



VERMONT
WILDERNESS
SCHOOL

November 2019

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Dear friend,

Have you noticed that our young people are fired up?? They are literally taking to the streets to tell us that it's time for a radical change in how our society relates to the Earth.

I'm writing to you— and a small group of other dedicated supporters of the Vermont Wilderness School— because I know that you believe in these young people. I'm inviting you to support them by contributing to our scholarship fund.

This year we will provide \$30,000 in scholarship funds to over 80 families. By helping a young person participate in a VWS program, you are reinforcing what they already know— that **living a life of purpose and community service begins with the cultivation a deep personal connection with the natural world**.

The Vermont Wilderness School is founded on the belief that it is possible to restore our relationships with the land. These young people are showing us that it is not only possible — it is essential.

You may know the Vermont Wilderness School as an organization that has been offering life-changing nature connection programs and mentoring for the past 20 years. But that's not all we do. I have a feeling there may be more to VWS than you realize!

VWS believes that **nature-connection, equity, and social justice are interdependent**— they walk hand in hand. Our vision is to be an antidote to the powerlessness and isolation felt by so many in the world today. We're grateful that young people like Leora (pictured above) and her peers put their trust in us as a place for essential learning and growth. We hope you will join with us in this vision.

What are we doing **right now** to make this vision real?

- **Making our nature connection programs available to everyone.** We already offer sliding scale pricing and scholarships for every one of our programs. This year we will provide \$30,000 in scholarships to over 80 families. In the near future we'll be expanding our **free programming** for elementary school students. (Stay tuned.)

"It was the only thing she asked for."



This comment was made offhand by the mother of 15-year-old Leora Fisher. When asked by her parents what gift she wanted for the holidays, the only thing she wanted was to return to the Vermont *Art of Mentoring* program for a second year.

- **Acknowledging that we are living in the historic territory of the Abenaki people**, who have endured displacement, oppression, and genocide over the past 200+ years, but who are still here. VWS is working with the Akomawt Educational Initiative to improve Native representation and acknowledgment in our program offerings and trainings. And in 2020 we will offer a Native Studies class, led by a local majority-Native teaching team. (Join us!)
- **Training teachers, managers, and parents to bring nature connection principles into their classrooms, workplaces, and families.** Over the past 20 years we have trained over a thousand people in our effective methods for nature connection mentoring and program design.
- **Building a movement.** VWS has taken a leadership role in helping create a network of 47 other like-minded wilderness schools around the region. Together we are responding to the interlocking global crises of climate disruption, disconnection from nature, and the insidious mindset of extraction and domination.

We could not, and will not, be able to do all this without your support. Without you, all we could manage would be to run a few fun programs for youth here in the Brattleboro area. But the world is calling us— all of us— to do more. VWS is ready to answer that call. Please join us as we embark on our next 20 years.



Please help us fill our 2020 Scholarship Fund.
 We need to raise \$30,000 by December 31.
 So far we've raised \$3,500, and we have \$26,500 to go!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam".

Sam Stegeman
 Executive Director

On behalf of
 The VWS Board
 &
 The VWS Staff

P.S. 100% of your donation will provide scholarship funds. Please give by December 31.

P.P.S. I hope you'll join us for our 20th Anniversary Celebration May 25th, 2020. Details coming soon!