. I had so many amazing experiences that have shaped me as a person and taught me a lot about myself...

YeTeasha Riddick

... Since I have learned so much at NCOB I feel that I can accomplish many things now. I learned to cook wholesome meals, set up tarps, and being safe. I also learned skills to positively communicate in a group of ten, embrace the different gifts and unique perspectives we had to offer, and to strive to keep going when all we wanted to do was quit.

Sincerely,  
Jose Figueroa

...While I was at North Carolina I learned to trust those around you even if they are complete strangers as they will always have your back as you would theirs, during my time there, I learned a lot about the wilderness and how to survive out there, I also met a lot of good people during my trip there and learned how hard it really is to commit to something; and how to bring out the best inside of you. Did I also mention how I got over my fear of heights and was able to climb Table Rock? That's was pretty cool...

Sincerely,  
Thomas Cartagena

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

I really appreciate the scholarship to go on the three week course of North Carolina Outward Bound. I was able to experience something out of the ordinary. I was able to push boundaries that I did not even know that was there. It was something new, different, and a great way to experience the wilderness. Without that scholarship I would have never been able to go to North Carolina Outward Bound and I believe everyone should have that type of experience at least once in their life time.

I really enjoyed white water rafting in Tennessee. That was my favorite being on and in the water. We jumped off the raft into the freezing cold water, but it was exhilarating and it felt so good (especially during a heat wave). I was terrified of the rock climbing because I am afraid of heights. I did the rock climbing though, and it was totally worth it in the end. It was a nice way to see the world from a different perspective and the wind blowing through your hair felt so right. The views were priceless and jaw dropping.

I learned many things while on the three week course of Outward

Bound. I learned how to pitch a tarp and how to share space with other people. I also learned that pushing your comfort zone is good if you want to experience a once in a life time thing. I did not leave with not one regret thanks to pushing that boundary. I was able to learn how to be independent and not to depend on others to help me survive in the world. If I can make it three weeks in Outward Bound on my own then I can do anything on my own.

I will never forget the this wild and risk taking experience in my life. This is definitely one of the craziest thing I ever done and I do not regret doing it. I will never forget the great and wonderful people I met. We became a family by helping, caring, and pushing each other. The views I will never ever forget and the feeling of accomplishment when ever I achieved a new goal. The number one thing I will never forget is the "aww" moment I had at the bush pushing on the second week of being there. I realized that if I could do a 19 hour hike from eight in the morning to two in the morning the next day I could do anything on my own. It felt good to have the moment because that is when I knew that I am capable of more then what I thought I actually thought. I would not change one thing about this trip. Thank you for the chance to do this unforgettable and a overall awesome trip.

Sincerely,  
Julia Martinez

...One of the activities that helped me the most was rock climbing because it helped me overcome obstacles that were in my way. I also enjoyed the backpacking activity because it helped me mentally and physically and it broke me down and rebuilt me. In addition I have developed a stronger minded attitude when I encounter problems. I will never forget all of the memories that were created in those three weeks.

Sincerely,  
Darnel Baez-Claudio

... What I expected most out of this trip was that I was going to be challenged in many ways and that I would have to overcome all the challenges. My motto was, "we fight and we overcome"...

Sincerely,  
Esteban Romero



# New Heights Academy Charter School

On May 10, 2012, 24 students from the New Heights Academy Charter School graduating class of 2013 embarked on a 2-day camping trip in Harriman State Park, approximately 45 miles north of their home in New York City. This camping trip was a great success!

The purpose of this trip was, as author Richard Louv wrote, to “save our children from nature-deficit disorder.” Our goals were to provide students with an authentic experience with nature, fostering their sense of curiosity and wonder and allowing them time to get to know themselves in an “unplugged” setting. Academically, the trip offered students an opportunity to apply hands-on skills they learned in their earth science and environmental studies classes, such as map reading and observing stream flows and the local ecosystem.

Planning and fundraising for the trip was a collaborative process between students and staff that began in the fall of 2011. Students had to earn the privilege to participate in the trip through good grades and behavior throughout the school year.

Upon arrival at the campsite, students worked together in groups to put up their tents. Since most students had little to no experience with such an activity, teamwork and patience were required.

The highlight of the first day was dinner preparations and the following group campfire. All students had some role or responsibility to ensure that dinner was cooked and that everyone was well fed.

