Dear Friends,

Everything we do at Wilderness Youth Project begins with gratitude. Every day when we circle up with the kids, the first thing we do is share our “thankfuls”—the question goes around, “what are you feeling thankful for right now?” When our staff comes together to plan a program, that’s how we begin. When our board meets to make sure WYP’s on track for fundraising and staying true to our strategic plan, we start with giving thanks. As we reflect on 2020, we feel gratitude for the ways in which we survived and even, in moments, thrived.

This annual report will look a little different. In late spring of 2020 Catherine Brozowski of the Audacious Foundation said to us: “this is WYP’s moment.” And she was right. As our community pulled together to find ways to keep kids well and healthy, you helped WYP make sure we were there. The world recognized the benefits of nature connection for kids (and the rest of us) like never before. Outdoor classrooms were headline news for weeks. Summer camp was a high priority everywhere. And even though the word “pivot” became the “most overused word of the year,” it still characterizes how we operated.
We adapted, responded, changed. We had to furlough some staff, but for only a brief period of spring, and we invited them back. We did something we’d never have imagined and met kids on Zoom for a little while. We sent out a Daily Dose email to offer a menu of easy and safe ways to connect with nature. When schools were closed, we met kids at home, in neighborhood parks. While we couldn’t use vans, we walked and biked. For this annual report, we’ll share a timeline of our Covid year. We were fortunate. 2020 was WYP’s 21st year and you, our community of supporters, had positioned us to be resilient. And then, when we needed you the most, you stepped up generously and made sure WYP stayed open.

We give thanks. For the kids who came outdoors and connected with us, even when things felt uncertain. For families who turned to us for help. For our continued opportunity to work for diversity, inclusion, equity, justice and belonging. For the Chumash, the native communities that came before us to this land - this beautiful place we call home would not be so great if not for their long-held and ongoing connection to this pairing of land and sea. And for each and every one of you who held the vision that nature connection could sustain and heal us during 2020.

In gratitude,

Dan Fontaine
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Kyra Rogers, MSW Chair
Anthony Rogers, MD Secretary
Laura Russell, CPA Treasurer

Trustees
Amy Schneider
April Price, MS
Brook Eiler

Chris Ragland
Carrie Kappel, PhD
Graciela Cabello
Lena Acereto-Morán, MEd
Who We Are

**MISSION**

The mission of Wilderness Youth Project (WYP) is to foster confidence, health, and a lifelong love of learning for young people and families through active outdoor experiences and mentoring.

**VISION**

Wilderness Youth Project envisions teaching the next generation of children to be peaceful, respectful and confident stewards of our world.

**21 Full-time Staff**

**12 Vans**

**28 Part-time Staff**

United by the belief that all children need nature, our team works together to bring our passion for the natural world and our knowledge of the benefits of mentoring to the community.

WYP staff bring many years of naturalist experience, wilderness safety, social justice, teaching and mentoring.

WYP aims to promote justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. We do this through building affirmative action practices, cultural competence, diverse multilingual staff, outreach, communications and scholarships based on financial need.

Our goal is for our board, staff, volunteers and participants to mirror the demographics of our service area: Goleta to Carpinteria.
Kids who come to Wilderness Youth Project...

- Feel Connected To Nature
- Are Physically And Mentally Healthier
- Have Higher Self-Esteem
- Are More Cooperative With Others
- Are Good Problem-Solvers
- Feel More Capable And Confident
- Are More Creative
- Do Better In School
- Have Good Self-Discipline
- Are Tomorrow’s Conservation Leaders
Key Accomplishments

For more than a decade, these numbers have been going up steadily, with an average of 15% growth. In 2020, our focus was adapting programs to stay connected to the kids we serve, even while schools were not meeting in person.

2019
Youth Served: 1,200

2020
Youth Served: 995

Number of School-Year programs
2019 37
2020 33

Summer Campers
2019 565
2020 238

Increase in participant numbers
418
Students served during the school day in 2018-19

558
Students served during the school day in 2019-20

Increase from 10 to 11 elementary Schools in Santa Barbara Unified School District, plus Police Activities League and Storyteller Children’s Center programs, plus neighborhood, low-income housing and community center meeting locations.

