

Photo by David Montero



OUTWARD BOUND  
**CALIFORNIA**

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

*A friend shared a quote with me this weekend from Dan Zandra, “Worry is a misuse of the imagination.” ‘Oh that’s good,’ I thought to myself. Too much worry kills our imagination and creativity.*

I think the antidote to worry is GRATITUDE and HOPE. Because of this amazing donor community, I find it so easy to lean into those things! So, THANK YOU! Thank you for giving hope and possibilities to our staff and students in a tumultuous year.

At the start of 2021 we had approved a modest budget, our ropes course programs were rolling but we hadn’t run overnight programs for a year and a half. You stood by us in that uncertainty and gave more deeply than any other time in our history. In 2021, our community of donors contributed over \$2.1 million towards our scholarship programming and partnerships with public schools.

By supporting Outward Bound California programming, you connected teens with soon-to-be-best-friends who had been trapped behind screens in online classes, helped female veterans find support from fellow sisters in arms, and provided students a way to get outside on the Ropes Challenge Course. **Two in every three participants received financial support to attend.** We were able to hold strong to this percentage because of your generosity.

Through the year, we reopened our Joshua Tree and High Sierra basecamps and met the record demand for courses which filled as quickly as we put them on the calendar! We heard from the 330 summer students who attended courses that the experience was magical - with more healing, connection and growth than ever. We operated our first full year at the Ropes Challenge Course with over 1,000 participants, which stayed open through the pandemic with smart safety decisions and following guidance from the CDC.

After each milestone this year, we raised a glass (or more appropriately a water bottle!) and cheered’d you. **Thank you for recognizing that these programs change lives, and being a part of this community in such a deeply impactful way.** There is much ahead of us and a great need for what we are providing. We are helping students reorient themselves to the world, rebuild confidence, and return to their communities as an active participant.

On behalf of the Outward Bound California community, thank you for your ongoing support. We look forward to the year ahead together where we can lean into hope, gratitude and possibilities.

In community,



NETTIE PARDUE  
npardue@obca.org

## LAST YEAR IN REVIEW

COURSES

120

STUDENTS

1,240

DAYS OF PROGRAMMING

6,520

CHALLENGE COURSE PROGRAMS

71



2 IN 3

STUDENTS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIP AID



## HOW DO STUDENTS GET TO OUTWARD BOUND CALIFORNIA?

330

students attended **open enrollment** expeditions in the High Sierra or Joshua Tree last year. They registered on our national website as individuals, and formed small groups of up to 10. Even though students arrived as strangers, they leave as tight knit friends with memories to last a lifetime.

500

students came with **community based organizations.** During the pandemic, nonprofits connected to the community were often the only access point for students when long-distance learning was in place.

290

students attended as a **field trip with their schools** and classmates. From San Francisco to Oakland to Los Angeles, schools are critical to reaching students who would normally not have access to outdoor programming.

20

students came on **fully scholarshiped programs** (including gear + travel stipends) in the High Sierra through our Pinnacle and Youth Leadership Corps programs. The scholarships’ goal is to inspire a love of the outdoors and deepen leadership skills for students of color and those from low-income communities.

# STUDENT JOURNEY

We provide a progression of different programs where students can join at the beginning and move through every type of experience or come to us at any point along the way. The goal is to offer an entry point program for every student, regardless of prior experience. With just one experience, or through the entire progression, participants develop important skills for success and a love of the outdoors they carry for the rest of their lives.



**CHALLENGE COURSE PROGRAMS**

The icon features a blue silhouette of a person climbing a rope on a structure, with another person climbing a rope on the right. Below the structure is a wheelchair icon and a person icon, indicating accessibility and participation.

For our nonprofit and school partnerships, the most approachable program is the Ropes Challenge Course. Located in San Francisco, it's a one day program that students attend with classmates and friends. For many, it's close enough to reach by foot! Concepts such as belonging, persistence, and physical confidence are introduced.



