



**Friends of Youth and Nature**



**For Immediate Release**

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**Friends of Youth and Nature receives El Pomar Foundation Merit Grant  
to Get Kids and Families Outside**

**January 18, 2021, Hotchkiss, CO** – Friends of Youth and Nature (FOYAN), has been awarded an El Pomar Foundation Merit Grant from the San Juan Regional Council in the amount of \$5,000 to continue their work as a non-profit creating opportunities for youth and families to go outside, explore nature, and experience new outdoor activities. “This is a particularly important time to help families diffuse the stress, anxieties and depression associated with the pandemic through outdoor recreational activities, nature camps, gardening projects, and exploring our public lands,” explained Anita Evans, Chair of the non-profit. Current research shows a wide range of benefits for children and youth through outdoor experiences, including improvements in physical health and emotional well-being as well as increased learning, personal, and social skills.

FOYAN’s mission is to connect youth and families with local providers of outdoor and nature programs in the tri-county area of Montrose, Mesa and Delta Counties. FOYAN provides scholarships for youth to attend outdoor education programs, funds family cross-country ski and snowshoe rentals, assists school districts with field trip transportation costs and supplies for Farm to School projects, and assists related organizations with grant writing and funding requests. FOYAN has also developed a web platform ([www.friendsofyouthandnature.org](http://www.friendsofyouthandnature.org)) that provides a list of environmental education providers in the area, resources such as curriculum, educational links, maps with area hiking and biking routes, gear rental providers and a news blog with monthly outdoor tips for teachers, students and parents to reference.

“El Pomar’s Regional Councils are instrumental in helping identify areas of need in each of the unique regional communities around the state, and we are pleased to support Friends of Youth and Nature with their vital mission,” said Kyle H. Hybl, El Pomar President and CEO. “We cannot overstate the value, particularly now, of having access to experiences in our outdoor spaces that contribute to our residents’ well-being.”

El Pomar Foundation is one of the largest and oldest private foundations in Colorado. Spencer and Julie Penrose founded El Pomar in 1937 with the mission to enhance, encourage and promote the current and future well-being of the people of Colorado. The Foundation now contributes more than \$22M annually

through grants and community stewardship programs to support Colorado nonprofit organizations involved in health, human services, education, arts and humanities and civic and community initiatives. More information about El Pomar Foundation can be found at [www.elpomar.org](http://www.elpomar.org).

Friends of Youth and Nature (FOYAN), created in 2018, continues to increase their youth outreach each year. “In 2020 we engaged over 3,600 youth in outdoor programs. We encourage parents, teachers and youth leaders to visit our website ([www.friendsofyouthandnature.org](http://www.friendsofyouthandnature.org)) to learn more about how we facilitate our mission and the opportunities FOYAN provides,” added Evans.

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