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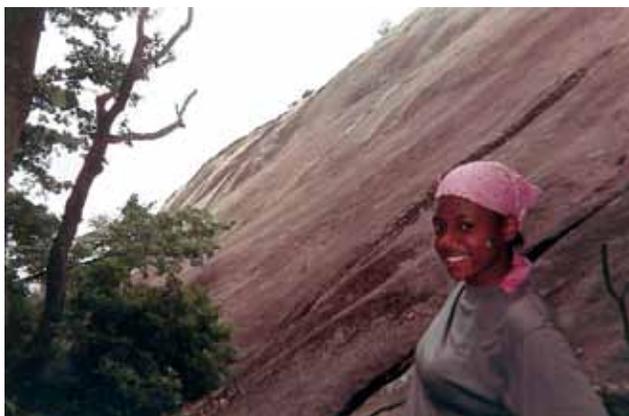
Winter, 2014

Where Are They Now?

Since 2004, 84 students from Community Academy of Philadelphia have received scholarships to attend either a 14 or 21 day trip to North Carolina Outward Bound. Alberta O'Brien, Upper School Principal, provided KSMF with follow-up information on the NCOB alumni. Three students are currently attending graduate school, one is a model in New York City, one is a nurse at Graduate Hospital in Philadelphia, thirty one students graduated college or are currently attending, three are in the military, and eight are still attending CAP.

The Foundation salutes these young men and women and strongly believes some of these accomplishments were related to their Outward Bound experience.

CAP Students' Thank You Notes



Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

I received a sponsor from your foundation for a 22 days experience at the North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS). I cannot thank you enough for the amazing experience that your scholarship offered me. Through the scholarship, I had a life changing experience. 22 days hiking through the Appalachian Mountains with ten other people and two instructors was not easy, but it was amazing.

On my course, my crew, "Team 'Murica" started off with a few days of backpacking through the mountains. We saw amazing views that took our breath away. We climbed steep mountains, like Heart Attack Ridge, that nearly had us on our knees, but we stuck it out and stood our ground. I'm being honest when I say that it was the hardest thing that I have ever done, but I'm also being honest when I say that it was more than worth it.

After the backpacking block, we moved onto our three-day rock-climbing block.

That was an experience in itself. The first day we climbed a 40-foot rock. I have never been so proud of myself in my entire life. I zipped up the rock and came back down with the only thought in my head being, "I did it." The second day was a little bit more of a challenging rock, but the third day was the hardest. The third day we climbed Table Rock Mountain. The entire time my partner, Payton, and myself were climbing, the only thought in my head was "we're going to die," but we didn't! The view at the top of the mountain was absolutely beautiful, but the satisfaction of making it up the mountain was even more beautiful.

When our rock-climbing block was over, we went into our white water canoeing block. Those three days were probably the most bipolar three days of my whole life. The first day was perfect. The weather was beautiful and the lessons were amazing. The next two days were interesting. We woke up one morning with a stream flowing through our tarp because the rain was coming down so hard. Even the miserable morning turned around to be perfect days.

After the white water canoeing block, we drove to the peak of Mt. Mitchell, more than 6,000 feet above sea level. We lived inside of the clouds for three days. It rained all three days, but the 40 hours that we had for our solo day, was the best. Solo days are a time to survive and fast on your own. I had the time of my life in those 40 hours.

Through the 22-day experience, I learned so many different things, like the four pillars that NCOBS lives by, compassion, physical fitness, self-reliance, and craftsmanship. Not only did I learn how to survive, but I learned how to appreciate everything and everyone that I have. The experience that you provided for me changed my life on so many different levels. Through tears, aches, pains, and smiles, I became a better person. I learned to love what I have and work for what I want. So thank you for this incredible experience, and please do not stop help changing young people's lives. Sincerely and with great thanks,

Kyfie Tausendfreundt



(Continued on Page 2)

CAP Thank You Notes

(Continued from Page 1)



... Other than canoeing and hiking, I would say that the ropes course was by far the best. ... This experience will help me push myself to earn better grades in school, meet new people, and help me with my communication with others. I am extremely grateful for this amazing experience and I just want to say thank you again for the incredible opportunity.

From, Melanie Reyes

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Svitek,

Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity. Outward Bound was a great experience for me. It helped me a lot, and it showed me that I am capable of much more than I thought. It also gave me the chance to meet other people from everywhere in the continent.

Everyone there is very different and unique. Even though we all came from different places we managed to get along and cooperate with each other. I even made some friends that I never thought I would have made. During our time together, we all talked about the kind of things we have in our home states, and the things we do. It was interesting learning about all that. When I left this place, I know we will still contact each other. When you live with people for three weeks, you tend to grow a bond with them. I definitely will be contacting most of the people I am here with. They are all wonderful and amazing people. We all saw amazing things together as well, and I am happy I shared those views with them.