*"I feel like I am a better leader and am able to step back in times of stress to think about what I need to do and what will generate the best outcome."*

- Liam, age 15



**4 - 7 DAY OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS**

The icon shows a blue silhouette of a tent pitched between two trees, with a person icon below it.

From the groups that join us on the ropes course, we recruit groups to attend an overnight expedition in some of California's most iconic outdoor spaces. This expedition provides a new level of challenge where students sleep overnight, carry heavy packs, and navigate their surroundings - not to mention the group dynamics that come up when the hiking gets hard! They still head out with classmates and a trusted teacher which helps build confidence early on in the programs.



Our 12+ week internship program in the High Sierra and apprenticeship program in the Bay Area create a pathway into the outdoor industry for people of color and LGBTQ+ identifying young adults. We offer in-depth training, skill building, student-led service projects and networking in the field. The goal of these programs is to prepare students for entry into instructional roles at Outward Bound or other youth-serving organizations. This year we will have four apprentices, we aim to grow to nine annually.



**INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT**

The icon features a blue silhouette of a person and a document icon with a checkmark, indicating training and development.

*"I notice that I tend to have a greater "seize the day" kind of attitude. I am taking more control over every day and the opportunities that come my way."*

- Tyler, age 21



**MULTI-WEEK PROGRAMS**

The icon shows a blue silhouette of a mountain range with a person icon climbing a peak.

Recruited from the organizations we work with on the two previous programs, the Pinnacle Program and the Youth Leadership Corps (YLC) are fully scholarshipped 2-week long programs in the High Sierra. Participants have a totally immersive experience on a longer format course with students they don't know from all over the state. Students are pushed farther out of their comfort zone with a longer course, new friends to make, more challenging terrain (desert or high altitude) and opportunities to lead through the myriad of challenges the natural world and group travel presents.





## PROGRAM PROGRESSION BY THE NUMBERS\*

For participants, an OBCA course is often an unprecedented, transformational experience—and for some, the first time they have spent consecutive days outdoors or explored a local park. Our courses are impactful precisely because they are physically, emotionally, and socially challenging. Overnight programs in awe-inspiring natural settings can provide clarity and a path to wellbeing. One-day programs can catalyze change and build community. The vision of Outward Bound is to build more resilient and compassionate individuals for a more resilient and compassionate world. We push

participants to discover and actualize their best selves and develop leaders who act beyond themselves toward the greater good. With different lengths of program it's important to compare programs by the number of days spent with us as well as counting the number of participants. The work described in this report is only possible with the tremendous support and generosity of our community of donors. As we build back from the pandemic, we seek to hit previous scholarship levels and grow from there to ensure access to all participants who seek adventure and self-discovery in nature.

 CHALLENGE COURSE PROGRAMS	STUDENTS SERVED	DAYS OF PROGRAMMING	LEVEL OF FUNDING NEEDED
ROPES COURSE	3,000	3,000	\$1,200,000
 4 - 7 DAY OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS			
GROUP PROGRAM EXPEDITIONS	1,500	6,000	\$500,000
VETERANS	40	240	\$100,000
 MULTI-WEEK PROGRAMS			
YOUTH LEADERSHIP CORPS	20	460	\$100,000
PINNACLE SCHOLARS PROGRAM	40	560	\$200,000
OPEN ENROLLMENT	400	5,600	\$100,000
 INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT			
INTERNSHIP / APPRENTICESHIP	9	360	\$250,000

