ICO Group Highlights

Boulder Valley ICO provides an array of outings beyond its snowy winter repertoire. Spring brings hiking, mountain biking, and fly fishing. The group has established relationships with two local organizations, Trips For Kids and Boulder Flycasters, for mountain biking and fly fishing. Boulder Flycasters, with support from Sierra Club’s Water Sentinels program and the City of Boulder, provide equipment and training so Boulder ICO high school participants can have monthly water sampling and fishing outings on Boulder Creek and Sawhill Ponds. See and read more about their array of outings on their web site: rockymtn.sierraclub.org/ipg/bvico/.

For the fifth time, Baltimore ICO’s Digital Harbor High School students participated in a multi-day canoeing and kayaking expedition on the Patuxent River, sponsored by the Patuxent Riverkeeper and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. This river sojourn is the culmination of the school year for these students in teacher and ICO leader Nicole Veltre’s environmental science class. From June 24-28, the group participated in on-the-water experiences, including restoration activities, riverside camping, paddling to Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum, and festive meals, all with the goal of having fun while learning about their local environment and building a strong environmental ethic.

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A Note from Debra

Dear Friends,

Summer is certainly upon us! I hope you are well and enjoying these long beautiful days. As always, ICO volunteers are very busy planning outings and getting young people outdoors and active in nature.

In late June, Myla, Joey Shadowen (ICO National Steering Committee, Midwest Representative), and I spent the weekend in Louisville, conducting an ICO Outings Leader Training and Action Plan Workshop. My first experience at a workshop with Myla proved what I have been hearing all along – these visits to the field are one of the most valuable things we can offer the volunteers! Myla is highly skilled at facilitating and running both the leadership training and the strategic planning workshops, presenting the required information in an easy-to-learn, engaging, and relevant fashion.

In funding news, Washington D.C. ICO received a mini-grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Foundation to take 40 students on the “Living Classroom,” the motorized vessel Half Shell. This program introduces students to their local watershed on the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers through hands-on investigation of aquatic life, water quality studies, clam dissection, and plankton sampling while on board a historic ship.

Also, REI, Inc. invited three ICO groups to apply for grants this year. Dallas, Madison, and Spokane all submitted applications for grants of up to $5,000 to aid their programs.

Lots going on, as usual! Thank you for your ongoing support of ICO and your continued understanding of its value.

My best to you, as always,

Debra Asher
ICO National Administrator
debra.asher@sierraclub.org

Kids from Atlanta ICO enjoy the scenery at Anna Ruby Falls in the Chattahoochee National Forest.
Trip Highlights continued from page 1

Atlanta ICO had numerous outings these past few months. In April, Warren Boys and Girls Club youth participated in a service trip and hike in nearby Panola State Park. The group worked with students from Georgia Perimeter College to clean up trash and then took a short watershed hike to a creek for cooling off. In May, the same group went to Smithgall Woods State Park for a weekend of camping and exploring. On the drive back to Atlanta, a stop to enjoy Anna Ruby Falls in the Chattahoochee National Forest completed this great outdoor weekend. See trip photos on atlantaico.org.

Thanks to a talented volunteer, Kimberly Daly, Tucson ICO boasts a wonderful new website (ico.sierraclub.org/tucson/) with many great photos reflecting the spirit of ICO in all the varied outings they do. A girls-only camping trip to Sedona with Maxwell Middle School, a moonlight hike to Saguaro Monument with Los Niños Elementary School, and an all day hike to Mt. Lemmon with the Owl and Panther Project group of refugee families were some of the outstanding events.

ICO Collaborations
Partnering for a More Powerful Program

Children and Nature Movement

Even though ICO has been getting kids outdoors for more than 30 years, we’ve seen a sharp increase recently in national awareness of this issue. Triggered by Richard Louv’s book, Last Child in The Woods, and the concept of “nature deficit disorder” in young people today, the national Children and Nature movement has been launched. Sierra Club and other environmental organizations, educators, and outdoor retailers have joined the Children and Nature movement, along with Outdoors Alliance for Kids, to help children, youth, and families to connect with the outdoors.

