



NatureBridge®

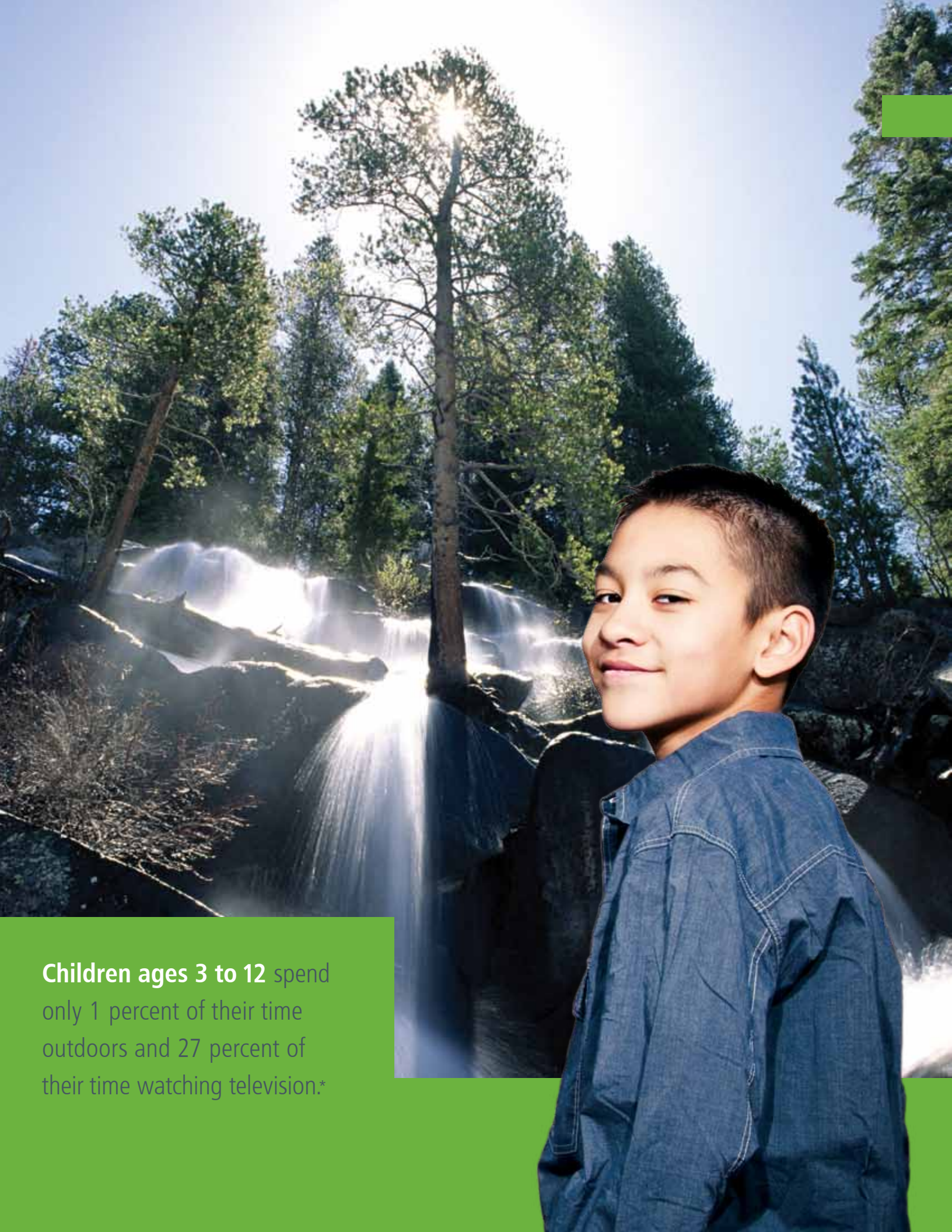
Connecting youth to nature and changing  
lives through environmental literacy



**WE'RE**

TO TEACH. TO INSPIRE.  
TO MOTIVATE.

**READY**



## WHY WE TEACH

### For Our Kids

We believe environmental education should be part of every child's experience. In 40 years we've introduced 1 million young people to the science and wonder of nature in the world's best classrooms—our national parks.

Every day, NatureBridge students have life-changing experiences in some of the most beautiful places on the planet. Approximately 30,000 students from 600 schools participate in our three- to five-day field science programs each year in Yosemite National Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Olympic National Park, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and Channel Islands National Park.

Annually, more than \$1 million dollars in NatureBridge scholarships ensure that diverse youth from underserved urban and rural communities experience the magic of living and learning in our national parks. On average, 35 percent of our students receive scholarship assistance.

### For More Sustainable Communities

We are in the midst of a profound environmental crisis. Destructive human impact on our environment is accelerating while our children become more alienated from nature and spend more time inside engaging in solitary and sedentary activities that put their minds and bodies at risk.

We must turn things around. A generation of environmentally literate youth that appreciates our world's diversity and understands the intersections of natural and human systems can put us on a path toward a more sustainable future.

**True environmental literacy** requires a strong connection to the natural world, an appreciation for nature's beauty, and an understanding of the scientific principles that govern our environment.