Total amount of scholarship given to participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$714,708</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$646,620</td>
<td>70%</td>
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Latinx participants

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>43%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Children with disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Covid Year: 2020

January 6
Biggest winter of WYP ever with 38 programs per week
Including Bridge to Nature at elementary schools:
Adams, Adelante, Cleveland, Franklin, McKinley,
Monroe, SB Community Academy, St. Raphael, Notre
Dame and community partners: PAL (Police Activities
League), and Storyteller Children's Center.

March 16
WYP launches Daily Dose
A daily newsletter providing ways
people can safely connect with nature

March 13
Santa Barbara closes schools
and moves to distance learning model.

March 19
WYP launches campaign to raise
$432,000 to stay operational

March 20
An anonymous donor calls
and says “I have your back. Let me know what
support you’ll need to keep your doors open.”

Spring
WYP uses digital tools to connect our
community to nature
NatureLink keeps our after school groups
together, meeting weekly on Zoom
and finding ways to play, connect, and
experience nature safely and at a distance.
Our Bridge to Nature classrooms get
weekly nature connection activities to
do at home to help support learning and
physical activity.

May 6
WYP receives CARES Act Paycheck
Protection Program grant - $205,903
WYP staff received pay
throughout Covid.

May 7
LA Times says “We need to
prepare for the mental health
effects of coronavirus on kids”

April 2
9 out of 10 children worldwide are out of school
Even the most fortunate of U.S. children are
going through a version of what’s called an
“adverse childhood experience” right now. The
effect of these experiences is cumulative —
experiencing four or more of them is considered
a major risk factor for long term physical health
problems.
June 15
WYP opens in-person summer camp with meeting spots at the Rose Garden, Tucker’s Grove, Rocky Nook, Skofield Park, La Mesa Park, Ortega Park, Manning Park, Carpinteria Bluffs, and Ellwood
- Covid protocols mean small groups, masks, social distancing, and no vans
- 236 kids come to camp
- 2 week camps (instead of 1 week camps) for stable groups
- “Bike to Nature” is born, in partnership with the SB Bike Coalition

August 24
WYP school year begins- we offer 32 weekly programs with Covid protocols
We offer adapted Bridge to Nature programs at Adelante Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Monroe Elementary, Notre Dame Elementary, St. Raphael Elementary, Storyteller Children’s Center, St. George Community Center, El Centro, the Turner Foundation, and Police Activities League.

June 23
The New York Times publishes “Nature Deficit Disorder Is Really a Thing”
Children’s behavior may suffer from lack of access to outdoor space, a problem heightened by the pandemic.

September 15
Jane and Paul Orfalea/ the Audacious Foundation offer a challenge grant to encourage the community to support Bridge to Nature
You, our community of supporters, met the challenge.

October
WYP tightens up protocols and stays open when SB County goes into the more restrictive red tier.

December 31
WYP ends 2020 with kids, in person, thanks to you

What we learned in 2020 is that this is a community that sees mentoring and nature connection as essential for children.

June 1
$432,000 campaign complete

Summer
Full Moon Paddles including a Latinx paddle and a BIPOC partners paddle.
“Kudos to WYP for pivoting their in-person programming to look at how to reach kids during this pandemic. WYP knows better than any organization in our community about the healing benefits of time in nature. Their Daily Dose offers little tidbits and inspiration each and every day for how our family can look outside with a new lens of curiosity and learning. Their ideas are fun and available even if you have only the smallest sliver of green space. We all feel so much calmer and more grounded when we are able to be outside in a safe way. The ideas they present make me feel good about how kids can best learn outside while exploring and having fun along the way.”

-Catherine Brozowski, parent and funder

“This pandemic is taking a heavy toll on children. Spending all day inside is not a healthy or happy childhood. Kids need to be outside — exercising and playing actively. We chose to support WYP because they’re the pros when it comes to nature-based learning.”

-Paul Orfalea, supporter

“In addition to the threat of learning loss, our students face significant health and wellness challenges during this time. Wilderness Youth Project’s work is especially essential these days, as they work to keep children connected to nature, find safe ways to go outdoors and move their bodies, and boost gratitude, hope and curiosity. We’re very grateful that Wilderness Youth Project has continued to provide free support, curriculum and student mentoring to the Title 1 schools in the Santa Barbara Unified School District.”

