



# GATEWAY TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



# OUR MISSION

Gateway to the Great Outdoors (GGO) provides low-income students across the US equitable access to comprehensive environmental education. By combining STEAM instruction with outdoor learning, GGO enhances the quality of health, science literacy, and environmental stewardship for children who would otherwise be excluded from this transformative experience. GGO presents an opportunity for children to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch the fascinating world of nature.



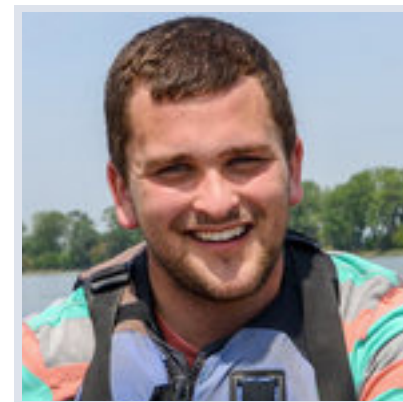
Dear Friends,

With heavy hearts, we reflect on the 2019-2020 school year that brought great change to our world as we know it. Across the globe, schools were closed due to COVID-19. Socio-economic educational gaps widened as the digital divide prevented low income students from engaging in remote classroom lessons. Meanwhile, the nation reckoned with systemic racial injustice. While Gateway to the Great Outdoors' in-person programming halted due to COVID-19, our mission to provide environmental and health education became even more relevant.

We are exceptionally proud of our pandemic-induced pivot to the Go & Grow with GGO program that provided take home STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) kits for our students in St. Louis and Chicago. By May we delivered over 2,000 kits to students with activities such as growing lettuce, making slime, and leaf rubbing.

Prior to the pandemic, GGO enjoyed an outstanding year of growth and innovation. Two successful Game Night fundraisers paved the way for an expansion in the 2020-2021 school year. To our delight we provided 22 programs to over 600 students St. Louis and Chicago students.

Finally, we are honored to be the recipient of the SHIFT Youth Engagement Award. The SHIFT organization is dedicated to the advancement of nature as a social determinant of health and it is especially rewarding to be recognized for our hard work and innovation through a health crisis. As we continue to adapt to an unconventional school year, we are excited to see our organization grow and work toward our vision of making the transformative power of the outdoors accessible to all. Here's to a great 2020-2021 school year!



**Nadav Sprague**  
Founding President, CEO



**Ben Aiken**  
Educational Director

# TESTIMONIES

“As a classroom teacher in Chicago Public Schools, two of my biggest challenges are lack of resources and our student-teacher ratio. Gateway to the Great Outdoors supports our classroom in both of those areas to improve the experience in the classroom for our students. By bringing in materials and dedicated volunteers, Gateway has given our students hands-on and collaborative learning experiences led by mentors in a small group setting that we wouldn't have the capacity to do otherwise. In addition, they have planned and funded trips to local museums and campgrounds that have allowed our students to transfer their learning out of the classroom and into the real world. Students have developed their appreciation and understanding for the environment, which I see as an imperative, given the effects climate change and urbanization will have on their generation.”

**Sean Murphy**  
Science Teacher, John Fiske Elementary School



“In the few sessions my students had with GGO, the impact has been tremendous. GGO volunteers bring environmental education alive. Students were excited for GGO days, highly engaged with the lessons & activities, and learned how to collaborate with peers as they talked through the various academic challenges they were facing. My personal favorite activity was the rock climbing experience. Just like the students, this was my first time rock climbing and we all had a blast. A couple students made it to the top of the climbing wall. This was my first year working with GGO and I'm super excited to continue the relationship.”

**Dr. Reagan Williams**  
Science Teacher, LaSalle Middle School

“GGO provides a critical outdoor experience for our students that we cannot provide during a regular academic program. The programming fits well within our normal school day and allows our students to learn practical outdoor skills and to experience

the joy of outdoor activities. This has been a vital partnership that focuses on not only providing experiences to our students but also builds a strong relationship between our students and the GGO volunteers. Camping with the fifth graders overnight

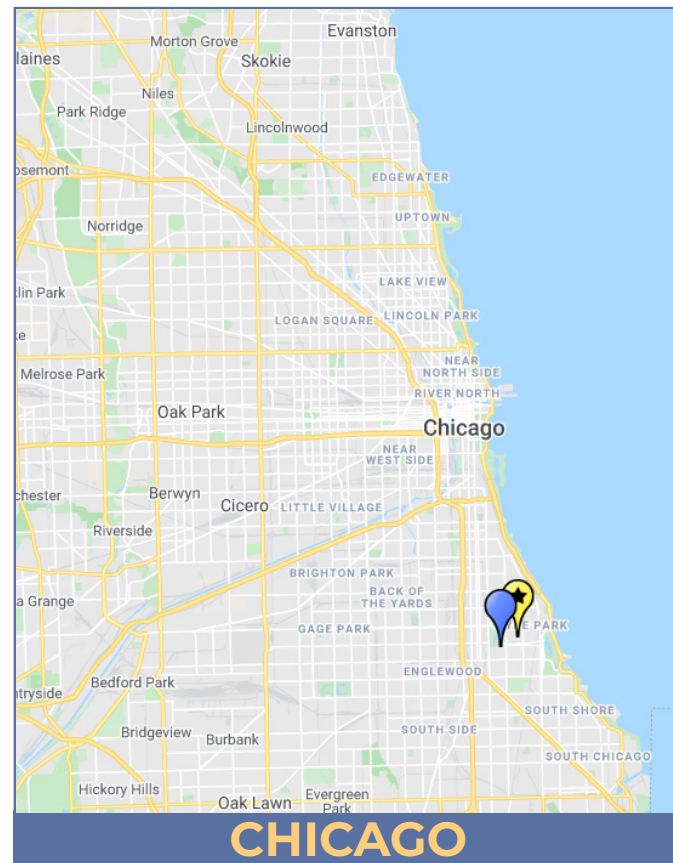
and seeing their joy was one of the highlights of my year as a principal. Our students have loved their GGO experience this year, and we are so lucky to have GGO as a partner!”

