



BLUE SKY FUND
ANNUAL REPORT
2016



Expanding Horizons

Horizon: /həˈraɪzn/ noun

1. the line at which the earth's surface and the sky appear to meet.
2. the limit of a person's mental perception, experience, or interest.



At Blue Sky Fund we seek to expand students’ mental horizons by exposing them to new physical horizons. We learn the most about ourselves when we step outside of what we know. We believe that the outdoors is the perfect opportunity to remove students from what is familiar. We hope to foster wonder and hope. We want to transform youth inside by going outside.



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



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Any experienced hiker will tell you the first thing they pack when preparing for a trip is a map. Without a map, navigation along the trails and arrival at your destination becomes incredibly challenging, if not impossible. [Without maps – both literal and figurative – Blue Sky Fund would not have navigated its way into becoming the organization we are today.](#)

Since our start in 2007, our map of success has grown larger and more complex each year. During 2016, the Blue Sky map changed in several significant ways. I joined the organization to fill the large hiking boots of Lawson Wijesooriya, becoming our second Executive Director. [We doubled the size and scope of our Explorers program](#), serving twice as many children as we ever had in the past, and [implemented new staff training methods and outcome measurements](#) that will allow us to continue serving our community in the most effective manner possible.

While the cartography evolves, our mission does not. We will always remain committed to providing transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education. The transformational experiences that we strive to provide for our students will not be fully realized unless we are expanding their horizons, both seen and perceived.

We seek to expand students' psychological horizons by exposing them to new physical horizons. We learn the most about ourselves when we step outside of what we know, and Blue Sky believes that the outdoors is the perfect opportunity to remove students from what is familiar and help them identify new limits. [Our hope is for our students to stand in wonder at the new physical horizons they encounter during their Blue Sky experiences](#), while also influencing their resilience, developing their confidence, and offering them hope.

I count it a privilege and a blessing to be part of an organization that provides the chance to expand the horizons of loving, energetic, and talented children. This map is a testament to the hard work and generosity of the community, here in Richmond and beyond.

[Thank you](#) to our students and their families, our program partners and volunteers, our donors, our Board, and our staff. I hope you enjoy your Blue Sky Fund trail map.

Sincerely,

David Kunnen
Executive Director

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



We entered into 2016 knowing it would be a challenging year with aggressive goals for the number of youth served and the fundraising to support that work. I am pleased to say that we met those goals on all fronts.

It was also a year of transitions. At the beginning of the year, our founding

Executive Director, Lawson Wijesooriya, announced her decision to leave Blue Sky Fund after 10 years on the job to focus on her family and pursue other opportunities. [Under her leadership, Blue Sky Fund had grown from a small spark of an idea into a mature organization serving more than 1,900 children from elementary school to high school.](#) We knew the search for a new Executive Director would be daunting, and we initiated a nationwide search for our next leader in March. After several months, we were very lucky to find that leader right here in our backyard. Coming with an extensive background with organizations such as the YMCA and the American Heart Association, David Kunnen hit the ground running as our new ED in September.

