

expEDITION

Winter, 2025

To Fulfill Kate's Inspiring Vision



The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation (KSMF) is part of a distinctive group of 501(c)(3) Charitable Organizations, founded as a result of a heartbreaking personal loss.

As you may be aware, charitable support varies in its purpose, such as medical research, support of hospitals and schools, enhancing community leisure sites and more. There are also foundations, such as the KSMF, that are established in memory of and/or in honor of a special individual.

Kate Svitek died tragically in a snowboarding accident 23 years ago. Subsequent to this catastrophe, her family and friends joined together to fulfill Kate's dreams, thereby establishing the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation.

At the age of just 17, Kate wrote the following for her college application to the University of Vermont: "I want to spend my life helping people to better understand our natural world and appreciate it in the same way I have done by becoming part of nature. Our natural world is a powerful force and I want to try to provide people with the opportunity to grow through their interaction with the environment." An inspiring vision, especially from one so young.

Originally, the foundation's database of contributors consisted of three generations of family and friends. These included 1/ Kate's friends, 2/ the friends of Kate's parents, and 3/ the friends of Kate's grandparents. Now that 23 years have elapsed, Kate's grandparents' friends have too passed on. Her beloved grandfather, Bob Clair, one of the foundation's founders, died on October 14, 2024 at the age of 95. In honoring his memory, \$14,561.51 was raised.

We are aware that the continued health of the KSMF now resides in the hands of Kate's friends and her parents' friends. Your help will enable the foundation to continue to present approximately \$180,000 to \$200,000 in grant funds each year.

These grants align with and also propel forward the extraordinary vision of a remarkable 17-year old young woman. Our beloved Kate.

In Memory of Bob Clair

Bob Clair, Kate's maternal grandfather passed away on October 14, 2024, just shy of his 96th birthday. Bob was a Founder, and very involved in helping fundraise for the Foundation.

The family requested donations in his memory be made to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and to date we have raised \$14,561.51.

Bob was an awesome husband, father, brother, grandfather, uncle, cousin and friend. He will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.





I am writing on behalf of Girl & Her Backpack (G&HBP) to express our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support, which has been instrumental in helping us create meaningful outdoor experiences for girls and non-binary youth.



2024 Achievements and Impact:

This year, G&HBP has made remarkable strides, serving over 200 participants—doubling the number from 2023. With your generosity, we have been able to host climbing clinics, car camping trips, and family-oriented events, in addition to our core summer backpacking trips and monthly hikes. These experiences provide opportunities for participants to develop leadership skills, build confidence, and connect with nature.

The impact of these programs is evident in the voices of our participants:

Zofia, age 15:

"Girl & Her Backpack is an amazing experience for me. I love making new memories with these camping trips, sitting around the campfire, and connecting with nature. I can't wait to go back and meet new people."

Maya, age 12:

"Camp got me off my phone and taught me how to connect with nature. I was so happy to receive a scholarship so I could go."

Ila, age 13:

"I loved meeting new people and spending time outdoors. Being out there just made everyone so happy. The scholarship helped so much for our family—thank you so much for it. I love this camp and can't wait to go back."

These goals will allow us to reach even more participants, ensuring that all youth—regardless of background—have access to the transformative power of outdoor adventure.

Your contributions make it possible for us to provide scholarships to the majority of our participants, removing financial barriers to access. As we look ahead to 2025, we hope to continue this important partnership, working together to empower youth through the outdoors.



Message

Dear Friends,

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

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

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

Thanks so much for your financial support.

With our deepest gratitude,

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

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

@svitekfoundation

and to visit our website:

www.katesvitekmemorial.org



Sip and Shop #7 was another huge success!! Once again, on February 11, 2024, our amazing supporters from South Florida gathered at the Evelyn and Arthur store in Palm Beach Gardens for a day of shopping and fundraising for the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation.

Evelyn and Arthur presented us a check for \$10,000 and ladies who were unable to attend sent checks totalling \$841.93 for a grand total of \$10,841.93.

Thanks to everyone who supported the event! Please mark your calendars for March 23, 2025!! See you there!

Ladies mark your calendars for the

8th Annual SIP & SHOP Event

March 23rd, 2025
11am-4pm

EVELYN & ARTHUR

10937 N. Military Trail
Palm Beach Gardens



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



Marcia Markoff (co chair), Ellen Svitek, Bernice Glaser (co chair)



Penny Blom and Lauren Jordan - Ibis doppelgangers



Ibis friends shopping



Ibis friends checking out



The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation generously awarded the New Jersey School of Conservation (NJSOC) a first-time grant of \$3,900 in June 2024 to support educational field experiences at our 240-acre residential environmental center within Stokes State Forest in northwestern New Jersey. NJSOC is proud to report that the Foundation's support has provided emergency funding for the Somers Point School District, one of our most dedicated partner districts.

The sixth graders at Jordan Road Middle School in Somers Point first visited the NJSOC in 1984. The hands-on learning experience at our wooded campus was so popular with the students and teachers that "the Stokes trip" immediately became an annual tradition — and a highlight of the sixth-grade year. The enthusiastic teachers from Somers Point brought their classes to the NJSOC every year for 35 years without fail, until the school and the NJSOC closed due to the pandemic in March 2020.

When we reopened for day trips only in 2021, the school made a special effort to bring the seventh-grade class to the NJSOC (which entailed a six-hour round trip bus ride that day) to ensure all of their middle schoolers would experience the NJSOC.

This fall the sixth-grade teaching team was gravely disappointed to learn that funding for the Stokes trip had been unexpectedly cut from the budget. To keep this long-standing tradition alive for this year's class, the NJSOC has allocated our Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation grant to assist Somers Point, a designated Title 1 school where 58% of the students receive free or reduced lunch. Sixty-five (65) sixth graders will visit NJSOC on February 5, 6 and 7.



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

Thanks to our many supporters, we are able to keep costs down for paying schools and offer scholarships to low-income schools. For the first time in several years, much of our funding in 2024 was limited to schools located in Washington County. Funding from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation allowed three classes from the Portland Public School District to participate in farm field trips. Teachers from Clark Elementary brought new groups of fifth graders from Southeast Portland.

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

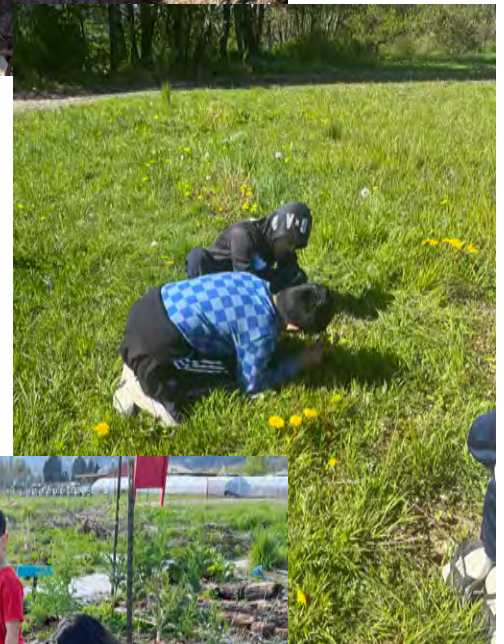
By introducing children to fresh vegetables and the preservation of natural areas and farmlands, we will deepen their connection to the land and food system, thus increasing their ability to take an active role in these matters in the future and make more informed dietary decisions. Our educator partners and research agree that our hands-on, place-based programs provide more meaningful education opportunities, which simply cannot be replicated in a classroom. A visit to the farm on a spring day, like the days on which we hosted Clark Elementary fifth graders, brings to life the Next Generation Science Standard lessons that students have been studying all winter. Students also taste fresh vegetables and tend to our Grow Lunch Garden. To the right, 5th graders are trying sorrel greens, they delight when they taste the sweet lemony sourness *"It tastes like green apples!"*. Every field trip is a new adventure as we dedicate a whole day to exploring three of the five different parts of the Sauvie Island Center's curriculum.

Below are comments from students who visited the farm in the spring of 2024.

"I want to switch to an all-plant diet and eat from here [the garden] all the time"

"I'm addicted to kale"

The total cost for the three Portland Public Schools scholarship field trips was approximately \$3621 which included field trip staff, supplies, bus transportation and the \$250 per trip fee which covers rent, insurance and more. Thank you for your continued support, and for helping us to make farms a part of more kids' lives!





Support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation enabled the Watersmith Guild to deliver the First Waves and Aqua Lab Adventure programs, combining standup paddleboarding and filmmaking to foster watershed conservation, youth mentorship, and diversity in the outdoors. Through 29 immersive events, these programs engaged 230 underserved youth, connecting them to environmental stewardship, recreational activities, and the power of digital media to inspire community-driven change.

A major accomplishment was the launch of Aqua Lab Adventures (ALA)—a connected-learning initiative developed by the Watersmith Guild that integrates citizen science and outdoor recreation. This innovative program empowers middle school students to lead in environmental conservation. During ALA, students conducted microplastic surveys using accessibly-designed designed trawls that they learned to tow behind paddleboards. The inaugural program served all 7th grade classes in the environmental justice districts of Hazelwood and Braddock Hills.



Reflecting on the experience, Lisa Ross, a 7th-grade science teacher, shared:

“I’m sure the students will be talking about this trip for years to come. They were so proud of themselves for doing something they initially feared. I appreciate you and your staff—you made the trip not only educational but enjoyable and easy for me as a teacher. Some of our students, who aren’t typically joyful, were smiling from ear to ear for three days. I wonder what the impact would be if this were done at the start of the year.”

Another key achievement was the expansion of First Waves to Erie, PA, where the program reached low-income youth through sojourns on Lake Erie and French Creek. The Erie cohort included 24 young people from a program that supports first-generation college-bound students. Additionally, the project extended ongoing First Waves initiatives to serve underserved youth across Western Pennsylvania.