Student Rosii Estrada wrote of her experience: “What I enjoyed about camping was working together and enjoying the company around us. I loved setting up our tents and trying to finish first.

Student Edgard Rodriguez reflected: “My words for this trip are pretty much extremely fun due to us being able to get out of the city for a bit. Being able to hear nothing but the birds with peace and quiet was something of a relief to me having a mostly stressful time in school and home.

Our students are more accustomed to seeing high-rise buildings and streetlights than tall trees and stars, so we hope to make this camping trip an annual tradition and expand it to include more students. In fact, this year it is our hope to expand the trip with last year’s participants serving as guides for new participants. Thank you to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for helping make New Heights’ first camping trip possible!





## Getting To Know Kate

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

**A letter written by Kathy Elias, Kate's roommate at UVM:**

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek and Michael,

When George Lucas said, "We were always dreaming of how it was going to be", he must have been talking about Kate and me. We were always dreaming up and concocting scenarios about how our "grown up" lives would turn out; especially, as our days at UVM wound down to an end. While our career paths would most certainly take us to different places, we planned ways to support each others' dreams. I was going to pursue a career in social work and was, for sure, going to change the world—one at-risk kid at a time. Kate would take the outdoor adventure world by storm—leading adventures into the wilderness and teaching the young and old about the beauty and wonder of the outdoors. As always, Kate had a plan for how our worlds would come together. She would provide scholarships for the at-risk kids that I would work with to attend her adventure trips. Well, she would joke with me, maybe she'd just give them a 50% discount. I'd look at her crooked. We would laugh and laugh. Kate was happiest when she was talking about, planning, and taking part in trips and vacations that I can only describe as grueling and insane. While I would probably never join in her escapades, as our years in college came to a close, I was excited to see her dreams become a reality. I could have never imagined how abruptly things would change.

As I look back over the past ten years, I am truly amazed. I reflect with awe and admiration at how the work the Foundation does so closely mirrors and enacts the dreams and desires that Kate spoke so passionately about since the day I met her. Knowing Kate I always expected that she would realize those dreams. Nothing else would have been acceptable. I just never thought that it would take an entire Foundation to accomplish it. When I read the stories from the students as they recount stories of the adventures they were afforded as a result of the Foundation scholarships, I often think of what Kate would say—I know she would be thrilled. And I must admit that I smile and sometimes laugh thinking back on the conversations that Kate and I had about the adventure trips, scholarships, and discounts. And tears come to my eyes when I realize that through the Foundation her "grown up" dreams have become a reality.

The work that you have done over the past decade to have Kate's dreams come true is nothing short of miraculous. You are an inspiration and the true vision of strength and determination. You have dedicated yourselves to ensure that the legacy of your daughter continues—and you have done so with smiles on your faces, generosity, and grace.

I know that Kate is looking down and smiling. I know that she is proud of what you both, Michael and the Foundation have achieved. Maybe what Kate would be most proud of would be the sense of family, tradition and continuity that the Foundation has created and maintained. Family, friends and togetherness were of the utmost importance to Kate. I am so proud and honored to know you, to be a small part of the legacy you have created for Kate, and to be a part of this family. It means the world to me that you all are a part of my life today—it's like still being able to have a piece of Kate.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Love, Kathy



"The Dreamers"  
1998/1999 (our Sophomore Year)  
Camel's Hump, Vermont

## We Got It!

**O**n June 20, 2012, Frank Svitek received an email from Amanda (Rothenberger) Schiffmacher, a classmate of Kate's from Germantown Academy.

She wrote, "The company I work for, Pearson, recently awarded my department a Planet Pearson Environmental Award. We received this award for becoming the first major U.S. publisher to secure FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) chain of custody accreditation. If you aren't familiar with FSC, its mission is to promote environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically prosperous management of the world's forests. Pearson became FSC certified in early 2012, which earned us an internal Planet Pearson Environmental Award. The award came with a grant of \$2,000 to be given to a charity of our choice. I nominated the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. After sharing your mission statement, we all agreed that KSMF was a perfect match since it encompassed both education and environmental responsibility. Not to mention, I had a close personal attachment!"

The Foundation received a check for \$2,000 on September 27, 2012.