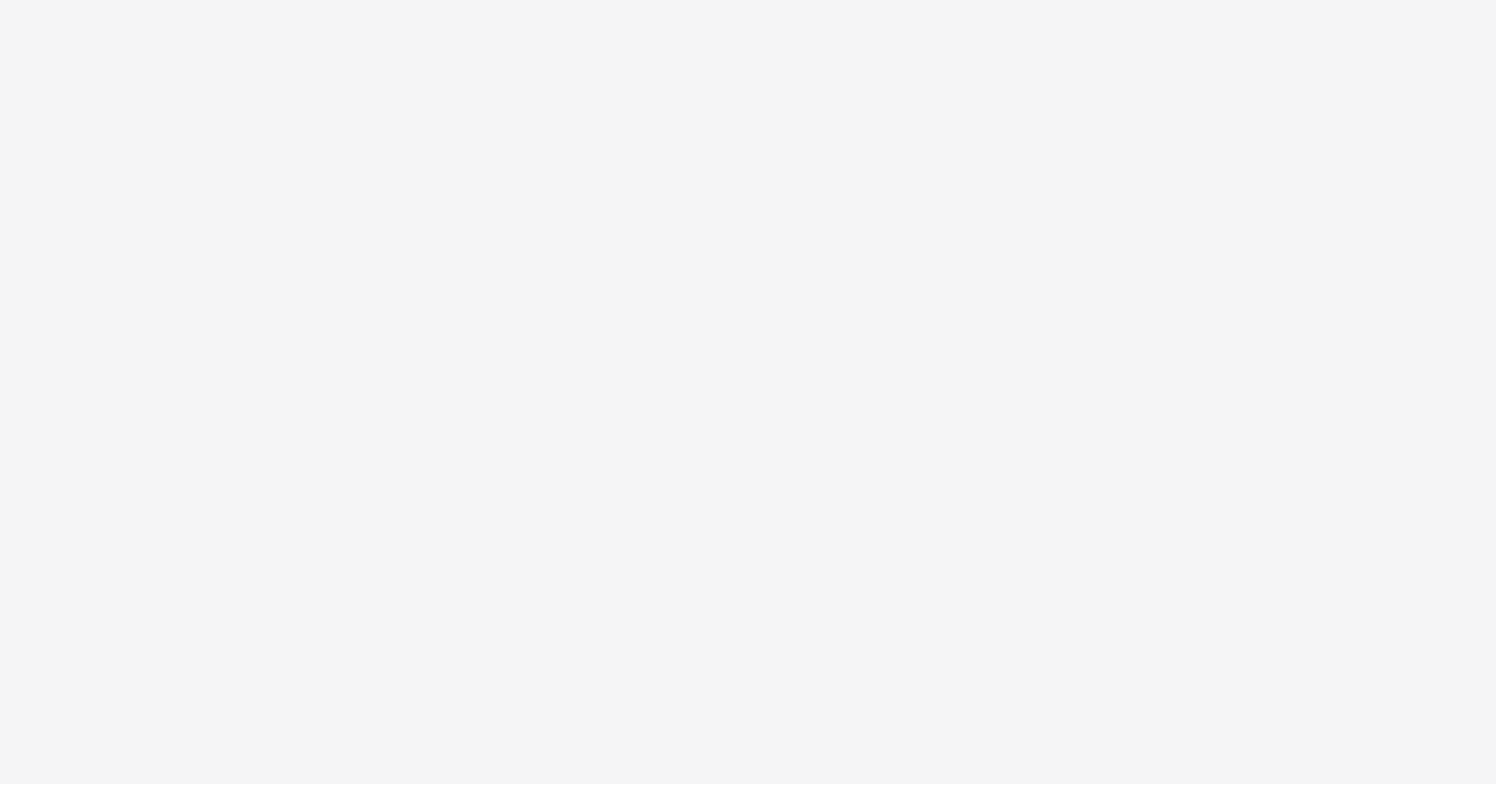
[Now, as we celebrate the completion of our first decade, we look ahead to new horizons.](#) Our strategic plan calls for us to continue to expand our programming to effectively serve children as they journey from elementary to high school right here in Richmond. At the same time, we will continue our focus on character development and defining what it means to be a “Deep Blue” kid.

We cannot achieve these goals alone. Thanks to your support as volunteers and donors, we are part of a vibrant community working to give these children the best experiences possible. [On behalf of the Board of Blue Sky Fund, thank you to everyone who helped us reach our goals in 2016 and who will journey with us in the years to come.](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Connell Mullins'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Connell' being more prominent.

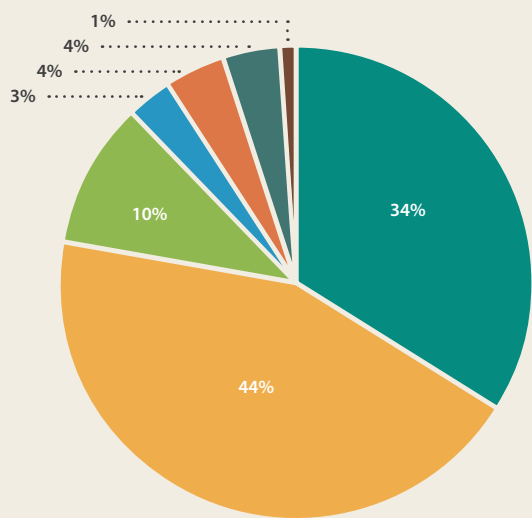
Connell Mullins
Board President



FINANCIALS

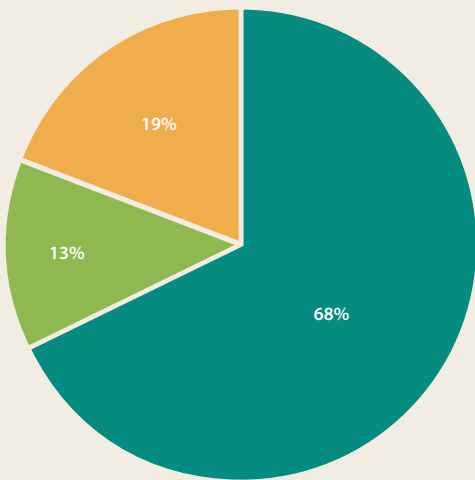


INCOME



Grants	\$199,340
Individuals	\$260,561
Board	\$59,837
Events	\$17,825
Corporations & Churches	\$23,674
Earned Income	\$25,033
In-Kind	\$5,407
Total Revenue	\$591,677