Project Highlights:

- 230 youth participants
- 29 events conducted
- 70 environmental education modules delivered
- Creation of new curriculum (Aqua Lab Adventures)
- Expansion into new regions (Erie, PA & Beaver County)



With the funding provided by the KSMF, we were able to provide more cleanup supplies not only for our channel cleanups but also for our regular monthly public cleanups.

We were able to complete 3 channel cleanups for the 2024 year with 134 volunteers and 2,539 pounds of trash.

Our goal was 5 channel cleanups, but we reduced the number due to the amount of rain this past year, along with Orange County Public Works being more diligent in keeping our adopted channels clean after having an article posted in December 2023 highlighting 1.5 tons of trash picked up by 40 volunteers after 1 channel cleanup late last year after a rain session.

Our channel cleanup and subsequent media attention notified Public Works of the higher need for maintenance in that channel.

With the additional capacity, we expanded our channel cleanup program by adding a new site location in Mission Viejo this year, where we had 45 volunteers and 403 pounds of trash picked up for our very first cleanup at that location. With both our channel and beach cleanups combined, we completed 7 cleanups with 343 volunteers and 3,023 pounds of trash in 2024.

“The county put up the yellow ‘trash net’ barrier, which holds until a heavy rainfall pushes trash downstream ... cleanup is meant to keep that from happening.” - Michael Tou, district director for Petrie-Norris

“I love the ocean and earth and we live near the most gorgeous beaches in the world, and we need to take care of our home. I’m so happy to see so many people from all walks of life, and different ages who all care about our earth.” - Volunteer Cindy Haq of Irvine

“It’s a fun way to connect with constituents and serve our community together.” - Cottie Petrie-Norris





Camp Fowler successfully implemented the Hiking, Hammocks, and Hemingway initiative as an expansion of our Summer Camp program,

connecting at-risk youth to nature and literacy. For many of our campers, this provided a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in the outdoors, fostering a deep appreciation for the natural world. This initiative was inspired by the legacy of Kate Svitek, a passionate nature lover whose spirit lives on in the connections campers and staff made with the environment.

A highlight of the program was the creation of a Hammock Village at the summit of our hiking loop. Campers used maps to navigate the trail, practicing essential map-reading and wayfinding skills. Upon arrival, they found a space designed for reflection, relaxation, and connection—with peers and nature. A newly installed library of books encouraged quiet reading, while mindfulness activities such as sensory meditations, singing bowl exercises, and gratitude practices taught campers to be present and manage stress. The hammocks also offered sensory benefits, including a calming rocking motion for children with diverse needs.

Beyond its impact on campers, Hammock Village became a favorite retreat for staff, who found peace and restoration there amid their busy schedules.

The campers themselves expressed the program’s transformative effects:

“I felt like I could relax.”

“I floated in a forest and my problems went away.”

To date, CV has served more than 5,300 unique youth and successfully completed more than 1,300 outdoor adventure therapy programs. 92% of youth in our programs show a significant

Achievements:

Impact: 583 campers participated in Camp Fowler’s Summer 2024 programs, with 2,629 served across all initiatives.

Access: 98% of summer campers received full scholarships, ensuring accessibility for youth facing financial barriers.

Infrastructure: The Hammock Village and mindfulness tools are now a permanent resource, supporting year-round outdoor school and mobile events.

Future Goals:

Camp Fowler plans to expand programming to include more at-risk youth by hiring dedicated behavioral support staff. Additionally, we aim to enhance the Hammock Village experience by introducing sound baths for the community, including adults, through the acquisition of more vibrational instruments.



Support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation has been instrumental in helping Salmon Valley Stewardship diversify and expand its outdoor education offerings.

Since 2012, we have provided Hands on the Land youth outdoor education programming, introducing hundreds of kids to the unique ecosystems and cultural history of the Salmon River region.

In 2024 alone, we reached over 780 individuals through a wide variety of school-based and out-of-school programs. Thanks to this grant, we were able to build on this foundation by launching new monthly Friday programs and enhancing partnerships to create even more opportunities for youth to connect with and learn about local ecology.

This year, with the Foundation’s support, we introduced out-of-school Friday programs focused on natural resource topics, such as botany, forestry, fish/rivers, and rangeland management. These sessions provide hands-on experiences that not only foster curiosity but also introduce students to potential outdoor careers. Partnerships with the Salmon Public Library, Salmon-Challis National Forest, and the Salmon High School Natural Resource class allowed us to expand our offerings even further. Highlights included teaching Leave No Trace principles with the library’s summer reading program participants, educating second graders about aquatic invasive species and the entire Leadore Elementary about trees, and engaging high schoolers in discussions on critical issues like dam removal and salmon and steelhead recovery efforts.

The impact of these programs is perhaps best reflected in the words of 10-year-old Jones, who exclaimed after a salmon conservation Friday session, *“I can’t wait to be a river guide when I grow up—it’s the coolest job ever!”* His excitement illustrates how these experiences spark interest and help kids envision themselves as future leaders and caretakers of the natural resources that sustain our community of Salmon.

Our focus remains on introducing youth to natural resource topics to inspire a sense of stewardship and prepare them to become future leaders in our community and in conservation. Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation’s support has been vital in bridging gaps in educational and financial resources in our rural community and strengthening our organization’s effort to connect youth with the landscape in central Idaho. Thank you!





Supporting the Everglades in West Palm Beach

Once again, the Kate Svitek Organization Provided funding for the Grassy Waters Preserve Summer Intern Program. This year, our intern program served 102 students.

These students were in grades K-8 and were from schools within the City of West Palm Beach. Interns were on site for 10 weeks. Each school had a pre-visit, a field trip, and a post visit. All of these were administered by our interns.

As part of their internship, our interns became certified in "Project Learning Tree" and "Project Wild". They also completed projects to further enhance students' experiences at Grassy Waters Preserve.

The interns lead field trips into the cypress swamp and taught the students about the importance of the Everglades and resources needed for human survival within this unique ecosystem such as food, water, medicinal uses, and shelter. Additionally, the interns took students into the marsh to determine the health of the environment by dip netting for creatures and determining their identity and tolerance for pollution.



The first project was a new education- to -go kit "Become A Naturalist". This kit was for 3rd grade students and provided teachers with a complete outline, all supplies needed, and background information of the program and what it means to be a Naturalist. Our interns read our new book, "Sam the Snail Kite". Activities that support the book included "Backyard Safari", "Mystery Marsh", and "Boggy Buddies". Another part of this project was a self-guided activity for younger students. In this kit students have "Naturalist" vests, binoculars, compass, magnifying glass, field guides for leaf identification, and much more.

The other project "Secrets of the Everglades" also related to the book were 3 - 5-minute videos for 3rd grade students. Students watched the videos and then completed activities related to the animal video. Observations were shared with the class. "Flip Up" signs were also created for each character in the book. Every animal in the book had its own sign and each sign was related to pictures in the book.

These projects are the interns' legacy to future students and will enhance their experience at Grassy Waters Preserve.



girls inc.

of Santa Fe

With the help of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, 116 Santa Fe girls participated in the 2024 Girls Inc. summer camp, 80% of whom were able to receive scholarships to attend. They hiked, learned about local flora and fauna, and took trips to the New Mexico Wildlife Center, Santa Fe Public Market, Harrell House Bug Museum, and Pajarito Environmental Education Center to learn about wildlife, conservationism, and food science.

The grant funds supported the camp's Girls enCourage six-week leadership program for older girls. Their adventures included weekly hikes ranging from three to seven miles each, rafting on the Rio Grande, and rock climbing at the Santa Fe Mountain Center.

This year Girls enCourage culminated in a three-day, two-night camping trip where they exercised the skills they learned over the summer, such as shelter building and cooking in the wilderness on an eight-mile hike in the Pecos Wilderness.

The girls learned more than just outdoor skills. As one girl said "We work on leadership and team building so we can confront challenges and overcome them." Another explains, "Summer camp has meant expanding my experiences and building teamwork and trust in others."

This summer, one exceptional girl had the opportunity to participate in an immersive wilderness expedition through our partnership with the National Outdoor Leadership School. Thanks to a full-tuition scholarship, she was able to explore the outdoors, develop leadership skills, and build a deeper connection with nature. She writes, "I genuinely want to thank you for this opportunity because it's honestly a once in a lifetime experience for me, and it wouldn't have been possible without your support. I was so scared at first, but in the end I appreciate the experience and I am proud of myself for accomplishing something I didn't know I could do."





Thanks to the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Fund, Neighborhood Bike Works (NBW) continued its impactful work with the Youth Bicycle Education and Empowerment

Program (YBEEP), empowering youth through cycling, mechanics, and personal growth. Over the past year, NBW reached 174 unique youth, a 16% increase from the previous year. We doubled the percentage of female participants to 32%, strengthening inclusivity within our programs.

In 2024, 98 students earned bikes through our Earn-A-Bike program, learning not only mechanics but also gaining invaluable life skills. One participant remarked, “A bike to me means freedom,” capturing the essence of our work. Altogether, students collectively rode 5,263 miles and 134 youth participated in multiple NBW programs, a testament to their sustained engagement.

Our efforts are achieving meaningful outcomes aligned with our goals. Ninety-six percent of students reported positive social interactions with peers, and 93% felt they had learned leadership skills, which they plan to carry into their schools and communities. “I can honestly say that without NBW, I wouldn’t be where I am,” shared a youth participant. “They molded me from that random kid that didn’t know the first thing about bikes to participating in actual races. I’ve made so many friends and I honestly can’t wait to make more.” Such testimonials illustrate the life-changing impact of YBEEP.



Additionally, NBW promotes environmental awareness, with 19 youth discovering new ride destinations and 15 participating in a three-day, 100-mile camping trip along the Circuit trails. One hundred percent of students indicated that NBW inspired them to ride more often, underscoring our commitment to fostering a passion for biking and environmental consciousness. Thank you for helping us provide this life-shaping program. NBW remains dedicated to guiding youth toward healthier, more confident futures.



In the summer of 2024, students in the Center for Aquatic Sciences’ Community And Urban Science Enrichment (CAUSE) Program traveled from their homes in Camden City, New Jersey to coastal Maine for a week of environmental field science and on-water adventures, through the generous support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation.

