



FAMILY FIRST

If these trying times have taught us anything, it's the importance of family. Of connections. Of quality time together and the significance of loving relationships. Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) has had an intentional focus on family for the last several months. This summer, ELK offered a variety of virtual on-line programs for ELK youth and families. Programs were geared for all ages, enabling multiple members from a household to join. A family favorite was our very first virtual camping trip. After providing our 70+ family participants with curbside pick-up meal kits, the two-day activity kicked off with a video tour of folks' homemade campsites. From the full tents in the back yard, to exquisitely engineered blanket tents in the living room, the ingenuity of our ELKsters was on full display.

ELK families have known for a long time that nature is a healing force. For this reason, ELK instituted Self-Directed Family Programs which allowed families to engage in outdoor recreational activities safely, within their own family, and at their own pace. Food and all equipment were provided by ELK and families were able to explore natural areas close to home like the Aurora Reservoir and Star K Ranch. ELK families have borrowed, free of charge, camping gear for extended overnight trips to explore Colorado's many special places.

"I SUSTAIN MYSELF WITH
THE LOVE OF FAMILY."
— MAYA ANGELOU

We are also thrilled to have brought back our fishing clinics in the month of October. We provided hands on fishing lessons to a limited number of families that included lunch and some highly important time to bond in nature. The fish were biting, and it was a much-needed reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. And that light is us. Our courage, our ability to handle adversity, and our perseverance to come out again on the other side. Together, we can do this. And together we will remember the values this has reawakened in each of us, long after this pandemic is over.



THE LOPEZ FAMILY, ENJOYING THE SUN AND SAND AT AURORA RESERVOIR

A CONNECTION TO NATURE CLOSE TO HOME LOOKING FORWARD TO SPRING

The Montbello Open Space & ELK Outdoor Education Center will transform this neighborhood, providing an underrepresented and diverse urban community environmental, educational, and health benefits for many generations to come.

The Montbello Open Space is 4.5 acres of newly developed parkland designed specifically to mimic the native short-grass prairie ecosystem. The Open Space includes trails, bridges, an outdoor classroom, geo-discovery area, wood nature play areas, climbing boulder, ropes course, and native plants. ELK has activated the space as weather, COVID, and final construction activities allow.

The Outdoor Education Center will be built on one acre of the property that once completed, will house ELK's education programs. The building will have indoor and outdoor multipurpose areas for educational programming and youth and family engagement. The building's architectural character is contemporary in form but also contextual with the immediate landscape of the Montbello Open Space Park. The building will be a welcoming community feature, while being a modest model for environmental design.

We are grateful to The Trust for Public Land, Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR), and to all our partners, and students and families as ELK reaches its fullest potential. The Open Space will open this Spring 2021 and groundbreaking and construction for the building will begin early Summer 2021. To help with ELK's last push to finish this campaign, contact Loretta Pineda lpineda@elkkids.org.

For our youth,



– Loretta Pineda | Executive Director



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“VIRTUAL” ELK ‘N EGGS BREAKFAST

On October 9th, 2020, the Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) team celebrated its first ever “virtual” ELK ‘n Eggs Breakfast. This annual event normally hosted at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science included scenes from the museum, and other community open spaces and parks as part of the streaming production.

This continuously successful event annually celebrates recent successes and plans, while also highlighting individuals and partners who have made an impact on bridging the gap between underrepresented youth and families in our beautiful outdoors.

This year’s ELK Lifetime Legacy Award was presented to Denver Parks and Recreation Executive Director Happy Haynes who has been breaking down barriers for Colorado youth and families for over 30 years.

Generation Wild Northeast Metro Coalition received the Celebrated Partner Award for 2020. The NEMC is a coalition of 13 conservation organizations that provide outdoor experiential education and jobs in nature.



MASTER OF CEREMONIES MIKE JOHNSTON, GARY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Happy Haynes
Executive Director,
Denver Parks and Recreation

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING FOR KIDS
2020 LIFETIME LEGACY AWARDEE

“I CARE DEEPLY ABOUT INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES IN GETTING OUTDOORS TO BECOME MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN NATURAL SETTINGS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION. BY SHARING OUR RESOURCES WITH ELK, WE CAN BENEFIT EACH OTHER, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.”
- HAPPY HAYNES

Generation Wild
Northeast Metro Coalition

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING FOR KIDS
2020 CELEBRATED PARTNER AWARDEE

COALITION MEMBERS: URBAN FARM; BLUFF NATURE CENTER; FRIENDS OF FRONT RANGE WILDLIFE REFUGES; GROUNDWORK DENVER; COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE; MILE HIGH YOUTH CORPS; BOYS & GIRLS CLUB; AURORA PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE; DENVER PARKS AND RECREATION; SAND CREEK GREENWAY; COMMERCE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION; ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!

WE COULDN'T BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF OUR WONDERFUL COMMUNITY





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A graphic for Colorado Gives Day 2020. It features a green background with large orange and yellow circles. The text reads: "Your GREATNESS is not in what you have, but in what you GIVE." Below this is the name "ALICE HOCKER" in yellow. At the bottom, it says "December 8, 2020" and includes the hashtags "#GiveWhereYouLive" and "#COGives" in white text on an orange bar.

Your
GREATNESS
is not in what you have,
but in what you
GIVE.
ALICE HOCKER
December 8, 2020
#GiveWhereYouLive | #COGives

COLORADO GIVES DAY 2020

Why do you give and how do nonprofits like ELK bring value to your life? Colorado Gives Day is an annual celebration of nonprofit organizations in Colorado that help make our state a better place for all. This year Colorado Gives Day falls on December 8th, 2020 but gifts can be scheduled as early as today at www.coloradogives.org/ELKKids. Your support has the power to help provide opportunities for young people and their families to engage safely in the outdoors and to learn about science, leadership, and community. **This Colorado Gives Day, give students an experience they'll never forget!**