

PROJECT GET OUTDOORS

2016 Newsletter



www.mnprojectgo.org

A Message from Our Founder

In 2016, Project Get Outdoors (GO) celebrated 11 years since our founding. As with any non-profit that makes it past the 10 year mark, our Board began working on restructuring of our organization which included developing a new business plan and remodeling our program model.

Professionals from SCORE and the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation were gracious to meet with Board Members and provide small business advising to help develop this new plan.

We are excited to announce that a major emphasis of the new program model will include a **Project GO Leader Certification program**, an 8-hour training that will be made available to community action groups and youth serving organizations throughout Minnesota. This training is being developed as we speak and will be piloted in early 2017. Thank you to **Mayo Clinic** and the **Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation** for supporting the development of this new training program!

We also wish to thank the **Jane Goodall Foundation** for their generous grant that allowed us to purchase more supplies for our Activity Backpacks. And the **Jeffers Foundation** for providing additional resources such as the Parents Guide to Nature Play, to also be included in our Activity Backpacks.

Sara Holger

Thank you for your support!



Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation

Summer 2016 Highlights

- Project GO Board Members participated in the Children and Nature Network International Conference that was held in St. Paul in May. We hosted a poster session and helped to facilitate a break out session on community mapping. Look for our session at the upcoming Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education Conference in Minneapolis this November.
- Eastside Salvation Army in St. Paul continued to access Project GO equipment kits to get their youth outdoors this summer.
- The Burnsville YMCA purchased 10 Project GO Activity Backpacks to use with summer day camps around the Metro Area.
- Project GO volunteers participated in two Como Zoo “Passport to Your Backyard” events, leading hands-on nature activities and sharing information with parents about how to connect their children to nature.
- Project GO volunteers participated in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed Clean Up by sponsoring an activity station.
- Winona State University students taking a public health course focused their required class project on Project GO by raising funds to assemble and distribute Activity Backpacks to various community organizations where families can check them out for free use. They then presented their project summary to their class.



Partner Highlight: Rochester Family YMCA

Prior to the kick off of the busy summer season, the Rochester Family YMCA invited Project GO to come provide a training for all of their summer day camp staff. Project GO also provided 5 Activity Backpacks to the site. Over the course of the summer, a special Project GO Day Camp was offered and Project GO volunteers helped lead some nature activities for the kids. Through this collaboration, we were able to help facilitate outdoor nature experiences for nearly 600 kids.



Project GO Early Childhood Training Now Available!

After nearly two years of working through a very intense approval process with the MN Center for Professional Development/MN Develop, Project GO has launched our Early Childhood Training for child care providers and others who work with pre-school age children. Board Members and staff worked closely with an independent curriculum developer to create this training to meet Parent Aware standards, a highly recognized status that signifies a child care center has trained their staff to meet a high level of child safety, especially related to health and wellness and preventing childhood obesity. The training was launched in early summer in Rochester and Winona and received great feedback. We are now working to recruit trainers who can lead these future trainings around the state. If you are interested, connect Sara Holger at 507-951-5885 or by email at sara.grover@yahoo.com.



Volunteer Spotlight: Vicky Strommen

Vicky Strommen lives in Rochester, MN. She is a Minnesota Master Naturalist volunteer who enjoys working with kids. Vicky reached out to Project GO after seeing our volunteer advertisement in the Rochester Post Bulletin newspaper. Thanks to the United Way of Olmsted County, these free volunteer ads appear in area newspapers and on the United Way website. For her first summer volunteering with Project GO, Vicky helped with an event at Como Zoo and she helped lead activities at the Rochester YMCA. Thank you Vicky!!!



Don't Forget Project GO on Give to the Max Day!

Please remember us on November 17, Give to the Max Day! Thank you for your support!



Contact Project GO

Founder - Sara (Grover) Holger
PO Box 244

Wabasha, MN 55981

Tel: 507-951-5885

Email: sara.grover@yahoo.com

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For More Information

www.mnprojectgo.org

