MISSION
Providing transformational experiences to urban youth through outdoor education

RESILIENCE
Our three core programs are designed to strengthen the “7C’s of Resilience”* in students impacted by adverse childhood experiences:
- **Explorers:** Coping and Competence
- **Outdoor Adventure Clubs:** Confidence and Control
- **Outdoor Leadership Institute:** Connection, Character and Contribution

VISION
Blue Sky Fund helps children from low-income Richmond neighborhoods improve academic achievement, especially in the sciences, through active outdoor education with the support of staff trained in trauma-informed care. Students’ innate character and leadership abilities further develop through outdoor experiences that expand horizons, increase confidence, and build collaboration skills.

*“7C’s of Resilience” as developed by Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg

THERE ARE BLUE SKIES AHEAD FOR ALL OF US
LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD PRESIDENT

To our loyal Blue Sky supporters,

Thanks to you, over 4,000 Richmond children experienced ongoing opportunities in 2019 to learn and grow in nature, while also strengthening their resilience to overcome challenges on their path. With your support, Blue Sky Fund continues to work at the intersection of racial equity in the outdoors, nature-based science education and empowering children impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

We strive for a future in which all young people in Richmond can thrive. Resilience is a common thread through Blue Sky’s three core programs. Blue Sky serves as a guide for children navigating the “7C’s of Resilience” to strengthen their skills in adapting to change and continuing to develop amidst challenges. These skills include competence, coping, confidence, control, character, connection and contribution.

At a time when the resilience of our community is being tested, and the gap has widened even further for low-income children in accessing equitable learning opportunities and safe outdoor experiences, the need for experiential outdoor education is more important than ever.

While our students remain at home during Richmond Public Schools’ closure, we have launched a #ThinkOutsideWithBlueSky outdoor learning series for families to engage their students at home or in any outdoor space.

As we look to the future, please consider investing in our students’ resilience today by making an online gift that will support repurposing our expertise to serve children remotely as well as relaunch of our experiential outdoor programming in the new school year.

With Gratitude,

Eleanor Kootsey
Blue Sky Fund Executive Director

Debbie Edwards
Blue Sky Fund Board President

Please consider investing in our students’ resilience today by making an online gift.

DONATE NOW
EXPLORERS
GRADES 3-5
LEARN MORE

GOAL

The Explorers program teaches an experiential science curriculum that improves students' academic performance, increases students' access to nature, and provides meaningful support to classroom teachers. At the request of Richmond Public Schools, the Explorers program expanded from eight to fourteen Title I elementary schools in the Fall of 2019.

EXPLORERS

COPING AND COMPETENCE

Beyond engaging in hands-on science lessons, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade Explorers strengthened their resilience skills of competence and coping through team-building activities that empowered them to better understand how to respond and recover when they experience challenges.

IMPACT

This program is great. I think my kids have learned so much today. It is wonderful to connect what they are learning [in the classroom] to real life. The team building aspect is also so important for them. I really liked how we started the day off empowering them. I am excited for this year.

-Ms. Coogle, Elizabeth D. Redd Elementary School 4th grade teacher at Three Lakes Park

3,808
Total Number of STUDENTS Served in 2019

1,870
Students served from JAN-JUN

1,938
Students served from SEPT-DEC

20
NATURAL SITES

15
HOURS IN NATURE Per student

14
TITLE 1 SCHOOLS SERVED

50%
Of students improved to a GRADE B OR HIGHER

89%
Of teachers planned to REFER BACK TO LESSONS IN THE CLASSROOM

88%
Of students Expressed that they CARE ABOUT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
**OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CLUBS**

**GRADES 6-8**

**LEARN MORE**

**CONFIDENCE AND CONTROL**

Middle school students participating in Outdoor Adventure Clubs unlocked confidence and control through the physical and emotional challenges of outdoor adventure. Students gathered once or twice a week to move beyond their comfort zones in trying outdoor skills such as hiking, paddling, biking, rock climbing, and geocaching, as well as enjoyed an overnight camping trip each semester.

**IMPACT**

You're letting us just be kids. We haven't done this since elementary school.

