

READY, SET, GO!

The newsletter that keeps you up-to-date on the Project GO happenings around Crookston and St. Paul!

A PROJECT GO INTRODUCTION

Project GO works to establish meaningful connections with nature and kids. The program was started in SW Minnesota back in 2005. Today, the program has spread throughout southern MN and is making it's way farther North! Weekly outings into the natural environment provide kids with unstructured play that helps with concentration, cooperative play, and cognitive thinking—all for free! The program is a community-supported program run by community volunteers with support from partnering organizations.

NORTHWEST REGION: SUMMER'S HERE!

The Regional Directors for the University of Minnesota Extension met in Crookston this month! One gentlemen gave me great advice when dealing with kids over the summer. He said when he was young the TV magically would quit working around June 1st every year, and then somehow get fixed near the end of August. We all had a chuckle, but that's an interesting parenting tactic - one that might prove to be a great ally to the outdoors!

Now that summer is here, the question is how do you get kids outside having fun? Well, there's no amount of shortage for activities in the Northwest! Between youth organization events, park programs, and summer rec opportunities, the question might be how do you DECIDE what to do?

Project GO is helping out with a Crookston Parks and Rec Summer program for kids about gardening and cooking. The kids get to learn about gardening and how to use what they grow in delicious dishes they learn to cook themselves.

The White Earth Academy of Math and Science started June 9th! Conservation Corps Individual Placements—Project GO and the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL)—are working together to assist with putting on a few classes during the month-long summer school. RREAL is putting on a solar energy class to work with the youth and Project GO will be assisting with a Rydell Refuge outing, campus tour, and nature games!



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Rydell National Wildlife Refuge
- Meet Amy Flatten
- Mud Activities
- Opportunities to Get Involved!



SHARING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND GOOD FUN!

The picture shown on the left is the very first school group of the year at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge! Project GO in the NW Region teamed up with the Rydell staff to offer fun, educational programming for school groups! This first group was a local pre-school class brave enough to brave the cold rainy weather that day. The weather slowly got better and better and eventually ended with the last group in sunny 80 degree weather.

Programs included scavenger hunts, bird house making, learning about aquatic invertebrates and large Minnesota predators, as well as fun educational games!

A special thanks goes out to the Rydell staff for allowing Project GO to partner in some of those programs! Working with such broad age groups allows one to see how the differences in how they digest information, what they get excited about, and all the great kinds of questions they ask.

Thank you school groups for a great spring school group semester! You are all wonderful, and we hope to see you around at the Refuge this summer!

What do you call a young deer who likes to eat grass?

A fawn mower

STAFF HIGHLIGHT: AMY FLATTEN

Amy is Project GO's Americorps member in St. Paul. As a recent graduate of UW Stevens Point, Amy is interested in anything biology related and loves learning new things. Growing up on a hobby farm in the west Metro, she became enthralled in the world of insects, gardens, and backyard chickens! Amy can never get enough time outdoors in any season (even this past winter) and loves camping, canoeing, hiking, skiing, snowboarding, birding, running around barefoot, and feeding hungry mosquitos!



ST. PAUL AREA: LET THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURES BEGIN!

(Read like a Race Commentator)

Aaaaaand they're off! It'll be a quick sprint of a summer with many contestants hurdling over barriers of where to spend their free time. It looks like some promising experiences that participants must face and overcome include the extensively tiring all-day event at Lake Phalen, the teamwork of group games, and the ultimate outdoor experience – overnight camping! The mightiest victors will scramble after insects, creep through the urban jungle, sense where the elusive green spaces are located, test their bravery of the elements and outdoor skills, handle strange tools, and build relationships with their comrades. Not for the faint of heart, but perfect for the adventuresome whim of a child! As they make the last turns of summer, they will motivate each other to master new outdoor skills, hone in on their creativity and imagination, and exploit the hours of irresistible summertime. Bring on the heat!

As for the Freedom River Event that Project GO partnered with, Minneapolis 3rd graders were challenged to explore wooded trails opening up to beautiful views of the Mississippi River and pick up trash as they went along. They were stunned to try a wild edible - garlic mustard - and perfected the art of skewering a hot dog on a stick to roast their meal over a fire. One hour on a sunny afternoon can definitely open up the eyes of kids to what's outside their bedroom windows! This summer they will have to resist the taunt of indoor play to find similar outdoor experience with friends.



Half of the group at Nathan's Freedom River Event, Minneapolis

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out the great events happening in the upcoming months! Many amazing organizations are working to better our communities and environment. If you have interest in any event—either to volunteer or get your kids busy with an activity—contact the Project GO coordinator assigned to that event!

KID'S ACTIVITY:

June 14th is National Get Outdoors Day! Visit a local state or city park close to you or better yet, explore a new one!

June 29th is International Mud Day but you can celebrate any day with these creative ideas from Natural Start.

Paint with Mud! Use hands, paintbrushes or sticks to paint masterpieces on an easel, sheet or the sidewalk.

Make Colorful Mud! Add food coloring to dirt and water create different shades, then add to your work of art.

Make a mud kitchen! Old pots, pans, spoons, and containers feed a child's imagination and lets them stir, splash, mix, and pat to their heart's content.

Mud into Mortar! Make thicker mud to hold together bricks, rocks, and sticks as a perfect building material.

| Upcoming Event | When | Where | Need Volunteers | Activity for kids | Project GO Contact |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Skyline Summer GO Programs | Mondays June-August | Skyline Tower, St. Paul | | ✓ | Amy |
| Children's Gardening Program | Every Friday through August 8th | Crookston Sports Center | | ✓ | Alysa |
| PAWS to Read | June 13 | Fosston Public Library | | ✓ | Alysa |
| MN Association for Environmental Ed Conference | June 20-22 | Sandstone, MN | | | Amy and Alysa |
| Geocaching on Campus | June 27 | U of M, St. Paul | ✓ | ✓ | Amy |
| PAWS to Read | July 23 | Crookston Public Library | ✓ | ✓ | Alysa |

PROJECT GET OUTDOORS

Project GO is a non-profit organization founded in 2006 to assist Minnesota communities in connecting children to nature exploration and outdoor learning during the out-of-school hours.

Project GO was developed in response to Richard Louv's 2005 book, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature -Deficit Disorder".

With the help of our project partners, Project GO has developed a free Toolkit to guide communities through the stages of designing, implementing, evaluating and sustaining their own unique Project GO after school programs.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Say no more! Just like our kids, we want to get YOU outside and connected with your local community as well!

Do you have a knack for kids? Are you passionate about a particular environmental subject? Would you like to share your love of simply exploring nature with enthusiastic kids? Sign up to volunteer with us today!

Program leaders are needed to organize programs throughout the year. This commitment can be as small as 5 hours/week or can be a full 40 hour/week internship. This is a tremendous way to get involved, enhance your leadership skills and network with many organizations. Even if you are interested in a one-time commitment to test the waters, there's an opportunity for you.

With the support of adult leaders, kids will look deeper, think more creatively, grow more confidently, develop stronger relationships, connect with nature, and be more connected to their community!



Project Get Outdoors

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Sponsors and Partners

