MISSION
Blue Sky is on a mission to provide transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education.

VISION
We will give every young person the opportunity to discover themselves by actively engaging the natural world.

PROGRAM GOALS
1. Help children achieve academic success, especially in the sciences, through active outdoor education that is appropriate for their current science curriculum.

2. Develop character and leadership through outdoor experiences that expand horizons, increase confidence, and build collaboration skills.
## OUR CORE PROGRAMS

The Blue Sky Journey

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<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Program frequency</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Daily in the Summer</td>
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EXPLORERS

Our Explorers program launched in 2008 and now partners with Richmond City Public Schools to provide monthly outdoor experiential field investigations to elementary school students, often those from our community’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. By traveling outside their urban classrooms to parks, farms, and riverside locations, students can explore and discover the Virginia Standards of Learning science concepts brought to life in nature’s classroom.

“My students enjoyed the natural environment, as few of them have had this type of exposure.”
– 2nd Grade Bellevue Elementary Teacher

“The lessons were all interrelated to curriculum previously or currently taught, so will be referred to [in the classroom].”
– 5th Grade George Mason Elementary Teacher

“I loved this field experience, and so did the students - they were engaged the entire time.”
– 2nd Grade Chimborazo Elementary School Teacher
OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CLUBS

Outdoor Adventure Clubs (OACs) launched in 2011 and partnered with six sites in 2017 to introduce at-risk urban youth to outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, orienteering, firemaking, kayaking, canoeing, and rock climbing. Through OACs weekly after-school programming, students are immersed in a specific outdoor activity for weeks at a time leading up to an Expedition trip into the great outdoors that challenges the youth to use their newfound skills in the field - the confidence gained from each activity series encourages students to continue applying these outdoor skills and engaging with their natural environment.

“We did a lot of different activities with OAC and my favorite was camping because we got to pick our food and I like setting up camp and building a tent. I hope to continue building my skills of being outdoors so that I can camp with my family and show them the different skills that I’ve learned by being in Blue Sky Fund programs.”

– Makaylah, 14 years old, Franklin Military Academy
The Outdoor Leadership Institute (OLI) is a year-long program for a diverse group of high school students from Richmond, Virginia, that includes an immersive wilderness experience and monthly community service projects. Through outdoor exploration and activities, OLI provides students an opportunity for personal growth, self discovery, bonding with multicultural peers, building leadership skills and giving back to their community. Each year, twenty four students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds are selected from a group of their nominated peers to join together to learn the fundamentals of backcountry hiking before hitting the trail for five days with the goal of summiting Mount Rogers in Grayson Highlands State Park of Virginia. The group meets once a month throughout the rest of the year to complete community service projects in their neighborhoods, such as planting trees, cleaning local trails and painting storm drains to raise awareness in the community. To celebrate the organization’s 10th anniversary, ten of our OLI alumni took a trip to Colorado for a week of backpacking, whitewater rafting and high-ropes adventure.

“I’m taking from the trip a new mindset and focus for my life, that will help me when I’m at school or home to be a better person and have a better day.”

– Miguel, 17 years old, Maggie Walker Governor’s School
FINANCIALS

Income
- Grants: $277,500
- Individuals: $204,762
- Board: $87,905
- Events: $68,270
- Corporations and Churches: $21,078
- Earned Income: $31,528
- In-Kind: $27,904
Total Revenue: $718,947

Expenses
- Programs: $494,274
- General Management: $106,816
- Fundraising: $155,154
Total Expenses: $756,244

2017 financials as reported on audited year end statements of revenues and expenses

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Blue Sky Fund would like to thank our program partners! We are grateful for your commitment to the community and for your involvement in our programs.

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VCU Rice Rivers Center
VCU School of Psychology
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Virginia Capital Trail Foundation
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Virginia Outside
Virginia State Parks
Woodville Elementary School
YMCA Camp Thunderbird
YMCA of Richmond

* Based on VA 2017 average hourly rate of volunteer hours at $26.75

155 Volunteers
1,040 Volunteer hours
$27,820 Value of volunteer hours*
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