

20 years of nurturing change-makers and outdoor leaders



Outdoor Adventures



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Just as it has been for 20 years, when you join YES today, you become part of a family. For participants, time spent in nature alongside trusted peers and staff lets them be their genuine, best selves, and opens their hearts to discovery and possibility. Our partners, funders, staff, and long-time volunteers nourish our family tree by helping to ensure access to high-quality programs that provide these positive experiences for youth and families.

YES's unique, holistic approach – supporting the whole child, engaging the whole family – is central to the success we've had over the course of two decades, and creates multi-generational impact. The young people who joined our family over a decade ago are the leaders of today. Fourteen YES youth successfully graduated from high school in 2019, and then spent their summer in advanced leadership positions and jobs that took them across the state and to new countries. Adults in our new Adult Leadership Pathway completed a six-month leadership program, and are now training a new group of leaders to become empowered agents for change.

We are dedicated to supporting and nurturing the members of this YES family on their journeys as resilient, earth-connected leaders. I'm grateful to the community that makes our work thrive, and honored to share the impact of our work with you in these pages.

Sincerely,

Eric Aaholm
Executive Director



“The trips I went on were fun-filled, with opportunities to learn... [they] helped me discover myself, and how I feel for the environment wouldn't be the same without YES. I even made my family stop using plastic straws because I told them how bad those hurt the ocean and the sea turtles. Even though it was just my family, we are already making a difference.”

—*Jocelyn*



OUR ENGAGED COMMUNITY

This year, YES engaged 573 underrepresented youth and adults from Richmond and surrounding West Contra Costa County through over 100 days of programming. Our holistic, whole-family approach and strong relationship-building practices served as the foundation for activities ranging from public speaking workshops to wilderness backpacking trips, all empowering Richmond youth, adults, and families to lead healthy, connected lives; motivate change in their neighborhoods; and inspire a safe, thriving community.



WINTER CAMP: TEEN LEADERS IN ACTION

YES's three-day Winter Camp was a deeply impactful, mid-year gathering for 40 youth of all ages. They hiked the blustery Marin coast, laughed through team-building activities, gained knowledge during health and wellness activities led by YES teens, and joined together in music-making. Youngsters were riveted by both the content and their teen role models. Camper favorites included "getting to see the Golden Gate bridge", "the night hike", "memories made in the dorm" and, simply put, "the Nature."

NEW COASTAL CONSERVATION CORPS FUNDED

New, pivotal funding from the California Coastal Commission WHALE TAIL Grants Program and California State Coastal Conservancy deepened our emphasis on conservation and environmental justice. Through YES's new "Coastal Conservation Corps," teens convene regularly to learn about coastal conservation issues and prepare for trips to Monterey Bay, Limantour Beach, Bolinas Lagoon, and more! Grant-supported partnerships with conservation agencies will provide opportunities for teens to explore new habitats, conduct hands-on conservation science, and train to educate peers and families.



ADULT LEADERSHIP PATHWAY LAUNCH

YES launched our new Adult Leadership Pathway to empower underrepresented Richmond residents to improve community conditions. During the six-month Adult Leaders cohort, participants of diverse backgrounds and ages examined social injustices, built meaningful relationships and support systems, learned organizing principles, identified their strengths as leaders, and developed the skills to make change for themselves and their community. Graduates progressed into the Fellows cohort to deepen their skills, and will help teach this year's incoming Leaders.



TEACHING SPANISH, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

YES nurtured the strengths of Richmond residents, who realized long-held dreams as a result. Four Adult Leadership Program participants met a community need for connection across language barriers between Latinx and African-American families by planning and teaching a series of interactive Spanish classes for Richmond parents. The Leaders facilitated laughter and learning over food, music, and board games like ¡Lotería! The project will continue in 2020.



TRAILBLAZERS FOR EQUITY & INCLUSION IN THE OUTDOORS

Who belongs in nature? We all do! YES is at the forefront of the movement for equity and inclusion for underrepresented youth and families in the outdoors. This year we took our efforts and expertise to the 2019 Children & Nature Network International Conference. Alongside conference founder Richard Louv and other environmental leaders, YES Executive Director Eric Aaholm and Program Director Blanca Hernández led workshops and served as panelists, sharing our program models, values, relationship-building approach, and cultural relevancy practices, as well as a call-to-action to nurture and empower the next generation of environmental leaders and decision-makers.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE

Immersing Youth in Nature

YES forged connections to nature for over 250 underrepresented youth ages 8 to 18 through our Youth Leadership Pathway. During residential, nature-based **Summer Camps**, connection to nature began amidst supportive peers and adults. Through a partnership with the East Bay Regional Park District, adolescent **Richmond Rangers** participants engaged in a ten-month program of hikes, canoe adventures, and hands-on nature education.

Teens in our **Camp-to-Community** (C2C) program spent over 25 days immersed in nature. C2C teens also engaged in year-round mentorship, job and academic goal-setting, and peer education addressing community health and environmental justice. At our **Winter Camp** and **Family Camps**, activities led by YES participants, staff, and dedicated volunteers provided opportunities to deepen connections – to each other and to the earth.

