



### ***Report to Trevor R Marsh Memorial Fund***

Thank you for your consistent and sustaining support! You are ensuring more under-resourced youth get the opportunity to engage in meaningful outdoor experiences. Your general fund support is incredibly meaningful because it allows us to plan confidently and build a sustainable program year over year.

2019 marks our 30th field season supporting youth and introducing them to inspirational outdoor experiences. Since our founding, we have engaged over 10,000 kids, conducted nearly 1,000 expeditions, organized over 5,600 volunteers, led over 150 overnight camps, and provided over 45,000 nights under the stars for kids that would not have had the opportunity without BCM.



This summer we completed 40 expeditions, 19 overnight camps, and served nearly 1,000 youth. This equated to over 2,800 youth program days in the field. We coordinated with 30 youth development agencies and we facilitated over 20,000 hours of volunteer service by recruiting over 250 volunteers.

We are heartened by the overall direction of the organization. We are growing stronger as a nonprofit organization. In addition to the above programmatic accomplishments, we have achieved some important goals as an organization overall. We have earned GuideStar Gold Status for our commitment to organizational transparency and financial stewardship. In addition, we achieved accreditation from the National Mentoring Partnership for adherence to the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring. The elements are research-informed standards for creating and sustaining quality youth mentoring programs.

Moreover, we have expanded our program offerings to include more overnight camps and single-day activities. We're doing this so we can involve more students and partner more easily with youth agencies new to expeditionary learning. We are piloting leadership development programs for students. And we have improved our strategic communications to expand our community of supporters. Additionally, we have established many important organizational systems and we have grown our board and national council. Lastly, we continue to invest in our trip instructor and volunteer trainings so that our trips are physically and emotionally safe, impactful, and fun.

## Our Programmatic Goals and Objectives for 2020

In 2020, we are planning to execute 46 expeditions and 25 overnight camps – 1200 youth served, and over 3,500 youth program days. Your renewed donation of \$2,000 will ensure that these expeditions are executed successfully.

In addition, you will expand BCM's Leadership Development Program. Piloted in 2019, BCM is building a new program for a special cohort of BCM alumni. The Leadership Program will take BCM's "rising stars" and provide them with additional training and mentoring to enhance their professional development and love of the outdoors. Specifically, we will recruit cohorts of 12 BCM Alumni per year to be part of the program. The groups will move as a cohort through a 3-month "semester" training and leadership development program focused on revealing, enhancing, and developing transferable job skills. The Leadership Program will allow students to "try on" leadership styles, learn about their personal internal and external assets, and ultimately let them put those personal findings to work through a student-inspired project.



## Our Strategic Direction

In the spring of 2019 BCM completed a multi-year strategic plan which will chart a course for the organization through 2021. The strategic goals articulated in the plan are:

1. **Quality** – Provide youth with impactful outdoor experiences that intentionally teach, reveal, or enhance critical life skills.
2. **Culture** – Build an organizational culture that fosters trust and togetherness; and embraces JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) in all aspects of our work.
3. **Relevance** – Build stronger relationships with our partners and the communities that we serve.

We believe these strategic goals, and the initiatives that flow from them, will make Big City Mountaineers an essential service provider and partner for our youth agencies. Moreover, they will establish BCM more concretely in the cities where we operate. Finally, we believe they will authentically connect us to community leaders, businesses, policy-makers, and the public at-large for the work we do and the impact we have.

## Plans for Continued Support

To be sure, you are a partner (not a sole source) in the funding of our organization. Our expeditions and camps are supported through diverse and sustainable revenue sources. Every year, we secure funds to grow our program in four important ways.



First, we engage our corporate partners. BCM is fortunate to receive cash support from many of the outdoor industry's largest companies. Second, BCM works with local foundations to fund our expeditions. Third, our Summit for Someone series of fundraising climbs raises approximately \$250,000 per year through an average of 3,000 unique donations. All of these funds are unrestricted and go to support programming across the country.