CAUSE students dedicate hundreds of hours each year to the program, studying environmental science, creating curriculum for and delivering STEM programming in their communities, and supporting kayaking and fishing programs offered free of charge to Camden residents.

Each summer, CAUSE students go on Excursion, a much-anticipated multi-night, out of state trip where they have opportunities to study new habitats, engage with team building, and participate in outdoor activities. Excursion is a vital, impactful part of the CAUSE experience, as many CAUSE students have never traveled out of state or visited preserved natural areas prior to joining CAUSE.

One 11th grade CAUSE student said of their experiences paddling in Maine this summer, “I felt free and really enjoyed myself... seeing so much nature around us and being ok with the water hitting you. We were literally splashing it on our faces.”

CAUSE students stayed in cabins in a forested area, went kayaking on the Saco River, and explored tidepools on the Atlantic coast. Students improved their paddling skills, conducted field research, and hiked to visit a pollinator habitat. They made memories, strengthened their teamwork and collaboration skills, and expanded their knowledge and perspective for future curriculum writing. They took these things back home to enrich the work they do, bringing STEM engagement opportunities to their communities.

“What really took my breath away was the tide pools. It was unlike anything I had seen before and the fact that it was natural was insane and unreal.”

-- CAUSE student, on the 2024 Excursion to Maine





Riverbend Environmental Education Center's staff would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for once

again supporting our Summer Habitat Management Internship program.

The Summer Habitat Management Internship opportunity allows Riverbend to uphold its commitment to being a place of learning that connects people with the natural world. Our internship program enables young people to gain hands on experience in land stewardship fieldwork and natural resources volunteer leadership. We know the summer of employment at our preserve will propel our participants into their continued studies, career trajectories, or natural resource volunteering interests in the future. It was an absolute highlight of my first year at Riverbend to gain the assistance of four passionate and delightful young people for a work season. We could not have this program or supplied the much beloved pruners and leather holsters worn daily by our interns without your generous support.

This summer four Interns supported our ecological restoration and preserve maintenance priorities. They came together to install erosion control features along our trail system, remove invasive vines and species around the preserve, construct bird nestboxes, repair our perimeter deer fence, run summer teen volunteer mornings, prepare and plant four meadow restoration plots, three grant funded pollinator support gardens and continued shrub and tree plantings in established project areas, among many other activities. The crew also conducted a soil assessment of 5 slope positions within our Ash Recovery Zone and helped begin the management planning for this zone of the preserve. The interns learned native and invasive plant ID with a specific focus on pollinator support plants and meadow species. They learned the fundamentals of how to approach public nature preserve management. We hope that they had fun throughout these efforts too, getting to know local flora, each other, recurring teen volunteers, and the staff at Riverbend!

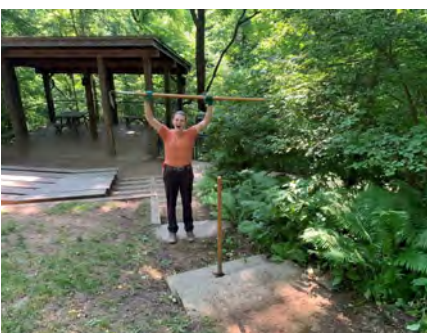
This internship is a unique opportunity to conduct meaningful ecological restoration work at a public site also activated by youth summer camp and environmental education programming. There is a real opportunity to glimpse a wide breadth of engagement surrounding natural resources and be exposed to what may inform your career path. We cannot thank the Kate Svitek Memorial foundation enough for enabling this crucial opportunity for our future land stewards. Thank you!

"I think this internship showed me how to turn my knowledge into usable skills in habitat management, not to mention the vast amount of knowledge I gained!" - Katherine Russell, Environmental Engineering, Hamilton College

"This internship has been the perfect opportunity to learn all there is to know about land stewardship from a very qualified teacher; I especially enjoyed all the facts about trail maintenance. Whether it was drilling in logs with rebar or building a rock bar, learning different ways to stop erosion was a great experience!" - Michael Lowry, Ecology and Evolution, University of Pittsburgh

"As an intern at Riverbend, I was able to participate in habitat management that helped me form my idea of my dream career." - Julia Rife, Geography, Millersville University

"As a habitat management intern, I learned so much about invasive species management and trail maintenance, and overall, I enjoyed spending time each week at Riverbend Environmental Education Center." - Myla Nelson, Environmental Science, Concentration in Soil Science and Hydrology, Stockton University



Copper River Stewardship Program was held June 9-20, 2024, with 9 students from the Copper River Basin and Cordova participating. The group travelled throughout the Copper River Watershed and Prince William Sound, exploring different ecosystems and engaging in a variety of activities designed to build awareness, practice stewardship, and learn about the issues facing our watershed and region.

The students learned about the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and current tanker traffic while crossing Prince William Sound on the Alaska Marine Highway System.

The youth engaged in creative activities which helped them reflect on their journey together, and their impact as stewards of the environment. For example, they took turns creating a daily journal in the form of short poems that revisited the events of each day.

For the students, it was a chance to bond with a cohort of like-minded peers while spending quality time in an outdoor setting. The program helps youth expand their horizons,



learning about the diversity in communities, cultures, and ecosystems found within this corner of Alaska. In this cohort we had students from several very tiny Copper Basin communities. For them to spend time in a remote part of the Copper River Delta was a unique experience they could get nowhere else. Then when the Copper Basin students got a chance to show their home turf to the students from Cordova, their pride was unmistakable. It's a transformative experience to get to understand a landscape this way.

Quotes from participants:

"A way I changed as a person was I realized how much more compatible I am with nature rather than electronics."

"I was challenged when I had to put on waders and march through marshland in burning sun and be eaten by mosquitos."

"If someone pollutes one part, the rest of the watershed can be affected. This is also like overfishing which affect many different ecosystems."

Thank you for helping these students have this amazing opportunity!



The Schuylkill Center
 for ENVIRONMENTAL
 EDUCATION

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

Thanks to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, the Schuylkill Center purchased equipment and supplies to expand our efforts to inspire new connections to nature with our community.

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

1. Compasses: Helped improve orienteering skills for our 10–12-year-olds during both on-site activities and trips around the Philadelphia area.
2. Water testing kits: Enabled campers to test water from various ponds, offering hands-on scientific learning.
3. Pocket microscopes: Allowed kids ages 4-12 to get an up-close view of what lives amongst us in small plant life and observe organisms like moss and macroinvertebrates.
4. Geology kits: Introduced kids to the rocks and minerals of Southeastern Pennsylvania, culminating in the fun of breaking geodes to take home.
5. Seed balls: Taught campers about the importance of native plants and stewarding our lands by creating seed balls with local species for planting.
6. Rain ponchos: Encouraged kids to embrace hiking and outdoor play, even in wet conditions.
7. Life jackets: Replaced worn gear for our popular canoeing activities, a favorite among young learners.
8. Camp stoves: Replaced aging equipment, allowing our 10-12 campers to cook meals like pasta and hot cocoa during their five-night outdoor camping trips.
9. New fire pit: Enhanced safety and allowed us to host memorable campfires, further enriching the outdoor experience for our older campers who learned to appreciate the beauty of the woods at night.



The support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation made this summer unforgettable. Our campers were able to fully embrace and appreciate the wonders of the natural world, creating memories that will last a lifetime.



Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions is pleased to report on the success of our school programs during the spring semester of 2024 (January - May). During this time period, we provided 113 educational days outdoors to over 1500 students in New Mexico from 17 different

schools and organizations. The Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation gift of \$3,000 allowed us to give a discount to a Title I school that otherwise may not have been able to afford our programs.

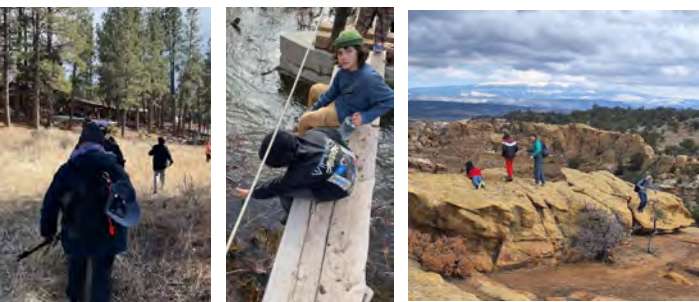
This spring, La Promesa Elementary school became a new partner for us. La Promesa is located in Valencia County, which is a rural area with very limited resources and services for their population. We were so excited to provide programming to students in this overlooked area of the state. We know that without grants like this one, the cost of our programs would be prohibitive for schools like La Promesa. The grant from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation was applied to the cost of programming for this school.

Thirteen 5th grade students from La Promesa participated in a 3-day camping trip with our experienced staff members at the Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions Basecamp property, located near Thoreau, NM. On the way out to Basecamp, they stopped at the breathtaking Sandstone Bluffs at the El Malpais National Monument, where they played some games and did some team/community building activities. They ate their lunch at the Bluffs and explored the area as a group.

They then proceeded to Basecamp and moved into the cabins located there, took a tour of the Basecamp and learned about outdoor norms and safety. Dinner took place at the Basecamp mess hall, after which the students performed "details"--our name for the chores that need to be done to keep the camp running smoothly. Details include things like doing dishes, taking out the trash, cleaning latrines and sweeping and cleaning the common areas. Students learn to work together as a team to take care of the space they are living in. After details were complete, there was a campfire, with songs, games and reflections on the day. Then off to bed.

On day two, after a hearty breakfast and details, the students went to the Bisti Badlands to hike, learn about the geology of the area and the cultural significance of the location. Then back to Basecamp for dinner, details, and another fun campfire.

On day three, after breakfast and packing up their belongings along with a sack lunch from the Basecamp mess hall, the students visited Casamero Pueblo, another naturally and culturally significant site for them to learn about. We then drove them back to their school to be picked up by their parents.



