

The National Forum on Children and Nature Endorses 30 Projects That Get Kids Back Outdoors

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Arlington, VA— The National Forum on Children and Nature today announced its endorsement of 30 creative demonstration projects across the nation that reconnect kids with nature. These projects promise to improve children's health and well-being.

"The Forum celebrates these projects for demonstrating how to get kids back outdoors," said Larry Selzer, president and CEO of The Conservation Fund, which hosts the Forum. "This is critical for children's health--and for the future of our environment. Saving a generation is not a spectator sport. These ideas invite corporate leaders, educators, community planners, government officials and others into the game."

Children have a basic right to a healthy, whole childhood. Despite major advances in medicine, education and other fields, however, kids today are developing chronic health conditions--such as obesity and depression—earlier and more frequently than ever before. Growing evidence links the decline in children's health, in part, to their disconnect from nature, including less active time outdoors.

Recognizing an urgent need to reconnect kids with nature, The Conservation Fund launched the National Forum on Children and Nature in 2007. The Forum includes 54 dynamic public and private leaders, including chairs Governors M. Jodi Rell (CT), Edward Rendell (PA), Mark Sanford (SC) and Brian Schweitzer (MT), and honorary co-chair Richard Louv, bestselling author of "Last Child in the Woods." The mayors of Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago are Forum members, as are the CEOs of The North Face, REI and the National Audubon Society, among other organizations.

The Forum's mission is to:

- Elevate the issue of reconnecting children with nature to the highest levels of our national consciousness
- Connect the fast-growing grass-roots side of this movement to some of the most powerful engines of American society— public, private and nonprofit
- Make real for every American—through nationally significant demonstration projects —ways that each of us can help reconnect children with nature

Over the past year, the Forum solicited and vetted 560 proposals from demonstration projects seeking endorsement. Forum advisory panels culled the best ideas for investment in children's health through nature, particularly in the areas of education, technology and community. Ultimately, the Forum endorsed 30 projects, based on their relevance, impact and sustainability. By endorsing these projects, the Forum commits to raising visibility and support for them.

Collectively, these 30 projects bring nature back to kids in urban neighborhoods and rural communities, reaching preschoolers, school-age kids and teens across different races and backgrounds. From public housing to wilderness adventure, science education to prescribing nature, these projects serve as innovative models for community leaders, planners, educators and others who want to take concrete steps locally to reconnect kids with the great outdoors.

"Today, more than ever, communities are searching for simple ways to improve children's well-being," notes Richard Louv. "These 30 projects offer ideas that educators, planners and others can use to benefit kids today--and for decades to come."

To learn more about the Forum and projects, visit

www.ConservationFund.org.

Projects Endorsed by the National Forum on Children and Nature

The Birds & The Bees Challenge
 Child-Friendly Communities
 Children and Nature Evaluation Center
 Connecting Kids to the Nature of Wyoming
 EarthTeam Eco-Stewards
 Fairchild Challenge
 Going Wild
 Green Infrastructure Vision
 Green Stops Partnership
 Kids in Nature
 Nature Connection
 The Nature of Learning
 No Child Left InsideSM Initiative
 Nuestra Naturaleza, Nuestra Comunidad
 Outdoor Connections for Houston Youth
 Outdoor Spaces for Children: Exposure West Atlanta
 Pass It On – Outdoor Mentors

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The National Forum on Children and ...

Pathway to Nature Preschool Program
Pittsburgh Outdoor Promise
Prescribing Nature
Project Ecopolis
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Science & Spanish Club Network
Secondary Environmental Education Collaborative
Sesame Street: "Connecting Preschoolers with Nature"
Spring Break Back to Nature
Teaching Kids About the Environment
Teens Outside
Trees for the 21st Century
Wise Kids@ Outdoors

About The Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund is dedicated to advancing America's land and water legacy. With our partners, we conserve land, train leaders and invest in conservation at home. Since 1985, we have helped protect more than 6 million acres, sustaining wild havens, working lands and vibrant communities. We're a top-ranked conservation organization, effective and efficient.

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