91%

Increase in comfort with the outdoors as a result of Summer Camp, Winter Camp, and Camp Days programming.

95%

Percentage of Camp-to-Community teens spending more time outdoors independently because of their engagement with YES.



“When you’re outdoors, it’s usually quiet. When you’re in the nature, at ease, you feel like you’ve let off a big burden.”

— YES youth, age 12

“I gained a lot of knowledge about forests and animals and leg muscles.”

— Richmond Rangers participant, age 11



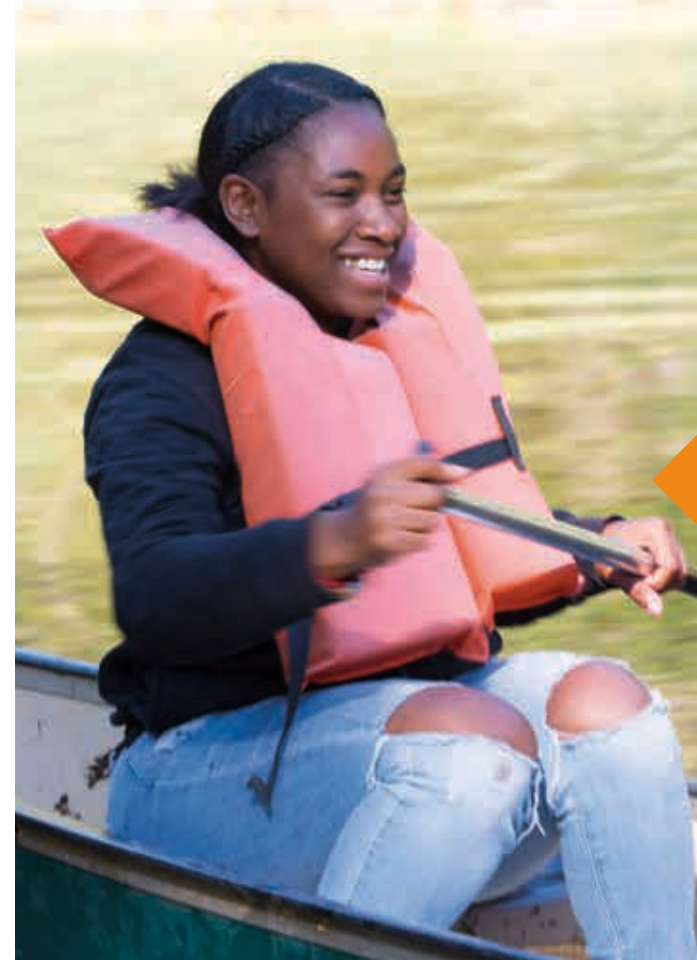
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES

Empowering Resilient, Earth-Connected Leaders

YES's Youth and Adult Leadership Pathways train participants as leaders in the outdoors, and empower them to help shape their environments into healthy, thriving communities.

In 2016, a friend invited Tajzhane to a meeting of YES's Youth Engagement Team, where she found supportive, accepting peers and adults. Now, Tajzhane is first on every sign-up list, from Winter Camp to rock climbing, to the Mountain Bike Club and beyond. This year, Tajzhane reached a milestone on her leadership journey, gaining leadership and environmental education experience, by working all summer as a Camp Counselor.

Cindy joined YES's Adult Leaders Program to address the disparities she saw in access to healthy food and educational opportunities. When parents in a local school identified a communication gap between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking families, she and three fellow Adult Leaders created and led weekly Spanish classes in a fun, welcoming environment, bringing neighbors together and building community.



“Leadership means to me that there’s always someone watching me who’s younger than me, that wants to do what I’m doing. So I have to do what’s right, to lead by example for them.”

— *Tajzhane, YES Teen Leader and Camp Counselor*



Increase in clarity of purpose by Adult Leadership Program participants.



Percentage of YES teens who gained leadership skills that they can apply in their daily lives as a result of the Camp-to-Community program.



Increase in confidence leading projects and working with peers by Adult Leadership Program graduates.

“Through this program, I definitely gained more public speaking skills, communication skills, and doing it effectively. I implemented my public speaking skills by teaching Spanish to adults – it pushed me to talk and work with a big audience.”

— *Cindy, Adult Leaders Graduate and Fellows Participant*



TWO DECADES OF MEMORIES AND MILESTONES

Celebrating 20 Years of YES

Since 1999, YES has brought the wonder and power of nature into the lives of thousands of youth and families, and supported hundreds of teens and adults to step forward as leaders.

As we celebrate these 20 years, we are grateful to the many partners, donors, volunteers, staff, and participants who make our work possible, guide and support us, and make up the “YES family tree.” Reminisce with us at www.yesfamilies.org/20.

1999 YES founder Diane Mintz provides scholarship for 81 Richmond youth to go to sleep-away summer camps.

1999-2005 YES sends 2,000 youth to summer camp between 1999 and 2005!

2004 YES hosts our first weekend-long Family Camp in the redwoods.

2007-08 We hire an executive director and open our first Richmond office.