Finally, BCM receives over \$200,000 in in-kind gear donations from outdoor industry sponsors every year. Providing the technical equipment is one of the biggest hurdles to getting our target audience out on these experiences. We have to outfit them from head to toe. Making sure our kids are warm, dry, and comfortable is key to our ability to run successful trips.

### **Measuring our Success**

To measure our success, we utilize the Search Institutes 40 Developmental Assets Profile (40DA). The 40DA is a psychometrically sound assessment tool aimed at measuring growth in a youth's developmental assets which are important for positive youth development. Year after year, we have proven effective (through this rigorous statistical analysis) at improving our student's positive values, increasing their social competencies, and growing a positive identity within them.

We take pre and post trip surveys of our students to determine the impact we have had in growing the number of assets they hold as well as their relative strength in those asset categories. After the field season is complete, we turn these surveys over to the Search Institute so they can run an independent third-party analysis of the data and supply us with a report. The report documents our pre-post scores, mean scores, mean change, effect size, and many other statistically significant analyses that help us see the impact our program has on our students.



There are four categories in which Search Institute places students based on the number of assets a student reports having – Challenged, Vulnerable, Adequate, and Thriving. Our goal with each trip, and throughout the year with our agency partners, is to move our students out of the Challenged and Vulnerable categories and into the Adequate or Thriving categories.

Overall, the 2019 class demonstrated growth in the 40 DAP surveys from pre to post across diverse demographics and is reflective of previous years' trends. In keeping with previous reports, BCM measured our ability to grow the number of students reporting adequate or



thriving levels of assets connected to Positive Values, Social Competency, Positive Identity, and Empowerment; and subsequently reduce the number of students reporting challenged or vulnerable levels of assets in those same categories.

In 2019,

- 73% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to positive values. An increase of 12 points from the pre-trip survey
- 71% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to social competency. An increase of 14 points from the pre-trip survey.
- 62% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to positive identity. An increase of 11 points from the pre-trip survey.
- 72% of our students reported adequate and thriving levels of assets related to empowerment. An increase of 12 points from the pre-trip survey.



These shifts are important because the longitudinal analysis of this data by the Search Institute has determined it reduces a young person's likelihood of using drugs or engaging in problem alcohol behavior. You're less likely to engage in violence at school or in the home. You are more likely to surround yourself with a positive peer network. Youth with thriving levels of assets indicates a high degree of honesty, responsibility, self-esteem, and self-purpose. And they are typically more capable of effectively interacting with others, making healthy but sometimes difficult life decisions, eschewing negative peer pressures, and believing in their own self-worth.

The research tells us that the higher the 40DA level, the lower the risk behaviors regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic background and gender. In fact, 40DA levels are a better predictor than socioeconomic status for predicting positive youth outcomes. High 40DA scores on the Personal Power and Self Esteem subscales were the best predictors of stronger delayed gratification, improved health, and overcoming adversity. BCM has shown specific improvement on both subscales.

Furthermore, research has found that increased 40DA scores are positively correlated to improved academic achievement. In addition to the general associations above that lead to improved commitment to school and better behavior in school, one longitudinal study found that higher developmental assets resulted in improved GPA and reduced Fs than those with lower scores. In another study, researchers corroborated this finding showing that increases in developmental assets over time were significantly correlated with increases in GPA in a 4-year longitudinal study. These two studies showed that both higher initial 40DA scores and increasing 40DA scores were predictive of improved academics 3 and 4 years later.

## Conclusion

As a leader in the outdoor industry and philanthropist dedicated to getting more under-resourced youth outdoors, we know that you recognize the positive impact BCM experiences have on young lives. Unfortunately, not every kid has the opportunity to experience nature and transformational wilderness journeys. Your support ensures more kids get the chance to experience the inspiring and regenerative effect of nature, the thrill of summiting a mountain, the excitement of catching a fish, the joy of sleeping under the stars, and the friendship of a caring adult mentor. Moreover, you have given more under-resourced youth an increased sense of self, an understanding of their place in the natural world, a passion for life-long learning, and a commitment to environmental stewardship. Lastly, you ensured that a career in, and a love for, the natural world is accessible to all.

Thank you for your support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require any further information.

