



2016 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 Northern VA area that provides opportunities for children to get outside, be active and enjoy nature while receiving important education and mentoring. We have implemented programs since 2003. 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, hiking, kayaking, fishing, camping and competitive racing.

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

Our Mission is 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! I say this every year and it's true, thankfully! 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. And important opportunities to connect personally with their surrounding natural areas.

In 2016, TYO focused our energies on remaining sustainable while also increasing our outreach. Through support from the Women's Sports Foundation and espnW we focused on increasing the number of girls, particularly minority girls, that would have the opportunity to participate. As one of the young girls said to me in late 2016, "well, you wanted more girls for me to ride with and now we got them!". We call this new group Aline's girls, as she successfully recruited several of her classmates to participate regularly. This and other outreach efforts helped to increase the number of girls participating and of that increase, over 80% are minorities! Wow.

In 2016, TYO:

- **Held ~100 outdoor, nature and physical activity-based events for local youth, a majority of which were geared towards low income or minority at-risk youth;**
- **Increased the number of girls, primarily Hispanic, either racing or participating and of those participating, over 80% were minorities;**
- **Implemented our popular Winter Trailblazer's Hike Club from November – March;**
- **Continued our Counselor-in-Training and paid Junior Counselor program to provide job skills for older teens;**
- **Provided tactical, financial and equipment support to three local youth Mountain Bike Race Teams: NOVA Composite, PW Racing, and Phoenix Bikes**
- **Supported a TYO Youth MTB team competing in ~20 Virginia Statewide youth mtb races;**
- **Implemented both the Junior Races at local Adult Mountain Bike Race Series and conducted the JBOMBR;**
- **Sustained our annual 3-day camping trip for at-risk youth and their families, hosting close to 40 people;**
- **Supported two elementary school run clubs for boys and girls;**
- **Provided tactical and financial support for students to compete in 2 Fun Runs (5k and 6k in length);**
- **Provided 3 months of winter indoor spin and fitness classes for local youth to keep active.**

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. In fact, as you can see from our finances it was a year we of using some savings. Yet, we moved forward and found ways to grow the number of kids outdoors, especially girls, and active in nature, increase our outreach activities and, most importantly, sustain the average amount of time spent mentoring 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.

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, or personal trails – the positive effects that TYO has had on the thousands of kids we have worked with remains with me.



Happy Trails,

Julie Childers

Julie Childers
Executive Director

from our director

Julie Childers, Executive Director

TYO bicycle rides in nature are geared towards at-risk youth ages 10-18 and provide the opportunity for them to experience the thrills, joys and needed stress release that comes from being active in nature. TYO brings together youth from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, providing the tools each child needs to feel the freedom of bicycling and the personal confidence that comes with overcoming obstacles successfully, all while forging a bond with their natural surroundings. These are more than a bicycle ride on a dirt trail; they are the very essence of personal challenge and growth.

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. Our 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 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 10-18

In addition to our regular program offerings – trail bike rides, hiking, kayaking, classes, camps, camping, and races, TYO provides a program geared towards older teens in our program.

Jr. Counselor Program for Teens

Through hands-on involvement, older teens who have volunteered in the past were eligible to become paid junior 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. A win-win for all - 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."*



job training
enhance existing opportunities

TYO provided a multi-week after school club geared towards at-risk underserved youth. During this weekly nature exploration club, youth met at Brookfield Park to sample and learn about a variety of outdoor activities - hiking, biking, kayaking, and fishing. At the completion of the club they put all their newly learned skills to the test with a 3-hour Super Sunday Funday Challenge, where they hiked 2 miles, kayaked, 2 miles and biked 4 miles. All youth were given the opportunity to experience the joys, thrills and health benefits of being active outdoors in our local park. These were highlights of the kids' weeks and provided needed exercise and stress-relief from their demanding schedules. They also provided incentive for attendance at school. As one local Principal told us, "it's clubs like yours that keep the kids from being absent."

