GOAL: TO INSPIRE A LIFELONG CONSERVATION ETHIC IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

Youth Leadership Adventures is a progression of transformational learning experiences designed for local underserved teens to jump-start lifelong environmental and community stewardship. Primary activities are 8-day Outdoor Leadership and 12-day Science and Sustainability Summer Courses in North Cascades National Park, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Next steps include Youth Ambassadors, internships, and the Northwest Youth Leadership Summit, allowing participants to put skills into action.

Program Outcomes

- Develop a **SENSE OF PLACE & COMMUNITY** by connecting underserved teens to public lands
- Deepen **ECOLOGICAL LITERACY** through first-hand field science learning
- Cultivate **LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION SKILLS** through identity exploration and public speaking
- Empower teens through **STEWARDSHIP, CIVIC ACTION, and WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES**

**I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, but without YLA I would have never experienced the great outdoors like this.**
— Sydney

**YLA empowered me and made me more confident that women in STEM are just as capable and able to do anything.**
— Kathleen

**A leader is someone who can pull together a group of strangers and make them family.**
— Taylor

**I loved the service projects! Helping build things to support fellow adventurous folks and being part of a bigger cause is a special thing.**
— Jayda

157+ outdoor learner hours per student

1,875 hours volunteered
Participant Snapshot

We provide scholarships, transportation, clothing, gear, meals, family orientations, culturally relevant curriculum, and gender-inclusive camp options. 94% of participants reported that they applied for YLA because of these support systems. Statistics reflect Summer Course and Ambassador participants.

**82%** live in the **NORTH CASCADES** ecosystem

**72%** identify as **LOW-INCOME** families

**10 LANGUAGES SPOKEN**

**51%** FIRST TIME in North Cascades National Park

**95%** of participants **RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS**

**63%** identify as **PEOPLE OF COLOR**

**77%** FIRST TIME participating in an outdoor program

**66%** participants **PAID ZERO DOLLARS**

**74%** prospective **FIRST GENERATION** college students

Pathways for Youth: Next-Step Opportunities to Put Skills Into Action

**Youth Ambassadors**

Throughout the school year, Youth Ambassadors further develop leadership and outdoor skills, volunteer, and plan for college and careers. Each participant volunteered 10 hours at state parks and public lands and received 56 hours of college access lessons and visits to regional colleges and universities. Read student-penned narratives from 2018 Ambassador trips on our blog (goo.gl/8g2A8N).

**Summer Interns**

Interns assist in leading summer courses while gaining work experience. Participants are inspired by interns who are of similar ages and backgrounds. Interns receive stipends, housing, meals, and Wilderness First Aid training.

**Northwest Youth Leadership Summit**

The Summit equips students with personal and professional development skills to serve the environment and communities. This free, two-day Summit in Seattle includes skill-building sessions, a career fair, discussions, and outdoor adventures.

79 **SUMMER COURSE** participants

28 **YOUTH AMBASSADORS**

120 **SUMMIT** participants

2 **summer course INTERNS**
Evaluating Program Outcomes

Pre-then post-program surveys demonstrate progress towards program outcomes and student transformations as a result of participation in YLA.

Summer Course Evaluations

**SENSE OF PLACE & COMMUNITY**
- Before: 63%, After: 96%
- Before: 81%, After: 97%
- Before: 57%, After: 96%

**ECOLOGICAL LITERACY**
- I enjoy learning science: Before: 57%, After: 84%
- I know how I can reduce climate change impacts: Before: 51%, After: 91%

**STEWARDSHIP**
- I am confident in working with tools: Before: 50%, After: 86%
- I am interested in environmental careers: Before: 41%, After: 70%

**LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION**
- I think of myself as a leader: Before: 47%, After: 87%
- I am confident in my public speaking: Before: 44%, After: 86%

Youth Ambassadors Evaluations

**Before** | **After**
---|---
I am comfortable with Public Speaking | 25% | 55%
Environmental stewardship is important to me | 48% | 100%
I think of myself as a leader | 40% | 80%
I know what I need to do to apply to college | 36% | 96%

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_Evaluating Program Outcomes_ 

After past challenges, I didn’t trust people, and worse, I didn’t trust myself. Youth Ambassadors helped me to be more confident every day and made me push my limits and overcome them.

— Eleanore

—I am motivated to help schools become more eco-friendly because I want future generations to respect our planet and thrive.

— Christian

—I realized that my identity is not found only in my race. You discover who you are once you find your sense of place. Nature helps me get away from distractions and find myself.

— Jessica
Pathways for Youth: Inna's Story

I graduated from Mount Vernon High School this year. Adopted at age 3 from Russia, I grew up in the Pacific Northwest. My first involvement with North Cascades Institute was Mountain School in 6th grade. I decided that I like being outside and learning about the environment. The summer after 10th grade, I nervously arrived for the 8-day Youth Leadership Adventures course. It was my first time camping with people other than my family. After, I wished that it lasted a whole week more.

I’ve grown my enthusiasm for learning every year since by participating in additional Youth Leadership programs. I attend the Summit and last year I was a Youth Ambassador. We went on field trips, volunteered with park rangers, and learned about college and career planning. Then I participated in the 12-day Science & Sustainability course this summer.

Leadership and public speaking were challenges that I faced. I had trouble saying what was on my mind and seeing myself as a leader. This summer, our instructor Dakota taught me that everyone is a leader, just in their own way. I had similar lessons before, but it sunk in this time. I gravitate towards being a “guide,” known as “participative leadership.” Finding my way as a leader is an unending path.

Now I’m planning to enroll at WWU’s Huxley College and apply for the YLA Internship in 2019. I’m proud of having been an Ambassador, a “Ross Lake Leader,” and a “Cascadian Cookie Bear.” I’m thankful to be part of such an important group of outdoorists and tree huggers in the PNW.

2018 Partners and Supporters

This May, 170 people contributed to Youth Leadership Adventure scholarships during our Give Big for Youth campaign, raising over $180,000 for all of our youth and school programs. Thank you!

Special thanks to Northwest Youth Leadership Summit sponsors and for in-kind gear donations from Crocs, GearAid and SmartWool.

Named Scholarships

Aguila
Amy Brown
Andrew Goodwill Murphy Memorial Fund
Ann Zwinger
Booth Family
Candi & Dick James Community Catalyst
Cook and Sullivan Fund for Youth
Darby Foundation
Dee & Chuck Robinson
Dream Green
Fitzberg
Gary Peterson Memorial Fund
Georgina Glaseo Family
Guemes Island Environmental Trust
Huisman Family
Kevin LaFleur Youth Leadership
Lee Cole
Lorrie Otto
Michele and Robert Liburdy
The Skagit Scholarship
Weisberg Family

Grants

Anonymous Foundation
D.V. and Ida J. McEachern Trust
Henry M. Jackson Foundation
OneFamily Foundation
Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Tulalip Tribes Charitable Trust
Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office No Child Left Inside Grant
Whatcom Community Foundation

Our scholarship recipient is driven to find meaning from his YLA experience, shaping his education and world view. This is exactly how we hoped our gift would affect young people. As long as programs like Youth Leadership Adventures exist, hope will prevail.

— Michele and Robert Liburdy, 2018 Scholarship Donor