This camping trip was a unique opportunity for these students and their teachers, many of whom had never been camping or seen these amazing locations in their home state. All our outdoor programs are "unplugged," meaning that the students are not allowed to use their phones or other electronic devices during the program. This encourages deeper learning and social development during the trip. This overnight program took place on March 18-20, 2024.



To Ellen Svitek and Foundation Trustees:

The Headwaters to Ocean summer camps were a fantastic success this year. Again, your generous support made this possible; we cannot thank you enough! There is nothing quite like summer camp, where kids can play, explore, be curious, and grow.

Our campers all experienced something new, exciting, and engaging this summer. We were able to host seven summer camps with hands-on, feet-wet education about the place we call home. Our 2024 programs included options for young explorers, week-long camps for our returning explorers, and overnight camps for middle schoolers focusing on stewardship. Our camp themes focused on Dinosaurs, extremophiles, Women in Science, salmon, healthy habitats, and, of course, having fun outside. Campers in all camps met with scientists, explored the rainforest, visited glaciers, waded through wetlands, investigated ocean ecosystems, and learned that from Headwaters to Ocean, it's all connected. The photos below show campers' fun experiences throughout the summer. In the Science Center's vision, our region maintains resilience by fostering strong connections between self, surroundings, science, and society for all community members. Education for all ages is a cornerstone of this vision. Thank you again for your generous support in helping us create lifelong memories for the next generation of nature-smart leaders.



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



Lacawac's 2024 summer camp aimed to enhance participant skills in collaboration, leadership, and stewardship. We were able to foster community building and support networks through Social Emotional Learning and facilitate knowledge sharing through group activities. The camp operated on a carefully planned daily schedule, ensuring a balanced mix of activities. Mornings included invigorating welcome activities followed by a morning educational session. Educational sessions were strategically placed to cater to various interests. Afternoon activities included hands-on projects, team-building exercises, and mindfulness activities. Each day concluded with afternoon recap sessions to discuss learning and experiences from the day. Numerous activities focused on skill-building, covering topics such as leadership, creativity, and STEAM based learning, covering a range of important developmental skills for each age group. Participants had opportunities to engage in multiple hands-on activities to reinforce learning. All sessions were designed to encourage collaboration and outdoor exploration among campers. Each of our 12 sessions were facilitated by experienced educators and industry professionals.

Demographics of Lacawac's Day Camp participants showcase why our camp is so unique and provides data on how to better facilitate future camps. Our gender distribution across all camp sessions were 60% male, 40% female, with our age range encompassing 5–12-year-olds. The geographic representation data shows participants from 5 different states, with 75% from the local area. Our total number of registrations increased by 62% from last year, with 126 participants. This year there was a 40% increase from our forecasted registrations based on 2023 data reports. Lacawac's Day Camps achieved a 95% satisfaction rate as measured by post-camp feedback, indicating overall effectiveness. We established more partnerships with local community organizations, enhancing resource availability for future activities. 8 Counselors in training developed hands on experience and leadership skills. We implemented feedback from previous camps, leading to a significant reduction in logistical issues experienced during the setup.

Overall, Lacawac's Day Camp had an incredible season! We would like to thank all of the campers, volunteers, sponsors, partnering agencies, and staff on collaborating to make a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Camper Quotes:

"My favorite part about camp was the hikes"
- Eco Investigators Camper

"We should be able to kiss salamanders"
-Creature Feature Camper

"I can't wait to show my parents the shelters we made!"
-Wilderness Adventure Camper

"This bear track is bigger than my face!"
-Exploring Nature Camper





In the summer of 2024, thanks to the generous support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, Camp Attaway was able to continue offering engaging and meaningful nature experiences for our campers.

We were excited to revive beloved traditions and introduce new activities, all centered around fostering a lifelong connection with nature.

Camp Attaway, a recreational camp built on the therapeutic themes of social skills, teamwork, and coping skills, found the nature program integral to our mission. It helped campers to look beyond themselves, engage with their environment, and develop a sense of responsibility towards others and nature.



Throughout the first week, we focused on social skills and connections, allowing campers to form new friendships. Activities like seed planting taught them the value of nurturing relationships. We also introduced eco-art fusion sculptures, where campers used natural materials to create art, sparking creativity and reinforcing environmental conservation.

The second week was dedicated to teamwork and interconnectedness. We brought back our tradition of the biosphere building activity, which illustrated the delicate balance of ecosystems, while the Predator and Prey game highlighted ecological connections and teamwork.

In the final week, we emphasized coping skills. Campers created nature sensory boxes filled with natural items, serving as



a tool to cope with stress and a reminder of their camp experiences. Our favorite Reptile Man returned with his collection of reptiles, teaching campers about adaptability and helping them overcome fears. Our nature field trip involved a new visit this summer to the Howard County Conservancy, which was a highlight. Campers participated in a Nature Ingo activity during

their hike, enhancing their mindfulness and sense of achievement. Further, most of our campers spend minimal time outdoors during the school year, and have challenges with flexibility, transitioning and sensory integration. The nature hike is a perfect opportunity for our campers to encounter unexpected situations, sensory discomfort, and to face their fear of bugs, building their “feeling muscles” for the world after camp.



Our CITs participate in a community outreach project as part of their Attaway experience. This summer, they embarked on a rewarding experience at the Community Ecology Institute (CEI) in Columbia, Maryland. CEI is dedicated to fostering connections with nature, enhancing community health, promoting stewardship, and advancing climate action. At CEI’s Freetown Farm, in addition to learning about the goings on at the farm, our CITs engaged in a variety of activities, from planting seeds and tending to crops, to creating decorations and organizing materials for various farm programs.

The 2024 summer session aimed to instill a sense of wonder and responsibility towards nature, encouraging campers to favor outdoor exploration over screen time. With the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, we created lasting memories and a significant impact on our campers' lives.

Dear Kate,

*Your name was spoken,
Many, many times recently, I must say,
As we honored your dear grandfather,
Who may be with you now every day.*

*Evidently, he was the greatest granddad,
How much you loved him was made clear,
And now that he too has passed over,
Hoping that special love is with you, Kate, dear.*

*It brought tears to many an eye,
Listening to kind words by Michael, Mom and Dad,
Oh, it wasn't easy, not going to sugarcoat it,
The missing of you, well, the longing can be sad.*

*Yet, when I had a chance to think more on it,
Knowing you'd moved beyond about a score ago,
It hit me how often you are thought about,
Every single day, by so many who you love and know.*

*So, Kate, this is an enthusiastic,
"Hello!" to you,
How special your life was —
it touches us still,
By the number of times we all
heard your name,
It's evident you live on,
differently, but you're with us,
until.....*

*Thanks for all you taught me.
Your friend and admirer,
Kathy*

(Poem by Kathy Disque)



Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation funded the Summer Camp 2024 program at Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow. For ten weeks from June through August, we host campers from ages

four through twelve at our education center to learn about the environment. Each week the campers learn about a different natural theme such as: Wetlands and Watersheds; What's the BUZZ (insects & pollinators); Wild Science, Awesome Amphibians & Radical Reptiles; and more.

Summer Camp 2024 was a huge success! We got a group of campers out into the woods and taught them about many environmental issues. They learned, for example, about being good water stewards, starting with teaching them about their home watershed address and how, whether they lived near water or not, everything is connected when it comes to rainfall.

The group spent a lot of time in the woods and stream, and they had fun while learning. Our campers went from a reaction being grossed out by holding crayfish and salamanders and toads, to saying, 'let me hold it.' One camper sent us a card saying, 'We got to climb trees and go on adventures. Can't wait to explore again!'



The College Settlement of Philadelphia

600 WITMER ROAD • HORSHAM, PENNSYLVANIA 19044

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

What an incredible year we have had! When I joined the staff of College Settlement in April, we had just a few short months remaining to prepare for almost 1,000 summer campers.

There were exciting new things we wanted to do. One was to survey our campers and parents to more concretely gauge their child's personal growth. In the report below we have highlighted a few of the results. Another widely popular addition was our Culinary Camper Kitchen. After picking produce on our partner organic farm, the campers would cook outside in a kitchen under a pavilion.

The bottom line is that the College Settlement Camper Fund allows us to help families send their children to camp at a greatly reduced cost. Two weeks of overnight camp tuition can be as little as \$340 because of Camperships. Still, \$340 is a huge investment for the majority of families, 80% of whom live at or below the poverty level. The actual cost for College Settlement to provide two weeks of overnight camp is \$1634! Living into our mission to provide a superior camp experience to Philadelphia's children is why we do what we do.

Thank you for supporting our Camper Fund once again. Your support can be felt and your example encourages other supporters.

2024 OUTCOMES REPORT

The \$5,800 contribution from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, along with other supporters and fundraising efforts, was used to welcome 953 children and youth from the Philadelphia area, 848 who received some form of campership support. Campers received an average subsidy of \$857 for each session of camp attended in 2024.

- 92% of parents surveyed reported that their children learned a new skill at camp.
- 95% of parents surveyed reported that their children had increased confidence in nature/outdoors.
"This was my sons' second year and he enjoyed it more than last time. This program has helped him mature personally and socially exactly how I hoped. Excellent job staff!!"
- 96% of parents surveyed reported that their children enjoyed trying healthy food options at camp.
- 82% of parents surveyed reported that their children have demonstrated increased self-confidence since camp.
"My son's self-esteem went through the roof at camp this year. He generally is embarrassed to put himself out there (school presentations, etc) but he said he danced in front of everyone and even sang new songs. He loved Gaga and going to the Environmental Center and the hayride. He also learned some self-regulation about listening to his body when he needs to rest and take it easy."
- 92% of campers reported that they want to return to camp next summer
"I loved that Lena swam one day in her clothes when her bathing suit was ripped: this taught her to be flexible and open to new ideas (like swimming in clothes!). I want the kids to learn to enjoy "not perfect" or "messy" fun - because that is life! All the animal and farm interactions were amazing as well. The photos were great because we could look at them together as a family and reflect about the experience, any learning or gratitude to take away from the day."





