



BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

Expanding Access to Nature

The Benefits of Spending Time in Nature

At the Aldo Leopold Nature Center, we envision a world where people understand how we are connected to our natural environment and to each other and, as a result, are responsible for our world's long-term sustainability.

In today's fast-paced society where many kids grow up in urban settings and spend several hours a day on their devices as they shuffle from one structured, indoor activity to another, they have few opportunities to experience the great outdoors.

According to the family technology education non-profit group, Common Sense Media, teens spend more than one-third of their days—or nearly nine hours on average—using electronic media such as online video or music.

Furthermore, only about 25% of kids play outside, compared to approximately 75% a generation ago. Of those kids who do play outside, most spend just minutes per day in unstructured activities such as climbing trees or playing games of catch.

Using technology topped the list of reasons why kids are not getting outdoors, while other factors include reduced or eliminated school recess, overscheduled lives and concerns about children's safety.

In addition to a lack of understanding of the natural environment and their connection to it, today's generation of kids (and adults) is missing out on the many benefits of spending time in nature.



By expanding access and opening opportunities for kids of all backgrounds to experience nature, our Bridge to the Future campaign is meeting these challenges head-on for the health of our children and the future of our planet.

According to research supported by the American Academy of Pediatric Health, the Children & Nature Network, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and many others, when children spend time in nature, they experience these benefits to body, mind and spirit:

Body

- Increased fitness levels build active, functional, healthy bodies, reducing rates of childhood and adult obesity
- Higher levels of Vitamin D lower the risks of developing osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes and other health problems later in life
- Improved coordination, distance vision and fewer instances of nearsightedness

Mind

- Reduced symptoms of anxiety, stress, depression, ADD, ADHD and other behavioral issues
- Improved scores on standardized tests in math, science, reading, writing and social studies
- Greater ability to adapt and think critically and creatively

Spirit

- Increased self-confidence and resilience to adversity
- Reduced aggression and healthier emotional well-being
- Greater meaning and purpose, a sense of coexistence, inner peace and awe in nature's presence with a sense of respect and concern for the natural world



How the Bridge to the Future Campaign is Expanding Access



EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL
DESPITE PHYSICAL, FINANCIAL OR
GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS



INCREASED SCHOLARSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES



FREE ADMISSION TO OUR GROUNDS,
FAMILY EVENTS, EXHIBITS AND
INDOOR PLAY SPACES

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