



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2022-2023





GGO'S MISSION

Gateway to the Great Outdoors empowers scholars from low-income households by igniting curiosity through outdoor experiences, building environmental science literacy and promoting healthy lifestyles.



Dear Friends,

I am so proud of all Gateway to the Great Outdoors (GGO) has accomplished this amazing school year, including **being named the St. Louis Public School District's 2022-2023 Community Partner of the Year!**

I am so grateful to the **amazing GGO staff and volunteers** whose hard work made this and many more accomplishments possible. From fall hiking trips to overnight spring camping trips and every classroom lesson in between, the 2022-2023 school year was filled with smiles and scientific inquiry!

In Chicago, GGO continued partnering with Fiske and Drake Elementary Schools – with plans of further expansions within the schools for the 2023-2024 year. Some of scholars' favorite GGO memories this year included **biking at the Indiana Dunes National Park, visiting an urban farm and planting new native species pollinator gardens at their schools.** While planting, one GGO scholar helped the entire day and by the end of the school day declared that he wanted to become a farmer when he grew up!

In St. Louis, GGO began its year with a new partnership with Froebel Elementary School in South City St. Louis. GGO was generously gifted office space inside the school, allowing the St. Louis team to immerse themselves within the school community. Everyday when GGO staff and volunteers arrived at Froebel, they were **greeted by scholars with wide smiles and lots of questions about upcoming GGO activities.** GGO continued to share our passions for science and the environment with Nance Elementary, Long Middle and La Salle Middle School scholars. St. Louis GGO scholars' favorite memories included the **camping trip and the annual science fair.**

All these amazing accomplishments could not have been done without **our amazing GGO team, volunteers and supporters.** This year, Hannah Zonneville served as our Interim Director of Research and Education, leading a successful year of programming in both cities. As we move into the new school year, I am pleased to welcome **Bridget Grabowski as GGO's incoming Director of Education!** With her firsthand GGO experience as the Chicago External Partnership and Development Coordinator VISTA, Bridget is excited to oversee the GGO program as a director and teach environmental literacy in new, innovative ways!

GGO continues to prove effective in its mission to empower scholars from low-income households by igniting curiosity through outdoor experiences, building environmental science literacy and promoting healthy lifestyles. This year, GGO's research team was published in two scientific journals – Sustainability and Health Expectations - for our work quantifying GGO's impact on our scholars.

The successes of the past school year inspire us to **reach new levels of excellence in the 2023-2024 school year.** I can't wait for even more scholars to develop their own, unique relationships with the natural world this year!

Warmly,

Nadav Sprague

Founding President, CEO

TESTIMONIALS

“ I love GGO because they teach us new things and help us learn more. My favorite activities were eating healthy and the field trip to the Indiana Dunes. I like how nice GGO was and they helped us if we needed help. I think that GGO are my science angels and they are just the best people ever ever ever EVER!!!! ”

Chicago Elementary School Scholar



“ GGO has provided a tremendous amount of support to our scholars and team members. Their presence instantly encourages our scholars to believe in their abilities and to also appreciate the value of nature all around them. ”

*Ryonnel Jackson, SLPS
Director of volunteer and mentoring services*

“ GGO provides a unique, engaging learning experience for our scholars. Through hands-on lessons, field experiences and collaboration with teachers, GGO mentors bring science, conservation and environmental issues to life. Through COVID and beyond, I've been impressed by our scholars' level of involvement and joy in learning that GGO makes possible. ”

*Dr. Tyler A. Archer, Principal
Nance Elementary School*



“ I'm so happy. I really appreciate y'all from the bottom of my heart for the field trips. They were so much fun. ”

St. Louis Elementary School Scholar

OUR SCHOOLS

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 scholar-mentors and free monthly field trips help close educational disparities and realize a more equitable future.