**Thank you, Amanda and Pearson!!**

# Tenth Anniversary – Under the Tent Event

There was A WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN GOIN ON, on June 23, 2012, as the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation commemorated the tenth anniversary of its founding and celebrated the remarkable growth and achievements over the past ten years. Founders, Frank and Ellen Svitek were the special honorees, recognized for their unprecedented passion, dedication and tireless hard work in furtherance of the KSMF mission as a legacy to their beloved daughter Katie who died tragically in a snowboarding accident. An artistic two-dimensional rendition of a mountain range featuring the impressive milestones and growth of the KSMF fundraising over the past decade adorned the cocktail hour and dining buffet.

Established to promote outdoor and wilderness education and preservation for youth, the Foundation has far surpassed its original goal to raise one million dollars. Through largely grass roots fundraising, and limited corporate sponsorship at the Annual Golf Insurance Industry Team Challenges this early goal has been exceeded by \$500,000, assuring the notoriety, strength and longevity of the Foundation. To date, the Foundation has approved more than 75 grants, totaling \$330,000, and enabling more than 1000 recipients to advance the mission of the Foundation. In addition, the KSMF has forged partnerships

with more than 27 organizations, including National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), University of Vermont Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources, West Virginia University, North Carolina Outward Bound, Philadelphia Community Academy, and Wissahickon Charter School, to name a few.

Attendees of the festive 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration were treated to a Memphis barbeque and heartfelt speeches from founding members of the KSMF, including Katie's beloved brother Mike Svitek. Frank and Ellen were also presented with a beautiful tribute book from founders and supporters which can be viewed online at <http://ksmf2012tribute.shutterfly.com/>. The music of *Blue Suede Shoes* delighted guests with the iconic music of Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash. This musical concept originated when the four superstars fortuitously met at Sun Record Studios in Memphis, currently featured in "Million Dollar Quartet", the acclaimed musical running Broadway.

While only time can endeavor to heal the pain of Kate Svitek's tragic and premature death, the success of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation will endure forever.



Blue Suede Shoes



Michael, Frank and Ellen Svitek



Mountain range representing 10 years of fundraising and grant allocation.



Rich Botos, Judy Criniti and Bill Katz



Mike, Ellen and Frank, Pat and George Severns



Mel Harris, John Rothberg,  
John and Deb Harris



Jill Anderson, Maddie and Herman Axelrod,  
Kevin Anderson



The Heller Family



Elvis with Jill Anderson



Gabe Brooks, Deb Harris, Jess Brooks, Lauren Quaile and Will  
Tonkin



Ira Clair, Ruth and Mario Bercholc, Hope Clair



Sherry and Brian Efron,  
Lisa and David Kovacs



Gates and Gail Rhodes, Mike Svitek,  
Barbara and Jon Kligerman



Tod Drucker, Bruce Dorsey,  
Jennie Nerenberg, Andi Drucker

# We're Going Caaaaamp—ing!

by Sam Permutt, Middle School Teaching Assistant

On the morning of the camping trip, two predominant and opposing feelings swept through the Wissahickon Charter School eighth grade students. Chants of “We’re going caaaaamp---ing” cried out by dancing students were counterbalanced with apprehensive “I’m not doing this” utterances from the more cautious of the bunch. The Outward Bound Wilderness course involved hiking and camping on a stretch of the Appalachian trail. Teachers, administrators, and outdoor instructors assured the students that they would have many opportunities for growth and discovery, to challenge themselves and each other emotionally and socially. They were told that they would be gaining leadership skills, confidence, and a closeness with nature, words that would prove powerful truths over the next five days. The ways in which these challenges would manifest themselves--making camp in pitch-black, hiking miles through downpour, holding macaroni and cheese cookoffs--were still unknown.

On the first night and morning in the woods, Mother Nature graced the young adventurers with near-torrential downpour. This rain would not be forgotten, as the sixty-pound survival bags hauled around by each eighth grader were never fully dry again. Every night, students set-up tents, hung their food to protect it from pesky animals, cooked dinner for each other, and held an evening meeting. The Outward Bound instructors began the trip leading and demonstrating most of these activities, but by the end, students were responsible for themselves and for each other in nearly all facets of the trip.

There were intense struggles. Early on, students had difficulties adjusting their pace in order to allow everyone in the group to stay together. Gear shared by the whole group remained unclaimed for extended stretches of time, as no one wanted to take on the extra weight. And there were stretches of irritability, caused by the adjustment to sleeping on the wet ground and pushing their bodies to the limit.