\*Numbers in this chart are aspirational and not actuals from 2021

# MEASURING OUR IMPACT: SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN ACTION

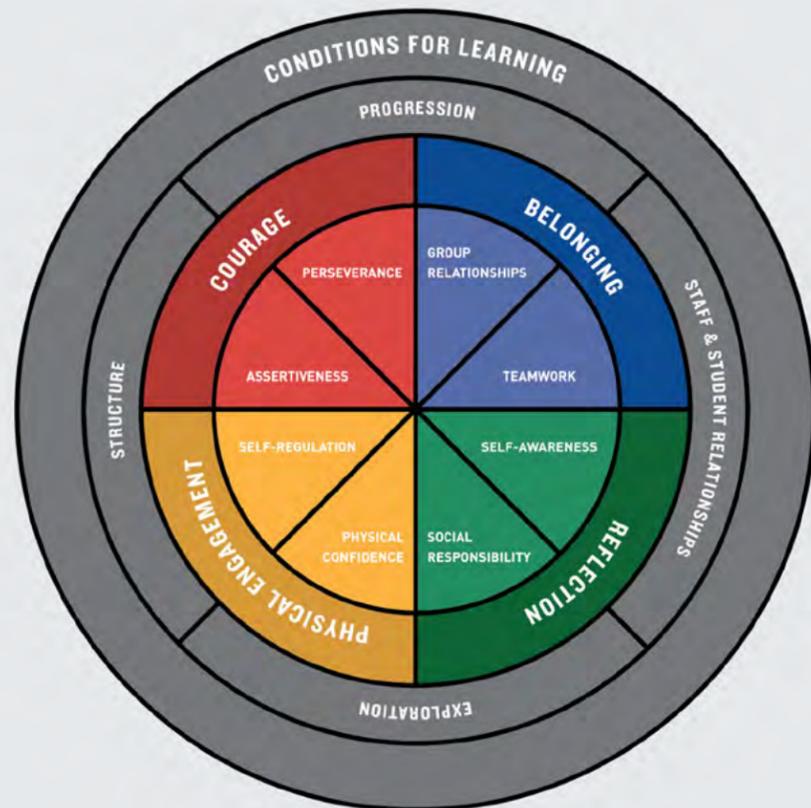
Outward Bound is at the center of a fundamental shift in the nation's educational paradigm. We are helping students become more engaged, compassionate, and confident. By teaching key social and emotional skills, our programs are helping students outgrow their comfort zones and learn to lead together.

The Outward Bound Domains of Thriving (DoT) combines our 60 year history with the latest insight and research on social-emotional development. The

DoT highlights the four areas of human development that are impacted on an Outward Bound course: Courage, Belonging, Reflection, and Physical Engagement.

The Outward Bound Outcomes Survey (OBOS), designed and validated by the Partnerships for Education and Resilience (PEAR), measures student change in 12 areas critical to the development of these four domains. Students take the survey at the end of their course, and report on each area. We analyze the results and leverage the learnings to improve programming, staff training and ensure we are providing equitable outcomes for all students across race and gender.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.



