2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Spending time in nature makes children smarter, healthier, and happier.
Dear Friends,

AT WILDERNESS YOUTH PROJECT, everything we do begins with gratitude. This report is our opportunity to thank you for your support: every one of these pictures, every story they tell and every young life we touch happens because you make it possible.

“Before WYP, I felt afraid. Now, I’ve proven to myself that I can face challenges and overcome my fears. I want to thank WYP for teaching me to say, ‘I can do it.’”

That sixth-grader’s voice echoes a common theme, one that conveys an essential outcome we achieve with our programs. Our organizational accomplishments are measured in transformed lives, as nature connection makes participants smarter, healthier and happier. Our programs introduce youth to nature in a way that encourages meaningful relationships with the natural world.

In 2012 WYP experienced a 20% overall increase in our budget and programs. Our steady growth is sustained through a combination of grants, corporate and individual contributions, and program fees. The focus for 2013 is growing our school-based program offerings, where we are able to reach students on the Free and Reduced-price Meal program.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our highly competent staff, our dedicated volunteers and our generous supporters. Thanks to you, we are poised for a strong 2013.

Gratefully,

DAN FONTAINE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MISSION
The mission of Wilderness Youth Project (WYP) is to foster confidence, health, and a life-long love of learning for young people and families through active outdoor experiences and mentoring.

VISION
WYP envisions teaching the next generation of children to be peaceful, respectful and confident stewards of our world.
Research has shown that time in nature has many benefits, among them improving children’s cognitive flexibility, emotional stability, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, use of imagination, self-esteem, and self-discipline.

WYP Participants Grow In These Areas:
- **Individual**– Self-confidence
- **Interpersonal**– Respect for others and conflict resolution abilities
- **Physical**– Competence and agility
- **Environmental**– Respect for the natural world

Our Programs Create Nature Connection With:
- Safe, well-facilitated, age-appropriate time in nature
- Individualized mentoring
- Exploration and curiosity
We strive to reflect the demographics of our community and welcome youth with a range of abilities and backgrounds.

Total Unduplicated Youth: 559

Key Statistics and Accomplishments for 2012:
- 45 weeks of summer camp
- 26 weekday programs (school year)
- 60% of participants receiving scholarships
- 20% increase in programs over 2011
- 6 vans
- 9 full time and 31 part time staff
- 60+ volunteers

Total Income: $684,921
- 48% Fundraised
- 52% Program Fees

Total Expenses: $659,875
- 73% Staffing
- 13% Program Expenses
- 7% Fundraising
- 7% Administration
Nature play stimulates creativity and improves problem solving. Children who participated in outdoor education programs raised their science test scores by 27%, improved their conflict resolution and problem-solving skills, and experienced better self-esteem and motivation to learn.

Nature play increases self-esteem and reduces stress. Children learn self-discipline and are more cooperative with others. Children feel more capable, confident and connected to nature.

Americans are suffering from an acute case of “nature deficit disorder,” and the effects are showing. American children spend 90% of their time indoors, resulting in increasing severity of health challenges including ADHD, obesity, depression and stress.

Nature connection makes children... Smarter, Healthier, Happier.
“Before WYP, I felt afraid. Now, I’ve proven to myself that I can face challenges and overcome my fears. I want to thank WYP for teaching me to say, ‘I can do it.’”

ZURI CATALAN, Age 11

“Wilderness Youth Project has sparked new hope and an excitement for learning. These at-risk students are experiencing “success” for the first time in their lives. Their self-confidence and motivation to learn and explore the many fields in science is more than I could have ever hoped for. This newfound love for learning is what we as educators strive to achieve in all of our children.”

AMY ALZINA, Principal at Adams Elementary

“When my 10 year-old son joined WYP last fall, he was stressed out by the traditional school environment. I am amazed at the change I observe in him. My son has become more social, trusting of others, and actually engages in physical contact with others. For the first time he is offering hugs to long-time family friends. The natural environment was always a love of his, but to see him now enjoy people as much as he does lizards brings me great joy!”

SALOMÉ HILL, Mother of Zahrán, Age 10

“I want to do this every day for the rest of my life!”

BELLA SANFORD, Age 7
Wilderness Youth Project
Since 1999
5386 Hollister Ave, Suite D, Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805-964-8096   www.wyp.org

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