



# OUTDOOR YOUTH CONNECTIONS

Empowering Outdoor Youth...

## 2015 Annual Report

### Mission

Outdoor Youth Connections provides opportunities for children and young adults to experience recreation, education, and stewardship activities in the natural outdoors. Whether hiking, biking, canoeing, birding, or any number of other pursuits, kids benefit from the opportunity to escape their daily routines and genuinely explore the world from a different perspective.

Our philosophy embraces experiential learning in nature and its potential for life-transformative growth. Both anecdotal and scientific evidence suggest that lessons mastered in that environment empower youth to choose paths of success and prepare them to become effective leaders in their communities.

We reach out to local individuals and groups who express leadership potential, enthusiasm for non-competitive outdoor recreation, and/or an interest in environmental stewardship. Many are under-served or otherwise do not have the means to experience the wilderness without the help of Outdoor Youth Connections.

### Summary

Our financial position remained stable as we pursued our goals, fully committed to our founding purposes. This year we partnered with three organizations, awarding grants that contributed to hundreds of youth experiences in the natural outdoors:

- Grants to three individuals for Youth Leadership Adventures through North Cascades Institute
- A grant sponsoring the Outdoor Ambassadors program of Northwest Youth Corps, providing opportunities for 22 youth to participate in hiking and river rafting adventures
- A grant funding 300 K-12 educational field trips to North Creek Forest in Bothell, Wa.

Major funding sources were our “A Night To Remember” gala, Snohomish and King County’s federated giving campaigns, and a silent auction/raffle in collaboration with the Everett Mountaineers Awards Banquet, where we also recognized our 2015 grant recipients.

### Significant Notes

We successfully held our administrative overhead and fundraising expenses to a remarkable 2% of revenues. We thank the many volunteers and non-profit friendly organizations that helped make that possible.

We’ve improved our visibility in outdoor communities and have seen an increase in grant applications as a result. Unfortunately, that means we now deny and defer more than we would like. Said another way, grant requests have outpaced our revenue sources, limiting our ability to satisfy deserving applicants.

## Looking Forward

We expect our operations to further evolve as our involvement with youth becomes more “hands on” and as we seek more effective ways to raise funds. That includes a renewed emphasis on grant writing. We seek more partnerships with schools and with local community organizations that are inspired by our mission.

## Thanks to YOU!

We owe our accomplishments to YOU our stakeholders: project partners, businesses and individual donors. We hope you share our pride in being a part of something so incredible. Thank you again for your continued support of and dedication to OYC.



Photos courtesy of North Cascade Institute

"Youth are impressionable. My learning from North Cascades Wild was brilliant to have impressed upon me. By funding my NCW trip, you have had a direct impact on today's youth, and thusly, on the future of our planet. Your generous support will not be forgotten. Thank you."

Laura Gillespie, Roosevelt High School, Seattle, WA

"The North Cascades Institute has shaped the path I'm on today. My peers and I were given infinite love and encouragement. All this was in addition to a rich, challenging dynamic learning environment - with the subject of our lessons surrounding us."

Heather Ellis, Seattle, WA