-Laura Capps, parent
“Wilderness Youth Project has provided a safe haven for our children during this chaotic time. We have been experiencing big highs and deep lows. WYP honors feelings without judgment. Our boys were thrilled to be reunited, albeit virtually, with their WYP “Tribe.” The day Nature Link program was to begin my older son was struggling - he hadn't been out of bed all day. I contacted Nick the Noodle, their mentor, to see if he could join without being on screen. Nicholas responded with the calm, caring kindness that I have come to depend on. Fifteen minutes into the meeting I heard my son sharing. I cried happy tears. The meeting was truly mood altering. WYP is what we all need in our lives. I tell people I worship at the temple of Wilderness Youth Project. We are grateful to have WYP and the remarkable mentors in our lives.”

-Parent of an 11-year-old, April 2020

“I'm very concerned about the lasting health impacts of prolonged inactivity as a result of this pandemic. Nature Deficit Disorder is a serious risk in our community, even right here in nature-rich Santa Barbara. Wilderness Youth Project provides a powerful antidote. Time in nature with WYP makes kids smarter and healthier and happier.”

-Dr. Tony Rogers, MD For Santa Barbara County Public Health, and WYP Board Member

“For all the bad news about children in the pandemic (decreased activity = lower physical health; more screen time; learning loss; significant increase in adverse childhood experiences and related challenges to mental wellness), one bit of good news we're all learning from the pandemic is... nature connection is truly an essential part of human wellbeing. And for kids especially, time outdoors can be one of the best ways to mitigate the challenges we've all faced together during the pandemic.”

-Michelle Howard, WYP Co-director of Development

“Della came home in the most incredible mood and has been herself again for the first time since March.”

-Autumn McFarland, parent
And skilled staff and volunteers:
Our 4:1 youth-to-counselor ratio affords our participants a high quality of mentoring typically unavailable in youth services. This low ratio, along with the flexible nature of our programs, also allows for individualized attention by our highly trained staff.

One 2020 parent wrote:
“I want to thank the amazing staff of WYP for a great summer brimming with rich experiences for our son and family. Every staff member contributed so much to the learning, growing, new bold experiences that helped our child's confidence blossom and helped his social skills mature.”

And through our Endowment Fund:
Which provides resilience and sustainability, ensuring that nature connection is here to stay. Planned giving, bequests, and gifts to the endowment will plant seeds for a healthy future.

Through foundations:
Grants from family foundations, community foundations and regional groups committed to nature connection sustained us in 2020, especially including multiple advance grants to make sure we were ready, in 2021, to help youth recover from the pandemic.

And individual donors:
Nature connection heros like you made 1,156 donations to make sure nature connection and mentoring reaches low-income children, those with disabilities and other groups less likely to access this kind of program through our scholarship program. Notably, 625 donations totaling $600,000 came in by June from donors who wanted to keep WYP operating during the pandemic.

And our board of directors:
Who volunteer their time to make sure that the strategic vision of Wilderness Youth Project has the support it needs. Especially in 2020, the Board acted as ambassadors to the community and positioned WYP to adapt quickly.
Core Support: Administration 11%