Another thing it helped me with was my physical fitness. Before Outward Bound, I could not even go up the fourteen steps to my house without breathing hard. Next thing I know I am hiking uphill towards the highest mountain east of the Mississippi River, Mount Mitchell. All the hiking, rock climbing, and canoeing got me right into shape. I mean sure it was hard but it all paid off. After I would be done hiking, I would have to take a step back and take in my surroundings. They were all beautiful and it almost looked unreal. I took lots of pictures of everything.

Sincerely,

Alexis Nieves

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

I am very thankful that you sponsored me for my NCOBS trip, because I met the most amazing group of kids. I had so much fun over there. I learned to stop taking things for granted, and taking advantage of my family members, and I can do anything I put my mind to. I learned how to rock climb, pack a backpack, read a map, and little bit of whitewater canoeing. On the personal challenge, I set a goal for myself to run the seven-mile run in a hour and 10 minutes. I ran it in a hour and 11 minutes. I came in fourth place over all and 3 in my group. I was so proud of myself not only for the goals I accomplished, but for making it through the whole 22 days without quitting.

With many thanks,

Arnold Gonzalez

... The trip really made an impact and had an affect on my life in ways. I thought it never could impact me that way. The trip changed me as a person, because I faced multiple challenges and I overcame all the challenges that had been thrown at me. The trip had given me the ability to do that. My instructors Sarah and Lucy were really awesome and my crew members were really cool and funny. Once again, I would like to thank you guys and Ms. O'Brien for choosing me to be one of the students to represent Community Academy of Philadelphia at this amazing place known as North Carolina Outward Bound School.

Fred White

Thank you for this amazing experience. I surprisingly enjoyed my time here. Being so far away from my family and friends was definitely not easy, but I'm proud to say I made it through it. This trip has showed me who I really am as a person. I don't mind trying new things, challenging myself, and meeting new people. I can use the things taught here in my college life and life after. I never want to give up on anything in life nor take "no" for an answer.

As I climbed the mountains and saw what I accomplished, I realized that I can do whatever I set my mind and heart to. I've never thought that I would see things I saw there, but I'm glad I did. I would've never thought I would be 5,000 feet above sea level without an airplane. I felt powerful, indestructible, and like a super hero. I learned I don't need other people to survive. This trip was definitely a life changing experience.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Blackson

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

Before North Carolina Outward Bound, I had never been on a plane before, eaten cereal in the middle of the woods, or went weeks without being around my family. It was a shock to me at first, all of the new things I had to get used to, but it made me appreciate the world around me and also my life at home so much more. I realized I was taking everything I had grown accustomed to for granted and being out in the middle of nowhere, forced to make due with what was supplied to me and my group, I quickly started to yearn for the technologies that made my life so simple back in Philadelphia. I was a long way from home, but during my journey I created bonds with people that I could never forget. I just wanted to express my gratitude for the opportunity to experience something as amazing and life changing as this that you both gave me. I have become a stronger, more humbled, individual and I owe it all to you both, Mr. and Mrs. Svitek. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Legacy Ledwell Ruiz



Message

from Ellen and Frank

The lyrics of Kelly Clarkson's hit song STRONGER say: "what doesn't kill you makes you STRONGER..."

After losing Kate, I just wanted to die. I struggled past those thoughts and we decided to help keep Kate's dreams alive by starting her memorial Foundation.

When I listen to Clarkson's song on the radio, I accept that losing Kate didn't kill me. Indeed, the Foundation together with my family and all of our wonderful friends and supporters has made me STRONGER!

In the past twelve years we have raised almost two million dollars. 2013's major fundraising event, the "Non Event-Event and Ad Book" raised more than \$57,000.

Although we missed the camaraderie and spirit of friendship by not all celebrating in the same room; the project was an amazing success.

Last year's expEDITION cover showed that KSMF had awarded \$330,765 in grants. If you add this year's grants of \$69,255, we are at the magnificent sum of \$400,020. Helping young people experience the Great Outdoors which Kate so loved would surely make her feel proud.

These accomplishments are wonderful and although I cannot easily equate in any fashion a memorial foundation for Kate together with the word success, I know I am STRONGER for being able to move forward each day since Kate's passing.

We are forever grateful to everyone for your constant support and kindness.

Ellen

In Memoriam



Hope Clair, maternal grandmother of Kate Svitek and Kate's biggest fan, passed away on July 20, 2013 at the age of 84. The family requested donations in Hope's memory be made to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and to date, \$13,750 has been raised.

Hope was on the board of Founders and worked at the registration table at every golf outing. She and her husband, Bob, were honored at the 2007 fifth Annual Under The Tent Event.

She was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend and will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

First Non-Event Event A Huge Success

A special thank you to all of our wonderful supporters of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation who participated in our first non-event event. Thanks for staying home and cooking a hot dog, hamburger, chicken or steak; opening your favorite beverage while listening to your favorite music and remembering Kate. This year's Ad Book/18 month calendar and non-event event raised \$57,000 for our ever growing scholarship and grant program.