EXPENSES



Programs	\$420,256
General Management	\$80,666
Fundraising	\$118,307
Total Expense	\$619,229

PARTNERS	
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.	
Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School	Oak Grove – Bellemeade Elementary School
Armstrong High School	Peak Experiences
Bellevue Elementary School	Peter Paul Development Center
Blackwell Elementary School	Pocahontas State Park
Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond	Poor Farm Park
ChildSavers	Project Yoga Richmond
Chimborazo Elementary School	Randolph Macon College
Church Hill Activities and Tutoring (CHAT)	RichmondOutside.com
Communities In Schools of Richmond	Richmond Public Schools
East End Fellowship	Richmond Ropes
Environmental Resources Management	Riverside Outfitters
Fairfield Court Elementary School	Robinson Theater
Franklin Military Academy	Roslyn Retreat Center
Friends of Bryan Park	RVA Paddlesports
George Mason Elementary School	Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club
Groundwork RVA	Shalom Farms
Henderson Middle School	Tredegar Iron Works (National Park Service)
Housing Families First	Tricycle Gardens
James River Association	University of Richmond Lora Robins Gallery
James River Park System	VCU AmeriCorps/America Reads
Kayak Richmond	VCU ASPIRE
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden	VCU Outdoor Adventure Program
Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School	VCU School of Social Work
Mighty Oaks Farm	VCU School of Psychology
Miles Jones Elementary School	Virginia State Parks
Neighborhood Resource Center	Westview on the James
New Kent Forestry Center	Woodville Elementary School
NextUp RVA	YMCA of Greater Richmond
	YMCA Camp Thunderbird
	York River State Park

DONORS

Blue Sky would like to extend a warm thank-you to all of our 2016 donors! We can do so much more because of you!

\$25,000+ The CarMax Foundation / The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia / The Robins Foundation / The William H., John G. and Emma Scott Foundation / Kirk and Kelly Tattersall / Dr. George W. Vetrovec **\$10,000 - \$24,999** Altria Companies Employee Community Fund / The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia / Dominion Foundation / ERM Group Foundation / Sam and Emily Gottwald / The Harrison Foundation / Herndon Foundation / The Hurlburt Family Foundation / Mr. and Mrs. Gordon W. Wallace, Sr. **\$5,000 - \$9,999** Tom and Daisy Byrd / The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia: AECW Fund • The Newsome Family Fund • Powell Fund • Thomas M. Moore Charitable Endowment / Mr. and Mrs. Ken Edwards / Foster Made / The Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation / Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Laughon, Jr. / Luck Companies Foundation / Tucker and Jennifer McNeil / Third Church / The Wilbur Moreland Havens Charitable Foundation **\$1,000 - \$4,999** Tom and Edith Allin / Anonymous /

484

volunteer experiences
with Blue Sky

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1,233
hours served by
our volunteers

Cider / Roberta Conroy / James Cooke / Mr. Ronald Corbin / Debby Corkish / Barbara Cottam / Steven and Megan Cottam / Doug Crosby / Ellen and Steve Cross / Mr. and Mrs. Otis Crowther, Jr. / Frances Daniel / Matt and Kimberly Daroca / Jeff and Carrie Davidson / Sam and Susan Davis / Eric De Boer / Lear deBessonet and Tom Gray / Anne deButts / Ms. Diana DeForest / Erich and Gia DeHart / Sarah Jane DeHart / Kristin N. DeMarco / CJ Demasana / Benson and Stacey Dendy / Rob and Liz Denison / Sheila Denzler / Dawn Denzler Trace / Barbara Dickinson / Jared Dieffenbach / James Dimmette / Mark Dimmick / Elizabeth Dodds Ashley / Mr. Duke Dodson / Ryan and Tracy Doherty / Jed and Elizabeth Donaldson / Listwella Donaldson / Mark and Susan Douglas / David and Meg Downs / Justin Doyle / Mark Drawbaugh / Dr. Mitchell Dudley / Molly Dunnington / Megan Durand / Mr. Scott Dysart / Mr. and Mrs. Eaton / Mr. and Mrs. Lyman and Nancy Edds / Mr. Nick Edds and Mrs. Yayan Zhang / Curtis and Sandra Edwards / Darla Edwards / Maureen Egan / Jamie Engebretson / Ingrid Engel / John Erbach / Melanie Erquiaga / Rick and Kathleen Essex / Farm Fresh / Susan Farrar / Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Featherstone / James Fifield / Mr. and Mrs. Michael Figge / The Fishburne Family / Dan and Ally Fisher / Janet Fisher / Paul and Libby Fitzgerald / Tim and Cindy Flanigan / Cheryl Forry / Christine Foster / Ms. Jessica Franck / Carla Frederick / Free Agents Marketing / Garden Grove Brewing Company / Mr. Jeff Geiger / Genworth