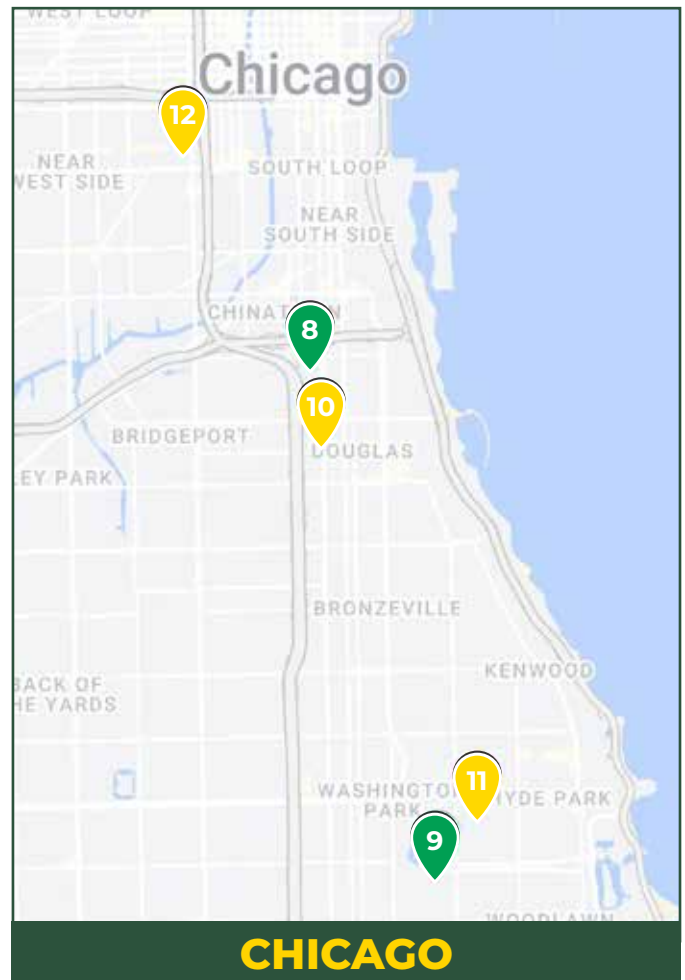


St. Louis Schools

- De La Salle Middle School
- Froebel Literacy Academy Elementary School
- Long International Middle School
- Nance Elementary

University Partners

- Saint Louis University
- Harris-Stowe State University
- Washington University in St. Louis



Chicago Schools

- John B Drake Elementary School
- John Fiske Elementary School

University Partners

- Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT)
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)

OUR IMPACT

GGO provides nature-based education programs for

22 CLASSES in *(St. Louis:16 – Chicago:6)*

6 LOW-INCOME URBAN SCHOOLS *(St. Louis:4 – Chicago:2)*

in St. Louis, MO and Chicago, IL

EACH GGO PROGRAM CONSISTS OF:

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

527 GGO SCHOLARS
IN GRADES 4-8

engaged in the '22-'23 school year

(St. Louis:232 – Chicago:295)

GGO partners with low-income schools that have scholar bodies

95-100% ENROLLED

in the National School Lunch Program.

This indicates that scholars are from low-income households.



PROGRAMMING



FAVORITE LESSONS

Some of GGO scholars' favorite lessons during the 22-23 school year include but are not limited to...

Recycling and Paper Making 5th grade

GGO Scholars transformed their classrooms into sustainable paper mills while gaining an understanding of the recycling process and its benefits. In an activity showing scholars how they can contribute to recycling and reusing materials that they may have once deemed trash, scholars created homemade paper from some of their own recycled waste.

Mental and Physical Health 4th grade

In this healthy movement and mindfulness lesson, scholars learned the importance of taking care of their mental and physical health as they completed a yoga flow. Through this activity, scholars regulated their breathing and engaged in yoga poses that incorporated movement into their day and brought them a sense of calm. Thank you to Athleta in Chicago for donating yoga mats for us to use during this lesson! Athleta also donated drawstring bags for scholars to use for all of their active lifestyle needs.



PLANTING POLLINATOR GARDENS

Thanks to grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, GGO was able to install 2, 1000+ square foot native pollinator gardens at John Fiske Elementary School and John B Drake Elementary School. During the second semester, GGO taught in-class lessons on the importance of pollinators to our ecosystems. In May, GGO scholars, staff and volunteers prepared the site, planted 319 plants from 12 species, laid mulch and placed stepping stones to create beautiful, productive and environmentally important gardens!