This summer we launched the Youth Bike Education and Empowerment Program (YBEEP) with funds from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. YBEEP is organized into four tiers, from basic bike repair and riding classes to job and leadership opportunities.

The tiers are divided into 2 tracks: bike mechanics and bike riding. Youth can progress their way through increasingly advanced offerings that culminate in them becoming leaders and educators in our programs and in the community. This is called Ride Club.

Ride Club is an entry-level class that teaches young people ages 8-18 the basics of safe urban riding and exposes them to the city's greenspaces, landmarks, and trails. Youth meet twice weekly after school for four weeks, biking a total of 20 miles per session to visit sites such as Bartram's Garden, Mill Creek Farm, the Schuylkill River Trail, the 58th Street Greenway, and the Waterworks.

Since receiving the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation grant award in April 2013, we conducted five Ride Club sessions that served a total of 40 youth. At the final meeting of each Ride Club, we hold a graduation ceremony—to which parents and caregivers are invited—to recognize the dedication and advances made by each of the youth participants.

NBW also hosts an annual Summer Cycling Day Camp. A total of 72 youth participated in our two-week sessions both at our West and North Philly shops from the first week of July through the last week of August. The program for camp combines elements of our entry-level bike repair class, Earn-A-Bike, with Ride Club. Youth took several miles-long rides to our usual sites, like Bartram's Garden, Water Works, and Mill Creek Farm. This year's camp also featured a full-day trip to the Cobbs Creek Community Environmental Education Center where youth participated in outdoor education programs, including fishing, hiking, and bird-watching.

A key goal of Ride Club is to help urban youth push beyond their boundaries. This includes both the physical boundaries of their neighborhoods (many youth have rarely, if ever, left the parts of the city where they live) and the psychological boundaries of what they believe to be possible for themselves. Thank you again for helping NBW provide this critical programming.



Green Valleys Watershed Association

- I thought the bird banding was so cool! I learned more than I ever did! -4th grader
- I thought the owls and hawk were really cool. I liked seeing the birds up close. -3rd grader
- I think it was cool that there was a bunch of different ways to start a fire! -5th grader
- My favorite thing was making the (beeswax) candles. -Kindergartner

These are just a few of the many comments made about some of our guest presenters who were invited to Green Valleys Watershed Association's 2013 Summer Nature Day Camp. The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation served approximately 230 campers, ages 4 through 13, by providing the funds to host nine guest programs this summer.

Children in the 4-11 year old groups enjoyed the following presenters:

- A bird banding expert from a local conservation trust, to net and demonstrate banding songbirds.

- Hawks, falcons and owls from a nature center to study raptor adaptations.
- An artist, who led the children in art projects using natural items they collected.
- A naturalist, to teach campers outdoor survival techniques.
- A science center, with live animals to discuss their interactions among each other and the effects of environmental hazards on our local wildlife.
- A beekeeper, with visuals, live bees, and props to teach campers about beekeeping, including bee biology.
- An animal expert with snakes, turtles, spiders and insects to help campers learn about adaptations and the food chain.
- A nature center, with native and exotic animals, to demonstrate how various features help the animals survive in their habitats.

For campers ages 12 and 13, the Foundation's funds supported a program presented to the campers on a field trip to the Mill at Anselma, a national historical site in Chester Springs. The Mill staff demonstrated how the old mill has, and still does operate, and taught campers about the historic uses of water in our community.



National Outdoor Leadership School

This year's scholarship recipient was Luis Rivas from Houston, TX. His mentor from YES Prep recommended him for a NOLS course as a passionate individual driven to see the world and overcome the obstacles life has put in his path. He has worked as a camp counselor and he chose NOLS as an organization that would enhance his ability to teach younger students about the outdoors. This summer, he participated in a backpacking and canoeing course in the Yukon Territory of Canada. His instructors noted that in a leadership role, he was able to communicate effectively and directly. His letter follows:

Dear Svitek family

My name is Luis Eduardo Rivas I live in Houston Texas. I would like to apologize for my delay in thanking you all. It is my last year of high school and I have been overwhelmed with college paraphernalia. My family and I would like to thank you for your donation that allowed me to explore the Yukon and myself.

Without your fanatical support I would not have been able to attend the NOLS program. My father works over 60 hours a week and supports a family of 8. Over this last summer I worked to pay of my flight to the Yukon because I was told my tuition had been pay by a donation. The donation came from you all, you all made this last summer possible for me. This summer at the Yukon I learned so much about Mother Nature and the harm humans are causing. As well as seeing the ecosystem works at its finest, I was also able to see firsthand how the food chain worked. Throughout the trip I learned what I am really capable of physically accomplishing. I also gained skill such as canoeing in white water rapids and navigating in the middle of now were.



Over all, I experienced so much this last summer that saying thank you would not even come close expressing my gratitude.