-Lucille Brown Middle School student

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**GOAL**

Outdoor Adventure Clubs increase students’ access to outdoor recreation activities that are designed to build confidence, control and resilience, as well as provide supportive mentorship to encourage academic success and reduce the likelihood of risky behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Total Number of STUDENTS Served in 2019</strong></th>
<th><strong>NATURAL SITES</strong></th>
<th><strong>HOURS IN NATURE Per student</strong></th>
<th><strong>SCHOOLS SERVED</strong></th>
<th><strong>Of students maintained or increased PERSONAL RESILIENCE</strong></th>
<th><strong>Of students maintained or increased PERSONAL CONFIDENCE</strong></th>
<th><strong>Of students maintained or increased ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS</strong></th>
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<td>204</td>
<td>8</td>
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**STUDENTS**

Total Number of Students served in 2019:

- JAN-JUN: 120
- SEPT-DEC: 84

**SCHOOLS**

Total Number of Schools served:

- 10

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**NATURAL SITES**

- 8

**HOURS IN NATURE Per student**

- 130+
**OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

*GRADES 9-12*

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**GOAL**

The Outdoor Leadership Institute is a year-long program for students from diverse socioeconomic and racial backgrounds designed to build unity, leadership and service through a five-day wilderness expedition and monthly community service projects.

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**CHARACTER, CONTRIBUTION, CONNECTION**

Through the Outdoor Leadership Institute, a multicultural group of high school students developed their character as leaders while overcoming outdoor challenges, contributed back to the local community in monthly service projects, and forged social connections that they may not have otherwise had access to through a shared outdoor experience.

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**IMPACT**

I feel like one thing I learned on the trip to Mount Rogers is to listen more and to be more open to hearing other people’s opinions.

-Alfred Pleasants, Highland Springs High School, 10th grade student

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**Total Number of STUDENTS Served in 2019**

- **48**

**Students served from JAN-JUN**

- **19**

**Students served from JULY-DEC**

- **29**

---

**5 NATURAL SITES**

- **200+ HOURS IN NATURE Per student**

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**25 SCHOOLS SERVED**

- **28 MILES HIked**

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**50% Of students maintained or increased PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**

- **90% Of students maintained or increased COMMUNITY SERVICE ATTITUDE**

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**19 JAN-JUN Students served from JAN-JUN**

- **29 JULY-DEC Students served from JULY-DEC**

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**2019 Schools served**

- **902**

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**NATURAL SITES HOURS IN NATURE Per student**

- **PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**

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**COMMUNITY SERVICE ATTITUDE**

- **VOLUNTEER HOURS COMPLETED**

- **60**
**COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

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**VOLUNTEERS**

87 volunteers
675 hours worked
$18,562.50 Value of Volunteer Hours
*Based on VA 2018 average hourly rate of volunteer hours at $27.50/hour

**IMPACT**

I grew up in Gilpin Court and this area of the City of Richmond pales in comparison to when I grew up there. Our student population needs more support emotionally and physically. Blue Sky makes the difference each time we actively engage our students with hands-on activities along with enthusiasm most needed for this population of active learners. I am looking forward to giving my time, talents, and finances to enhance the positive impact Blue Sky delivers to our students.

- Ashley Singleton, former staff and volunteer

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Todd Williams
Brad Williams
Linda Williams
Bridget Williams
Kyndall Williams
Williams Mullen Clark & Dobbins
Ante Wind
Leslie Winston
Richard Wintsch
Mr. and Mrs. Joshua D. Wishnack
Murray and Lauren Withrow
Kelly Wombold
Chris Wong
Ann Wood
Mina and Robin Wood
Ali Woodworth
Jennifer K. Wright
Raghav Wusirika
Sun Yoon
Geoff and Jami Young
Courtney Young
Jennifer Young
Robert Young
Harvey Youssef
Abigail Zeiler
Lori Zwart
Elizabeth Zwart
Eric Zwemer

FINANCIALS

2019 financials as reported on audited year end statements of revenues and expenses

- Grants: $273,484
- Individuals: $254,834
- Board: $112,920
- Events: $47,196
- Corporations and Faith-based organizations: $13,864
- Earned Income: $47,960
- In-Kind: $11,733

Total Revenue: $761,991

- Programs: $576,553
- General Management: $78,226
- Fundraising: $143,311

Total Expenses: $798,090

Though expenses exceeded income in 2019, Blue Sky has a healthy cash reserve and is not in debt. During the organization’s 2020 strategic planning, we are addressing sustainable growth and organizational structure.
HOW TO GET INVOLVED THIS YEAR

Join Blue Sky in empowering underserved youth across Richmond to strengthen their resilience through outdoor adventure!

SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTER

GIVE MONTHLY

Make a donation with ongoing impact by setting up a recurring monthly gift online at www.blueskyfund.org/donate

DONATE

Support our repurposing efforts so that Blue Sky may continue to serve children now and be ready to relaunch our programming when schools reopen

PARTICIPATE

Register online this summer for our annual Hike For Kids fundraiser on November 7th

VOLUNTEER

Experience the transformative power of our outdoor programming firsthand by signing up to volunteer at www.blueskyfund.org/get-involved/volunteer

STAY CONNECTED

@BlueSkyFund