



For Immediate Release

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**Resilient Kids Project gets boost from
Western Colorado Community Foundation**

November 11, 2022, Hotchkiss, CO – Each year **Western Colorado Community Foundation (WCCF)** selects a theme for their community grants and awards \$100,000 in funding to several nonprofits throughout the seven-county region. In 2022, addressing the theme *Dreaming Forward*, WCCF awarded Friends of Youth and Nature (FOYAN) \$10,000 to help the organization grow its impact with our local youth. FOYAN facilitates opportunities for youth and families to explore and embrace nature, experience new outdoor activities, and engage in natural resource stewardship projects. “It is well known that interactions with nature and time outdoors develops confidence, resilience, and relieves stress and anxieties in our youth. Any kid can benefit from time outdoors but it is particularly important for at-risk youth,” says Anita Evans, FOYAN chair and co-founder. In addition to the WCCF funds, FOYAN was awarded grants from the El Pomar Foundation (\$2,500), Anschutz Family Foundation (\$7,500), the Montrose Community Foundation (\$3,000) and Dicks Sporting Goods (\$1,000). These grants, along with \$3,000 of additional fundraising, enabled the purchase of 27 youth mountain bikes of various sizes and a bike trailer used to transport the bikes to various trails and bike parks.

What is FOYAN doing to help build resilience and confidence in at-risk youth? “We are fortunate to have some integral partners collaborating to provide opportunities for these young ones,” Evans describes. The partners, part of the “Together for Resilient Youth” or TRY, program include Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s Ridgway State Park, Montrose Recreation Department, FOYAN and the youth organizations: CASA 7JD, Partners, Families Plus, Haven House for the Homeless, Outer Range (Montrose Country School District), and Black Canyon Boys and Girls Club. . FOYAN works closely with these partners to organize and schedule the outings every other month and the kids love the opportunity to experience some fun outdoor activities. Environmental educators, park rangers, biologists, and guides lead kids on river rafting trips, cross country ski/snowshoe outings,

mountain bike trail rides, nature learning workshops, fishing derbies, archery instruction, and paddle boarding. Through these grants, FOYAN has been able to purchase various equipment like snowshoes, skis, paddleboards, and mountain bikes for these groups to use through a free gear library located in Montrose just for TRY members. “We live in a location where outdoor adventures abound; these kids just need access to equipment, knowledge of where to go, and instructors to guide them,” Evans explained.

Friends of Youth and Nature (FOYAN) was created in 2018 and focuses their efforts in Mesa, Delta, Montrose and Ouray Counties. In 2022, FOYAN helped engage over 6,700 youth in outdoor programs. Visit our website or *follow our outdoor news blog and receive monthly tips on connecting your children to nature.* Learn more, visit www.friendsofyouthandnature.org. We are encouraging “Give where you live” donations through Coloradogives.org to help us continue our mission.

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