As my senior year started I was not able to make a smooth transition from uncivilized Yukon to civilized Houston, Texas. I was finding it a challenge to obey the rules of my school. In all my experiences of my short life the lessons that I was faced in the Yukon were the ones that have shaped me the greatest. I did not want to cook for three other people and several times I simply wanted to quit, however, I manages to persevere. I surmounted all my physical and mental challenges. I learned to work whit others! I intend to take my new found determination and apply it in my last year of high school and consequently college. I intend to prevail in college as I physically surmounted the mountains in the Yukon. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to become disciplined and imbuing me whit a sense of determination. I am forever grateful.

Sincerely
Luis Eduardo Rivas





The College Settlement of Philadelphia

The grant the College Settlement of Philadelphia received this year from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation provided essential equipment for our Adventure Challenge Program. We were able to purchase trapeze lines, rescue lines, belay devices and harnesses, all important equipment for the safety of our campers and staff. One of the most exciting experiences for our campers is the rope climbing and thrill of the zip lines, not only for the personal accomplishment, but for the team building and cooperation these exercises produce. In addition to the climbing equipment, the grant was able to provide a 10 x 10 shed for the proper storage of the new equipment. You can see on the faces of our campers, how much they enjoy the adventure challenges.



Knowledge is the number one quality that Venture Outdoors customers expect of their leaders. Knowledge comes from training, from keeping eyes and ears open, and from asking questions.



Venture Outdoors believes that staff and volunteer trip leaders become excellent through continuing education with a focus on medical training and activity-specific skills. In order to encourage the greatest number of volunteers and staff to attend the variety of internal and external trainings offered, Venture

Outdoors provides scholarships to remove any financial barriers.

Thanks to funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Venture Outdoors was able to offset the cost of giving 125 full and partial scholarships to outdoor conferences, medical training workshops, leadership workshops, and skills development courses over the course of 2013.

All of these endeavors further strengthen both the paid staff and core volunteers who are so crucial to the success of public programs. Having well trained leaders provides for the safest possible experience for everyone.

Thanks to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Venture Outdoors was able to provide quality leadership training experiences to a broad and varied group of volunteers and staff helping to ensure that all programs and activities are provided by high quality, well trained leaders.





The summer of 2013 marked the 6th 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.



This year the theme of the Nature Program was **"Living Organisms: Their relationships with Air, Water and Land."** Two nature activities took place during the first week of camp. First, campers were given the opportunity to plant vegetable and flower seeds. This activity gave campers the opportunity to nurture and care for

something outside of themselves. Campers watered the plants and gave them sunlight and as the days of camp went by watched the plants sprout and begin to grow.

The second activity was a return visit by a naturalist from the **Maryland State Department of Natural Resources**. This year she brought reptiles, amphibians and birds for the campers to see. The campers enjoyed seeing the air, water, and land dwellers up close and observing the differences that make them especially suited for their respective habitats. Campers were especially fascinated by the way a turkey buzzard seems so ugly but is actually quite clean.

During the second week of camp the campers were able to practice teamwork skills on their first trip to the **Howard County Conservancy**. Working together, campers collected soil samples and examined the different layers of soil learning about the types of organisms that inhabit each layer or type of soil.

In our final week of camp, campers learned about coping skills on a return 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. Using water quality test kits, campers worked together to complete several water quality tests including pH and dissolved oxygen. Then, with nets in hand, the campers caught as many



His favorite activity was the Nature trip to the stream and catching crayfish.
Camp Attaway Parent

macroinvertebrates as they could and observed the various coping elements of the different organisms living in the stream.

Particularly exciting at camp this year was the implementation of the Counselor in Training (CIT) "Go Green Initiative." Last summer, 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. The CITs visited the Robinson Nature Center where they viewed an interactive composting exhibit and spoke with nature center staff about how to start a program at camp. This summer, the CIT's were able to implement last year's CITs' plans. They set up recycling and composting bins for the camp and made posters encouraging campers to use the bins. Additionally, they gave a presentation about recycling and composting to the campers. Hopefully their "Go Green" efforts will have an impact in campers' homes as well as at camp!

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.



UVM Recipients Share Their Experiences

(excerpts from thank you letters)

Thank you so very much for the opportunity that the award you provided gave me this summer.

My Internship, in the broadest terms possible, consisted of a population project on Lake Whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*), which is a species of fish that currently inhabits the waters of Lake Champlain. For some reference, here is a photo of myself holding a large adult Lake Whitefish.



Most mornings were spent extracting DNA in a genetics lab on campus, which was equipped with a ton of instruments for all sorts of DNA analysis. Then, in the afternoon I would generally relocate down to the Rubenstein Ecosystems Laboratory located in the same building as the Echo Center aquarium on the edge of the lake. Periodically, I would get the chance to participate in the actual sampling of the fish. This meant that I got to go out on the research boats owned by the school on beautiful days and haul in gillnets full of new fish whose DNA still needed to be extracted.

Later on in my work I did what is called PCR which is short for Polymerase Chain Reaction and in short is a series of many temperatures that promotes the synthesis of lots of copies of a specific sequence of DNA that we are looking to study. Much of the results are still not back even today, and so I am continuing to work on the project into the semester!

