



2014 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 and fishing to our available opportunities.

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: 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. Opportunities to escape the boarding house they live in with many other families or to eat a nutritious meal.

In 2014, TYO expanded to add a pilot job training program for older teens. Our new junior counselor and counselor-in-training programs will now build future leaders and provide 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 raising support for their families takes precedence in free time demands. With this 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 13th year of providing opportunities for kids to be outside and active!

In 2014, 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 youths;**
- **Added a third elementary school recipient of our popular after school "Trail Blazers" club;**
- **Added a counselor-in-training and paid junior counselor pilot program to create job skills for older teens;**
- **Provided support to the NOVA Composite Youth Mountain Bike Race Team and youth opportunities to be part of the inaugural Virginia youth mountain bike race team and league;**
- **Implemented both the Junior Races at local Adult Mountain Bike Race Series and conducted the JBOMBR;**
- **Added another elementary school to our sustained community-wide air quality/asthma awareness campaign;**
- **Sustained our annual 3 day camping trip for at-risk youth and their families, hosting close to 60 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 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

These bicycle rides in nature are geared towards at-risk youth ages 9-18 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 9-18

In addition to our regular program offerings – trail bike rides, hiking, kayaking, classes, camps, camping, and races, 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 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."*



new programs
enhance existing opportunities

TYO provided 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.

Through engaged mentoring, youth learned the importance of their natural world. They learned about school concepts such as watershed, conservation and environmental 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 and access to experience mountain bike racing. In addition, in 2014 we supported the NOVA Composite Youth State Mountain Bike Team, which competed in the NICA race series. These are all fun ways 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 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."*

— Alejandro, Age 9, after a mountain bike race



youth MTB racing
mountain bike racing

In 2014, TYO also held a summer adventure race camp, a camping trip and summer weekly Trailblazers nature exploration club — 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.

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!

Summer Adventure Racing Camp

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.



programs

classes, camping & rodeos

Summer Weekly Trailblazer Club

TYO held a multi-week nature exploration club and the 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 connectivity to nature.

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

Exploring the water ways and seeking to fish (catch and release) is one more challenge and excitement for the kids to experience - didn't matter if tiny or large, they were excited and thrilled to catch a fish.

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. While some bike the trails others use the water trails to see the same nature area from a different perspective. They see fish jump, birds fly overhead and flowers bloom – it's a slower and personal chance to experiences the sights and sounds of the water areas in our urban settings.

Safe Routes to School

TYO is proud to be a national and local leader in the SRTS program. In 2014 TYO moved away from program implementation of SRTS to allow for local schools to establish themselves as individual program providers. TYO was happy to share our expertise and guidance through several conferences and webinars in 2014, but we feel it's beneficial for local schools to establish their own sustained programs. We will continue to provide guidance as available, but have instead chosen to focus our resources on providing opportunities for youth to get outside and get active. With our new focus, we have also redirected our bicycle rodeo resources to support the growing demand for our after-school Trailblazer Clubs.



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)
- Single Track Future Foundation
- Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Department of Health
- Springfield Civic Association
- Boy Scouts of America
- St. Mark's Youth Group
- The Bike Lane
- Arrow Bicycles
- CDW-G
- NICA
- Nova Composite Race Team
- Community and national sponsors (please see our website for more information)



partnerships

working together to help kids

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

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

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

2014 Board of Directors

President: Pat Hoar, Orbital Sciences

Vice President: Ken Scott, Recreational Equipment Inc.

Secretary: Shirley Shannon, Vice Principal Lynbrook Elementary School

Treasurer: Kathy Levy, Alpha-Safe Inc.

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

Janet Merrifield, 5th Grade AAP Teacher

Jeffrey Anderson, Advocate and parent

Chris Barnes, EMT

Year-round staff

Julie Childers, Executive Director

Seasonal program coordinators/staff:

Ken Scott, Ride Leader

Teen Counselors

Heather Barnes

Dery Martinez

Henok Berhame

James Zuritta

Yorshua Aguillar

Nancy Salazar-Pineda



by the numbers
events and staffing

Income

Contributed Revenue	\$80,346
Earned Revenue	\$10,531
Total Income	\$90,877

Expenses

Program Expenses	\$76,506
Administrative / Overhead Expenses	\$14,654
Total Expenses	\$91,160

"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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