



2013 annual report

TrailsforYouth.Org

Teaching kids to overcome obstacles on the trail and in life!

TrailsforYouth.Org (TYO) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) award- winning children’s health organization in the Washington DC area that provides opportunities for children to get outside, be active and enjoy nature while receiving important education and mentoring. Our program is simple in design -- provide positive reinforcement, safe exercise, healthy nutrition and fun in the outdoors.

We strive to provide high quality experiences and opportunities for the underserved youth of our community. Through TYO, those at-risk youth are given some well needed physical exercise, better understanding of their surrounding environment, greater appreciation of the nature parks in their own communities and a chance to push their own barriers and overcome obstacles. At the end of the event, they are tired and stand prouder for their accomplishments.

As we’ve grown, we’ve embraced a holistic approach to encouraging youth to be active outdoors with many different types of nature program — biking is still a popular venue, but we also provide kayaking and fishing to our available opportunities.

Whether they are on the trail to school, nature trail or trail of life we provide the opportunity for children to be healthier and more confident in their abilities

Our Mission: To mentor at-risk youth and provide opportunities for all children to benefit from a healthy, active lifestyle through safe outdoor experiences



about us

a non-profit 501(c)(3) award- winning children’s health organization

Another year, lots more smiles and TrailsforYouth.Org (TYO) keeps on rolling! What did we do this year? Simply put, we provided opportunities. Opportunities for children to experience nature, exercise and adventure. Opportunities for some quiet time with friends and to ask questions of caring adults. Opportunities to escape the boarding house they live in with many other families or to eat a nutritious meal.

In 2013, TYO added an older teen program that focused on job training. Our new counselor-in-training programs will now build future leaders and provides much needed job skill training for the kids in our programs who are starting to age out, so to speak. As the kids get older, the demands for their time become more intense and in particular the need to help in raising support for their families takes precedence in free time demands. With our counselors-in-training program, teens who have volunteered with us before are able to work for TYO. They learn how to implement events, interact in a leadership role with other kids, work with supervisors and remain active outdoors – a win-win for all. And we've found as the older teens deliver our life lessons to the younger kids in the program, the messages are heard a bit clearer coming from their older counterparts. This is sure to a bigger program as we continue into our 12th year of providing opportunities for kids to be outside and active!

In 2013, TYO:

- Held 115 outdoor and nature-based events for local youth, a majority of which were geared towards low income or minority at-risk youths;
- Provided over 8000 mentoring opportunities;
- Added a counselor-in-training program to create job skills for older teens;
- Helped thousands of children experience the fun of exercising through Walk to School Days at 12 schools;
- Introduced families to the joy of nature though Take A Kid Mountain Biking Day;
- Implemented both the Junior Races at local Adult Mountain Bike Race Series and conducted the JBOMBR series – a set of mountain races just for kids;
- Brought the Safe Routes to School Programs to more local elementary schools;
- Implemented a community-wide air quality/asthma awareness campaign within two elementary schools;
- Increased participation at our annual nature camping experience hosting close to 80 people.

As you can see, this past year was very successful. It was a bit of a struggle as we continued to see an increase in demand for our services, while funding sources decreased. Yet, we moved forward and found ways to sustain the number of kids outdoors and active in nature, increase our outreach activities and, most importantly, sustain the average amount of time spent with each child.

I am certain that with the right ingredients – nature, positive energy, exploring the outdoors, dedicated mentors and partnerships – we have created a program that ripples in our communities and spreads its lasting positive effects. Join us on this journey.

As we move ahead and further our expertise in the myriad of programs that we provide, I am reminded of the many smiles I saw on the variety of trails this past year – whether dirt, single-track, side-walk or personal trails – the positive effects that TYO has had on the thousands of kids we have worked with remains with me always.

Happy Trails,

Julie Childers

Julie Childers
Executive Director



from our director

Julie Childers, Executive Director

These bicycle rides in nature are geared towards at-risk youth ages 8-18 and provide the opportunity for them to experience the thrills, joys and needed stress release that comes from being active in nature. These are more than a bicycle ride on a dirt trail; they are the very essence of personal challenge and growth. TYO brings together youth from a variety of backgrounds and culture, providing the tools each child needs to feel the freedom of bicycling.

These rides provide the opportunity for youth to drop their hardened shells and, for the moment, connect to nature and themselves as they challenge their perceptions of what they think they can accomplish. TYO guides them to overcome their personal and immediate challenges. These nature bike rides provide a needed boost in self-esteem, physical exercise, education and connectivity on the importance of preserving our natural world.

