

# CHILDREN'S FOREST OF CENTRAL OREGON COMMUNITY REPORT



## Who We Are

The Children's Forest is not a physical place, it's a partnership between local agencies to enhance the lives of kids - of all abilities and ages - by connecting them with nature. We focus strongly on equity and inclusion, helping to connect underrepresented communities to impactful experiences in nature. We recognize that not all kids have equal access to the outdoors, and not everyone feels safe and welcome in outdoor spaces. We believe that the health and well-being of children, families, and communities improves when all people connect to the outdoors.



## OUR WORK



### Outdoor Learning

The Children's Forest partners with schools to enhance learning through outdoor education. We break down barriers to outdoor learning and bridge gaps in classroom funding.

#### Highlight: NatureHoods

Our NatureHoods program is a free 4-day program with the goal for students to see themselves as scientists who study nature. The program reached 952 K-2 students from rural and Title I schools this year.

"The NatureHoods program gave my students an increased excitement about science and the environment around us. Students are more openly looking at the world around them in greater depth".

## OUR NETWORK

Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests, Oregon State Parks, High Desert ESD, Bend-La Pine SD, Redmond SD, Sisters SD, Bend Parks and Rec, Redmond Area Parks and Rec, Mosaic Medical, Central Oregon Pediatric Associates, Bend Forest School, Boys & Girls Clubs, Camp Fire Central Oregon, Camp Tamarack, Deschutes Land Trust, Discover Your Forest, The Environmental Center, Friends of the Children, Heart of Oregon Corps, High Desert Museum, Middle Deschutes Watershed Council, Oregon Adaptive Sports, Sunriver Nature Center & Observatory, Trout Unlimited, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, Wildheart Nature School

### Families and Health

The Children's Forest offers free events and programs throughout Central Oregon to connect youth of all ages - and their families - with nature.

#### Highlight: Kids On-the-Move

45 families from La Pine and Redmond participated in a free 4-week family program this summer, offered in partnership with OSU-Extension's Nutrition Education Program. Children ages 0-5, and their parents, engaged in fun nature-based activities, physical activity, and received recipes and kits for healthy snacks.



### Supporting Our Network

Most of the work of the Children's Forest is done through our amazing network of partners. Our goal is to enhance their work and bring resources to support programs for underrepresented communities. We provide small grants, trainings, and funds to support internships, all which advances our work to make the outdoors more inclusive.

#### Highlight: YES Projects

With support from the Forest Service, the Children's Forest funded 10 projects that reached 1,023 participants. During a year when youth faced many social and emotional challenges connected to the stresses of the pandemic, our partner programs helped connect youth to the healing power of nature.

SUPPORT  
OUR FIELD  
TRIP FUND



# VÁMONOS OUTSIDE



## WHAT WE DO

Vámonos Outside runs outdoor-based programs that serve the Latinx/BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) communities in Central Oregon. We work with youth of all ages, ranging from preschool to high schoolers. A cornerstone of Latino culture is the family, so we also engage the family unit in outdoor-related activities. Our programs introduce participants to a wide range of outdoor activities including skiing and snowboarding, mountain biking, indoor climbing, kayaking and rafting, and family-friendly camping. All of our programs are free for the community.



Photo by: Wesley Heredia

## WHY VO?

Vámonos Outside was born in 2020 out of the need to engage the Latinx community in the outdoors that is abundant here in Central Oregon. Our community recognized the lack of Latinx folks participating in outdoor recreation and not benefiting from all that nature has to offer. Vámonos Outside exists to be the bridge between the Latinx community and outdoor opportunities. It takes a Latinx-led program to understand, navigate, and address the cultural and physical barriers this community has connected to the outdoors.

Photo by: Austin White



## OUR TEAM

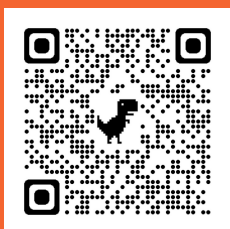
Eduardo Romero, Program Specialist, was born and raised in Bend. He is graduate of the COCC Outdoor Leadership program. He is using his talents to help diversify the media as a model and talented photographer. Through Vámonos Outside and his camera, Eduardo is on a mission to bring more Latinx/BIPOC representation into the outdoors.

Wesley Heredia, Program Coordinator, has been in living in Bend for six years. He has worked as an outdoor educator all over the Western United States as a wilderness instructor, climbing and mountain guide, environmental educator, and snowboard instructor. His passion is to create lasting and meaningful outdoor recreation opportunities for Latinx/BIPOC youth and families in Central Oregon.

Wesley and Eduardo (pictured center).  
photo by: Sun Country Tours



## DONATE



Vámonos Outside is a program of the Children's Forest. Donate at [vamonosoutside.org](http://vamonosoutside.org)

## OUR PARTNERS

Vámonos Outside partners with these organizations and businesses to make our work happen! Bend-La Pine Schools, Bend Park and Recreation District, Bend Rock Gym, Black Diamond, Camp Tamarack, Cog Wild, Commute Options, Deschutes National Forest, Deschutes Land Trust, Deschutes Trails Coalition, Discover Your Forest, Family Access Network, Gear Fix, High Desert Education Service District, Juntos (OSU), Juntos Aprendemos, Mt. Bachelor Ski Area, Redmond School District, REI, Stio, Sun Country Tours, The Circuit Bouldering Gym, Think Wild.