Core Support: Fundraising 13%

Direct Expenses: Shared by Programs 76%

Summer programs 27%

School-day programs 46%

After-school programs 27%

2020 Total Expenses $1,523,202

2020 Operating Revenue $2,416,750

2020 Total Assets $3,661,532
2020 GIFTS

$250 and above

Abercrombie Family Fund
Kathy Abney
Melika and Tom Adams
Peter and Rebecca Adams
Adams Legacy Foundation
Karlin and Terry Aegeler
Scott and Tina Allen
Pamela Allman & Larry Rennacker
Kelly and Kevin Almeroth
Amazon Smile
Kathy Ambrette
Anonymous
Henning Ansorg
Audacious Foundation
B.P. Moser Trust
Timothy and Monica Babich
Wayne Adams & Taryn Adams
Easley & Lorie Bacon
Christopher and Molly Barnes
Byron and Robyn Beck
Ann Bennett
Angela and David Berenstein
Gene Bettencourt
Chanin Birkhahn
Rebecca Bjork
Penn Borden
Christine and Dave Bourgeois
James S. Bower Foundation
John Brewster
Brittingham Family Foundation
Guy and Deb Brown
Liz and Nils Brown
Bryant & Sons, Ltd.
Buczaczer Family & Friends
Pat and Michael Buczaczer
D.B. Buehring
William B. Burke
Melike Bush
Graciela Cabello
Dinah and Ricardo Calderon
Laura and Lois Capps
John Case
Ben, Jennifer and Tom Caves
Channel Data Systems
Kevin and Sonia Connors
Clint Callahan and Debra Cook
Marni and Michael Cooney
Eileen Daley
Dancing Tides Foundation
Danner and Wcislo Charitable Foundation
Yvonne DeGraw & Craig Prater
Anna DeLaski
Megan Deloreto & Matthew Sicheri
Diane and Steven Demeter
Brian Dempsey
Corwin D. Denney Foundation
Matt Dobberteen
Allen and Trish Dubberley
Graham Duncan & Courtney Smith
Mil Duncan
Owen Duncan
Rob and Susan Dunton
Dianne and Rob Duva
Dylanian Charitable Fund
Aaron and Valerie Edelheit
Electronic Scrip
Dan and Emily Engel
Victoria Carranza & Brian Engleton
Michelle Knab & Shawn Erickson
Carin and Kenan Ezal
Bret and Rosanne Farnum
Gina and Mark Fennell
Andrew Feshbach
Pat Files
Fischer Family Fund
Doug Fischer
Andrew and Carolyn Fitzgerald
Danny and Lynn Fitzgibbons
Claudia and Phil Flanders
Brett Fontaine
Jean Fontaine
Dennis Forster
Francesca Fortunati & Greg Levin
Bryan Boyd and Elizabeth Foscue-Boyd
Colleen and Ted Friedel
The Fund for Santa Barbara
Dennis and Setsuko Furuike
Jen Gamble & Jared Ficker
Andrea Garza
Mary and Paul Genis
George B. Page Foundation
Arlene and Michael Gomez
Goodwin Family Memorial Trust
Daniel and Janelle Green
Deron Burkepile & Allison Grisham
Deborah Gunther
Mirjana and William Hall
Benjamin Halpern & Kim Selkoe
Peter Hasler
Hawkins Foundation
Eric and Tisha Hawkins
Doyle Hayes
Rachel Haymon
Hazan Family Foundation
Sarah Hemmer
Brenda and Brian Henderson
Herbert and Gertrude Latkin Charitable
Anthony Hickling
Helena Hill
Leslie Hogan & John Rickey
Mark Holmgren
Hazel Heath Horton Philanthropic Trust
Barbara and Joe Howell
HPC
Adrienne and Michelle Howard
Humphreys Family Foundation
Mary Jackson & Alex Lobba
Ann Jackson Family Foundation
Siouxie Jennett
Chris and Emily Johnson
Kirby Jones Family Foundation
Carrie Kappel & Carl Palmer
Charl and David Kappel
Bob and Janet Kates
Marion and Jules Kaupas
Sterling Keeley
Elizabeth L. Kilb
Marlin Kipp
Anna and Petar Kokotovic
Jules Kramer
Beryl and Neil Kreisel
Mimi and Tony Krivanek
LaCentra-Sumerlin Foundation
Andy Lanes
Lauren David
Craig and Eve Leeds
Kurt and Leigh Legler
Laurel Leone
Bridget and Roland Lewin
Bob and Kate Lima
Al and Barbara Lindemann
Rudi Lion
Art Ludwig & Lynn Shoemaker
Mary Lynn & Mike Mallen
Kelsey Maloney
Manger Scout Fund
Geoff Alexander & Andrea Marcus
Ways to Get Involved

This work is made possible by a community of partners and supporters. Volunteers, donors, and community ambassadors are all crucial for us to connect children with nature.

To find out more, visit wyp.org.
ALL CHILDREN NEED NATURE.
Not just the ones whose families have privilege and easy access to nature. Not only those of a certain economic class or culture or gender or sexual identity or language or set of abilities.

Every child and every family.