These simple but effective rides on trails allow each youth in turn to experience the freedom and joys of simply being a kid riding a bike in nature – taking in all the thrills of the wind on their faces and a caring adult helping to make sure they are safe. As each rider views their surroundings of the local nature areas from the seat of a mountain bike, they leave with a sense of accomplishment that they have overcome obstacles on the trail and they take these lessons and personal successes into their daily lives.

These are, in base terms, a vital component in developing stronger, healthier and more aware young adults who will embrace these experiences and carry them on into adulthood.



nature rides

geared towards at-risk youth ages 8-18

In addition to our regular program offerings – trail bike rides, hiking, kayaking, classes, camps, camping, races, safe routes to school (see below), TYO added a new program geared towards older teens in our program.

Counselor Program for Teens

Through hands-on involvement, older teens who have volunteered in the past were eligible to become paid counselors for TYO. Their job duties ranged within all aspects of our programming offerings and provided real world experiences that helped them build job skills. Through this program the kids were able to continue to be active outdoors while also engaging younger youth in mentoring life lessons, implementing events, assisting ride leaders, preparing equipment in general gathering work ethics and skills. This program was a huge success and as one intern said, “this really helped ‘cuz now I can stay with TYO and help my mom with rent.” A win-win for all!



new programs
enhance existing opportunities

TYO is proud to be a national and local leader in the SRTS program. Having established ourselves as a local leader of SRTS program implementation, in 2013, we led efforts in 13 schools in Fairfax County and Alexandria City, VA. One of the highlights was a highly successful International Walk 2 School Day with thousands of students participating, as well as International Bike to School Day. Other elements of the SRTS program include setting up Walking Wednesdays, Mileage Clubs, bicycle rodeos and pedestrian/cyclist education seminars, all of which encourage families and kids to be active in their travel to and from school.

In 2013 we continued with our efforts within Fairfax County through our involvement in the task force. (In 2012, TYO joined the Fairfax County Public School SRTS Task Force to help draft and issue new language for local schools. In addition, TYO provided thousands of youth with education on safe cycling habits and experience.)

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program which encourages children to walk and/or bike to and from school. Designed as a part of the effort to combat childhood obesity, the SRTS programs are “sustained efforts by parents, schools, community leaders and local, state, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school.”



safe routes to school

promoting walking and biking for students

We developed the Youth Mountain Bike Series as a un effort for all children to pursue competitive mountain bike racing in a safe, controlled environment, allowing them to grow as riders in a sport that is often more tailored for adults. With this series, young riders can unleash their competitive side and challenge themselves. Also, for those children who want to compete, but don't have the opportunity or equipment necessary to participate, TYO can provide access to bikes, helmets, and scholarships, as well as mentor-led rides to develop skills, confidence and experience on a continued basis.

Since the series began in 2007, we have seen a 300% increase in the number of youth participating. Providing this level of riding creates an opportunity for the more experienced bikers to challenge themselves, and furthers our mission to provide opportunities for more kids to be active outdoors.

The generous support of our donors and Potomac Velo Club allows TYO to provide scholarships to children who otherwise wouldn't be able to participate

*"A rider in front of me fell down. I stopped to make sure he was okay.
It's fun to win, but you've got to take care of each other too."*

— Alejandro, Age 9, after a mountain bike race



youth MTB race series
mountain bike racing

In 2013, TYO held classes, a spring and summer break adventure race camp, bike rodeos, a camping trip and after school nature exploration club – The TRAILBLAZERS! — all geared at promoting and educating our community and their families on the importance of being active outdoors and striving to incorporate nature in a healthy life style.

Introduction to Mountain Bike Classes

Classes open to the general public, as well as scholarships for at-risk youth, gave instruction on the tips and tricks of riding single track, while also imparting important environmental lessons of sustaining our natural resources. These provided a wonderful base for entire families to learn a new way to explore the local parks.

Summer Camping Trip

This annual trip to Rocky Gap, MD brings together youth and adults from all over the Metro DC area to enjoy fresh air, biking, hiking, swimming, fishing, kayaking and good old-fashioned camping. For three days these youth were able to relax and enjoy the many wonders of nature – trees, trails, birds, fish, boating, biking and hiking — a true escape from their daily stressful lives and, in many cases, the first time these kids have the opportunity to witness a full sky of stars or experience sleeping in a tent!

