



Vámonos Outside expanded their ski and snowboard program for BIPOC teens in their second year. 28 youth participated in the program over 336 participant days.

"I DIDN'T HAVE A LOT OF SELF-CONFIDENCE STARTING THIS BUT NOW WHEN I FALL DOWN, I SEE IT AS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE. I THINK ABOUT WHAT WENT WRONG, I TRY AND FIX IT, AND THEN I KEEP SNOWBOARDING."

-SKI PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



The Children's Forest partnered with Crook County Library and OSU-Extension to offer 16 free family programs in La Pine, Prineville, and Redmond this summer. Families connected with local parks while learning about the natural world through stories, art, and play.

Our NatureHoods program reached 1,038 K-2nd grade students, with 71% from rural communities. The 4-day program has the goal of students seeing themselves as scientists that study nature.

"EVEN IN THE FEW DAYS WE SPENT ENGAGING WITH THIS TOPIC, STUDENTS HAVE GROWN IN THEIR OBSERVATION SKILLS AND CURIOSITY ABOUT THE NATURAL WORLD AROUND THEM."



Vámonos Outside continued their teen mountain biking program with a spring and fall session, reaching 22 high school students.

Participants were able to gain self-esteem in their abilities with learning new skills to try harder trails, features, and obstacles. The teens described their experience as:

"Really freaking amazing!"
"A fantastic new experience"
"Fun, exciting, enjoyable"



In May, we had an amazing Spring Into Nature Festival event in Madras which celebrated the many ways that we connect with nature. Families built bird houses, learned about fire ecology, did science and art activities, and enjoyed live music. Over 10 organizations participated in the event.



Our Field Trip Fund supported 3,173 students to attend outdoor programs last school year, including trips to the Deschutes River, High Desert Museum, Mt. Bachelor, Lava Lands, and so much more. The Field Trip Fund covers bus and substitute costs for field trips, focusing on Title I schools.



The Children's Forest supported 9 BIPOC high school students through paid internships in the green sector through our Green Jobs Summer Program. Interns were placed with 6 different organizations (Bend Parks and Recreation District, Camp Chica, High Desert Museum, The Environmental Center, Think Wild, and Vámonos Outside) and participated in up to 300 hours of job training. Interns gained skills in group management, public speaking, wildlife interpretation, and community engagement. In addition to job skills, the interns shared how their connection to nature grew or changed through the summer:

- I helped find a bit of myself and find a sense of grounding
- I learned more about what's out there
- I feel closer and more care towards nature
- I enjoyed getting outside with new people
- I learned that **nature facilitates fun and happiness**



We hosted our 7th Annual Discover Nature Festival at Alpenglow Park in September. This event continues to draw hundreds of families who love the diversity of engaging activities for the whole family. Over 30 community partners participated in the event.



This fall marked the return of Jugamos Afuera, a culturally-specific afterschool program for elementary-aged youth from Bear Creek Elementary. Youth participated in a range of adventures ranging from park visits to hiking at Tumalo Falls to indoor rock climbing. The program will continue through the school year and expand to a second site in the spring.

This September Camp Chica officially joined Vámonos Outside and The Children's Forest to continue providing bilingual adventure camp programs for elementary-aged girls in Central Oregon. Camp Chica provides adventures on early-release Wednesdays, no-school day camps, and summer camps. The program's goals are to connect girls to nature and place, to themselves, and create a community that celebrates bilingualism. We are thrilled to have this program be part of the Children's Forest and to be able to expand the culturally-specific offerings of Vámonos Outside. We also welcomed Veronica Vega and Molly Alles to our team!



Finally, we wanted to share a little about some of our "behind the scenes" work facilitating committees and trainings focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion for our network of 30+ partners. We coordinate a variety of opportunities to learn and improve our programs and organizations together. These include quarterly Leadership Gatherings focused on organizational culture and policies, a Learning Group focused on educators, and a group that focuses on partnerships with Indigenous communities. This year we also partnered with The Environmental Center and Camp Tamarack to offer a training for outdoor educators in our region focused on supporting gender expansive and transgender youth.