By day four, though, the struggles seemed a distant memory. Challenges were met with excitement and positivity. Students, independently, zoomed through setting up camp, eager

to get through the evening activities and celebrate with pasta and s’mores. At sunset, a brief hike upwards revealed a breathtaking view of the landscape below--the lake, the woods, the distant hills, all the places the students had explored and lived over the past



four days.

## *Excerpts from some of the participant's letters*

“I’m going to remember this trip and the people who were here with me, and I’m going to make sure my kids have the same opportunity we did.” This was one of the many poignant reflections made by students on that last night. Students discussed their increased desire to take care of the environment, how they felt more confident in their ability to lead and be good citizens, and their newfound bonds with each other. Several students were blown away by the sky; they had never seen so many stars shine so brightly. All students, regardless of the mindset they had going into the trip, walked away challenged, matured, and ready for their own beds and showers. ...I am so sorry for your loss. I heard she loved to hike and she loved to be outside and enjoy nature. Thank you for making the 8th grade camping trip a fun experience for me...  
Jarell

...The camping trip was a success! I doubt you were informed of the trip's completion, but I am thanking you for making it possible...  
Qoosim

... Camping in the woods is a complete new way to have fun and be a leader. I didn't know I had it in me to be a leader. It was challenging to hike at least 5 miles a day with 30 pound packs strapped to your back. I know why your daughter loved it so much...



Zyon

...Thank you for funding our 5 day Outward Bound trip. The trip was an experience I will never forget. At times, the hiking was hard, difficult and painful but at the end it was worth it. The trip helped me realize that you're always going to have trials through life whether they be physical or emotional and you have to push through.

Taniya

... I would like to thank you for making the trip possible because without you, I wouldn't have learned things about myself. Like, if I believe in myself and put hard work into it, I can accomplish anything...

Nakyha

...I really appreciate you guys for donating the money we needed to go camping. What you did gave kids that doesn't normally have a chance to be outdoors, a chance to go camping. On the trip I learned self reliance...

David

...I have learned that I am stronger than I thought and that caused me to be more determined...



Essence

...I learned I can work with people my age from school that I normally don't work with. I learned to face my fears and challenges. Thank you for letting me experience something that I will always remember...

Raiyanah

Last week I went on a 5-day peer leadership, backpacking trip. I like the outdoors and I like hiking and sleeping outside. But even I had a breaking point. But I realized that was OK because you can't learn anything without struggling or having a challenge. There were a few

challenges: It rained everyday, we got lost twice, and cooperating with my peers. The girls in my group were not as accustomed to being outdoors and not as prepared for backpacking long distances. Because of this, simple tasks became complicated. But I feel as though I overcame my challenges and I made the most of the trip. I think my instructors Kiff and Catrina for helping and guiding me.

Love,  
Joycelin

## Camp Attaway Strengthens Nature Program

The summer of 2012 marked the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Camp Attaway's nature program. The continued support provided by the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation allowed us to strengthen our nature program both within camp and with the environmental community around us.

Campers had the opportunity to germinate seeds and were given the responsibility of caring for the seedlings throughout camp. Each day the campers watered the plants and watched as small vegetable and flower plants grew. This activity allowed the campers to care for something outside of themselves and experience the personal satisfaction of successfully helping the plants grow and thrive.

During the first week of camp, a naturalist was invited for a visit and brought along several birds of prey. The campers got up close and personal with two owls, a falcon and a vulture.

Teamwork was the central theme during the second week of camp. This summer we wanted to bring teamwork into nature and did so by playing a game called Hug - A - Tree.

The culminating nature activity of the summer was a trip to the Howard County Conservancy. The Conservancy is home to a beautiful stream which is where our campers participated in the annual Camp Attaway Stream Study.

Particularly exciting at camp this year was the beginning of the Counselor in Training (CIT) "Go Green Initiative." The CITs took some time out from their busy days helping around camp to focus their efforts on the environment. They decided that Camp Attaway should compost and set about to learn all they could so they could make it happen.

Having watched the nature program grow from the beginning, it is exciting to see what it has become today. The financial support provided by the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation has truly allowed this program to flourish and the campers are reaping the benefits. By showing campers how to feel comfortable in nature and by nurturing their curiosity in it, we are helping them become stewards of the Earth.