I am confident that this internship will someday be the final factor that lands me a job. Thank you so much!

Tyler Parent

I have been working with the City of Burlington, at the Community and Economic Development Office at City Hall as an intern for the summer of 2013. I had no idea how useful background on natural resources and the environment might have while working in a city government.

Originally I am from New York City and like Kate, have adventured out during my teen years and completed a NOLS course in the Absoroka Mountains. It completely changed my life to say the least. I had a burning passion to protect the natural world to the best of my ability. I knew what I wanted to focus my life on from that moment I shared with those mountains. This summer I had been working with CEDO on some of the city's sustainability initiatives. I was partnered with a high school student and acted as a mentor. We looked at Resilient Communities for America as well as Adopt a Drain Programs.

Above is a picture of Mayor Weinberger (center) and Katie (my sustainability partner) and other businesses owners who worked on the Carbon Cup. It was a program to get people to use alternative transportation to their businesses or schools. Burlington Received the Carbon Cup and Katie (right) is holding it.

I am so appreciative of the opportunity that you have given me this summer. Thank you again for this opportunity,

Sincerely,
Taryn Maitland



Thank you so much for helping me finance my research experience this past summer! I probably could not have done it without you.

This past summer, I spent the month of July on a research expedition with three other students to northern Mongolia through the Mongolian-American Aquatic Ecology Research Initiative (MAAERI) and Rutgers University. The project's overall goal is to assess how climate change could be affecting the populations of several endangered fish species in the cold-water lakes and rivers of the region. The logic is that as climate change progresses, these aquatic systems will gradually become warmer, reducing the available cold-water habitat as well as placing various other stresses on the fish. Through our research, we are hoping to gain a better understanding of what these specific stresses might be.

My project focuses on trying to determine the diet composition of taimen (the fish pictured above) and piecing together some of the food web in the river ecosystem. After a very long flight to the other side of the world, we spent our first two days in the capital, Ulaanbataar, learning as much as we could about the history, culture and customs of Mongolia, picking up some key phrases in Mongolian we might need along the way, and gathering the necessary supplies for the first half of the expedition. We then met up with the six Mongolians accompanying us and embarked on a two day long van ride out to our field station on the Uur River.

We spent ten days living in traditional gers (you might know them as yurts) at the river site, dividing our time between fishing (for both work and pleasure), monitoring fish respiration trials, collecting various plant and aquatic insect samples, eating lots of sheep, and getting to know our new Mongolian friends. After finishing our work at the river, we piled back into the vans to drive to our next stop at Lake Hovsgol, the seventeenth largest lake in the world (with a brief, glorious stop at a hotel with a hot shower and Internet access along the way). We spent the next ten days traveling around the lake on one of its few boats, pulling up to a new campsite each night where we could set our nets out, collect our samples in the morning, then motor up to the next site in the afternoon.

The trip was a phenomenal learning experience in every sense. As a student, I learned all sorts of new techniques that are fairly



UVM Recipients Share Their Experiences

(Continued from page 8)

standard in the field of fisheries biology, which I will undoubtedly use again at some point in the future. As a traveling scientist, I gained invaluable experience in dealing with the challenges of working in a remote location as opposed to a laboratory with all the standard amenities.

I just want you to know how truly grateful I am for all your help in letting me get there. Thank you again, both for this and for all you do to help people like me have these amazing experiences.

Sincerely,

Frances Iannucci

Thank you so much for choosing me as an honored recipient of the Kate Svitek Memorial Grant this summer. With your generous support, I was able to work for two non-profit organizations in Vermont, devoted to the stewardship and preservation of the beautiful earth that we live in.

I started the summer off with an unforgettable experience through the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC). Specifically, I was drafted into a women's leadership development corps, designed to empower women with support, and leadership skills within a small group. Teamwork was really the driving theme of this experience, and I feel extremely thankful to have been part of such a dynamic team.

For the second half of summer, I served as a Natural History intern with the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association. As the NH intern, I developed and executed a study on the connection between specific plants, and the habitats that they are found in. In retrospect, this internship was one of the most self-enlightening experiences of my professional career. Up until that point, I had never had to act as my own boss or run my own independent research project, but now that I have. I feel incredibly empowered and thankful to have gotten the chance to.

None of this self-growth, and empowerment would've been possible without the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. Thank you again for helping me achieve the impossible, and move one step closer to my dreams.

Sincerely,

Amie M. Schiller



In 2013, the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation assisted Riverbend Environmental Education Center with habitat restoration in our woodland areas. To create a healthier and more diverse ecosystem, native plants and shrubs were added to complement the recently planted trees. The new plants and shrubs 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 our property.