**Deborah Rogers, Ed.D.**  
Principal, Patrick Henry Downtown Academy



# OUR COMMUNITY

Most GGO partner schools only budget for up to one annual field trip due to the cost of transportation and food. Additional field trip costs often fall to the parents. GGO university student-mentors and free monthly field trips help close educational disparities and realize a more equitable future.



## SCHOOLS

- Boys and Girls Clubs of St. Louis
- Buder Elementary School
- Carr Lane VPA Middle School
- Ford Elementary School
- KIPP Academy - Triumph Middle School
- Long International Middle School
- La Salle Middle School
- Lift for Life Academy
- Patrick Henry Downtown Academy

## UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

- Saint Louis University
- Washington University in St. Louis

## SCHOOLS

- John Fiske Elementary

## UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

- University of Chicago

In 2019-2020 GGO built relationships with Chicago Public Schools and local universities paving the way for a major Chicago expansion in 2020-2021. GGO has secured funding to establish a team of Americorps members and created relationships for talented mentors to lead our Chicago programs for years to come.

# OUR IMPACT

GGO provides nature-based education programs for

**22 GROUPS** in  
**10 LOW-INCOME URBAN SCHOOLS**

in St. Louis, MO and Chicago, IL



GGO Programs consist of:

- Weekly Classroom Lessons
- Monthly Outdoor Adventures
- Semesterly Camping Trips
- Year Round Mentoring



**602 STUDENTS** IN GRADES 4-9

served in the 2019-2020 school year

GGO partners with low-income schools that have student bodies

**97-100% ENROLLED**

in the National School Lunch Program. This indicates that students' families live in poverty. These students qualify to receive one to two meals at school.



# STEAM

GGO increases STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) comprehension by providing weekly experiential learning in small groups with rigorous lessons designed to match national science standards.

**100%** of partner teachers reported improvements in students' science scores.



# OUTDOOR ADVENTURE



GGO provides free monthly outdoor field trips to solidify in-classroom lessons, enabling students to develop relationships with fellow classmates and mentors at no cost to the schools or families.



**74%** of students indicated that they had not been to a park in a year or more prior to starting GGO.



# HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



GGO encourages healthy lifestyles through creating healthy relationships, facilitating physical activities, and providing access to healthy food.



**97%** of the students' physical, emotional, and mental health improved.

**4:1** ratio of students to mentors

**448** total hours of classroom instruction



GGO builds authentic relationships between university-student mentors and public school students through the weekly sessions and monthly outdoor adventure trips.

# MENTORSHIP



# GO & GROW WITH GGO

While COVID-19 forced schools to close and normal GGO programming to cease in March, the GGO team continued to fulfill our mission by providing STEAM kits for families to complete at home.

Due to the digital divide, many low-income students do not have access to the internet, computers, or smart devices. Our kits gave them the chance to continue their science education with hands-on activities.

The Go & Grow kits contained three or four hands-on STEAM activities that included at-home urban agriculture, changes of matter experiments, and nature art projects. All activities are aligned with the GGO curriculum and allowed our volunteers and students to stay connected despite the circumstances.

Go & Grow will continue in the 2020-2021 school year until GGO is permitted to safely resume in-person sessions and outdoor adventures.



By May, 2020  
GGO distributed:

**8**

sets of kits to

**5**

schools in St. Louis and  
Chicago for a total of

**2,050**

Go & Grow kits.



## CHICAGO GAME NIGHT

11/16/19

**Menomonee Club**  
**\$25,368 Raised\***  
**198 Participants**

### Committee

Anna Aronovitz  
 Riva Cohen  
 Samantha Cohen  
 Linda Hagan  
 Lisa Lieberman  
 Judith Metzger  
 Liz Metzger  
 Jacqueline Oestreicher  
 Anna Smith  
 Denise Sprague  
 Jamie Steuer  
 Gabi Stone  
 Julie Weisman

### Sponsors

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Robert Cohn	Jennifer & Adam Levine	Denise & Stuart Sprague
Sheri & Wally Cupkovic	Julie Mazer	Betty Underwood
Jessica & Peter Goldman	Mayor Family Charitable Fund	Morgan & Preston Wolin

\* Some funds raised from Game Night are from foundations and listed as such on Finaces page.