NatureBridge students become environmentally literate. They connect to nature through real-world, inquiry-based science. They are challenged to consider their environment in new ways and to learn how to make informed decisions. They are changed in ways small and large that put them on a new path.



**WE ARE PROUD** to be the largest residential environmental education partner of the National Park Service and to work with them to strengthen the role education plays in our national parks, and the role our national parks play in the lives of our youth.

Children ages 3 to 12 spend only 1 percent of their time outdoors and 27 percent of their time watching television.\*

## HOW WE TEACH

“**Immersive and research-based** environmental education programs like NatureBridge offers combat the disengagement from nature that we are seeing in kids today. They have dramatic benefits in areas such as health, academic achievement, and commitment to conservation and sustainability.”

NICOLE ARDOIN Assistant Professor, Stanford University School of Education and the Woods Institute for the Environment; Chair, NatureBridge Education Advisory Council

### Lasting Connections

You'll find field science at the core of everything we do. But we can't bring every student to a national park. We have to reach beyond park boundaries if we are going to gain momentum toward a more sustainable future. So we do more.

We support teachers and students with free curricula and tools they use in the classroom, online, and in their local communities to expand on their NatureBridge experiences. Our research-based training programs prepare teachers to teach environmental education topics in the classroom. Youth leadership and skills development programs provide more opportunities for students to connect with the environment and explore careers in environmental education.

### High Standards

Our field science curricula meet California, Washington state, and national standards. Every program is built on the NatureBridge Core Educational Framework, which was developed in partnership with academic, research, and environmental experts from leading institutions. It enables us to meet students where they are and capitalize on their unique strengths and prior knowledge. As a result, every NatureBridge student has a meaningful experience that stays with them long after they've left the national park.

### Three Common Themes

Three Core Educational Framework threads provide a foundation for every program. Learning about the natural and cultural features of the parks in which we teach provides students with a strong *sense of place*. A range of scientific, cultural, and social topics helps students form *interconnections* that inspire them to think differently about their relationships to nature and to each other. And *stewardship* lessons help students understand the need for responsible choices and inspire them to take action to protect our planet.

### Always Focused on Outcomes

The goal of environmental education is responsible environmental behavior. NatureBridge focuses on behavior change and three key program outcomes that directly support it. Increased academic ability, personal growth, and improved interpersonal skills all support our ultimate goal for every student to behave in ways that protect and preserve the natural world.

### NatureBridge Works

Ongoing evaluations, done in partnership with experts from organizations such as Stanford University's School of Education, show that NatureBridge field science programs create a long-term educational impact, strengthen teacher effectiveness, and encourage stewardship among students.

**ONE OF THE THINGS** I learned was how to observe. I found out that to really understand something, you have to go beyond asking yourself yes or no questions like, "Are there more trees by the creek than in the forest?" You also have to ask yourself "Why?"

EMIKO sixth grade field science student





## BUILDING THE NATUREBRIDGE COMMUNITY

“**What NatureBridge does** has never been more urgent. Today’s youth spend an average of four hours per day inside consuming media, compared to seven minutes engaged in outdoor activities. With basic environmental values under unprecedented attack, we must work together to promote scientific and ecological literacy—paired with the sense of wonder that connects us to the natural world.”

**ANDREAS MERKL** Chairman, Sea Change Investment Fund; Principal, California Environmental Associates; NatureBridge Capital Campaign Committee Member

### Taking the Long View

Environmental literacy is key to conserving and protecting our natural resources. And those resources are critically important to all of us whether we are children, parents, scientists, teachers, hunters, farmers, advocates, or philanthropists.

We are committed to removing cultural, economic, and political barriers to environmental literacy. By increasing awareness and building demand for environmental education, we create a path toward a more environmentally literate society and a more sustainable future.

Together with partners—in the academic community, government agencies, advocacy organizations, other program providers, the philanthropic community, and individuals like you—we are charting a course for the future of environmental education. We continue to build and document best practices in the field, create new evidence-based curriculum and professional development programs for teachers, and expand the definition of environmental education to include interdisciplinary studies from math and science to history and civics.

### Based On a Solid Foundation

We’ve been leaders in environmental education for 40 years. And we’re ready for whatever the next 40 years bring.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we rely on generous donations to support scholarships, the development of new curricula, and program enhancements. But more than 70 percent of our income is earned through our field science programs, as well as conference and family programs that subsidize our mission.

We’re ready to do more, and we’re ready for you to join us.



**Week-long outdoor education experiences** result in increases in mastery of science concepts, enhanced cooperation and conflict resolution skills, and gains in positive environmental behavior.\*\*

## WHERE WE TEACH

### Yosemite National Park

In 1971 we brought our first students to Yosemite National Park and immersed them in the nearly 1,200 square miles of deep valleys, grand meadows, and ancient giant sequoias. Today, more than 10,000 students attend NatureBridge field science programs in Yosemite each year.