## New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences

With funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and other supporters, the New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences was able to send twenty youth in the Community and Urban Science Enrichment (CAUSE) Program on an exploration of Maine. CAUSE strives to provide a nurturing environment for youth, with character education, life skills training, mentoring, and a strong aquatic science education. This annual excursion helps prepare the students for the world that awaits them beyond Camden City and really get them excited about the aquatic features of someplace different. For most of the teens in the program, the excursion is their first experience being away from home for a week. The youth in grades 9-12, left Camden on an early June morning and by evening were attending a field ecology program at the Ferry Beach Ecology School in Saco, Maine. During a walk to Moxie Lake in the mountains, a CAUSE teen said, "I never in my life thought I would see a scene so beautiful like this". There were also opportunities for the teens to practice innovative public presentation skills used by the Ferry Beach Ecology School to engage younger students in science learning through interactive role playing and theatrical techniques. All of these experiences would come together in July and August as the youth used curricula they developed to run a five-week, multi-aged summer camp for children in two Camden elementary schools. After spending several days at the Ferry Beach Ecology School, the youth then spent a day whitewater rafting. As many of the students do not know how to swim, and have never had a similar experience, this was an opportunity for them to overcome their fears and prove to themselves that they can do anything. As one CAUSE youth commented, "It was an unforgettable experience; I have never done anything like whitewater rafting in my life". The excursion ended, as it does each year with a visit to a local college or university. This year the youth toured the University of New England. With the CAUSE program boasting a 100% high school graduation rate and 100% of the students continuing on to college in the last 8 years, this is the perfect way to end the week and encourage the youth to think about their future.



# Venture Outdoors Is Creating New Leaders

With help from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Venture Outdoors had one of its biggest and best turnouts for outdoor leadership training graduating 22 new leaders at the annual Outdoor Leadership Weekend in September. The Foundation's support also enabled Venture Outdoors to offer this leadership workshop at a new location, Camp T. Frank Soles, in Rockwood, PA. The setting was perfect for teaching outdoor leadership with a rustic dining hall, cabins, campfire ring, and hiking trails. The participants of this weekend are already leading and assisting on Venture Outdoors' Fall activities and are sharing their passion for the outdoors with program participants.

Some feedback from the enthusiastic new leaders included the following.

"Excellent instruction and examples."

"I appreciate all the knowledge and experience the instructors shared."

"They each showed they cared about us, wanted us to learn and want us to get involved."

"The Culture of Acceptance and Inclusion is very evident. Lots of sincere & friendly interaction."

"Great setting for learning about getting people outdoors."

These new graduates will help encourage others to become Venture Outdoors trip leaders and assistants. The outdoor community continues to grow thanks to activities like these that could only be offered thanks to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation.



## College Settlement Adds To Climbing Tower

This summer, the vertical playpen was installed on the opposite side of the climbing tower at College Settlement Camp. The Challenge activities with the high ropes course and climbing tower are activities for both the residential and day campers. One of the many benefits of the climbing tower is two people can climb on the playpen at the same time using the giant's ladder made of three wooden beams spaced about five feet apart vertically. This provides an opportunity for two climbers to work together. We were able to have all of our campers in Session Four experience the vertical playpen. It is one of the coolest things to see when a camper reaches the top. Thanks so much for your support in making this new apparatus a part of our challenge activities for our campers and staff.



The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation is assisting Riverbend Environmental Education Center with habitat restoration programs in their meadow and woodland areas. The projects will focus on adding native plants to create healthier and more diverse ecosystems. The new plants will provide more diverse natural food sources to better attract and support birds, small mammals, butterflies and bugs. This will, in turn, give Riverbend richer opportunities for teaching children and the wider public about nature, as well as improve the health and appearance of their property.

Riverbend also has a small, one-acre meadow that consists mainly of 2-3 varieties of grasses. This year they wanted to add additional species of grasses and wildflowers to the meadow, and the Kate Svitek Foundation stepped in to help.

Next Spring and Summer will show the most tangible results of your gift to Riverbend – a profusion of new flowers, ferns, and grasses in both the meadow and woodland areas!