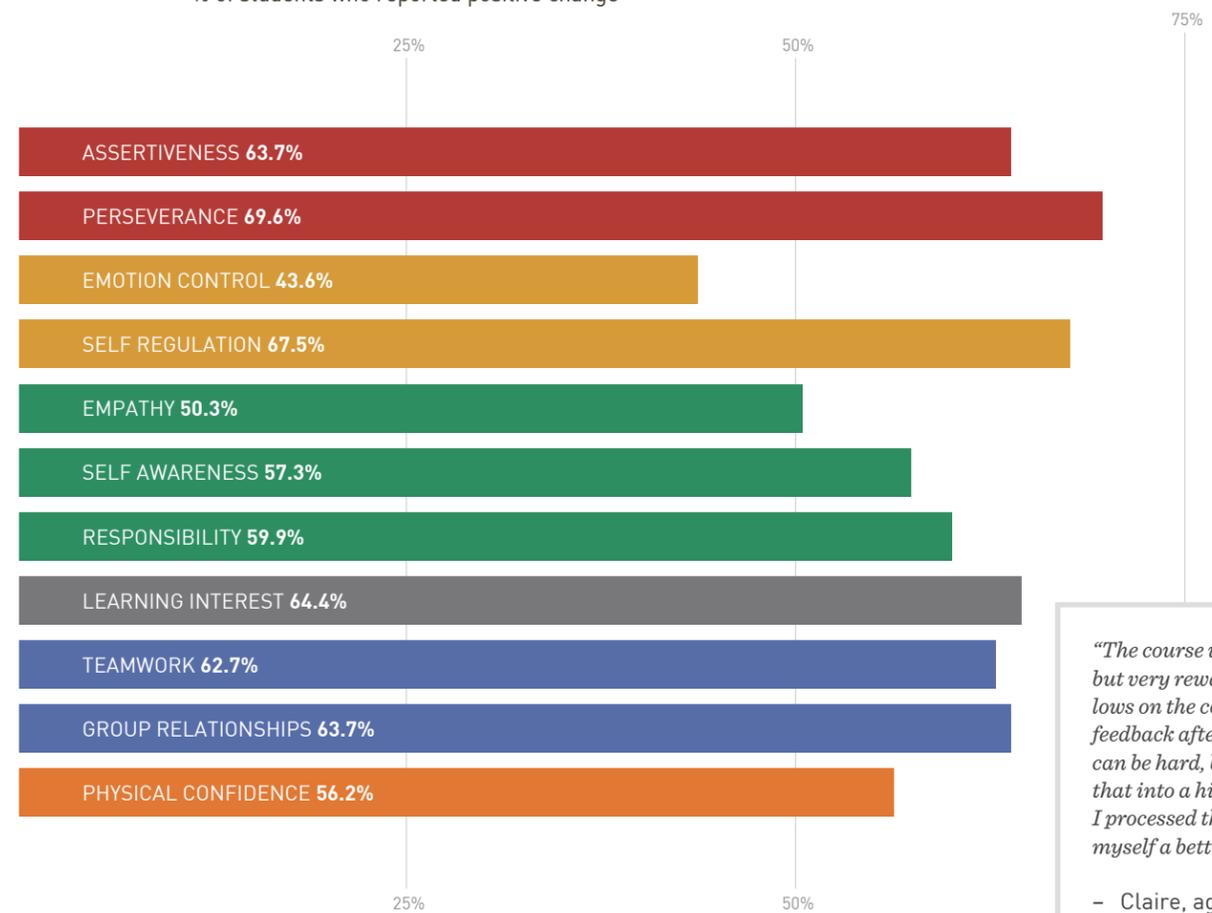
## ALL MEASURED OUTCOMES SHOWED POSITIVE CHANGE

Behavioral change through experiential learning programs is incredibly hard to measure and even harder to prove results. We are proud to say in our first

year of deep analysis of this data, our results showed that students reported statistically significant positive change across all twelve measures on our overnight programs and all six measures on our ropes course one-day programs. Additionally, there were no statistically significant differences between race/ethnicity groups on any of the 12 scales for either program type. There were interesting differences across gender, course length and age for our overnight programs that are explained further in this section.

### OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS

% of students who reported positive change



*"The course was a very challenging but very rewarding experience. The lows on the course included taking in feedback after long days on trail which can be hard, but I managed to turn that into a high later on course when I processed that feedback and made myself a better leader."*

- Claire, age 16



Percent of Students Self Reporting Change Using the OBOS in 2021. Total of 366 surveys were completed.

Permission to use the Outward Bound Outcomes Survey (OBOS) was obtained from PEAR.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of Outward Bound California and do not necessarily reflect those of PEAR.

## ON OUR OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS

● Agree ● Neither Agree nor Disagree ● Disagree



of students gained courage to face challenges



of students committed to making a difference in their world after their course



of students felt they learned to work more effectively in a group

## ON OUR ONE-DAY PROGRAMS

● Agree ● Neither Agree nor Disagree ● Disagree



I have gained confidence to try new things



I am more aware of how to support those around me



I can work more effectively in a group

## EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN

Female identifying students reported more positive change in three of the measures (Assertiveness, Self-Awareness and Physical Confidence) on our overnight programs. They also reported a high change in Perseverance. We see these results qualitatively each year from our female students. They come back from course saying they found their voice in the group and surprised themselves in what they were able to physically do.