Wissahickon

CHARTER SCHOOL

I am pleased to share with you the lasting impact of this year's Kate Svitek Memorial Expedition, which our Eighth-Grade students at the Awbury Campus completed this fall. Once again, the expedition has proven to be a transformative experience. Throughout the trip, many of our students discovered new strengths within themselves, stepping up in leadership roles and navigating challenges with determination. These experiences helped them recognize their own capacity for perseverance and problem-solving, which they carry with them back into the classroom and beyond. As our students worked together in an unfamiliar and demanding environment, they developed deeper bonds with their peers and grew more attuned to each other's needs. The sense of empathy and collaboration they return with continues to positively shape their relationships with one another at school. This journey also provided our students with the rare opportunity to connect with nature, reflecting Kate's love of the outdoors and her commitment to cultivating a deep respect for the environment. Through this experience, our students not only honor Kate's memory but also come to understand the importance of her vision: inspiring young people to care for and protect the natural world. Enclosed, you will find reflections from some of our Awbury Campus students. Our Fernhill Campus will embark on their expedition in the spring. We will provide a detailed report on their experience at that time. We are truly grateful for your continued support, which makes such transformative opportunities possible for our students each year.

"I learned to be patient and really work as a team, like listening and solving problems when there was conflict." - Jordyn



"I made goals for myself during the trip...I realized that I have more strength than I had before." - Braylon

"When we were hiking the rocks were challenging but we got through it, which helped us learn new skills and to help others throughout the trip." - Ciara



"Something I realized about myself is I like to rock climb because of the views...I also realized that I like wildlife. I used to be scared of the woods but now I'm not." - Nyair

"I learned what 'leave no trace' is, which basically means 'leave it better than you found it'...I also learned that I like hiking with my friends." - Blake



"I actually kinda enjoy camping...it was a challenge while hiking, but I guess I pushed through it." - Sahaar

"Some things I realized about myself is that when I'm under pressure I get frustrated. For example, when we were hiking and my feet were hurting, I was getting really upset... Something else I realized is that I have good leadership skills. These things have changed me because they made me want to better myself. It also changed me because I believe in myself more." - Zuhrah

"I can challenge myself. Hiking is something that I would never do again, but I got through it. I also challenged myself to eat new foods. As a picky eater, that was hard." - Azuri

"I bonded with my classmates and my legs got stronger. My compassion towards people is higher than it was." - Jer'ray

"This experience changed me because it was lots of hikes and made me feel strong." - Suhaylah

"I actually kinda enjoy camping...it was a challenge while hiking, but I guess I pushed through it." - Sahaar

Thank You, Mr & Mrs. Svitek!



We want to express our sincere gratitude for the generous financial support from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation in 2024- thank you! Your support allowed 100 Elk Outdoor Center programming to help many students from Colorado "Reveal the Possibilities Within" - one of our primary missions that is at the core of everything we do here.

In 2024, 100 Elk hosted 31 schools and community programs - 1,853 students - at our Buena Vista, CO facility. Thanks to the funding from Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, we were able to provide \$1,000 of financial aid to 43 students at a school from Golden Colorado (7th and 8th graders). In addition, we were able to provide \$1,500 to support the cost of outdoor education delivered to 48 (4th and 5th grade) students from Glenwood Springs, CO (Title I school) and \$1,000 to help bring 106 (7th-9th graders) students from Denver, CO.

2024 100 Elk Outdoor Education programming included:

- 1) Challenge activities, including two high ropes courses and a zipline, archery and horseback riding.
- 2) Community-building activities, including canoeing, low ropes courses and team-building sessions that focus on problem-solving, improving communication skills, and fostering and supporting friendships.
- 3) Ecology activities, which help foster a love for and understanding of the outdoors, Eco hikes that encourage the sustainability of our forests along with survival skills, and engaging in group games that simulate how ecosystems and the food web work.
- 4) New STEM programs, aerospace team building introducing the science and physics of rocket building and launching; Soil Sampling - measuring the hydration of the soil from several different elevations around our 1100 acre facility; the birds and animals of the Arkansas River Valley including pictures and audio recordings - the audio of Elk bugling was recorded on our property in the fall.

With love and gratitude for your very generous support of our youth!





James River Basin Partnership (JRBP) hosted our 2nd 100 Hours Outdoors program for the summer, where children and families are encouraged to spend time outdoors during their summer breaks. We had over 250 kids signed up for the program, 82 submitted 100 hours or more, and over 10,000 hours were logged in total! New this summer, we added a series of events titled Experience the Outdoors.

Thanks to funding from the Katie Svitek Memorial Foundation, we were able to purchase supplies for many of these events. New binoculars were used for a bird walk in late May, where we explore the woods along South Creek, led by a local birder and author, Dorothy, of the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society.

KSMF funds helped us purchase magnifying glasses and materials for guides, which were used for a Hike with a Geologist event at Busiek State Forest, where participants searched the creek for rocks, minerals, and fossils. One of our favorite events from the summer was our nature journaling event, where KSMF funds purchased a nature journal and colored pencil pack for each child, and we explored a natural area, drawing pictures of anything observed, including mushrooms, blooming flowers, pipevine swallowtail caterpillars munching on leaves, and more.

We had many families attend more than one event, and one parent emailed us our favorite review:

“We loved taking part in this challenge together— it gave us a lot of quality time together as a family and the motivation to be together outside as much as possible. We are hoping we can keep that spirit alive all year long! Thank you for the fun opportunities this gave us embracing this wholesome family challenge!!”

So many children were able to have personal connections with nature and learn more about the environment around them. Our hope is that these children continue down this path of being life-long nature lovers. This program was a success thanks for support from KSMF!



STRAYER MIDDLE SCHOOL

A select group of Strayer Middle School eighth graders took part in a unique educational experience at the Chincoteague Bay Field Station in Wallops Island, VA. Students spent four days learning both in the lab and immersed in the field, gaining a great appreciation

for the outdoors, the marine environment, and their role in it. The students actively participated in an array of classroom lectures, field trips, and hands-on activities. Before each field trip students were prepared by the station’s instructors with a 30-minute lesson about the natural resources they would be seeing up close and then taken by bus which dropped us off right into that environment. Specimen captured on the oceanographic boat trip and from the intertidal zone were studied either in the field including a juvenile shark, a male seahorse and a mantis shrimp or if they were hardy enough to withstand the trip such as crabs, shellfish and aquatic

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



“I had such an amazing time! I got to do things I never thought I would. Being on the boat and seeing the dolphins swim alongside was so cool.” - Student attending trip



With your support, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association's Youth Backcountry Camps successfully delivered transformative outdoor experiences to 115 teens through 12 four-day, three-night wilderness

adventures in the 2024 season. Our comprehensive program combined outdoor education with a strong focus on Leave No Trace principals, leadership activities, and social-emotional learning to foster the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders.

Youth navigated challenging terrain, learned backcountry cooking, and worked collaboratively while immersed in the pristine wilderness of the Tahoe Rim Trail. Guided by experienced outdoor educators trained in Backcountry Risk

Management and Youth Mental Health First-Aid, campers developed critical skills like decision-making, risk assessment, and effective communication. Beyond teaching technical outdoor skills, YBCC camps created a supportive environment where youth could challenge themselves, form meaningful connections with peers, and develop a lasting appreciation for the natural world. Through mindfully designed activities and facilitated discussions, participants explored themes of personal growth, environmental responsibility, and community building. One YBCC camper named Oscar stated, "what stood out to me most is that no matter where you are, you can make friends and memories to last a lifetime."

The impact of our program was evident in post-program evaluations, with 84% of participants reporting an increase in social-emotional skills including self-confidence, independence, and resiliency. Additionally, 84% of youth demonstrated an enhanced understanding of environmental stewardship ethics, indicating a deepened connection to nature and pride for Tahoe ecosystems.

The success of this year's Youth Backcountry Camps demonstrates the profound impact of immersive outdoor experiences on young people's development and their relationship to one another and the environment. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association remains committed to providing accessible, high-quality outdoor education programs that inspire and empower youth as we continue to break down barriers of access to the outdoors. Thank you for your support in bringing that mission to life.



Laketrails Base Camp is truly grateful for the funding received from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation with the financial award we were able to provide funding to bring a group of 36 students from Apple Valley High School up to camp on Lake of the Woods.

The students' adventure began with a trek north, arriving at our remote island after a 9-hour bus ride followed by a 6-mile boat ride. While in Base Camp, students learned to set up tents, how to pack camping gear, how to paddle and portage canoes, how to identify local flora and fauna and much more.

After just one full day on the island, they accompanied Laketrails staff on a 5-day excursion into the wilderness areas of Lake of the Woods, a huge island-filled lake spanning the U.S. and Ontario borders. Campers were immersed in the full experience of paddling and portaging, learning to navigate, cooking over campfires, living in tents, fishing, and learning to work together as a group to meet shared goals. Students learned to "get dirty," the Laketrails expression for becoming fully engaged in the happenings of one's canoe trip.

Upon returning to Base Camp, Laketrails staff noticed many students who seemed to have lost their fear and anxiety and were now bursting with confidence. Many of these urban youth saw the stars and Northern Lights for the first time, a truly awe-inspiring occasion for them. Once again, the "Laketrails Magic" produced some amazing positive transformations in these teens.

Without the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, none of this would have been possible. Again, THANK YOU!

STUDENT COMMENTS:

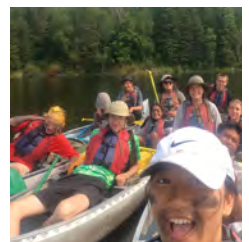
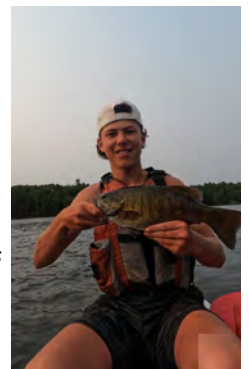
"The Laketrails trip helped me to see the world from a different perspective. It showed me there's a world outside of social media and that we need to take care of it."—I.K.