Outdoor Nation

In June, four young ICO leaders from Hartford, New York City, and San Francisco represented ICO at Outdoor Nation, a two-day youth summit and festival held in Central Park to start a youth-driven movement champion-

ICO AT A GLANCE

Begun in 1971 by the Sierra Club’s San Francisco Bay chapter, ICO promotes appreciation and protection of the natural environment through wilderness adventures and environmental education.

Today, 49 groups nationwide serve more than 11,000 young people on approximately 845 outings and service trips each year. Participants include low-income inner city youth and adults, as well as the physically challenged; people who would not otherwise have access to safe, enjoyable outdoor experiences.

Three part-time staff and approximately 400 volunteers run the program.

ICO LOCAL GROUPS

Alabama:
Birmingham

Arizona:
Phoenix, Tucson

California:
Eastern Sierra, Los Angeles, Orange County, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Francisco Rafting, San Jose

Colorado:
Boulder, Denver

Connecticut:
Hartford, New Haven

DC:
Washington

Florida:
Gainesville, Jacksonville, Manatee-Sarasota, Miami, Orlando, Tampa Bay, West Palm Beach

Georgia:
Atlanta

Illinois:
Chicago

Kentucky:
Lexington, Louisville

Maryland:
Baltimore

Massachusetts:
Boston

Michigan:
Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti (Washtenaw), Grand Rapids

Minnesota:
Minneapolis/St. Paul

Missouri:
St. Louis

New Jersey:
North Central

New York:
New York City

North Carolina:
Triangle - Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill

Ohio:
Cincinnati, Cleveland

Oregon:
Portland

Pennsylvania:
Harrisburg, Philadelphia

Tennessee:
Nashville

Texas:
Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston

Washington:
Seattle, Spokane

Wisconsin:
Madison

(continued on page 4)
ICO Trainings - Boston and Louisville

In early June, Myla Marks, our ICO Organizer, and Laureen Guerriero, ICO National Steering Committee Northeast Representative, made their way to Boston to conduct an ICO Outings Leader Training (ICO OLT 201) and Action Plan Workshop (APW).

Eleven volunteers – including three from Hartford ICO – completed the all-day training on Saturday followed by the Boston ICO strategic planning session on Sunday, with six Boston volunteers in attendance. Two of the Hartford ICO leaders – college students who had participated in ICO when they were in high school – inspired the group with their continued commitment to ICO leadership and re-engaging their high schools in the program. The workshop also inspired volunteers to revitalize a previous successful fundraiser – “ICO Brewfest” – for February 2011.

At the Louisville training in late June, 17 ICO volunteers – four from Nashville and 13 from Louisville, including four youth leaders (ages 16-19) who have been with ICO since they were in middle school – attended the all day ICO OLT 201, followed by the APW on Sunday. The co-chairs from Nashville ICO stayed for the first portion of the APW so they could learn how to conduct one for their own group in the future. Having the mix of groups provided an added source of information and best practice sharing that everyone found helpful.

“I want to recognize the volunteers who were able to attend both the training and the APW. It was truly an amazing experience. Thank you for the day of fun, educational, hands-on interactive training.”

– Participant at Louisville ICO Training and Action Plan Workshop

ICO Collaborations continued from page 3

ing the outdoors (outdoornation.org). New York ICO volunteers led hikes in Central Park and others promoted ICO at informational tables. Mike Brune, Sierra Club’s Executive Director, announced the Club’s involvement in the Obama administration’s September 11, 2010 Day of Service, encouraging young people to get involved in an outdoor project. And our ICO leaders met and networked with other outdoor youth leaders from across the country.

The Best Internship on Earth
ICO and Sierra Club’s Building Bridges to the Outdoors (BBTO) worked with Sierra Club Communications on the development of the “Best Internship on Earth.” The intern, Evan Geary, will participate in and produce video and blogs about all his Sierra Club outdoor experiences. Christian Alvarado – a former Hartford ICO participant and now college-aged Hartford ICO leader – was one of the top ten finalists for Best Internship on Earth, and Christian will work closely with Evan to publicize his own story and the work of ICO. This is all incredible publicity for ICO and the Sierra Club’s role in the youth outdoors movement. See Christian’s video chronicling a Hartford ICO outing on our ICO public web site: sierraclub.org/ico/video.aspx.