

Stories of Gratitude

How Your Giving Changes Lives

SUMMER/FALL 2024



WILDERNESS
AWARENESS
SCHOOL

Lasting Impressions

by Sheynan, Grandmother of Azy

When my son was younger he always wanted to go to Wilderness Awareness School but we just couldn't afford it. 15 years later I am a single grandma raising my granddaughter. We decided to homeschool for a year to get a break from public school. As soon as I got schooling figured out, I wandered over to the WAS website. **I still couldn't afford it, but so badly wanted this to be a part of her childhood experience.** I applied for a scholarship and crossed my fingers.

My granddaughter was not interested in the great outdoors. She would whine and complain if we went on a hike. She hates bugs, being cold, and wouldn't swim in lakes and rivers unless she had a floaty. I knew this was either going to be a success or a total failure, but I was hopeful. We were given the scholarship, and thankfully she agreed to go.

“Her experience at WAS has certainly made a lasting impression on her. Thank you to the donors for making this a success.”

On the first day she had a meeting with devil's club—and not in a good way. I thought for sure she would not want to go back, but the second week came around and she was still in. That week she tripped and scraped up her leg. This was not going well.

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Thanks to your generosity, Azy now loves to go on hikes.

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Notes From the Eagle's Nest

by Warren Moon, Executive Director

I hope your summer has been filled with many wonderful moments in nature. Thanks to your support, 1,786 youth enjoyed such moments and made lasting memories with us at summer camp.

These campers embarked on exciting nature adventures with experienced mentors, exploring the stunning beauty of the Pacific Northwest. They built shelters, identified edible plants, studied animal tracks and signs, learned bird language, and deeply connected with nature. This experience has helped them build resilience and well-being, essential for navigating today's world. None of this would have been possible without your compassionate support. Thank you!

I'm thrilled to share our latest edition of Stories of Gratitude, which highlights the positive impact of your contributions:

In *Lasting Impressions*, you'll see how your donations helped Azy change her mind about hiking and set aside her fear of dirt and bugs in the name of fun.

In *Nature Connection in Real Estate*, you'll read about Sarah's commitment to bringing nature connection into the real estate space using the teachings from her Immersion experience.

I'm deeply grateful for your incredible generosity. Together, we're cultivating healthy relationships with nature, community, and self, while helping young people grow into the compassionate leaders and stewards of tomorrow.

With gratitude,

Warren
Moon



By the third week she learned what things to avoid and began making friends. The kids played games and she always got caught because her blonde hair shone when the sun hit it and gave her away. I knew things were going well the day she came home and told me she finally stayed hidden by laying her head under a fern (where there are bugs and dirt) and covering herself with foliage. My kiddo in the dirt under a fern! I was so proud of her.

“My kiddo in the dirt under a fern! I was so proud of her.”



Azy has grown in herself and her appreciation of nature thanks to the scholarship she received.

Throughout the year she chanced the “scary” murky pond waters a time or two, spent a day cold or uncomfortable, and even learned to make fire. This summer her one request has been to go camping so she can compete with her uncle in a fire challenge.

Now Azy loves going on hikes. **Thanks to the generous scholarship she has definitely grown in herself, in her appreciation of nature, and in her skills.** Her experience at WAS has certainly made a lasting impression on her. Thank you to the donors for making this a success.

Summer Moments Made Possible by You

“My 10-year-old camper enjoyed practicing his camouflage and ‘sneaking’ during Ranger Skills. He came home on day 2 wearing a handmade crown of sword ferns! Wilderness Awareness School camps encourage a pure joy of nature.”

– Mom of 10-year-old Ranger Skills camper

“My camper loved the games, hikes, playing in the clay pit, catching bugs and frogs, identifying plants, making nature tea, and sharing stories with the other campers and her counselor.”

– Mother of a 7-year-old Nature Adventure camper

“My son had so much fun at camp! He came home tired, dirty, and happy! Knowing he was outside playing in the trees and interacting with nature all day was so heartening. It’s exactly what kids should be doing all summer!”

– Mother of a 7-year-old Nature Adventure camper

“I had a great time at Castaway Overnight Camp. Some of my experiences were bullfrog hunting late at night, learning which berries I can eat, and how to treat bug stings. I think that this is an amazing camp and I would definitely do it again.”

– Andres Anguiano, Castaway Overnight camper

Nature Connection in Real Estate

by Sarah Liljegren

Right before I decided to take the leap into The Immersion at Wilderness Awareness School, I was angry at the world and myself. Like most people, I hated how Covid affected our society and culture, and I found myself distrusting more and more people, systems, and myself. I knew if I didn’t change myself drastically, I was going to remain submissive and scared for the rest of my adulthood.

“The Immersion was the rebirth process only the deepest part of me knew I needed.”

In the summer of 2021, I attended a natural movement retreat and was introduced to the core routines of Wilderness Awareness School, which moved my soul. It was my first time in Washington, and I decided to book a tour of the school. **The trees behind Malalo whispered the words “I love you,” and I knew after walking the land of Linne Doran that I would return** – even if The Immersion did start in less than a month!

The program itself was everything I needed to hold me in my grief, which I decided to feel fully and deeply. I found that the trees held me as they told me secrets, just like the landscape of eastern Washington gave me messages near the end of my Immersion experience that still give me chills. I will always remember the first coal I achieved with a bow drill. I’d never found emotions so old and so new at the same time before.



Sarah soaking in the emotions from a hard-earned friction fire

During the winter break of my Immersion year, I signed up for real estate school. There's much corruption in the real estate industry, and **something in me decided I'd give the rest of my life to healing that wound by weaving nature connection into the real estate space.** I was an oddball in the realtor world, with a perspective that centered developments around ecology and natural buildings and education. The code-switching it took to walk between these two worlds was more than I anticipated.



In her element, Sarah shares her deep love of plants as a facilitator at Wild Women's Weekend

Community work kept me grounded. I started Home Scouts, where I lead workshops that weave together nature connection, land stewardship, and sometimes real estate education. I was shocked by how often I would chat about land projects with

attendees, and it was during this pilot program I recommitted to the understanding that real estate work is nature connection work. My mission is to help connect people to not only a home, but also themselves, the environment, and the full complexity of their human experience.

These days, I'm working in Liberty Lake and Spokane Valley as an Agent Services and Marketing Manager for Windemere Valley real estate firm and serving on the board of the Northwest Intentional Communities Association (NICA). I host the Home for Humanity podcast, where I weave together the seemingly opposite worlds of nature connection and real estate to paint a picture of what nature-connected communities could look like.

“Real estate work is nature connection work.”

The Immersion was the soulful death and rebirth process only the deepest part of me knew I needed. I am so thankful my curiosity listened to the whispers of the trees, deepened into the blessing of my humanity, and allowed my brokenness to be reshaped and healed by the Immersion staff, apprentices, classmates, and land. The wave of regenerative real estate is here and I'm proud to be a part of it.

Yes! I want to be a lifeline for those needing nature connection!



- \$35
- \$50
- \$100
- \$250
- \$_____ - the possibilities are endless!

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Donate securely online at wildernessawareness.org/donate