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\$32,169

the value of our volunteers' hours*

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Newport / John Newsom / Ian Nimmo / Rob and Janie Norfleet / Sonia O'Malley / Mr. and Mrs. Evan Ocheltree / OneDigital / Kristi Orcutt / Brittany Orr / Osprey Packs, Inc. / Trey and Caroline Packard / Jennifer Parham / Richard and Laurie Parker / Pearl Parks / Sarah K. Parrish / Leigh Pate and Ann Wood / Richard Patterson / Leonard and Kathy Pauley / Bill and Nancy Payne / Daniel and Anna Payne / Will and Amanda Payne / Mr. and Mrs. John Pearson / Jen Pearson / Mr. Robert Peay / Nick and Theresa Pedrazas / William and Marcia Penn / Josh Penn and Lee Taylor Penn / Mrs. Nancy Peterson / Jonathan Phillips / Luke and Anne Pickett / Dennis Pickett / Megan Pierce / Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Tabitha Pitts / Saint and Maria Pollard / Keith Pollock / Tracey Pollock / Stephen and Amy Popovich / Matt Powell / Santiago Prada / Barbara Priddy / Martha Proutt / Liza Pruitt / Rusty Rabb / Tracey Ragsdale / Elizabeth Rambo / Jerry and Patricia Ramsey / Megan Ramsey / Julie Reagan / Daniel Rearick / Redmond Family / Dr. Renee Reid / Don and Barb Reinicker / Charles Renninger / Stephanie Renninger / Mr. Jeff Reynolds / Dick and Pat Rheutan / Richmond Christian School / Richmond Rides / Dr. and Mrs. Travis Riddell / Matt and Rachel Ridenour / Darlan Rieth / Mr. and Mrs. Matthew G. Rigby / Thomas W. Rigby / Betty Ring / Danielle and Ryan Ripperton / Patty Roberts / Sarah Rodman / Jason and Kate Rood / Erin Rose / Hunter Ross / Matt Rowe / Erik and Elise Rupinski / Carson Ruritans / Cathie Rushing / Allison Rutledge / Kelley and Brennan Ryan / Georgianna Ryan / Charles and Rebecca Satterfield / Philip Saul / Cathy Saunders / Ms. Corrente A. Schankler & Mr. Nathaniel Tarrant Hunt / Tyler Schatz / Paul Shatz / Jack and Martha Schilthuis / Clayton Schloss / Betty Schwarten / Robert Scott / Melanie Seigler / Luke and Meghan Semple / Lynn Seuffert / Lindsey Shaddrix and Scott Axelson / Kelley Shanahan / The Shaw Family / Melanie Shears / Michael Sheets / Joey and Kate Sherrard / JoAnn Shriner / Steve and Kelly Shriner / Richard Shu / The Shugart Family / Mr. and Mrs. Trey Sibley / Barry Simmerman / Mr. and

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Blue Sky Fund values every donor and every contribution made to sustain our mission. We have worked to ensure the accuracy of this donor list. If you find an error, please accept our deepest apologies and contact us at development@blueskyfund.org.

**based on VA average hourly rate of volunteer hours at \$26.09 as rated by independentsector.org*



OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Our year-long Outdoor Leadership Institute engages diverse crews of high school students around the concepts of servant leadership, community service, multicultural understanding, and environmental conservation. This journey begins over the summer with a 5-day backpacking expedition to summit Mount Rogers, the tallest peak in Virginia. With a newfound appreciation for teamwork, communication, and leadership skills, students meet monthly throughout the school year to complete community service projects.

