



**For Immediate Release**

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## Friends of Youth and Nature receives Western Colorado Community Foundation Grant to Get Kids Outside

June 05, 2020, Hotchkiss, CO – Friends of Youth and Nature (FOYAN), in partnership with Delta Families Plus, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), and Colorado Parks and Wildlife at Ridgway State Park, has been awarded a “Youth Outside” grant for \$8,000 from the Western Colorado Community Foundation (WCCF) that focuses on youth development through outdoor recreation. FOYAN is one of several organizations receiving funds intended to help teens address stress and anxiety through organized outdoor recreational activities.

This new community “Youth Outside” grant will help FOYAN and its partners engage middle and high school youth in outdoor experiential activities during weekly events throughout the summer. WCCF recognizes that youth are under stress across our communities, leading to anxiety, depression, and in extreme cases, suicide. Current research shows a wide range of benefits for children and youth through outdoor experiences, including improvements in physical health and emotional well-being, increased learning, and improved personal and social skills.

*Teaming Up –Art, Action and Leadership in the Outdoors* offers teens opportunities to experience the challenges and accomplishments of trying new outdoor sports and experiencing creative expression inspired through nature. “Exploring nature, challenging oneself with physical activities, and expressing emotions through art are effective avenues for teens to release stress and overcome anxieties,” said Anita Evans, Executive Director of FOYAN. The education and volunteer staff at Ridgway State Park, and the staff, volunteers and mentors of CASA and Families Plus have developed a summer schedule of weekly outings at either the state park or a local park for a full day, including lunch and dinner. The grant money will be used for transportation, outdoor equipment, education, and art supplies as well as group gatherings enjoying special meals.

Friends of Youth and Nature (FOYAN) is a non-profit created in 2018 that promotes opportunities for youth and families to get outside, experience outdoor activities, and explore nature. “Our efforts are focused in Mesa, Delta and Montrose Counties. In 2019, we helped engage over 3000 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.

The Western Colorado Community Foundation serves seven counties in western Colorado, managing charitable funds for community good. Currently, the Community Foundation manages over 265 charitable funds totaling over \$80 million in assets and awards over \$3.4 million in grants and scholarships annually.

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