Leave No Trace 4th grade

During this lesson, scholars were able to learn about the 7 principles of Leave No Trace. They took the principles into their own hands by creating skits for each principle with props they designed! St. Louis scholars brainstormed how they would incorporate these principles into their camping trips at the end of the year and were thrilled when they were able to put them into practice at Camp Manitowa!

Constructing a Hydroponics System 6th grade

Scholars utilized their engineering skills to create a hydroponics system for their classroom. Throughout the process of building the system, scholars discovered the benefits of using a hydroponics system. These include growing fresh produce while using minimal space and water, which is particularly beneficial in urban areas such as where the scholars live.



STEAM



GGO INCREASES STEAM

GGO scholars increase their STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) comprehension through small group lessons led by university mentors, augmented by nature-based outings & overnight trips, with year-round mentorship provided by university students. Scholars engage with weekly experiential and investigative learning in small groups with rigorous and fun lessons designed to match national science standards.

A highlight was the engineering lesson and activity where scholars completed engineering related projects. The scholars were enthusiastic about creating a circuit to light up lightbulbs, heating tinfoil through batteries and using momentum to push objects off of a table. Additionally, the scholars built solar ovens and watched the thermometer jump from 75 degrees to over 120 degrees in their ovens, creating a fun competition to see which group had the hottest oven. Many scholars indicated that they had a higher interest in pursuing engineering careers after completing the activities.