Riverbend's property was in a steady decline with zero regeneration of native trees and shrubs and an increased proliferation of invasive species and over browse by white-tailed deer. As part of our woodland restoration project, we installed a deer-exclosure fence and have been working diligently to remove invasive plants. Since 2008, we have planted over 2000 saplings in the woodland areas. These plantings are invaluable because in addition to improving air and water quality and supporting wildlife, they have stabilized the hillside and helped prevent invasive exotic plants from returning. The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation allowed us to add ferns and other native perennials to the edges of these woodland areas. In addition to creating a healthier, more diverse ecosystem of native plants, these areas serve as demonstration gardens and encourage visitors to use native plants in their gardens. This fall we will be adding tree and plant tags to aid visitors in identifying them.



New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences

With generous funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and other supporters, the New Jersey Academy for Aquatic Sciences sent twenty youth in the Community and Urban Science Enrichment (CAUSE) Program on an exploration of the Virginia coast in June. CAUSE is a program designed to provide a nurturing environment for youth with life skills training, mentoring, and strong aquatic science education. For many of the youth, the annual excursion is the first experience exploring the world outside of Camden. The youth, in grades 9-12, spent several days at Wallops Island, Virginia at the Marine Science Consortium. Youth boarded a research vessel where they pulled a trawl, collected organisms, and performed water tests. They visited intertidal flats and explored marshes, barrier islands, and learned dune ecology. The youth also spent time kayaking in a cypress swamp and had lunch on the Pocomoke River. The trip in Virginia ended with a campfire on Assateague Island. On their way home, the youth participated in a college tour at the University of Delaware. With the CAUSE program boasting a 100% high school graduation rate and 100% of the students continuing on to college in the last 9

years, this is the perfect way to end the week and encourage the youth to think about their future.

A highlight for the staff occurred during the marsh exploration. During the exploration the youth are challenged to cross a marsh mud pit during a “proliferation plunge”; they can crawl, swim, or jump, but it almost always results in getting very muddy. One of the CAUSE youth, a normally quiet, reserved, well-behaved young person, jumped in with the other youth. When asked about the experience afterwards, she stated “It felt... um...liberating, free. It was so cool that everyone was dirty and having fun and we did not have to worry about appearance or anything. I did not feel all of the normal restrictions and things that people place on me. We were all disgusting, laughing, and taking backwards trust falls in the mud together.” Experiences like this not only lifted their sense of peer pressure, but encouraged team building and other skills that the youth relied on as they ran a five-week summer camp for children in two Camden elementary schools, with curriculum that they developed themselves.





The No Barriers Summit was held in Telluride, Colorado August 8-11, 2013. The summit was an adventure festival for people with disabilities.

In addition to the many youth who join our Summit with their families, we're hosting a youth-only group of 24

participants between the ages of 15 and 19 plus two educators. These students are signed up for individual clinics like other Summit participants but will also engage in several youth-specific activities to deepen their experience. With the guidance and mentorship of a No Barriers Youth Expedition Leader, the group will develop leadership skills and explore what it means to have a No Barriers Mindset.

None of these participants would be attending the Summit without outside support, and it will be truly a life-changing experience for many of them. Here is a snapshot of a couple of our participants that shows the kinds of students we are supporting:

Garrett Rush-Miller

Age: 17

Location: Pueblo, CO

Background: Garrett was diagnosed with brain cancer when he was five-years-old and has a permanent visual impairment because of it.

My 5 Day with 2 Teachers and 9 Students

By Debby Pollak

It's been almost a month since we got back from our "5 day" on the Appalachian Trail with Outward Bound. And I can think of lots of things that we learned during our four nights on the trail: how to hang a tarp, and which hitch or knot is best for making a bear hang. How to put a forty-five pound backpack on our backs without pulling any muscles. How to wash dishes while conserving water, and leaving as little trace of us as humans, as possible. How to purify drinking water on the trail, and yes, how to poop in the woods. There are more deep seated and serious skills that we practiced that week, ones that will take a life time to master, and that we'll use every day. These are the skills that matter most; the skills that Jen and Mark (our teachers from Outward Bound) knew to be the most important: how to foster self-esteem by pushing us past our own individual comfort zones, how to encourage us to build lasting friendships by fostering group skill building, and how to take lessons learned on the trail as signposts for lessons to be learned in our daily lives.

I think it was on the second to last day of our camping trip that our teachers assigned our most difficult challenge of all, our "solo". We were required to go off in the woods alone, for



one hour (some groups were even sent for longer) to be by ourselves. Not only that, we were supposed to write a poem during that hour – an "I Am" poem, that asked us to identify, remember, and imagine things about ourselves. In the three days before our solos, my students and I had been through a lot. We had hiked for miles, we had twisted ankles, fallen on faces, gotten scratched and stung, not slept, not gone to the bathroom, gone to the bathroom, been afraid in the dark, missed our moms, dads and siblings. We had climbed on rock faces, complained, sweated, been cold, and been rained on. We had cooked in the dark, washed dishes with barely any water, carried heavy packs on our backs, argued, laughed and cried together. And the hardest part was being alone with ourselves.