"This trip made a big impact on me. It taught me hard work, camaraderie, all about nature and being part of a community. It taught me that we are responsible for our actions and how those actions can impact nature. The experience was beautiful." —J.H.

"I learned to reach out more to those around me and to make new friends. I also learned to have patience and developed camping and survival skills needed to explore the wilderness and the world around me." —M.M.

"Laketrails taught me how much you can truly LIVE when you learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I feel more brave now to explore new places, try new experiences, and just live in the present moment more often." —L.B.

"During our time on trail my group encountered some difficulties and challenges that we all had to get through. I didn't know I was capable of being so in sync with people I barely knew. After Laketrails, I feel more open and confident in my ability to connect with others." —B.W.





Something Good in the World cannot thank the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation enough for what their support has made possible for children in both New York and Hawai'i!

In NY, the Ossining Children's Center Kindergarten students were given access to all aspects of nature in the local area, to

discover and explore the living systems that are all interconnected. Most of the children had never been in the woods, hiked on a trail, sloshed through a stream, or touched a river. Starting with our drinking water, the students followed its rainwater source from watershed to dam to estuary, and completed the summer's process by experiencing fresh veggies and herbs on a family farm – all of which depends on the clean water, air, and pollinators. Students learned more about the



origins of their foods, whether foraged in the wild or harvested from the garden. They had the opportunity to run freely and learn by doing, using all of their senses, while having impactful, memorable experiences that teach nature's lessons in the planet's classroom. Whether climbing on rocks or immersing in running water or eating a berry fresh from the woods, children told us it was their favorite day, every day.



In Hawai'i, Pre-K through Grade 4 students at the Volcano School of Arts & Sciences have been thrilled to get out into the "mala" (garden) every week! This Hawaiian-focused, place-based charter school is located in the district of Ka'u on the Big Island, where 53% of the children come from low-income families, and 47% identify as Native Hawaiian. Something Good in the World introduced students to all aspects

of organic gardening, including worms and compost, creating healthy soil and growing veggies, herbs, native plants and pollinator-attracting flowers. Learning how to grow food at home is essential for fighting food insecurity, and preparing local, seasonal, healthy snacks is helping students to discover sustainable practices that promote food sovereignty. Protecting the marine environment from flooding and run-off, restoring the native forest for birds and insects - all have been vital understandings for the children as leaders of the now, and the ancestors of the future.

Mahalo to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for making these programs possible!



As a result of our 2024 grant award from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, we were able to take 21 students from Newark on several outdoor expedition programs this summer. The funding from the foundation allowed us to hold an initial overnight camping and team building experience at our

Wildcat Mountain Wilderness Center in Hewitt, NJ within Wawayanda State Park in early July. For many of the students participating in the trip, it was their first overnight camping experience and allowed us to help them build confidence and learn basic skills for our longer expedition trip to New Hampshire.

In late July, we organized a day-long sailing trip for students with our program partners from Soundwaters, allowing our students to experience getting out on the water in Long Island Sound. The trip included an opportunity for our students to learn about navigating on the water, getting a chance to see and learn about marine life in Long Island Sound, participate in some hands-on activities to discover the local ecosystem and environment, and help the Soundwaters crew operate and steer the boat.

In August, we were able to successfully run a week-long expedition program to New Hampshire, where our program group successfully climbed to the summit of Mount Washington. One highlight of this year's trip was having some returning students who were not as prepared for the trip last year successfully lead the group and achieve the milestone of reaching the summit. The trip was challenging but incredibly rewarding, and we've included some of the testimonial letters from students and feedback from parents and family members from students who were a part of the trip.

Thank you to the foundation for continuing to support our programming and helping us to make these transformative and memorable experiences available to the amazing students we work with!





Summer 2024 was a big season for Peak 7 Adventures. Our mission is to inspire youth to discover their greater potential through wilderness adventure, and we bridge

the barriers to recreation for under-resourced youth by providing all the equipment, guides, permits and transportation needed to help kids connect with nature.

Since 2022, we have amplified our efforts by renting a summer camp facility in the foothills of Washington State's spectacular Mt. Rainier- the facility allows us to serve youth who might not be eager candidates for tent camping and backpacking by providing basic comforts like electricity, hot showers, and indoor sleeping arrangements. The facility lies on federal forest lands, with a beautiful mountain creek to explore, trails leading through the forest, and close access to recreation sites for stand-up paddle boarding and rock climbing. Our nonprofit partners bring their youth for multi-day base camp adventures, giving youth the opportunity to 'dip a toe' into recreation while still feeling safe. Our base camp program is growing- we served 196 youth through our Seattle programs this year from organizations such as Big Homie Program, Tacoma Rescue Mission, Vine Maple Place, Open House Ministries, World Relief and more.

The following is the story of one of those trips:

The Big Homie Program is rewriting stories of hope for youth through intentional mentorship for gang intervention and prevention. Big Homie is committed to assisting gang-involved and affiliated youth in Washington state to overcome the gang lifestyle and mindset by meeting them where they are at. In their pursuit to transform their lives in a positive direction, they support youth in navigating social, cultural, interpersonal, and financial barriers. Their mission meshes perfectly with Peak 7's vision to ensure that all youth have the opportunity to experience the transformative power of the outdoors. Steven, a mentor with the Big Homie Program, shared, "These kids come from the inner city, and have never experienced anything like this before." Coming out to rock climb and paddleboard with Peak 7 at our Rainier Base Camp, these kids were both excited and intimidated by the outdoors. "All of this rock climbing and paddleboarding stuff is brand new to these kids," Steven noted, "and it is so important that they see things outside of their norm. These kids have created a negative culture of passing time, and activities like this show them new opportunities." Throughout the three-day trip, Steven witnessed the transformation of their program participants. From initial hesitancy to conquering the heights of rock walls, the youth not only overcame fears but also discovered newfound confidence. "I saw these same kids who were scared to climb at the start of the day jetting up to the top of these rock walls," Steven recounted proudly. Through these new outdoor experiences, Steven addresses how he was able to promote healthy dialogue outside of triggering environments: "Out here is an escape from the trauma of home. It was like I was interacting with entirely new kids—they were jumping around and happy because they got to escape from all that stuff."



These trips revealed new possibilities to these youth through the creation and community around them. By overcoming fears and embracing challenges on these outdoor adventures, the Big Homie Program participants discovered new abilities and resilience. Steven's unwavering support and guidance, along with the support of other mentors, helps the kids navigate their emotions and cultivate self-worth through trust, accountability, and persistence. This consistent encouragement helped these kids overcome doubts and celebrate triumphs together both on the rocks and the lake.



One of the greatest joys at NOLS is sharing the impact of our scholarship programs with dedicated donors like you.

I'm thrilled to share that in 2024 your \$5,000.00 scholarship was awarded to Imara A. from Chile to go toward her total financial aid package supporting her Spring Semester in Patagonia course. Each NOLS course ensures that its students develop a wide variety of skills from environmental stewardship to risk management, and so much in between. As a result, your scholarship recipient returns to her community as a better leader, prepared to take on challenges she faces both in and out of the wilderness.

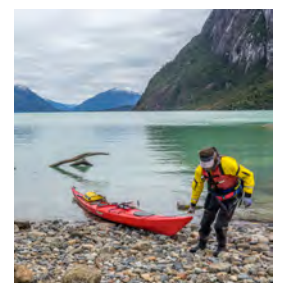
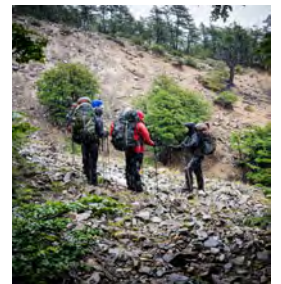
WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR GREATEST LESSONS LEARNED ON YOUR NOLS COURSE, AND HOW DOES IT APPLY TO YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE?

"In each section I learned something different that was related to the specific challenge I had in each one of them:"

-Kayak section: *"I'm really close to my family and friends, they're like a safe place for me, so not having them around the first month was really difficult. But this helped me to find and create that safe place in myself, and when I realized that I had myself, my own support and strength during the course... I found peace. This is something I try to remember every single day in my day-to-day life."*

-Hiking section: *"Sometimes it was too hard and exhausting the journey and I was always thinking about arriving to the 'x'. Thanks to my instructors I started working on focusing more on the journey than on the 'final line'. This brought me more joy and happiness during the session because it allowed me to appreciate every single moment and second of it."*

-Climbing section: *"I suffered an injury in the last days of the hiking section that made me unable to do the physical activities like climbing with my friends. I had two options: Bring myself down because I can't climb or accept the circumstances and find a way to still enjoy the experience despite my injury. I chose the second one. This taught me that it is up to me how I want to experience and live my life. The things that happen outside of me are things that I can't control, but what I can control is how to respond to those circumstances. I learned how to be patient, how to trust in the process and how to look for a positive perspective in everything that happened to me."*





On behalf of the entire team at GOALS Youth River Expeditions, thank you for your generous donation on April 30, 2024. This gift was invested into the GOALS Financial Assistance Fund and impacted three teenagers from the refugee community – Shoaib, Amani and Kaihan.

Because of your support, these three remarkable boys from Afghanistan and Burundi experienced an 8-day GOALS expedition through Lodore Canyon in July 2024, building community with each other and developing a deeper connection to the planet.

GOALS stands alone in the outdoor youth empowerment space with a three-layered approach to our work that synchronously focuses on strengthening adolescent mental health, fostering authentic peer-to-peer connections, and developing a deep love for the outdoors in the kids that we serve - all while having a truly epic adventure on the river!

GOALS objective is to share our growth-focused, multi-day wilderness expeditions with children from all socioeconomic backgrounds, but our program fees can limit accessibility for some households (multi-day river rafting expeditions require substantial resources for logistics, safety, and access to remote locations). Through GOALS Financial Assistance Program, we help to significantly reduce or entirely eliminate the out-of-pocket cost to eligible families, allowing for increased environmental accessibility to underserved youth.

