



NEWSLETTER

Welcome to 2024 and Happy New Year!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

GGO is excited to start a new year filled with wilderness adventure as we continue to provide GGO students with transformative outdoor experiences and environmental education. We are so grateful for an amazing 2023 that brought GGO students on incredible adventures throughout St. Louis and Chicago!



2023 End of Year Wrap Up



2023 was a remarkable year for GGO. The St. Louis Public School District honored us by naming GGO the **SLPS Community Partner of the Year**!

GGO students embarked on so many exciting adventures: from hiking & camping explorations to planting pollinator gardens at their schools & building wind turbines in class. We are so grateful to all of our dedicated volunteers, staff, and supporters who have helped GGO students develop a love for science, exploration, and nature.

In St. Louis, GGO partnered with the [Forest Park Living Lab](#) to provide our students with an enriching experience at Forest Park. Students delved into topics like monarch migration, leaf identification, and the study of animals native to the forest, including the examination of invertebrates in the park's waterways. Learn more about this amazing experience for GGO students on this [STL NPR segment](#).

In Chicago, GGO students engaged in numerous field trips. One of the most popular among students was visiting [Just Roots Urban Farms](#). GGO students toured



the farms, harvested vegetables, participated in a scavenger hunt, and tasted fresh produce!

GGO partner schools **principals reported increased standardized test scores and enhanced student engagement.** In partnership with Dr. Ekenga, GGO students shared their knowledge to help develop an environmental health theoretical framework. This framework was published in the scientific journal Health Expectations.

Dr. Tyler A. Archer, the principal of GGO's St. Louis partner school Nance Elementary, said:



“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”



Upcoming Adventures

Upcoming GGO Adventures

Here are some of our upcoming adventures that we are looking forward to:

In St. Louis, we will be visiting the **Saint Louis Zoo!** During this trip, GGO students will feature a behind-the-scenes look at Zoo vet hospital/animal rehabilitation. In the past, this type of adventure has inspired students to consider careers in zoology and veterinary medicine.

We are also excited for the **Steelworkers Park** trip, which will take Chicago students rock climbing and exploring trails near the lake! Students will benefit from exploring the outdoors while getting exercise and having fun.

GGO is so excited for our **camping trips** that are planned in Chicago and St. Louis! Many of our students have never camped before, and benefit from learning practical outdoor skills while building relationships with their peers and mentors alike.



COME WORK AT GGO!

GGO IS HIRING IN ST LOUIS



Gateway to the Great Outdoors is currently hiring for the following positions:

St. Louis:

[St. Louis Program Coordinator Application](#)

[St. Louis Programming Support Application](#)

These are amazing opportunities to explore the nonprofit world, for recent graduates and experienced professionals alike! You can find out more by visiting the GGO [website](#).

Mentor of the Month!

Meet Katherine!

Meet Katherine Rizkalla, our mentor of the month! Katherine is a fourth year student at the University of Chicago with majors in the "Fundamentals: Issues and Texts" and Philosophy departments. She has been mentoring with GGO since the start of this school year in October 2023. Her favorite GGO memory is, in her own words, "the day we learned about compasses and how the students all came together to do a little "home base" dance with me in between every round of the game." Finally, her favorite outdoor activity is kayaking. We are thrilled to have Katherine on the team as a mentor, and look forward to continuing to work with her! Thank you for all of your hard work, Katherine!



Looking Ahead

We want to extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to our end-of-year campaign! While we didn't meet our fundraising goal, we are hoping to kick off the new year strong. If you missed our end-of-year campaign and still want to enable more amazing outdoor experiences and environmental education for promising

youth, please visit the following link: [Donate](#). We look forward to hearing from you and hope everyone has an incredible new year!

Thank You for Your Support!



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