*"Since the course, I'm a lot more self-assured, confident, and reaching out for more adventure. I embrace challenges more and definitely appreciate everything around myself. In general, I am much happier and appreciative."*

- Hannah, age 15



72%

ASSERTIVENESS

76%

PERSEVERANCE

68%

SELF-AWARENESS

61%

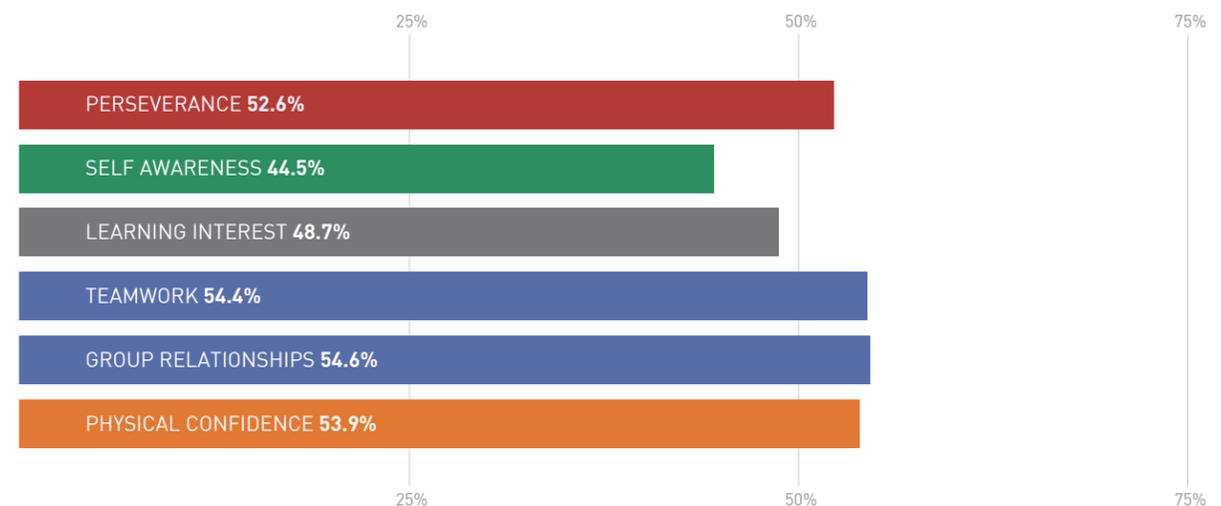
PHYSICAL CONFIDENCE

## CHALLENGE ROPES COURSE OUTCOMES

% of students who reported positive change on each scale

While the change is less dramatic on our one-day programs (which we would expect having only 6 hours with students vs. a week+) all measures still showed statistically significant positive change in critical outcomes such as physical confidence and group

relationships. Many of the groups represented by these surveys came together on our ropes course in McLaren Park for the first time in person in a year or more. It was powerful for them and us to be a part of their healing and reorientation to social activity.