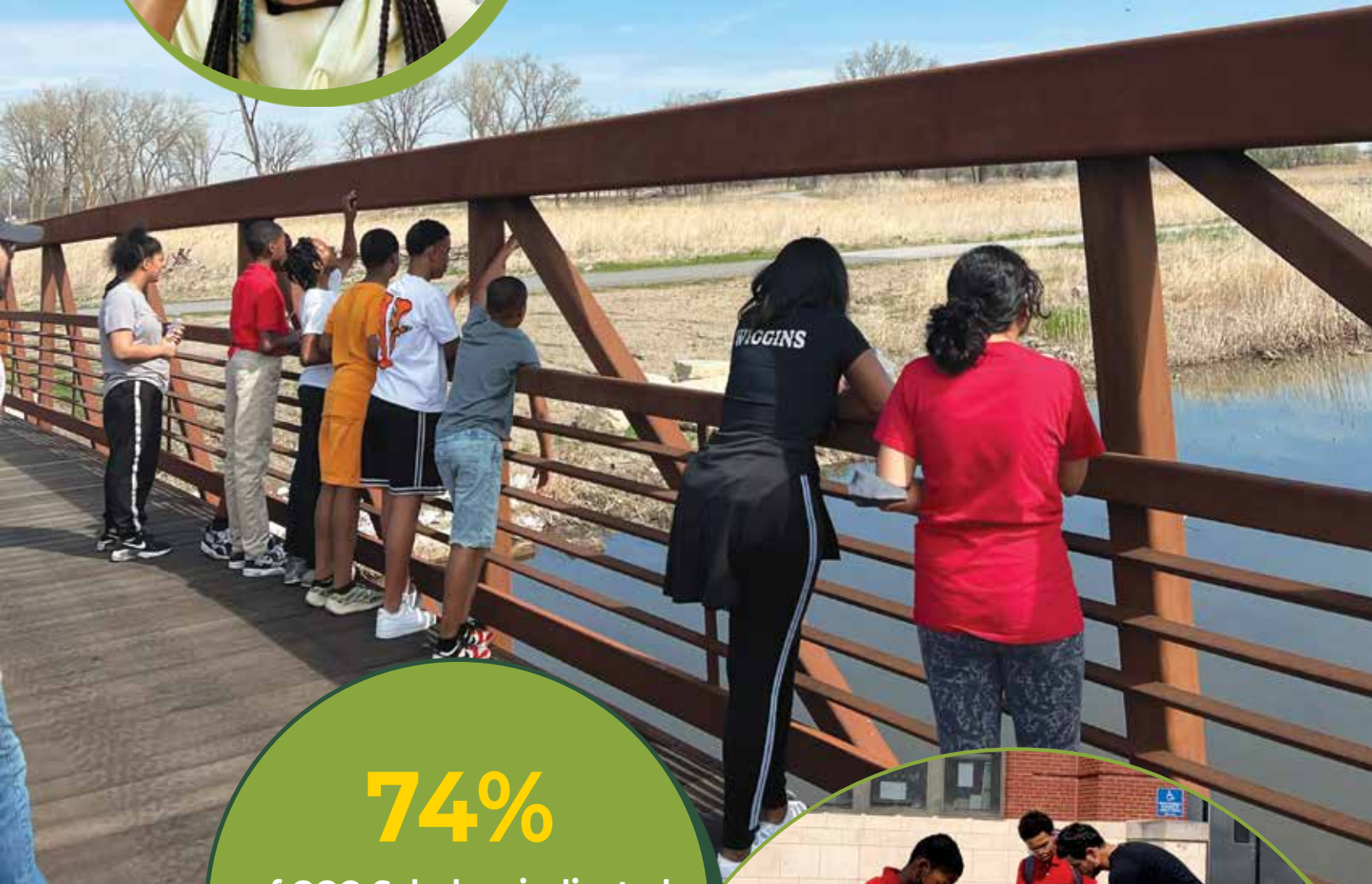
100%

of teachers reported improvements in GGO Scholars' science scores.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



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



74%

of GGO Scholars indicated that they had not been to a park in a year or more prior to starting GGO.



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

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

While GGO can plan lessons extensively, the organization's greatest critics are the scholars. One of the scholars' favorite lessons throughout the year was the 4th and 5th grade nutrition and healthy lifestyles lesson. During this lesson, scholars tasted organic produce snacks like cucumbers with hummus – many for the first time. Scholars then picked their favorite vegetables to plant and take home. This lesson – in partnership with SEED St. Louis – would not have been possible without the challenge of creating an in-classroom field trip experience. GGO is confident that this activity will leave lasting memories for scholars.

97%

of the GGO Scholars' physical, emotional and mental health improved.



CAMPING TRIPS

GGO was able to reimplement full overnight camping trips with GGO Scholars in both St. Louis and Chicago during spring 2023! In April and May, GGO scholars in St. Louis traveled to Camp Manitowa in Benton, IL and scholars in Chicago traveled to Camp Sullivan in Oak Forest, IL. At both sites, scholars were able to partake in 24-hours of fun outdoor activities, including hiking, making arts & crafts, fire building, s'mores making, rock wall climbing, canoeing and more!



MENTORSHIP

MENTORSHIP & INSTRUCTION

535 TOTAL HOURS

including field trips

(St. Louis:350 – Chicago:185)

4:1 RATIO

of GGO Scholars to mentors

GGO connects people across zip codes by facilitating university-scholar mentors to teach in the science classroom weekly and chaperone field trips.



EVENTS



GGO'S IN-"TENTS" SCIENCE FAIR RETURNS TO CHICAGO AND ST. LOUIS!

In September 2022, GGO hosted a science fair at Nance Elementary School for St. Louis scholars! Throughout the day, scholars enjoyed tie-dying, building terrariums for their schools and making their own microscope slides!

In May 2023, GGO staff and community partners brought 15 interactive booths to John Fiske Elementary School for a full day of STEAM fun! Scholars were able to wander from booth to booth, completing fun environmental, art and science activities. Some favorites of the day were vegetable pickling with UChicago's Phoenix Farm, planting four trees with Morton Arboretum's Chicago Region Trees Initiative and creating solar-powered s'mores cooking ovens out of recycled materials!

DINING OUT FOR GGO - AUGUST 2022

Giving back never tasted so good! GGO supporters from Chicago and St. Louis came together to enjoy some of their favorite local restaurants, like Seoul Taco, Native Foods Cafe, Lou Malnati's and Pasta House, with a portion of every bill donated back to support GGO. Thank you to everyone who participated in the event!