# UVM Recipients Share Their Experiences

(excerpts from thank you letters)

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

I am writing to express my gratitude for the generous scholarship funds that you have donated to the School of Natural Resources. I was fortunate enough to receive a portion of the scholarship money to help me along my way with a summer internship I completed this past July and August. I am a Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Major and my internship was with a ski guide company in Sun Valley, Idaho.



This internship was truly an amazing event for me, and has helped me along my career path looking towards the future. During my time in the mountains around Sun Valley I completed many long days of work, while also having time to reflect personally on where I see myself going after my senior year at UVM. I spent many days chopping, hucking, and stacking firewood for the upcoming winter. This grueling task is the cornerstone to keeping the guests warm and comfortable during their stays at the yurts in the winter. On our wood cutting trips we visited all 6 of the different yurts that our company owns. At each yurt we experienced different terrain, ecosystems, and breath taking views. We would cut wood or repair the yurts from 8 am to 4 pm and then have time to bike or hike around and explore the different areas.

Ski guiding has always been a dream job for me. When I first visited Sun Valley to complete Avalanche 1 training with a UVM course, I made a connection with the guiding company we worked with. After completing this internship with them, I have realized that ski guiding can be a reality for me and this has made me very happy and excited for the future. This internship has helped me along my career process and also helped to provide me with my next opportunity after college, as a winter intern with the same company! I thank you so much for helping me along the way in realizing my ultimate goals. Without this summer internship, I don't know if I would have been able to make the connections I was able to.

Sincerely,  
Max Ebenstein

Dear Svitek Family,

Thank you so much for my incredible summer experience. Thanks to your generosity, I was able to spend two weeks in South Africa studying elephants and their effects upon the landscape through the organization Operation Wallacea, which implements biodiversity and conservation management research programs across the globe. The experience I had was unique and unforgettable – I have been exposed to so much information that I would never have attained had I not gone abroad. As a wildlife biology major with a desire to work in the realm of wildlife management, the opportunity to see Africa's megafauna first-hand, and to take part in conservation efforts for a favorite species of mine, the elephant, was an experience simply beyond words. These animals are so real, and so powerful, and yet so threatened by our existence. Learning the local view on the way to conserve the land is an impossibly important aspect of successful conservation, and I feel so privileged to have had the insight to Zulu and South African viewpoints that I had while working in South Africa.

I would not have been able to have this experience without your generosity. I went as an unpaid volunteer with program costs as well as flights and internal transfer expenses, but I truly wanted the experience to work first-hand in the savannah. As a college senior just starting to get field experience, I think it is very important to take advantage of every opportunity possible to get out in the field, get experience, and learn what I want to do. As I have learned, this often means accepting unpaid positions. I feel very fortunate to have been able to pick up this position and make the trip to this amazing country.

Again, thank you so much for the generosity that allowed me to have these experiences. It is a trip I will never forget, and knowledge that I will keep from now on as I approach my own career in wildlife management.

Sincerely,  
Allison Middleman



Dear Svitek Family,

I am writing you today to thank you for your support and enabling me with the opportunity to enjoy the most educational and meaningful summer I have experienced. Thanks to your generous scholarship award, I was able to work for Wilderness Ventures this summer, a youth leadership expedition company based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming...

...As the summer neared, I learned I was to be leading 10 teenagers on a trip that included activities such as rock climbing, whitewater rafting, sea kayaking, mountaineering and backpacking – the same itinerary used on the original trip 40 years ago. As excited as I was for these activities alone, I was even more eager to meet my students and embark on a journey that would surely influence both mine and their development....

...Other than the senses of achievement and perseverance

that I witnessed from my students, nothing meant as much to me as the relationships that developed between the kids. Throughout the trip, the students bonded from the countless challenges and difficulties that they helped each other overcome. I watched a

group of teenagers – who started as an awkward, reckless bunch – develop into mature, responsible young adults who cared for each other and expressed great leadership qualities in their day-to-day actions. On the last day, I could not deny the sense of pride that came with watching my students help each other check in for their flights, reminisce about their adventures, and enjoy their last moments together.

I wanted to thank you once more for your support. If it were not for this Memorial Award, I would never have had the opportunity to have such an impact on a group of young adults that I know will last them a lifetime, and I myself would have not realized my true passion in life.