Jen and Mark taught us so much that week, including things about Kurt Hahn, the Outward Bound visionary. They explained Hahn's ideas about teaching "through the ocean", or "through the forest". They encouraged us to bring the strength and stamina that we had discovered on the Appalachian Trail, back to our lives in Philly and beyond.

Personal Statement: "Brain cancer has been the obvious barrier in my life. It cost me my vision and left a lot of other problems in my family and my life. But I am not defined by the cancer. I define cancer by how I live my life. I was given a 50/50 chance of living 5 years. Now, I want to go to college for Outdoor Leadership and work for the Wounded Warrior Project. I chose the Wounded Warrior Project because I want to help wounded military members enjoy the outdoors."

Vanessa Escobar

Age: 16

Location: Houston, TX

Background: Vanessa comes from a low-income environment and would not be able to participate in the Summit without financial support.

Personal Statement: "I want to join the No Barriers Summit Retreat because I see it as a great opportunity to develop social and mental skills to help me on my journey to college and beyond. I want to work with a group of other motivated students and go beyond our comfort zone. I think it will be a great way to work with a group of diverse people and learn together while engaging in exciting activities. I am certain in those 4 days we will all develop remarkable characteristics, make new friends and leave knowing we can overcome any barrier life brings."

Thanks for your generous support!

David Shurna

Executive Director





This summer, KSMF partnered with a second charter school, Boys' Latin. Below are letters from two of the boys who went on a North Carolina Outward Bound trip.

MaKail Crawford

Where do I begin? I went on a three week Outward Bound course with my friend Will. Although we were in different groups I still enjoyed myself. My Outward Bound experience as a whole was excellent because I was able to do so many new things that I've never experienced before. My experience was like none other; I flew for the first time, got trapped in an airport, meet new friends and gained new experiences. I don't think that it would have been possible if it was not for the scholarship that I received through generous donors and sponsors.

Through Outward Bound I have learned not to take the small things in life for granted. This is so because through my entire experience I craved for the little things like a nice hot shower, clean clothes, a roof for protection, and every other thing that falls in between. But on the other hand I enjoyed every little detail about Outward Bound; from multi-pitch climbing Table Rock to the "Why is four the magic number" riddle, which took me days to figure out. In my three weeks of backpacking in the woods of North Carolina I began to feel as though the friends I made at Outward Bound were more than friends...they were family. In the end I am grateful that I was able to partake in this Outward Bound experience and hope that others can experience the same life changing adventure I did.

Elijah Kendall

When I first applied to the North Carolina Outward Bound program, I thought that I was signing up for a vacation. However, when I arrived in North Carolina, I found out that my perception was totally wrong. I would not be spending three weeks in the lap of luxury, but instead I would be surviving for three weeks. The first week was a big challenge for me because I had no cell phone, no one I knew, and had I had to sleep in a tarp next to five other guys. I was automatically saying, "I CAN'T DO THIS!!!!" But after a few days, I got to know some of the guys and the sleeping part wasn't as bad. The next challenge was to accept the fact that I would be walking approximately 4-5 miles per day. After a few days, the walking became second nature. I began to think that there would be no more issues or trials to endure, and that I would have a smooth fun ride for the rest of my time in North Carolina. Then, I contracted the trench foot fungal infection. I cannot put into words the amount of pain I was in. It was to the point where I had to use crutches in order to walk. This was extremely hard because not only was I walking 4-5 miles a day, but I was carrying a 50 pound bag on my back. A few days before the Outward bound course was over, my feet were hurting so much that I could not walk. I was standing in a small, bushy area by myself saying, "It's time to go home." I tried to walk back to my group and I fell to the ground. At this point, I was totally defeated and didn't have a single ounce of will to go on. I looked down at the grass and I saw the sunlight reflecting on something. It was my necklace that my father had given me. It said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". Immediately, I felt a little bit better and I had a little bit of will stirred up in me. I had the strength to walk the 3 miles back to camp. To make a long story short, God answered my prayers and allowed me to finish the Outward Bound course strong. When I came back home and told everyone my story, and they were so proud of me and what I had accomplished.

The Upside Down Tree

In June, 2002, Germantown Academy (Kate's Alma Mater) planted a tree in her memory. This fall, Class 4B wrote a poem about the tree.



The Upside Down Tree

By 4B

The tree is a grandparent to other trees.
 It has thick bark.
 From underneath it looks like leaves falling.
 The tree looks like it has a beard like Dumbledore.
 The branches hang down like a beagle's ears.
 It reminds me of a scarecrow.
 The tree is fatter at the top and thinner on the bottom.
 It looks like there's a door that leads into it.
 The branches look very twisted and bendy.
 It looks like an old haunted house.
 It looks like a man with wings.
 It's droopy like a Boston Terrier's lip.
 The top looks like it was cut off.

It is dedicated in the memory of Kate Svitek, '97



Kate Svitek After School Program

On behalf of myself, the School District of Upper Dublin and the UD Township, we greatly appreciate the generous donation from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation.