Visiting Yosemite is a transformative experience. The park's natural history, geology, and vast wilderness areas make it the perfect setting for our students to study the impacts of climate change, build confidence, learn teamwork, and form new connections with each other and with the natural world.

Yosemite is also the place where NatureBridge develops some of its most innovative new programs. A summer educator development program prepares diverse groups of college graduates to begin a career in outdoor education. A summer field research course offers high school students a chance to develop and conduct their own studies in the Yosemite backcountry. And the Armstrong Scholars expedition brings together young women each summer for a life-changing backpacking adventure through the high sierra.

### I WANT FUTURE STUDENTS

to respect nature and animals and the environment because I learned that humans, plants, animals, and everything else all needs each other and we are one big family.

**BRIAN** fifth grade field science student



**"I taught my parents** about plankton and how zooplankton has to get their food and phytoplankton makes their own food. My family was amazed. The way you taught me—that's the way I'm going to teach my family and pass it on to other people and that person might pass it on to the world. It's the little things that make a big difference."

**VERONICA** 10th grade field science student

### Golden Gate National Recreation Area

NatureBridge established its first urban campus in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1977. Located on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, the campus resides on the site of the Fort Cronkhite World War II military post. For some of the more than 9,000 students who join us here each year, it is the first time they have ever seen the ocean or visited a national park.

At our Golden Gate campus, students study tide pool creatures' adaptations in our state-of-the-art intertidal marine lab, observe seals from coastal bluffs, remove invasive plant species, learn teamwork, and renew their relationship with nature.

This campus hosts many of our teacher professional development programs and is home to groundbreaking youth leadership programs, including NatureBridge's Teen Environmental Education Mentorship program. As teen mentors, high school students from San Francisco Bay Area urban centers discover their inner strength as leaders; their ability to positively influence others; and the importance of diversity, community, and hands-on learning.





## WHERE WE TEACH

**“I learned a lot more** than I thought possible about my friends, nature, and myself. I learned some of the things I could do to preserve nature all around the world and that now it needs protecting more than ever.”

DANIEL sixth grade field science student

### Olympic National Park

In 1988, in partnership with Olympic National Park, we established our third campus in one of North America’s most spectacular temperate rain forests.

The historic Rosemary Inn on the shores of Lake Crescent is home to our campus. More than 6,000 students and teachers visit us here in the northern foothills of the Olympic Mountains each year.

Coastal and subalpine ecosystems, a rich cultural history, and strong, community-based relationships combine at our Olympic campus to create transformational experiences for students and teachers. The Elwha River and the removal of the Elwha Dam that began in September 2011 provide students a unique opportunity to study the direct consequences of human impact on the natural world.

In this living laboratory, our students learn about the area’s cultural history, study habitat restoration, and collect and contribute data to research projects. By increasing their scientific literacy and building connections to the natural world, they come to better understand and appreciate their roles as environmental stewards.



### Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

In close partnership with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, we launched our Santa Monica Mountains campus in 2010. From the top of Sandstone Peak to the Arroyo Sequit watershed, NatureBridge students from Southern California’s urban centers explore the park’s Mediterranean ecosystem and learn how their actions impact the world around them.

Here, field science programs combine with physical challenge and team building to create magical experiences for our students—many of whom have never left their urban neighborhoods before and never knew these wild places existed right in their own backyard.

### Channel Islands National Park

At Channel Islands National Park, our students study isolated landscapes and seascapes, and experience unique animals and plants found nowhere else on earth. They leave everything familiar behind and begin to think differently about the world and their place in it.

Students explore on foot and by kayak, studying marine life, geology, and natural history while camping on the islands or living aboard a boat. We launched our first programs in the Channel Islands in 2010.



### SCIENCE HERE IS DIFFERENT

from at home. Science here isn’t a class, but an experience.

ASHLYN fifth grade field science student





YOSEMITE  
GOLDEN GATE  
OLYMPIC  
SANTA MONICA  
MOUNTAINS  
CHANNEL ISLANDS



**“National parks are our best classrooms.** There is no place better for children to learn about environmental science and study human impacts on our environment. And you can’t come to these magical places without being changed, without forming personal, lasting relationships with the natural world. Together, the science and the inspiration combine to create a desire to protect and preserve our national parks for future generations. That’s the key to what NatureBridge is doing. They take students from science to stewardship. That’s what makes this work so important.”

JON JARVIS Director, National Park Service

### Are You Ready to Join Us?

We believe that a more sustainable future is achievable and that environmental education is the key. And we know we can’t get there alone. We are relying on the creativity, support, and leadership of people like you to help us teach and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards. Will you join us?

[naturebridge.org/ready](http://naturebridge.org/ready)

## NATUREBRIDGE.ORG

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*Founded as Yosemite Institute in 1971*



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\*Hofferth, S. L., and J. F. Sandberg. "Changes in American Children's Time, 1981–1997." In *Children at the Millennium: Where Have We Come From, Where Are We Going?*, edited by S. L. Hofferth and T. J. Owens. Oxford, England: Elsevier Science, 2001.

\*\*American Institutes for Research. *Effects of Outdoor Education Programs for Children in California*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research, 2005.