Sincerely,  
Patrick Hurley



Dear Svitek Family,

William Feather once said "Something that has always puzzled me all my life is why, when I am in special need of help, the good deed is usually done by somebody on whom I have no claim." While I do not hold claim to anyone in your family, I now have a very special place in my heart for all of you and the opportunity you have afforded me through the spring 2012 Svitek Scholarship through University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources.

I have always been a very passionate outdoors woman, growing up each summer with my family at an outdoor summer camp, hiking, biking and kayaking often, ski racing all my life, and eventually becoming a sea kayaking guide and a leader for the UVM Outing Club. I can remember every winter when it finally snowed a great deal at home in Gray, Maine, my dad, sister and I would dig a big hole in the snow and set our tent up in it, creating an insulating wall around us to keep us warm throughout our adventurous night. My mom would always say we were allowed to spend our special night out in the tent only if we kept our hats on. As soon as our hats were off, we had to go sleep inside. Every year my sister would manage to wiggle her hat off, but I never wavered, loving the thrill of the cold, of the adventure, of the excitement of being outside in the peaceful world when no one else was.

I have carried this love for adventure and outdoors throughout my life and during college began to mesh this love with a passion for gender equality and empowerment of women through outdoor education. For my senior internship I was able to join forces with Vermont Works for Women to create an incredible experience for me in both the fields of experiential education and women and girls empowerment. I quickly realized that working for this organization for a whole semester was going to be extremely financially taxing. I live 40 miles from the Barre, VT office and I needed to renew my Wilderness First Responder and CPR certification in order to fulfill one of my internship goals of being a rock climbing instructor for the girls Rock and Adventure Program during Burlington's February school break. After realizing that I was not going to be able to support myself through the entirety of this internship, I was pointed in the direction of this grant and to my surprise and immense gratitude, received funding to continue working with VWW and helping girls throughout Vermont.

Some of the highlights of my internship included working with six girls from Burlington throughout their vacation week with the Rock and Adventure Program, seeing girls who at the beginning of the week would not talk by the end of the week burst with excitement when they rung the bell at the top of a challenging wall. Helping out with the Women's Backcountry Ski Clinic was also wonderful, seeing



women who had never really been on skis shred through the backwoods of Bolton Valley Ski area. Amongst all the excitement that this spring brought while working with VWW, I have to say that I am the most grateful for the relationships which I have formed and the powerful women I have met. Through this internship, I have now secured a summer job as a mountain bike instructor for VWW's Dirt Diva's girls program and have met countless women also striving for gender equality and Women's empowerment through experiential education in Vermont.

I have been rejuvenated and reassured that there are others out there who believe that all girls and women have a chance to be powerful, strong and influential people, and that they all deserve a deep and spiritual connection with environment around them. I am eternally grateful to you for giving me this opportunity and for truly opening many doors for me. As I enter the real world now I know that I have this amazing experience under my belt and some amazing women for support as I try and conquer my next adventures in life. While I am deeply sorry that Kate could not be here to continue on the great work she was a part of, I hope that I can carry her spirit and her mission with me as I move forward in my life as an outdoor leader and a powerful woman. I cannot thank you all enough for the gift you have given me, but I do hope that this is a start.

Be well. Sincerely,  
Emily Licht

## Green Valleys Association

For the 3rd year, KSMF funded programs at Green Valleys Association at Welkinweir in Pottstown, PA. The funds hosted these 6 guest programs for campers of all ages this summer:

- Bird banding demonstration with bander, Doris McGovern
- Live reptiles from Len Knapp, reptile expert
- Live snakes, spiders, lizards and parrots from Bob's Critters
- Geocaching for older campers with GeoVentures, Inc.
- Live, nocturnal animals from Quiver Farm Projects
- Stories interwoven with science experiments from Sciencetelling





This summer's Urban Blazer's programming was a huge success based in large part to the \$5,000 grant received from the Kate Svitek Memorial Fund. Urban Blazers was able to work with over 400 youth this summer on a weekly basis, and introduce 50 new girl participants aged 10 to 16 to our Girls Active In Nature (GAIN) programming.

The girls who were a part of our GAIN programs participated in 8 hikes throughout the summer in East Fairmount Park and Wissahickon Creek Park. This spring they had the opportunity to go on a geo-caching adventure, and as a summer capstone event 32 girls learned how to row boats on the Delaware River in partnership with Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory.