Through engaged mentoring, youth learned the importance of their natural world. They learned about environmental concepts such as watershed, conservation and stewardship. As one young lady said,

"before this club I wouldn't have thought about dropping the wrapper on the ground, now I know it hurts the water and the birds."



trailblazer school clubs

hands-on nature exploration for school clubs

TYO provided the JBOMBR (Junior Bicyclists Only Mountain Bike Race) and junior races at the Wednesday@Wakefield Adult MTB Race series for youth of all abilities. These races provided the experience to try mountain bike racing. In addition, in 2016 we supported three different youth mountain bike teams with tactical, financial and equipment. These teams, NOVA Composite, Prince William Racing and Phoenix Bikes, were able to compete in ~20 races throughout Virginia. In many cases, without our support, youth would not have been able to participate. These are all fun ways for 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 these several races, 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. 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.

*"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."*



youth mtb racing
mountain bike racing

In 2016, TYO also held our annual and popular 3-day camping trip! This is an opportunity for youth and their families to experience sleeping under the stars, in many cases for the first time! TYO leads bike rides, night and day hikes, kayaking, beach time and general campsite fun activities for the youth and families to experience the excitement of camping — 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. 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!

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"I have never seen so many stars! It's amazing!"



2016 TYO Rocky Gap Camping Trip

overnight camping

camping

In 2016, TYO once again offered our Winter Winter Trailblazer Club. The Winter Trailblazers Club, now in its second year, is an outdoor hiking program made up of students from three different local Elementary School's that are either Title-1 or have a predominate low-income population. On a bi-weekly basis the children and group leaders visit new parks to explore while also learning about nature, photography, and the importance of protecting our environment. Local parks include Lake Accotink, Wakefield, Laurel Hill, Huntley Meadows, Theodore Roosevelt Island, and more! The goal for this program is to get kids up and moving even during the chillier winter months.

TYO's focus, is to provide services to children whose families may not otherwise have the resources to spend time outdoors. Learning about nature and participating in these hikes allows the kids to burn energy and connect to their natural world in a safe and fun atmosphere.

Also to combat winter weather and lack of physical activity, TYO provided 8 weeks of indoor cycling and fundamental fitness training. This program allowed youth to continue with their exercise and prepare for the coming Spring race season. It also provided hours of fun fitness and new exercise programs such as weights, yoga and general calenthetics.

*"Even though it's cold, it's good to go outside.
I like it outside and the eagle was cool."*

-- Adonai, age 11, after seeing 4 eagles at Mason Neck State Park



winter programs
indoor winter training, winter hiking

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:

- Potomac Velo Club
- Fairfax County Parks and Recreation
- Fairfax County Public Schools
- Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE)
- International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA)
- Single Track Future Foundation
- Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Health
- Springfield Civic Association
- The Bike Lane
- NICA
- Nova Composite Race Team
- Prince William Race Team
- Phoenix Bikes
- Metro Run and Walk
- Kingstowne Striders
- Interstate Van Line
- Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Local PTA organizations



partnerships

working together to help kids

TYO provided over 1,000 opportunities for kids to receive much needed physical activity, mentoring, and nutrition.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014*</u>	<u>2015*</u>	<u>2016*</u>
Children served	8200	8728	8700	8700	1100	1100	1100
Number of Events	150	150	150	115	105	100	100
Volunteer hours	1600	1600	1200	1200	1100	1000	800
Avg. child/staff or vol. ratio*	2/1	2/1	2/1	2/1	3/1	2/1	2/1

*Does not include school based running clubs supported by TYO.

*76% of youth we serve are traditional at-risk
and 83% are minorities*

2016 Board of Directors

President: Janet Merrifield, AAP 5th Grade Teacher

Vice President: Ken Scott, Recreational Equipment Inc.

Treasurer: Jen Raab, NOVA Comp Coach, Pre-School Teacher

Secretary: Shirley Shannon, Vice Principal Fairfax County Elementary School

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

Gary Bangs, Parent, Community Liason

Year-round staff

Julie Childers, Executive Director

Seasonal staff:

Rebecca Chappellear, Program Coordinator



by the numbers
events and staffing

Income

Contributed Revenue	\$76,525
Earned Revenue	\$ 7,749
Total Income	\$84,274

Expenses

Program Expenses	\$73,612
Administrative / Overhead Expenses	\$12,060
Total Expenses	\$85,672

"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."



financial information

TYO financial statement



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

TrailsforYouth.Org

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www.facebook.com/trailsforyouth.org