GOALS quite literally could not do this work without the support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation. We feel very lucky to honor Kate’s legacy through the brave, dynamic children that we serve. Thank you for your contribution and for believing in our vision of transforming the future for kids and wild places. We hope to continue to partner with your wonderful organization and make a sustained impact on adolescent mental health and environmental connectedness in our community.



NESS’s New London Community Boating (NLCB) program offers free open enrollment programs for disadvantaged youth aged 9-14, including a four-week Learn to Sail Program designed to provide a

safe and supportive environment where students can get their first sailing experiences. Thanks to the generous support of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, New England Science & Sailing (NESS) was able to provide approximately 40 New London students the opportunity to participate in the Learn to Sail Program during the Summer ‘24 sailing season. The program is designed to teach and emphasize water safety by always requiring the use of PFDs and utilizing a low student-to instructor ratio of 4:1 or less. Through this experience, students with no previous sailing exposure were able to complete a mile-long distance sail around White Rock on the Thames River. The nature of this on-the-water experiential learning program also provided the students with an opportunity to develop skills such as teamwork, communication, confidence, perseverance, and self-control. While direct quotes from participants are not available for this report since they were not solicited during or after the program, some video footage taken during the summer Learn to Sail program can be available upon request.



C2C Cleanup Challenge

Since its November 2020 inception, our innovative Creeks to Coast (C2C) Cleanup has engaged 2,500+ participants in cleaning up more than 6 tons of waste and reporting pollution data on more than 143,000 pieces of litter. Since submitting our grant in March 2024, we've held 12 cleanup events at high-need sites across LA County, including 3 beach and 2 LA River locations. We've engaged 1,000+ volunteers in removing 2,000+ lbs of waste and collecting 12,000+ litter data points via the Litterati app.

River Assessment Fieldwork Team

Since relaunching the RAFT program, LAW has successfully engaged 596 volunteers (52% from disadvantaged communities) at 9 sites throughout the LA River. Our aim is to deepen community knowledge of and connection to the LA River and community science. This year alone, 339 volunteers took part in 12 volunteer events along the LA River where we introduced water monitoring concepts utilizing the EarthEcho Water Challenge Kits as well as tested for PFAS and coliform bacteria.

MPA Watch

During the grant period our MPA Watch crew continued its role of protecting our local marine reserves completing 32 survey trips, which play a critical role in supporting MPAs while providing unique on-the-water experiences for volunteers. Over the course of the grant LAW engaged dozens of volunteers from previously incarcerated youth to aspiring marine scientists. We also supported the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), in sampling and tracking the presence of domoic acid, from toxic algal blooms, which harms marine animals.



Thank You! Thank You!

Once again, the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation received a check in the amount of \$2500 from the Joseph Alexander Foundation.

Mr. Alexander's niece, Randi Windheim serves on the board of the Joseph Alexander Foundation and knew Kate when she was growing up.



In 2024, Lucky to Ride’s Learn to Earn (LtE) program provided almost 100 youth with valuable bike maintenance, safety, and STEM skills, thanks to support

from the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation and other funders. Partnering with organizations like Sheridan and Denver school districts, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Denver, LtE delivered hands-on instruction in 10-student classes, each with 15+ hours across five to six sessions.

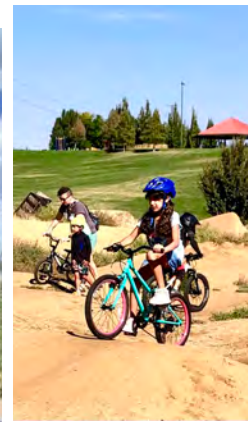
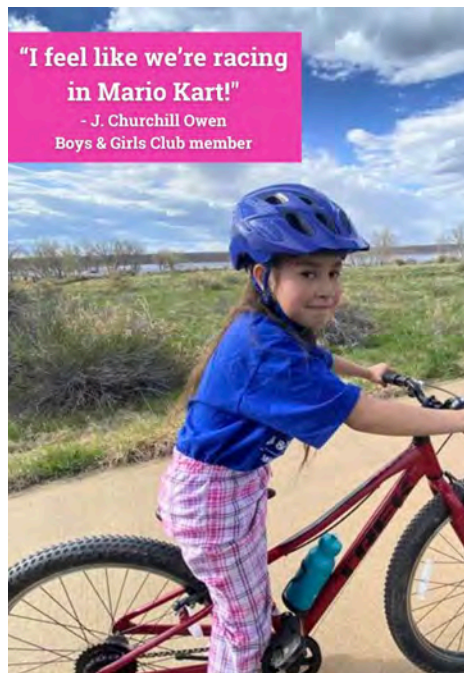
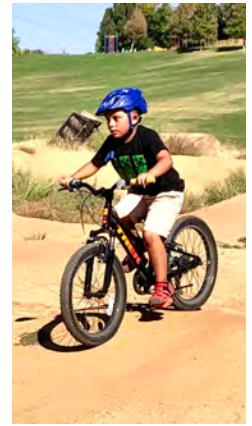
Participants gained bike maintenance skills, including changing tires and performing ABC Quick Checks, and were introduced to STEM concepts through bicycles, covering systems, simple machines, energy, force, and friction. Youth completed the program with a sense of achievement, each earning a quality geared bike, helmet, lock, and essential bike tools. In communities where bikes are a rarity, ownership of a bike signifies independence and access to low-cost transportation, supporting both physical and mental well-being.

Program goals included fostering a love for outdoor biking, encouraging skill-building, creating positive group experiences, and motivating youth to incorporate cycling into their lives. Assessment results indicated that over 95% of participants successfully demonstrated bike maintenance and safety skills, with vocabulary assessments showing significant improvements in understanding STEM concepts related to cycling. Participants reported increased confidence in science-related topics and showed enthusiasm for riding in their neighborhoods.



Social-emotional learning (SEL) skills such as critical thinking, social awareness, and resilience were also a focus. Lucky to Ride recently refined its mission to prioritize equitable access to cycling and outdoor experiences, acknowledging barriers beyond the obvious that can prevent youth from participating in such activities.

Serving youth from predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods in southwest and northeast Denver, as well as nearby cities like Sheridan and Commerce City, the program reached communities where 67% identify as Latinx or Hispanic, 6% as Black, and 20% live below the poverty line. Through LtE, Lucky to Ride made significant strides in creating meaningful, lasting impact by empowering underserved youth with biking skills, STEM knowledge, and personal independence.



NORTH CAROLINA OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL

This summer, 6 students from the Community Academy went Outward Bound. Teamwork was central to their success, as they all contributed to the group dynamic, offering support, conflict resolution, and positive energy. Yadiel’s warmth made others feel welcome, while AJ stood up for others during difficult moments, exemplifying how students looked out for one another. They demonstrated a deep commitment to self-improvement, from Kevin’s attentiveness to his physical limits to Peter’s growth in leadership and navigation skills. Many students, like Kevin and Javi, cherished opportunities to connect with the natural world. These experiences fostered reflection and self-care, helping students like Jose develop a deeper sense of self-awareness and emotional resilience.

- 6 students
- 2 attended 9-day courses
- 4 attended 14-day courses, with 3 on the same course





We thank the Kate Svitek Memorial

Foundation for your generous support of Achieve Tahoe in 2024. Your support helped us continue to achieve our mission to provide affordable, inclusive physical and recreational activities that build health, confidence, and independence for people with disabilities. Your support created 16 scholarships for people with disabilities to participate in our 2023/24 Adaptive Winter Snowsports Program. The scholarship recipients were low-income or otherwise financially burdened participants.

These individuals would not have been able to participate in adaptive skiing and snowboarding lessons last winter without your generous support.



Last winter our program served a record 704 unique participants with disabilities and delivered 2,514 adaptive snow sports lessons – an increase of 16% and 27% above the previous winter’s numbers, respectively. We served participants of all ages (4+) with a wide range of physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities, including people with autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, paralysis, blindness, Down Syndrome, and many others. Lessons ran from December 2023 through April 2024 and were taught at Alpine Meadows, Palisades Tahoe, and NorthStar ski resorts.

Our highly trained staff and volunteer instructors customized the lessons to support each unique participant’s abilities and needs, helping them to grow their technical skills, independence, and confidence. One such example of our winter program’s impact last year comes from participant Amelia, who is deaf. She recounts, *“I had never envisioned skiing by myself, because I thought it was impossible.”* However, when Amelia came to Achieve Tahoe, she was paired with volunteer instructor, Nicole, who is also deaf. Nicole used her skiing expertise and fluency in American Sign Language to help Amelia learn how to ski independently. Amelia is thrilled that she can now ski alongside her husband (who is also deaf) and her two children. Amelia shares, *“In the future, when my family and I have gained the necessary skills, we will apply as volunteer ski instructors to help others. We would spread Achieve to other deaf families interested in skiing. We consider Achieve Tahoe a family.”*

Thank you again for your generous support of Achieve Tahoe!



Thank you to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for your generous support of the Youth Experiential Training Institute (Y.E.T.I.). Your funding has contributed to the success of our 2024 programs, allowing us to provide transformative outdoor experiences to over 350 students in South King County. This year, Y.E.T.I. has expanded its reach through various programs, impacting students across 8 school sites and 12 partnership programs. With your support, we were able to conduct 154 outdoor adventures, totaling over 3,000 hours outside. Our activities ranged from hiking and rock climbing to kayaking and snowshoeing, fostering a sense of adventure and a connection to the natural world among our participants.

One of our standout students this year is Sophie from Highline High School. After struggling to connect with other activities, Sophie found her passion in Y.E.T.I. She has become a leader, organizing successful trips like rock climbing and camping in Vantage, WA. Her enthusiasm and dedication have made Y.E.T.I. a popular choice at her school, and we look forward to continuing our work with Sophie and her peers next year.

Our partnership with Franklin High School's English language students was another highlight. Organizing a snowshoeing trip to Snoqualmie Pass, we provided 30 students with their first experience of snowfall, creating unforgettable memories and inspiring a love for the outdoors.