Each hike or adventure was punctuated by active weekly lessons in teamwork, communication, perseverance and other 'soft' skills important to creating a culture of leadership within GAIN. At the end of the summer girls were surveyed on their experience with GAIN. As their feedback is a stronger indicator of success than my words, here are some of their answers (unedited):

**Overcoming Fears:**

"I was afraid to go canoeing, because I heard that we were going to be in the Delaware River. But when we were in the river I got used to it and eventually started to like it."

"I overcame my fears by doing beyond what I'm use to doing."

"I overcame them by being brave."

**Accomplishments:**

"I participated in activities like a mature young adult and did what I was told."

"Going on the hikes and creeks, I was a very good listener and it was easier to go through that way."

"I went in the water even though I was scared."

**Most Important Lesson:**

"Was to trust others and always ask for help."

"The most important thing I learned was that we are all a team."

"I learned that you can help other people conquer their fears."

**Is GAIN worth doing?:**

"Yes, because I know how to row a boat and I eat 2 or 3 different leaves and mustard seeds."

"We went places and did things that I didn't know we could do."

"Yes, because we get to try new things."



# WVU Parkersburg 5th Annual Trip

Ten participants (four male & six females) were selected this year, by the team-taught faculty of Dr. Phil McClung, Professor of Psychology (and 2012 Professor of the Year for West Virginia University at Parkersburg) and Denise McClung, Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Division of Social Sciences & Languages. The course involved camping in tents for the week throughout beautiful West Virginia.

We left on Saturday, May 5 for our 2012 adventure. Each year our first site visit is at Kayford Mountain/mine with internationally renowned mountaintop top removal (MTR) advocate, Larry Gibson, a native resident and land owner of this mountain who also is a member of the West Virginia Highlands Conservatory. Kayford Mountain has become a nationally known site displaying the devastating outcomes that MTR has on the environment. Mr. Gibson focused on the impact and devastation MTR has made on our mountains and WV. Spending the afternoon walking the mountain, viewing the devastation surrounding the area, and listening to the heartfelt words of Mr. Gibson, students leave with a genuine perspective concerning coal and our state. This is a great start to the trip each year.



On our first evening, a majority of the students pitched their first tents and constructed group living quarters while preparing dinner for the group. Students quickly learn the importance of cooperation and the group dynamics were well on their way to developing a working team and caring group of people who were learning to watch over each other and our environment.

On Sunday morning, we visited the New River Gorge and Hawks Nest learning about hydropower created by the river. At noon we geared-up and completed a Tree Tops Canopy tour with zip lines, sky bridges, and repelling. Talk about a self- challenge for several of these students!!! Many were challenged beyond what they themselves thought they were able to do. We were, at times, 80 feet in the air on wires or standing on a platforms and bridges. It took lots of team encouragement and self-talks for some of the students to finish the course. Their self-confidence rose by the end of this day and continues long after the course is completed. Teamwork was strengthening.

The next day we traveled to Cranberry Glades and toured the area learning about the bogs, plants and animals living in this unique environment. We continued to our next destination of Greenbank National Observatory. Students participated in educational modules.. From Greenbank, we traveled to Seneca Rocks.

We hiked to the top of Seneca Rocks on this beautiful evening.

This is another monster challenge for several students. When they achieve the goal of reaching the top, they are re-enforced for their efforts by not only the magnificent view of the valley but also by the self-confidence which is evident when they are standing on top of the rock cliff. As we exited the Rocks, a light rain began.

On Wednesday, we traveled from Dolly Sods toward Canaan Valley to the wind farms on Backbone Mountain near Thomas. We then went to Morgantown to prepare for the high ropes course.

What an experience the challenge course was for everyone. Students were challenged mentally, physically, and emotionally. It builds teamwork, trust, and confidence in oneself and others. We had our trip banquet that evening and processed the day.

Students continue working on course requirements and projects throughout the summer. We are collecting old athletic shoes to send to Nike for their recycling program. We meet regularly to review project progress and assist with ideas. This course makes a difference with students, our campus, and our community.

Thank you every year Mr. & Mrs. Svitek and the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for your continued support to help educate and offer students this outdoors learning experience. We are committed to making a difference in the future of our world. Students are making a difference. Your Foundation has made a difference.

Thank you.

Dr. Phil McClung

Denise McClung





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