CHICAGO



ST. LOUIS



DONORS



THANK YOU DONORS FOR SUPPORTING GGO DURING THE 2022 FISCAL YEAR

CORPORATE

American Online Giving Foundation
Americorps
Fiduciary Trust Company International
M3 Engineering Group
Patagonia
Upper Limits 3, Inc.

FOUNDATIONS

Benjamin J Rosenthal Foundation
Blues for Kids Foundation
Bonzai Express of St Louis
Cardinals Care Foundation
CSN Kiwanis Foundation
DiscoverE
Frederick Pitzman Fund
Kate Svedick Foundation
Mayor Family Charitable Fund
Maxine Clark and Bob Fox's Fund at
the St. Louis Community Foundation
Network For Good
New Frontiers Foundation
Pay Pal Giving Fund
Pledgeling Foundation
Schwab Charitable
St. Louis Community Foundation
Tisbest Philanthropy

SPECIAL EVENTS

Cane's
Hopleaf
Linda R Lebovic
Marissa Giardini
Marjorie Melton
Melissa Pennington
Native Foods Acquisition
Shani Dangelo

INDIVIDUAL

Amazon Smile
Angie Paden
Ann Grove Dillon
Anthony Pick
Beth Herbster
Brandyn Jones
Brian O'Looney
Brian Runft
Charlie Savenor
Daryl Huitt
Dee Baebler
Eileen Griffiths
Gisela Cohen
Goldman
Jeff Aeder
Jeff Ellison
Jennifer Blaese
Ken Fox
Leah Hooper
Lisa Lieberman
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Madeleine Balchan
Marta Sprague
Mary Sue
Matthew James
Melissa Pennington
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Rena Citrin
Richard Noffke
Robert Cohn
Robert Olender
Rochelle Rosen
Shari J Rake
Sheri Simon
Shirin Shirin
Sibby Kruse
Stephanie DePlanty
Stuart Sprague
William Huitt
Zoe Benjamin

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Allen R Kelman
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Robert MartynSeoul Taco
Grove
Sharyn Goldstein
Shoshana Fain
Stuart Sprague
The Malnati Organization LLC
The Pasta House Company
Wendy Matuson-Zuckerberg
Wendy Thibodeaux
William Huitt

PARTNERS

GGO STUDENTS

48%   52%

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



COMMUNITY PARTNERS WHO HELPED MAKE GGO FIELD TRIPS A SUCCESS:

ST. LOUIS

Animal House Cat Rescue & Adoption Center
Braeutigam Orchards
Camp Manitowa
Endangered Wolf Center
Forest Park Forever
Lone Elk Park
Meramec Caverns
Missouri Botanical Gardens
New Earth Farm
Saint Louis Zoo
SEED St. Louis
Shaw Nature Reserve
Upper Limits

CHICAGO

Big Marsh Park
Friends of Big Marsh
Chicago Botanic Gardens
Garfield Park Conservatory
Streets are for Everyone (SAFE) Ambassadors
Indiana Sand Dunes National Park
Just Roots Urban Farm
Shedd Aquarium
Brookfield Zoo
Sand Ridge Nature Center
Forest Preserve District
Keeler Gardens
Morton Arboretum's Chicago Region Trees Initiative

FINANCES

2022 OPERATING REVENUE

Government	0
Foundation	38,553.67
Individual	5,301.56
Corporate	83,449.99
Special Events & Fundraising	11,487.36
Interest Income	35.67
Other Income	630.00
Total Operating Revenue	139,458.25