“It was so great to break down those barriers. I would have never met those girls any other way. It was really beautiful to see us be able to trust each other. I trust them with my life.”

MC, OLI Alumna

HIGHLIGHTS

Alumni climb, raft, and give back in West Virginia



STAFF

Brittany Bailey	Megan Holland	Janina Peppers
Lyra Bartell	Laura Ingles	Jenny Pfeiffer
Treffery Brock	Charles B. Johnson	Victoria Reichert
David Buenrostro	Charles W. A. Johnson	Anne Self
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Janissa Hamilton	Cabell Neterer	Martha Ellen Wingfield
Ryan Hamlet	Dustin Parks	Walter Wroblewski
Sara Boddorf Higgins	Amanda Payne	



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CLUBS

Middle school students in our six Outdoor Adventure Clubs meet weekly after school to learn technical adventure skills and explore nature. Each semester, students embark on an overnight Blue Ridge Mountain expedition to put their newfound wilderness skills into action. Through mentoring relationships with our staff and new experiences in nature, we seek to foster the 7 Cs of resilience in each and every one of our students: competence, confidence, connection, character, contribution, coping, and control. We believe the outdoors is the perfect classroom to foster personal growth in all of these areas.

"I'm so proud of myself right now! I am the first person in my family to summit this mountain! That was a hard hike but I wasn't going to let myself stop 'til I made it to the top. You couldn't have paid me enough to sit up here last year!"

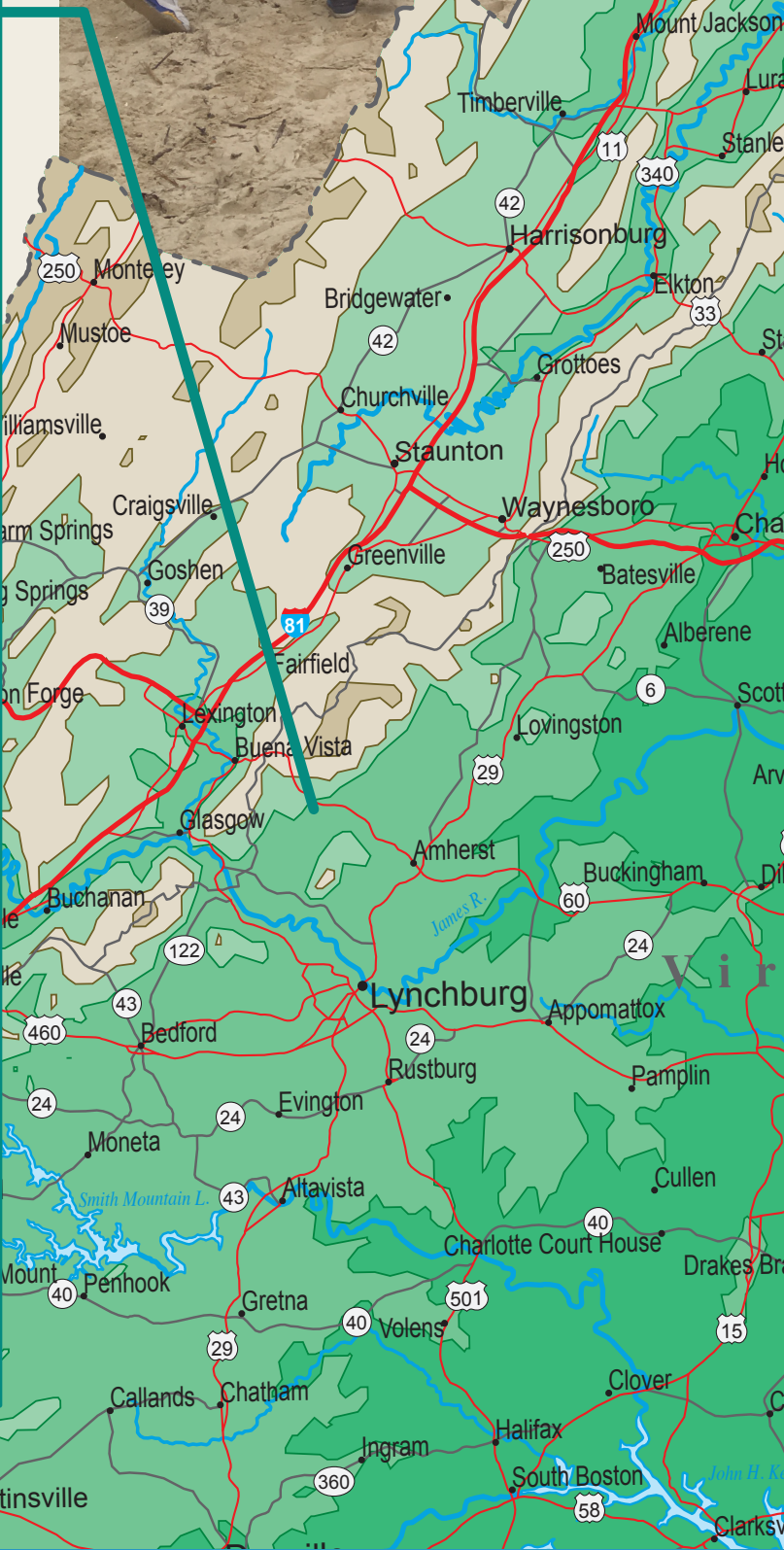
Summer Sauls, Church Hill Activities & Tutoring OAC

