



# TRAIL Mix

FALL/WINTER  
2022

ELK NEWSLETTER

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE BACK IN ACTION!

Whew, what a rush! It's been an incredible year so far for Environmental Learning for Kids as we've opened our new facility and home in the Montbello community, continued to grow our staff and number of youth and families served, and raised near-record amounts of funding through grants and donations. However, after years of adjusting lessons and patiently waiting, ELK is finally back performing one of its most fundamental values which is teaching and mentoring in our local classrooms!

Teaching and working with youth in our community might be the most important thing that ELK does. ELK's school-based programs follow an experiential education focus, meaning that our goal is to strive to make learning a hands-on lesson in real time. With us, students are expected to work together, ask questions, make hypotheses, and test different approaches. This environment makes for sudden developments that can feel rowdy at times and lead to "a-ha!" moments for students. This approach embraces exploration and provides a safe space to make



AN ELK STUDENT ENJOYING A HANDS-ON SCHOOL PROGRAM ON OUR MONTBELLO OPEN SPACE PARK ROPES COURSE.

mistakes, be authentic, and take chances.

Studies have repeatedly confirmed the benefits of experiential learning (social-emotional development, critical thinking skills, etc.).

At this point, we've worked with more than 500 K-5 students since the beginning of the 2022 school year and have given them all a unique, active problem to work through. If life is the sum of all our experience, then ELK's

goal is to give our students as many opportunities as possible to try things for themselves. We know our students are already amazing people, and we're honored to give them the chance to show off their skills and who they are.

Read more by following our ELK blog at <https://elkkids.medium.com/>.

Scan to visit  
our Blog!



A message from Juan Pérez Sáez, ELK Executive Director

# WHAT DOES ACTIVATION OF THE ELK EDUCATION CENTER LOOK LIKE?



Following our official Opening Ceremony in June, activation of the long-awaited ELK Education Center has started off with a bang. So just what does that activation look like, you may be wondering?

This is a concept that we considered long and hard before committing to a project this large in both idealism and reality. What did we hope to accomplish? What would success look like?

For us, success starts with listening. Because of the many community focus groups we facilitated before starting this project, we knew that our far northeast community wanted a safe space to learn, to develop within, and to host important meetings and gatherings at that impact opportunities afforded to all far northeast youth and families.

So far this year, the ELK Education Center has reached over a thousand youth and families through events, outreach, and after school programs such as The Lounge Mentorship, Leadership Corps, and Energi Camp. In the future, you can look forward to ELK partnering with other like-minded organizations for Fun Family Fitness class, Gardening and Creative clubs, an after-school Nature Club, and more.

To find out more about our programs, sign up for our newsletters, follow us on social media, become a monthly donor, or sign up for our programs. Join our mission to re-shape what the future of environmental stewardship in Colorado will look like.

For the present and future generations,

– Juan Pérez Sáez | Executive Director



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# ELK 'N EGGS 2022

ELK 'n Eggs 2022 was truly an event to remember. We were overjoyed to come back together in person finally, after two years of missed connections and a strife on our human need to connect.



PAM JINER - ELK LIFETIME LEGACY AWARD RECIPIENT, 2022

Returning to the home of our longtime partner, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, this event celebrated many 2021-2022 accomplishments and spoke to our ability to rise to the challenge of much needed growth and a significant increase in services within the walls of our new home, the ELK Education Center.

As always, this year's ELK 'n Eggs including the presentation of a Celebrated Partner Award and a Lifetime Legacy Award. This year's Celebrated Partner was longtime partner, Denver Parks and Recreation. Accepted by Denver Parks and Recreation Executive Director, Happy Haynes, this award honors a strong partnership in providing safe and equitable access to all of Denver's residents.

One of Montbello community's most well-known and action-oriented residents, Ms. Pam Jiner, was bestowed the Lifetime Legacy award for her commitment to youth, families, and community.

On what this award means to her, Ms. Jiner said the following: "Absolutely everything! Having lived in Montbello for over 50+ years; working the past six years as the Executive Director of Montbello Walks - receiving a "Lifetime Legacy Award" from Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) is the icing on my cake. ELK designs and facilitates outdoor environmental learning experiences for our kids as does Montbello Walks. I am truly honored to accept this award on behalf of myself and the many Montbello Walks volunteers that support my work in community.

We were also overjoyed to host Youth Speaker, Daisy Madera, who graciously shared her journey with ELK.

We raised the most in this event's history with a total of \$112,000 in generous gifts that will support youth and families in our far northeast community. Many thanks to all of our sponsors and in-kind donors for making this event a success.

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

## THE LOUNGE

Every Thursday | 4pm-6pm  
Join The Lounge and ELK for our weekly mentorship afterschool camp for youth tutoring and mentoring needs, that also provides students a safe space here at the ELK Education Center. This program will run throughout the school year and benefit thirty youth in the Montbello Community ages 5-22. [If you are interested in getting your youth involved, please contact Dennis Troutman at \[dtroutman@elkkids.org\]\(mailto:dtroutman@elkkids.org\) or 720-439-9638.](#)

## FAMILY FITNESS CLASSES

Every Monday | 5pm-6:30pm  
Starting January 23rd, ELK will be partnering with Athletics and Beyond for an 8-week Family Fitness class that provides everything you need for a quality workout, including a free healthy meal. This program will run every Monday from 5pm-6:30pm, and it's for ALL AGES. The first 4 sessions will be held at the ELK Education Center and the last 4 sessions will happen at the Athletics and Beyond gym. [If you have any questions or need to set up transportation, please contact Dennis Troutman at \[dtroutman@elkkids.org\]\(mailto:dtroutman@elkkids.org\) or 865-208-8971.](#)



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## COLORADO GIVES DAY!



The countdown to Colorado Gives Day is on! Your gift to support Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) counts towards our December 6th goal of raising \$20,000 and the \$1.6 million Colorado Gives Day Incentive Fund. All participating Colorado Gives Day nonprofits earn a percentage of the fund, so the more we raise, the more we get

so be sure to visit <https://www.coloradogives.org/> and search “Environmental Learning for Kids.”

What does your support of ELK look like? A young person enjoying their first outdoor experience. A family being awakened to their child’s newfound passion for science. A high school student feeling supported in their secondary education aspirations to study within a STEM field.

We’re asking you to join us for Colorado Gives Day to make a difference in the lives of ELK youth and families. Help us meet our goal! Every year, Colorado comes together as a community, sharing stories and raising funds. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to ELK today. **Together we can inspire, educate, and transform our next generation of stewards and conservationists in Colorado! #COGivesDay**