



Inner City Outings

Providing outdoor opportunities for urban youth and adults



ICO Seattle



ICO Harrisburg



ICO Boulder Valley



ICO Miami



ICO Boston

ICO Group Highlights

Harrisburg ICO had an adventure on the Juniata River thanks to community partners Susquehanna River Outfitters and Pittman's Riverside Campgrounds. Ten Math/Science Academy Magnet School students and alumni canoed down the river, located northwest of Harrisburg, PA. Wildlife abounded: the group spotted red winged black birds, snapping turtles, a large catfish, and even an eagle. Part of the outing included participation in a watershed study, analyzing the health of the river. The group collected and identified macro invertebrates like leeches and crayfish. They also took several water quality measurements like the turbidity, and dissolved oxygen and phosphorus levels in several spots on the river. All were happy to hear the overall health of the river was a thumbs-up. The evening at Pittman's Riverside Campground included a campfire, games, and fun. The next morning the students helped make (and eat!) a large breakfast before getting back on the river for a day of paddling.

Adventure Day at Caspers Regional Park was an eye-opening experience for **Orange County ICO** leaders and participants. Middle school students from CREER, a community agency providing educational resources and gang-prevention activities for Hispanic youth visited the park, located just a 20 minute drive from their homes. The Caspers' rangers provided nature-themed games and prizes and led a hike that concluded with a shared picnic lunch. Few students knew of the park's existence but were excited to learn of a gem right in their own backyard; this is what ICO is all about!

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“I feel very fortunate to have spent the last 2+ years as Inner City Outings Field Organizer, training ICO leaders across the country and sharing best practices to help groups develop a shared vision and strong local infrastructure. I leave the position having benefitted from my work with countless inspiring people who are invested in creating and fostering healthy relationships between disadvantaged peoples and the outdoors.”

– Myla Marks, ICO Organizer



ICO Harrisburg explored the Juniata River in their home state of Pennsylvania, enjoying waterfalls and checking the river's health along the way.

A Note from Debra

Dear Friends,

The crisp air is a true sign that fall is upon us. No matter the time of year, there is a great deal of ICO activity – planning and participating in outings, training volunteers, fundraising – all with the goal of getting the youth outdoors and active in nature.

Amidst the flurry of summer activities was the bittersweet departure of ICO Organizer Myla Marks, who has returned to graduate school at the University of Oregon to earn her Masters degree in nonprofit management and environmental science. Myla raised the quality of this program to its highest level ever and we will certainly miss her. We will look to our experienced staff and regional representatives to continue supporting and training local groups.

Funding-wise, there is good news. **REI Inc.** has awarded the **Dallas and Spokane ICO** groups each with a \$5,000 grant award and **Madison ICO** awaits notice of its award. Volunteer connections were instrumental in helping **Los Angeles ICO** receive renewed support of \$15,000 from **Northrup Grumman Corporation** and also **Boulder Valley ICO's** award of \$1,000 from **Covidien**.

On the grant application front, Chicago and West Palm Beach ICO groups each applied to and received \$2,500 grants from North Face's Explore Fund. Chicago ICO also hopes to renew support from the Youth Outdoors Legacy Fund. Sacramento ICO applied for funding from the local Soroptimist Club to match \$1,000 from Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge Fund with the goal of sending a group of youth for a weekend of environmental education. Lastly, Seattle ICO applied for renewed funding from their long-time donor, The Islands Fund, plus former supporter the Youth Outdoors Legacy Fund.

Thank you for your continued support of ICO and allowing youth to experience the great outdoors. I hope you enjoy the wonders of fall and look forward to sharing more ICO stories next quarter.

My best to you, as always,

Debra Asher
ICO National Administrator
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Trip Highlights *continued from page 1*

St. Louis ICO experienced a memorable camping and caving trip to Onondago State Park. Youth from Kingdom House, a social service agency serving youth ages six to 18, and St. Bridget and St. Teresa's after school youth group participated in the novel adventure. The cave tour revealed small spaces and large rooms with vast ceilings, a flowing stream and pools, and even a waterfall - sights many had never witnessed. Everyone was excited to learn about cave ecology and escape the summer heat.



Clockwise, from top: San Francisco Bay ICO Rafting group clearing Scotch Broom—an invasive species—from the banks of the South Fork of the American River; Hartford ICO with their haul from a day's work along the Connecticut River; a proud community gardener from ICO Washington D.C. (photo courtesy of Katie Campbell).

ICO Serves America

President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009, designating September 11th as a National Day of Service and Remembrance. We are proud to report that thirteen ICO groups signed on to conduct service outings that day, eight of them spearheaded by youth who participated in the Islandwood training (*see page 4*).

One such youth is Christian Alvarado from **Hartford ICO** who organized a clean-up on the banks of the Connecticut River. Islandwood trainees Lucy Lang and Giao Tran of **Orange County ICO** organized the Wilderness Adventures Club at Bolsa Grand High School to collect leaf litter and trash from the school's track. **Washington D.C. ICO** leaders took youth from the Columbia Heights Community Center to the local farmers' market where they quizzed the farmers about organic produce then headed to North Columbia Heights Green to help garden. ICO certainly left a positive impact in their local communities on this special day.

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 (Washentaw), 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

ICO Trainings

Islandwood Youth Leader Training

In July, ICO and Sierra Club's Building Bridges to the Outdoors (BBTO) program teamed up to provide an outings leader training at Islandwood, an environmental education center on Bainbridge Island, WA. The educator-led training focused on environmental education, games, and methods to make nature relevant to the personal experiences of youth, especially those who may not have experienced the outdoors before. This collaborative training combined the strengths of ICO and BBTO to produce outings leaders who are engaged in establishing lasting pathways for youth.



"It was such a great weekend. I was so impressed with how Myla and Mark took care of everything, kept us on track, and really helped us get a lot accomplished. I've gotten great feedback from the weekend and I think things are really going to go well."

— Allison Williams, Atlanta ICO Chair on the Outings Leader Training and Action Plan Workshop conducted in mid-August.



Louisville ICO participants were some of the lucky few that traveled to Denver, CO to help rebuild trails in the Maroon Bells Wilderness near Aspen.

Sierra Club Volunteer Vacations

Thanks to a generous donor bequest we are able to offer three Sierra Club "volunteer vacation" trips to nine ICO participants and three adult chaperones.

Three youth and one chaperone from **Louisville ICO** traveled from their hometown to Denver, CO to participate in a trail building project in the Maroon Bells Wilderness near Aspen. The group, joined by other families, aimed to rehabilitate the Crater Lake Trail, a well-used summer hiking trail. The process included obliterating old trail to make way for new trail and digging holes to transplant native trees and bushes. Everyone felt accomplished, especially because they were thanked multiple times by random strangers.

Across a few states to the West, three members of **Boulder Valley ICO** and one chaperone set out for a week-long habitat restoration project at Point Reyes National Seashore in northern California. The participants, along with local youth, spent four days removing invasive species. For the remaining two days, the group explored the beaches and trails of the exquisite coastal environment. Chaperone Linda Gerdenich praised the participants for their hard work and positive interactions with everyone.

Wind River Range of Wyoming was the destination of the third service trip. Three youth and one leader from the Hmong Partnership group of **Minnesota ICO** participated in this strenuous yet rewarding adventure.

If you are interested in a volunteer vacation with Sierra Club, please visit: sierraclub.org/outings