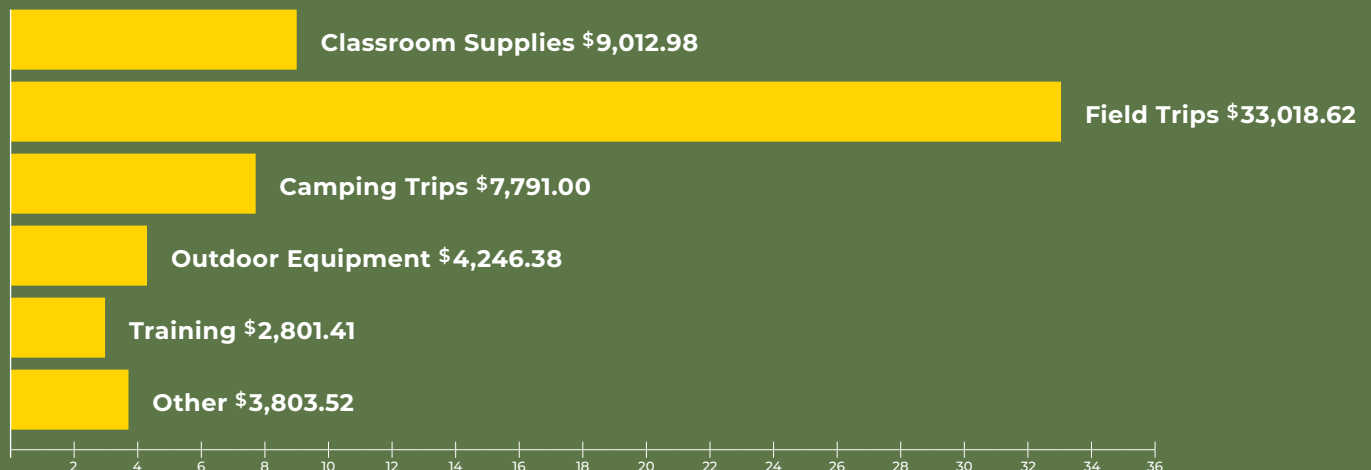
2022 OPERATING EXPENSES

Programming	60,673.91
Admin	11,992.78
Fundraising	1,340.43
Payroll	113,713.35
Total Operating Expenses	187,720.47



88.6%
Total operating expenses spent on programming*

2022 PROGRAMMING EXPENSES = \$60,673.91



*includes program staff payroll

VOLUNTEERS

ST. LOUIS

Harris-Stowe State University

Nia Acker
Alexus McNeal

St. Louis University

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Lauren Trinh
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Path Patel
Pierrelza Jean Louis
Queenie Chou
Saima Farook
Sharlene Faye Manlongat
Shreya Patel
Shrina Shah
Ugo Uzo-Ojinnaka
Zuhair Saeed

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Camryn Smalling
Delilah Tefertiller
Despina Tsiamtsiouris
Dylan Nelson
Eden Cohen
Ella Brodey
Elli Reginelli
Emily Buchalter
Erica Hurley
Evan Sharafuddin

Gary Twu
Hannah Woodhouse
Hanya Guan
Isabella Wynne-Markham
Keshav Vasanth
Kevin Cheng
Marissa Mathieson
Melissa Parkinson
Merry Schlarman
Michael Barash
Nallely Rivas
Pranav Kirti
Ryan Tyler
Sara Shepetin
Sarah Govert
Sarah Xie
Serene Tomaszewski
Stella Parker
Sydney Hou
Tatum Choi
Torrey Taylor

USML

Jennifer Voss

CHICAGO

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Jonah Lovejoy
Julian Hovanec
Katherine Ritter
Kriti Arunkundrum
Lucia Poggi
Mariana Reed
Mira Kaplan
Natalia Potente
Paulina Koenig
Sofia Kucher
Katya Drovetsky

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)

Anthony Levey, *President*
Yaovi Koutoglo

2,140

total hours
contributed by all of
our phenomenal
volunteers



THE GGO TEAM



Nadav Sprague

Founding CEO and President

Daryl Rosen-Huitt

Director of Operations

Hannah Zonneville

Interim Director of Education

Lily Schwartz

VISTA Leader

Sam Zuckerberg

Grant and PR Coordinator VISTA

Kayla Parker

*Donor Management &
Public Relations VISTA*

Angie Paden

PR and Development VISTA

Bridget Grabowski

*Chicago External Partnership &
Development Coordinator VISTA*

Gayathri Rao

Grant Coordinator VISTA

Joyewel Hudson

*Chicago Internal Partnership &
Development Coordinator VISTA*



SUMMER VISTAS

Lia Basden

Will Boarders

Natalie Frederick

Emily Harrast

Neha Herring

Maria Heuring

David McCoy

Dylan Nelson



**GATEWAY TO THE
GREAT OUTDOORS**



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