We are grateful to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for supporting our mission. Your generosity has allowed us to provide these enriching outdoor experiences and promote the physical and mental well-being of our youth. Thank you for believing in our vision and helping us make it a reality.





With the help of the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation, 67 diverse high school students participated in immersive backpacking and canoe-camping trips in the North Cascades this past summer!

North Cascades Institute’s Youth Leadership Adventures (YLA) is an entry-level wilderness recreation program offering accessible opportunities for teens from historically underserved communities to gain skills in outdoor recreation and leadership, develop their sense of identity, and learn about climate change and solutions.

“YLA was a life changing experience. I learned so much about myself and what it means to appreciate the environment and our home. I loved the peacefulness of being alone at the beach, admiring Ross Lake’s beauty... the adventures we went on are unforgettable.”

– 2024 Participant

We offered nine YLA trips this year, each either five or eight days in length. Participants camped, canoed, hiked, and backpacked throughout North Cascades National Park and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. They acquired the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to be comfortable and competent in the outdoors while simultaneously creating lifelong friendships, learning about and practicing collaborative leadership skills, and exploring a variety of pathways to engage in climate solutions. Students and instructors also contributed more than 350 volunteer hours working on stewardship projects, helping maintain the trails and campsites of our National Park and Forest.



In the spring of 2024, 215 students at Green Woods Charter School embarked on right-of-passage field studies that extended their learning beyond the classroom. These experiences fostered collaboration, critical thinking, and a deep connection to the natural world.

4th grade students began the school year nurturing trout from eggs to fry, learning about the delicate balance of the local watershed. On Earth Day, standing at the edge of Wissahickon Creek, they released the trout into their new habitat, and felt the connection to the world around them as they watched the fish swim downstream.

The year concluded with their right of passage field study in Cape May, where students work alongside marsh experts, discovering how upstream actions impact ocean ecosystems. *“I learned about horseshoe crabs, dolphins, and macro-invertebrates. I would never have known how connected everything is if I hadn’t seen it for myself.”*- Kendall M., 4th grade

Our 6th graders found adventure on the slopes of Blue Mountain. Armed with their growing math and physics skills, they analyzed the science of motion as they glided down the slopes. Each activity—whether calculating angles or strategizing as a team—built not only academic understanding but also trust and camaraderie. *“I thought we were just snowtubing, but it turns out, we were learning about math!”* -Charlotte H., 6th grade

For our 8th graders, the journey was both personal and communal. During an overnight trip to College Settlement, they took on challenges requiring problem-solving and teamwork, all while immersed in nature. Around the campfire, they shared stories of growth and new perspectives, forging bonds that will guide them as they step into high school. *“This trip taught me how much I can do when I work with others!”*-Chrisette, 8th grade

These right-of-passage trips expose students to environmental stewardship with meaningful learning. The experiences left our students not only with new knowledge but also with a profound sense of responsibility to their community and the world. We are deeply grateful to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for their generosity, which made these transformative field study experiences a reality for our students.



The Princeton-Blairstown Center (PBC) is grateful to the Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation for their support of our Venture Out program for middle school students from public schools in Trenton, NJ.

About Venture Out

Venture Out is a 30-hour residential on our beautiful Blairstown Campus that combines inquiry-based, hands-on environmental education (EE) and social & emotional learning (SEL) sessions that aim to help students engage more deeply with science and the scientific method and understand that science is fun. PBC's curriculum is aligned to the State of New Jersey's middle school science curriculum standards. This overnight experience includes six hands-on environmental science lessons and an evening astronomy session, as well as teambuilding and adventure course sessions focused on social & emotional learning. The Venture Out Program is designed to help students develop:

- An exposure to and increased awareness around college and career readiness in STEM fields.
- Specific knowledge and skill outcomes related to next generation science standards.
- An increased appreciation and respect for nature.
- A desire to protect the environment.
- A shared understanding of the role humans play in the global ecosystem.
- An understanding that they have a shared responsibility to transform their communities through political efficacy.

Students' Comments

- *I had such an amazing time and can't wait to come back. I also loved the adventures and risks that we took because it prepares you for the real world and what it's like out there. All our adventures and activities were also very informative.*
- *I'm always stuck at home using my phone or sleeping but being here made me experience new things and I felt happy.*
- *Everybody here is so kind and I really enjoyed the people teaching us and helping us with the things we learned.*
- *I learned a lot of new things about nature that I didn't know about, and this place gave me the time to socialize with people I didn't know.*
- *I feel more free and alive than if I stayed inside.*

Chaperone Comments

- *My group learned to appreciate being outside away from technology.*
- *I think students of different social groups came together to achieve a common goal in a way that was supportive and beneficial to all participants.*
- *The students opened up and tried things they were afraid of. They complained but they pushed through. They exhibited amazing teamwork.*
- *We saw group bonding and quiet students become leaders for their groups.*





Grateful CAP Students Write About Their Outward Bound Experiences

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

My name is Alberto Hernandez. I attended the North Carolina Outward Bound School from July 9, 2024, to July 21, 2024. The course was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and if I get another chance to go, I would definitely take it. I was offered this opportunity in 2021 for the summer of the 2022 Outward Bound expedition, though I initially declined, thinking I wouldn't enjoy it. Going the following year made me realize how wrong I was.

The beginning of the trip was a bit rocky. If I'm being honest, the entire experience had its challenges—not from the trip itself, but from the dynamics among the participants. The first three days were tough, as someone had to leave early because they couldn't physically keep up with the rest of the crew. After this, everything became easier. Of course, there were still difficulties, such as some people not wanting to cooperate, everyone getting homesick, and overall laziness. These factors made it hard for me to fully enjoy my time there, causing me to second-guess my decision to attend North Carolina Outward Bound. However, this experience also taught me that this adventure isn't for everyone. I realized that even though I can do certain things, others may not be able to keep up, and I need to be patient with them. While it may seem that I only focus on the negatives of this experience, I also gained valuable positives. While attending Outward Bound, I created memories that I wish I could relive. From rock climbing to sitting around campfires to hiking at sunset, these moments made it worthwhile. I knew that if I didn't commit to the mission, I would definitely regret the decision, and I was right. I'm glad I completed the expedition and can proudly say that I survived a week and a half in the woods.

I learned some important things about myself during this trip. I discovered that I am naturally skilled at reading a compass and navigating my surroundings. Throughout the trip, I was referred to as “Mr. Navigator” because I often helped guide the group to our resting point for the night. I also learned that I love solitude, and nature facilitates that. On our solo day, we spent time alone, which helped us build our character. This was an important revelation for me.

Lastly, I learned that as much as I thought I knew about myself, I still had more to discover. I believed I could work well under mental strain, but I found that I could not perform at 100% when I felt down. I also thought I could do everything independently, but I learned that I need others' help, regardless of the task. This taught me a very important lesson: It is never bad to ask for help. What I liked best about the experience was the wonderful memories I made. Even the challenges couldn't outweigh the cherished moments I took away from NCOBS. This experience changed me significantly as a person, influencing my character and my reactions to others. I've improved my work ethic, whether it's for school assignments or job responsibilities. I've become more responsible with my work and deadlines, and I've developed greater discipline. I've learned to be more patient and respectful toward others. This experience has been nothing short of a blessing. Thank you for giving me the chance to attend the North Carolina Outward Bound School.

Dear Mr. and Ms. Svitek,

During the course, I learned a lot about the outdoors, saw things I never thought I would encounter in the woods, and experienced activities I never imagined doing. I've also developed qualities that I continue to use to this day, which allow me to excel in class, sports, and other areas of life.

Javier Sanchez
Grade 10

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

During my program, I not only learned about the outdoors but also discovered greater confidence, resilience, and leadership within myself. These experiences taught me a lot about who I am and many other important lessons. It was a true eye-opener, filled with wonderful friendships and memories I made along the way.

Sincerely,
Jose Nevarez, 10th grade



Grateful CAP Students Write About Their Outward Bound Experiences

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

Going into this experience, I will admit I was very nervous, but once I arrived, everything changed. We entered a whole new world, working on our mental, physical, and social health. I learned so much during the program, such as how to filter river water and rock climb. Not only did I acquire new outdoor skills, but I also developed a deep love for the outdoors. I met some amazing people during the course, including my instructors, Seb and Zozo. The other members of the course and I even created a group chat to stay in touch, so I gained some new friends as well! It was an unforgettable adventure, and I am truly grateful for the experiences and friendships I made along the way.

Sincerely,
Kevin Adrian Then-Hernandez
12th Grade

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

During the program, I gained insights not only about camping but also about myself. I learned what it means to be a good leader, to be confident, to trust myself, and to help and work with others. I met many incredible people during this journey, and I will never forget them. I discovered traits about myself that I am eager to apply in my daily life as a student and at home when facing challenges.

Peter Rodriguez

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Svitek,

To put it simply, it was an enlightening experience—something that I really needed. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to see that.

During the program itself, I had a blast, even though I had the shortest trip of everyone who attended. I was also the only person from CAP who went alone, and I am grateful for that because it allowed me to truly express myself without worrying about how it would affect me at home. The experience improved my personal skills, including my confidence, teamwork abilities, and openness to learning new things.

Once more, I want to express my gratitude for giving me this amazing opportunity and allowing me to step outside my comfort zone. As a city boy venturing into the true wilderness, it was a breathtaking experience that showed me my dream in life is to help others and to ensure our wonderful planet remains a beautiful place to see and explore.

Yadiel Nazario

Friendly Reminder

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

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

Cards are only \$10 each and the Foundation makes \$9.45 per card!

Let's support the Foundation instead of your local card shop!



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Minimum contribution is \$10.
Please notify us if the address given is a change of address.

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Please make checks payable and mail to the *Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation*, P.O. Box 104, Ambler, PA 19002-0104. Your contribution will be acknowledged to the recipient.

Contributions are considered a 100% charitable donation. KSMF is a registered §501(c)(3) organization. The official registrations and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free within PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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