## ST. LOUIS GAME NIGHT

2/1/20

**Crossroads College Prep**  
**\$29,500 Raised**  
**220 Participants**

### Committee

Suzane Burack  
 Stephanie DePlanty  
 Patricia Dillon  
 Ben Griffiths  
 Hilary Musgrave Murphy

### Sponsors

Dot Dot Dash  
 Jamie Ryan  
 Kiwanis Club  
 Lift For Life Academy  
 Musick Construction



New City School  
 Renewal by Andersen  
 Ross Braun  
 Royal Banks of Missouri

The Sunset Hills Parks and  
 Recreation Department  
 Wunderlich Fibre Box Co

## DONATE S'MORES DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

November-December 2019  
**\$10,232 Raised**

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS FOR SUPPORTING GGO DURING THE 2019 FISCAL YEAR

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A special thanks to our many generous anonymous donors.

# PARTNERS

## PARTNERS

Dr. Christine Ekenga  
The Nomis Group  
Thompson Coburn LLP  
Weisman & Weisman, P.C.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS who helped make GGO field trips a success:

Audubon Society	Peggy Notebaert
Big Muddy	Nature Museum
River Adventures	Shaw Nature Reserve
Camp Manitowa	Sherwood Forest
Climb So ill	St. Louis Science
Earth Dance Farm	Center
Forest Park Forever	Upper Limits
Gateway Greening	Climbing Gym
Meramac Caverns	Urban Harvest
	Vertical Voyages

## GGO STUDENTS

83.2% non-Hispanic Black  
7.5% Hispanic Black  
2.3% Native American  
2.1% Asian American  
1.7% Hispanic White  
0.9% non-Hispanic White  
2.3% Other

48% Female 52% Male



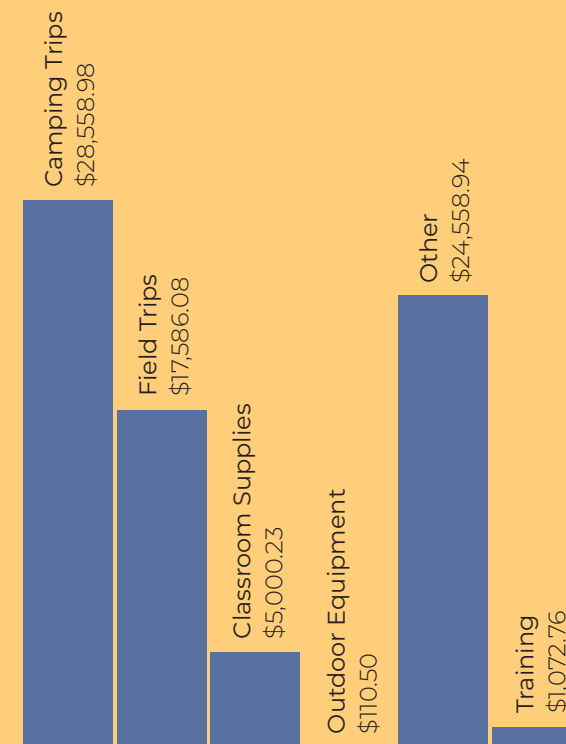
# FINANCES

## 93%

Total Operating Expenses  
spent on programming

## \$20,820

In-Kind Donations



## 2019 PROGRAMMING EXPENSES



## 2019 Operating Revenue

### Donation Income

Foundation	\$45,750.00
Corporation	\$40,050.86
Individual	\$26,186.56
In Kind	\$20,820.00
Special Events and Fundraising	\$16,271.75
Interest Income	\$40.26

**TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE \$149,119.43**

## 2019 Operating Expenses

### Programming

Camping Trips	\$28,558.98
Site Fee	\$10,930.00
Supplies	\$5,474.53
Transportation	\$12,154.45
Field Trips	\$17,586.08
Site Fee	\$8,826.36
Supplies	\$2,794.60
Transportation	\$5,965.12
Weekly Lesson Supplies	\$5,000.23
Equipment	\$110.50
Other (recruitment, Americorps VISTA, etc.)	\$24,558.94
Training	\$1,072.76
<b>Total Programming Expenses</b>	<b>\$76,887.49</b>

### Management

\$3,754.22

### Fundraising

\$1,983.38

**TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES \$89,625.09**



# VOLUNTEERS

## St. Louis University

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<b>Nadav Sprague</b>	Founding CEO and President
<b>Ben Aiken</b>	Education Director, Co-founder
<b>Zoe Kaufman</b>	St. Louis Program Manager
<b>Xavier Bravo</b>	Donor Relations and St. Louis Program Coordinator
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<b>Hilary Musgrave Murphy</b>	PR and Grant Coordinator
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<b>Erin Wicks</b>	Summer Associate
<b>Kayomi Williams</b>	Summer Associate
<b>Stephanie Lysy</b>	Intern
<b>Sam Holmes</b>	Intern
<b>Maya Kaslow</b>	John Burroughs May Project Leader



# GATEWAY TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

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