A portion of the money was designated to our first Kate Svitek After School Program. We had 7 students sign up, who really enjoyed themselves! Each week we discussed different nature topics (birds, bats, pond, watershed). We gave an introduction with pertinent information. We focused on activities and investigations out in the park related to each topic. Although I had an educational focus, the students really enjoyed just hiking in the park, observing birds, discovering pond life, walking the creeks and being kids in the outdoors.

We also built three bat boxes to supply habitat for our local Little Brown



Bats! They will replace the old ones in the back field adjacent to your property. I did also share your website to help the students appreciate and understand what the Foundation has been doing for kids. I wanted them to know about all the amazing opportunities that are out there, out of doors for them.

I gave the students a post-survey and 100% of the students gave us a 4 out of 4 excellent rating. 100% said that after this program their desire: to go outside, to explore outdoors more, to learn more about science/nature; to visit other parks INCREASED or stayed the same. 100% said they would recommend it to a friend and do it again.

Sincerely,
Lisa Fantini
Director of Robbins Park EEC



Thank you Faulkner Family Foundation

On October 18, 2013 the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation received a check for the amount of \$10,000 from the Faulkner Family Foundation, a fund of the Pennsylvania Automotive Association Foundation. The mission of the PAAF is to support the charitable activities and good works of Pennsylvania's new car and truck dealers.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



On behalf of Urban Blazers, and all of the youth we work with, I would like to sincerely thank you for your generous donation of \$5,000 towards our Summer Experience Program! This contribution from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation has allowed us to grow our program to reach more than 750 kids an average of 4 times each this summer!

This summer our team of 6 energetic interns, 15 volunteers and 2 program coordinators introduced students from 12

partners sites to natural areas accessible to their communities. We caught frogs and crayfish in the Wissahickon Creek. Picked berries and built forts on the Boxers' Trail in East Fairmount Park. We skipped rocks in the Pennypack Creek. We caught snakes next to Cobbs Creek. Many of our students were exploring nature for the first time and others have become veteran explorers who are able to teach our new interns and volunteers what plants smell good and are edible; and where to find the best worms and trees to climb.



Joshua- A 10 year old veteran of Urban Blazers at Mander Playground told one of our volunteers, "Some kids play video games. I climb trees."



Tariq – A 13 year old first time participant from the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf signed to me, "Thank you for treating us like normal kids because we are."

Janai – A 13 year old from Gathers Rec Center told one of our interns, "This is what summer is all about. Picking berries and catching toads on our very own trail. I never would have known that this could be so much fun. "

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make these incredible experiences possible. We could not do it without your support.



You Can Help!

Each year the Foundation raises between \$1,200 - \$1,500 in contribution cards. For only \$10, you can purchase a beautiful card that can be used for recognizing births, special birthdays, get well, appreciation and sympathy cards. If you are interested, please email Ellen Svitek (ellensvitek@gmail.com) and she will send you a coupon book and return envelopes.



Thanks again for the support you provided for our scholarship field trips in 2013. In 2012 we offered 29 scholarship trips representing 58% of our total trips. In 2013, we are providing 39 scholarship trips which represent 66% of all trips offered. That means we've had an increase of approximately 250-300 Title 1 students on the farm this year. Again this year, many of these teachers tell us that ours is the only day of outdoor education these students are getting during their school year.

Other highlights of the year include:

- An overall increase in the number of children served from 1,440 in 2012 to nearly 1,600 in 2013.
- Four full weeks of summer Farm Camp, which included two weeks at market rate and two weeks offered as scholarships to community centers serving lower-income children.
- Our first Farm to Preschool day, partnering with a nearby Head Start program (this was by far our cutest day of the year, so I am attaching a couple of photos).
- Spring and fall partnerships with Portland State University Capstone classes, so that college students could come out to the farm and learn how to lead our educational programs.
- An increase in Chef on the Farm days, bringing local chefs out to harvest vegetables with kids and then participate in a cooking project. This year we've made arepas, sopes, salad rolls, quesadillas and more – all stuffed or filled with fresh vegetables.

The support you provided over the years has allowed us to try new programs and expand on others. Our organization continues to grow slowly and to thrive, and we are so appreciative of the support we've received from you and others that has allowed that growth.



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.

“Although I didn't make it to the summit of Mt. Rainier that sunrise, near the top of the world, gave me a new perspective on life. I realized the importance of challenging one's own limits and ingenuity even if you are not able to achieve a goal. That sunrise placed into me a sense of wonder that had nothing to do with whether or not I made it to the summit. It is not always necessary to achieve an ultimate goal, because the reward of self satisfaction was enough from within. “

- Kate Svitek



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We would like to hear from you. Please consider a gift to the KSMF that will bring us one step closer to delivering Kate's dream. We welcome suggestions or ideas regarding fundraising events or programming. Perhaps you have a unique outlook or proposal, a special contact in the environmental or wilderness fields, or know of an organization or student in need of our support.

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Minimum contribution is \$10.
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