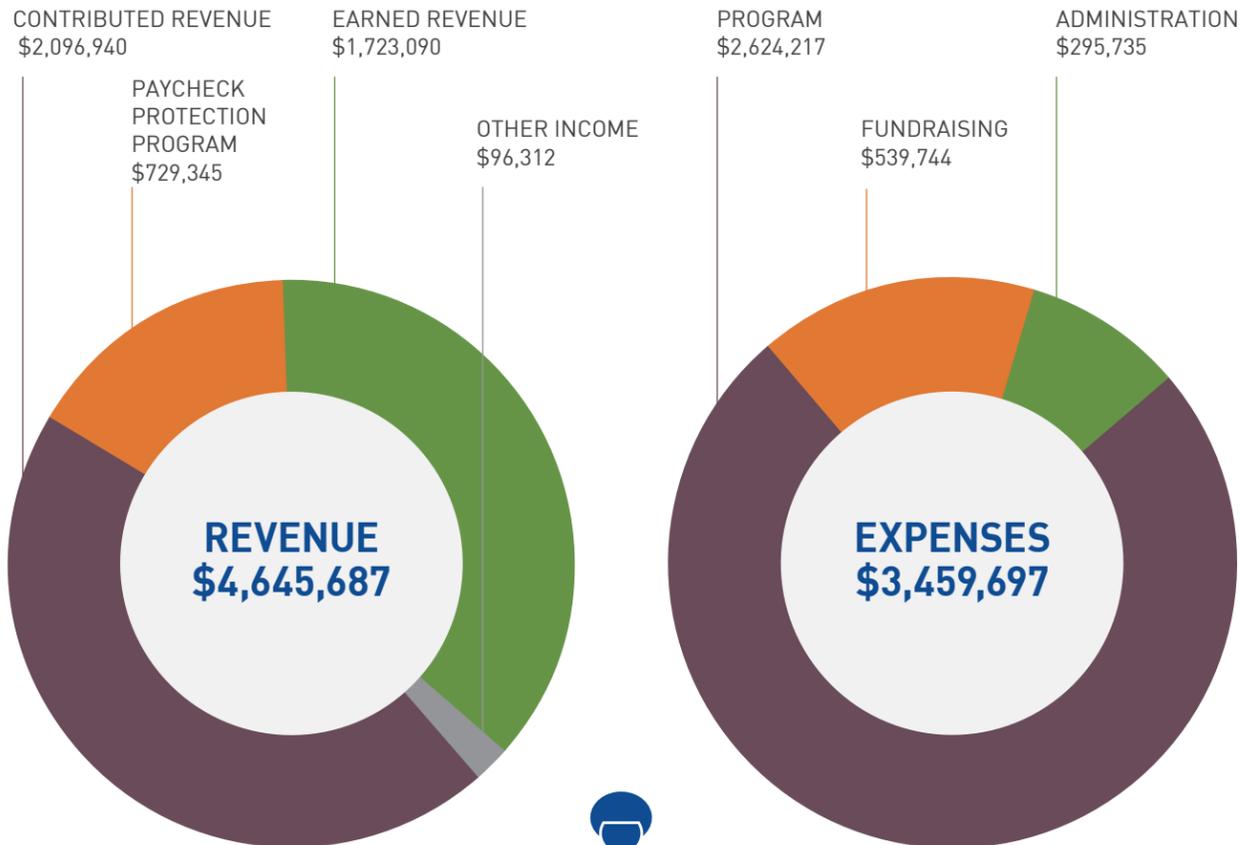


# FINANCIALS

Early in 2021, we had just made it through a very challenging period, and the path forward was still unclear. Our ropes course day programs were running, but still at low capacity, and we hadn't run an overnight program since March 2020. By summer we were running our traditional multi-week expeditions again at 65% capacity, our ropes course programming was ramping up with nearly three days every week booked, and we had our sights set on reopening our Southern California basecamp in the fall.

By 2021 year end, through disciplined decision making, we were in a strong financial position with three months of cash in the bank as well as having exceeded both fundraising and earned revenue targets.

Fundraised revenue alone increased by over 40% year over year. We leveraged additional federal Payroll Protection Plan stimulus funding of \$729,000 in 2021 to open all three of our regional basecamps again but were conservative with how much we grew because more government support funds were not anticipated in 2022. The final result was a return to our 50-50 earned-contributed revenue model and a 25% administrative/fundraising expense. We anticipate this number going down as we ramp up more programs in coming years.