HIGHLIGHTS

1,251
program days

130
expeditions

140
nights under the stars



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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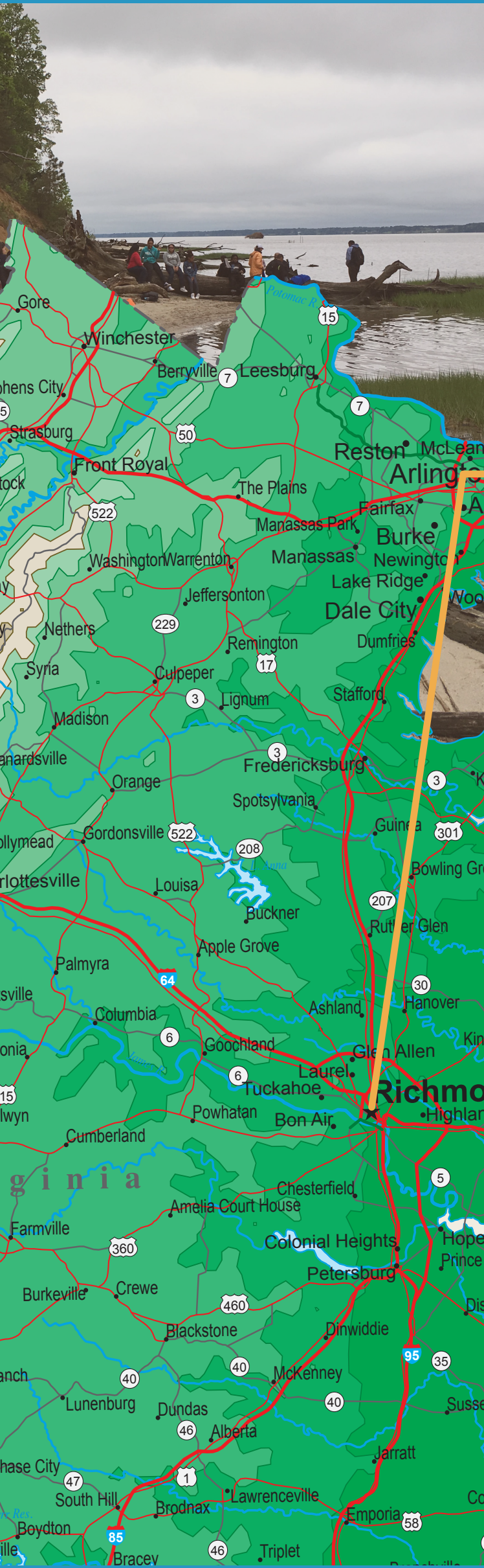
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Kelly Tattersall
Community Volunteer

Andy Thompson
Website Owner, Richmondoutside.com and Terrain360.com

Ty Toepke
Fundraising Consultant



EXPLORERS

Now in its ninth year, our Explorers program works in partnership with Richmond Public Schools to provide 1,900 elementary school students with monthly outdoor, experiential, and environmental field investigations. By traveling outside their urban classrooms to parks, farms, and riverside locations in the Richmond area, students increase their understanding of earth science and environmental stewardship.

**"I never want to leave 3rd grade
because of the field trips! I love Blue Sky!"**

*Third-Grade Student, Chimborazo
Elementary School*

HIGHLIGHTS

1,900
students served

69.5%
of students improved
their science grades, or
maintained a B or above

132
field investigations held
at 14 different host sites



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info@blueskyfund.org
804-410-4273



designed by Cheyenne Varner
www.cheyennevarner.com