2010 YES goes year-round with new, local outings, partners with East Bay Regional Park District, and the Camp-to-Community teen program is born!

2012 A new focus on health fuels the launch of YES's adult Wellness Program; participants help organize the Walk to Nature community-wide health event.

2013-17 YES organizes the North Richmond Network, convening more than 20 agencies to improve school and family engagement and health at Verde Elementary.

2016 YES receives Outstanding Nonprofit of the Year award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

2017 We align our programs within a 10-year Leadership Pathway to engage youth year-round from age 8 through 18.

2018 Ten YES youth obtain jobs in the outdoors – up from five in previous years!

2019 YES turns 20 while providing 100 days of programming for Richmond youth and families.

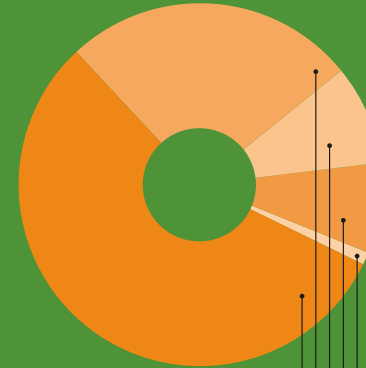
2019 Three youth alumni are hired to work with YES as Weekend Trip Leaders. The Adult Leadership Pathway is re-designed and re-launched.

Financial Statement

Our Donors

YES extends our great gratitude to the hundreds of individual donors and the volunteers and partners that make our work possible.

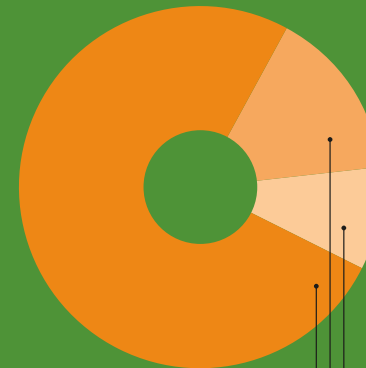
REVENUE & SUPPORT



Foundations 56%
 Individuals 26%
 Government Grants 9%
 Corporate Donations 8%
 Earned Income 1%

TOTAL \$1,030,363

EXPENSES



Programs 75%
 Fundraising 16%
 Administration 9%

TOTAL \$1,073,797

FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation
 Bill Graham Supporting Foundation
 California Coastal Commission*
 Chamberlin Family Foundation
 City of Richmond
 Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation
 Clif Bar Family Foundation
 Contra Costa Kids, Inc.
 Contra Costa Health Services
 Crescent Porter Hale Foundation
 East Bay Community Foundation
 Environmental Volunteers
 Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation*
 Five Arts Fund
 Friends of George Miller
 Hellman Foundation*
 Irene S. Scully Fund
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 Quest Foundation
 Satterberg Foundation*
 Save the Redwoods League
 The California Endowment*
 The Lampert Byrd Foundation
 The Morrison & Foerster Foundation
 The San Francisco Foundation
 The Stuart Foundation
 The Wolfgang Fund, East Bay Community Foundation
 Youth Outside*

* Multi-year grants

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AmazonSmile
 Anaviv Catering & Events
 Big Chief Tree Service
 Blue Heron Builders
 BNSF Railway Company †
 Bridge Association of REALTORS
 Cerami Builders
 Chevron Richmond Refinery
 Contra Costa Association of REALTORS
 District Homes

East Bay Audiologists
 Evergreen Painting
 Farmers Insurance: Ruth Stroup Agency
 Garden Architecture
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 Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
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 Vesper Society
 West Summit Cabinetry
 Winkler Real Estate Group
 Yovino-Young

† YES received this funding in December 2018. Based on our values and strong partnership with East Bay Regional Park District, we will no longer accept funds from this agency.

MISSION

In partnership with nature, YES Nature to Neighborhoods nurtures leaders who champion the wellbeing of our community.

VISION

Our vision is for Richmond youth, adults, and families to lead healthy, connected lives; motivate change in their neighborhoods; and inspire a safe, thriving community.

YES TEAM

STAFF

Eric Aaholm, *Executive Director*
Blanca Hernández, *Program Director*
Claire McMurtry, *Development & Communications Manager*
Maria Chan, *Operations & HR Manager*
Vencel Alfred, *C2C Fellows Coordinator*
Peter Walker-Flom, *C2C Youth Leaders Coordinator*
Angelica Delgado, *Adult Leaders Coordinator*
Joanna Pulido, *Youth Engagement Specialist*
Yuliana Solis, *Bilingual Program Associate*
Pearl Penumaka, *Development & Communications Associate*
Aswun James, *Peer Advocate*

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Tana Monteiro
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Jabeen Yusuf

FOUNDER

Diane Mintz

“Today especially, YES has a staff of such heart and such passion that it allows people, it encourages people to follow their dreams.”

— *Diane Mintz, YES Founder*

“YES is a seed planted in Richmond. It sprouts and grows into a towering tree, drops its acorns and leaves, young trees sprout – the cycle continues – a forest is born.”

— *Ann Higgins, YES Board Member*



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