\*Unaudited financials for 2021



## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS & CHARTER SCHOOLS

Anahuacalmecac International University Preparatory  
Aptos Middle School  
Burton High School  
Claire Lilienthal Middle School  
Democracy Preparatory Academy  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Academic Middle School  
Get Out And Learn/Downtown High School  
John O'Connell High School  
June Jordan School for Equity  
Mission High School  
Oakland Military Institute College Preparatory Academy  
Rudsdale Newcomer High School  
Sunrise Middle School  
Tennyson High School  
Visitacion Valley Middle School (VVMS)

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Bayshore School  
The Branson School  
Blue Oak School  
Sierra Nevada University  
St. Raymond Catholic School  
Stevenson School

### GOVERNMENT

Mentoring for Success  
Public Service Pathways  
San Francisco Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (SFCASA)  
San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Harpeth Hall School  
Pacific Bay Christian School

### NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

AIM High  
Bayview Hunters Point YMCA  
Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco Mission Clubhouse  
Boys and Girls Club Visitacion Valley Clubhouse  
Camp Phoenix  
City Youth Now  
College Track East Palo Alto  
Community Grows  
Covenant House California  
Enterprise for Youth  
FACES for the Future Coalition  
Forest and Tree  
Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF)  
Girl Scouts Heart of Central California  
Hope SF  
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles  
Kids Enjoy Exercise Now  
Kingmakers of Oakland  
Larkin Street Youth Services  
Los Angeles Audubon Society  
Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program  
Outdoor Educators Institute (Youth Outside)  
Project Avary  
Project Wreckless  
Real Options for City Kids  
Seen52  
Success Centers  
Summer Search  
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)  
YES Nature to Neighborhoods

## INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation  
AT&T  
Bella Vista Foundation  
The Bernard Osher Foundation  
The California Wellness Foundation  
Climate Ride  
Chrysalis Fund  
Crescent Porter Hale Foundation  
The Dean and Margaret Lesher Foundation  
Dodge & Cox Funds  
Dr. Squatch  
The Elkes Foundation  
Fort Point Capital Partners  
Goodby Silverstein & Partners  
GoPro  
The Hearst Foundations  
Hellman Foundation  
Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation

John and Marcia Goldman Foundation  
Kokari Foundation  
Lampert Byrd Foundation  
The Lookout Foundation  
Lisa Stone Pritzker Family Foundation  
March Conservation Fund  
Mountain Camp  
Noah Langholz Remembrance Fund  
Pisces Foundation  
San Francisco Department of Children Youth and Families  
Shauna M. and Kevin B. Flanigan Family Foundation  
The Sports Basement, Inc.  
The Stanley S. Langendorf Foundation  
Virginia Adams Fund for The Ansel Adams Wilderness  
Vital Projects Fund  
The Walther Foundation  
William K. Bowes, Jr. Foundation

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ed Colloton, Co-Chair

Winn Ellis, Co-Chair

Greg Yap, Treasurer

Natalie McCullough, Secretary

Abraham Simmons

Alan Nguyen, Finance Committee Chair

Anastasia Greenmore

Brendon Kraham, Governance Committee Chair

Doug Levick

Eric Boales

Fernando Sucre

Jonathan D. Schmidt

Jorge Gutierrez Luthe, Equity Committee Chair

Kendra Frisbie

Lori Guy

Paul Danielsen

Steve Hagler, Program Safety Committee Chair

Topher Solmssen, Fundraising Committee Chair

Tristram Brown

Veronica Arthur

West Coghlan





OUTWARD BOUND  
CALIFORNIA

7/25/21

Thank you for your generous donation. You have made an impact in this world by giving historically excluded people the opportunity to be part of a non-profit program. These programs tend to be extremely expensive which create a financial barrier. Luckily, we got a scholarship to go on a two-week backpacking course in the High Sierras.

These past two weeks have had its lows and highs, but my amazing group and I worked through them. We learned many life lessons that will be useful in the future. Such lessons include being resourceful, learning to step out of our comfort zone, and being selfless.

Once again, thank you for your donation; we really appreciate it. I wish you a healthy life full of blessings.

Sincerely,  
Maria

Name: Maria Course# XNVR-19D Dates: 7/13/21 to 7/26/21 Age: 17

Outward Bound California occasionally shares Appreciation Letters with external parties as examples of the impact of the course experience. If you are \*not\* ok with your letter being shared outside of OBCA staff, please check the box below.

Please do NOT share my letter with any party outside of Outward Bound California

[www.obca.org](http://www.obca.org)