Bike Rodeos

With 30+ years of experiences, our veteran instructors help children learn bicycle safety and TYO has established ourselves as the premier organization to implement a bike rodeo. We bring helmets, bikes to borrow, cones, obstacles and loads of encouragement and enthusiasm to help novice riders feel more comfortable, safe and knowledgeable as they navigate their neighborhood via bicycle. We have given out over 1,000 bicycle helmets in these rodeos and the kids love the course so much that many of them ride it 50 times in one day — that's fun while learning!



programs
classes, camping & rodeos

Adventure Racing Camps - Spring and Summer

Through our ongoing relationship with Fairfax County Parks and Recreation, we provided a week-long experience of hiking, biking, team exercises and mentor-led activities. All of these help youth appreciate and learn about nature, trails, exercise, biking and the importance of being part of a team. At the end of the week, the teams competed to reach 5 different check-points to earn the accomplishment of finishing a challenging race. TYO provides scholarships to the camp through partnering with local schools.

After School Trailblazer Club

TYO piloted a multi-week after school club geared towards at-risk underserved youth. During this weekly nature exploration club, the kids were transported to local nature areas to experience the joys, thrills and health benefits of biking, hiking, fishing and kayaking. These were highlights of the kids' weeks and provided needed exercise and stress-relief from their demanding schedules.

Hiking

Not only is this a great way to get kids out and about, we encouraged family members to join us, creating a wonderful bonding environment and a way to de-stress together.

Fishing

We partnered with Virginia Fishing Adventures, providing a different challenge as we taught the kids the concepts of catch and release and provided experiences for them to see nature up close and personal. Fishing is also a great way to relax and enjoy time for calm reflection, something of great benefit to kids in today's non-stop world.

Kayaking

Providing the opportunity to see nature from the seat of a kayak and having the ability to go into nature areas that are only accessible by boat allows the kids to gain a different perspective of the same nature areas – so while some bike the trails others use the water trails to see the same nature area from a different perspective – fish jump, birds fly overhead and flowers bloom – it's a slower and personal chance to experience the sights and sounds of the water areas in our urban settings. This program was made possible by a grant from Outdoor Nation.



programs
camps, clubs, hiking, fishing & kayaking

We believe strongly in being part of our community, realizing that the more efforts that exist to help our youth, the stronger that effort and community will be. We are proud to partner with the following organizations in this growing commitment:

- National Park Service
- Potomac Velo Club
- Fairfax County Parks and Recreation
- Arlington County Recreational Services
- City of Alexandria Public Schools
- Fairfax County Public Schools
- Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)
- International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)
- Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling
- National Safe Routes to School Partnership
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Health
- Neighborhood Watch
- Springfield Civic Association
- Boy Scouts of America
- St. Mark's Youth Group
- Verizon Foundation
- Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI)
- The Bike Lane
- Arrow Bicycles
- CDW-G
- Community and national sponsors (please see our website for more information)



partnerships

working together to help kids

TYO provided over 8,700 children, an opportunity to receive much needed physical activity, mentoring, and nutrition.

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Children served | 3000 | 4024 | 8181 | 8200 | 8728 | 8700 | 8700 |
| Number of Event | 114 | 114 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 115 |
| Volunteer list (members) | 125 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 100 |
| Avg. child/volunteer ratio* | 1/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 |

*Does not include children health festival or safe routes to school work.

2013 Board of Directors

President: Pat Hoar, Orbital Sciences

Vice President: Ken Scott, Recreational Equipment Inc.

Secretary: James P. Childers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Treasurer: Kathy Levy, Alpha-Safe Inc.

Georgette Phillips, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

Janet Merrifield, 5th Grade AAP Teacher

Shirley Shannon, Vice Principal Lynbrook Elementary School

Jeffrey Anderson, Advocate and parent

Year-round staff

Julie Childers, Executive Director

Megan Brooks, Assistant Director

Seasonal program

coordinators/staff:

Randy Filz, Virginia Ride Leader Coordinator

Justin Mawdsley, Virginia Ride Leader

Rebecca Chappelle, Virginia Events Counselor

Teen Counselors

Heather Barnes

Dery Martinez

Laura Martinez

Nancy Salazar-Pineda



by the numbers
events and staffing

Income

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Contributed Revenue | \$ 72,024 |
| Earned Revenue | \$ 57,312 |
| Total Income | \$129,336 |

Expenses

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Program Expenses | \$ 97,554 |
| Administrative / Overhead Expenses | \$ 17,860 |
| Total Expenses | \$115,404 |

"I love being able to support Trails for Youth. I see how positive it is for the kids and how much they enjoy the ride. Even though they are sweaty and dirty, it's good for them."

— 2011 TYO donor



financial information

TYO financial statement



Join us on the adventure at
www.TrailsforYouth.Org!

TrailsforYouth.Org

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