

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: FALLING FORWARD

Is this the Indian Summer we've all heard about, but rarely have seen? After the cold snap in September, I was sure our warmer days were numbered, but October has blessed us with a unseasonably warm and comfortable fall. `

The Mahnomens Boys and Girls Club has certainly been taking advantage of this warm weather with fun outings! Alysa has been working with the older youth and staff to plan outings that work for the wide range of ages that attend the after-school club. Since school has started again, the number of youth going to the Mahnomens Boys and Girls club has increased to 40-50 kids a day, all ranging from young elementary-aged to high school! The large number and range of ages is a challenge the Mahnomens GO team is excited to tackle, and will continue to be innovative in thinking of activities.

The latest and final Kids At Castle event was this past Monday, the 13th. The theme was seasonably perfect, a pumpkin decorating event! Not the traditional kind of decorating, where you need knives and disposal of lots and lots of pumpkin guts, but a decorating with nature! Kids loved getting close to nature and finding "cool artifacts" of leaves and sticks. It was fun to see the creativeness with some using moss for hair and woodchips for teeth! A highlight for Alysa was seeing how involved parents and grandparents got with the kids. Being in nature is fun for all, no matter what you're doing (or gluing!).

Alysa also attended the Minnesota State Water Trails Tourism Summit this last month in St. Cloud. The planning team did a wonderful job balancing networking with brainstorming and learning. Lots of ideas fluttered through the rooms in regards to community engagement, bettering infrastructure, and connecting resources. Check out page two for more details!



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Mahnomens Boys and Girls Club
- Highlights from the Water Summit
- Fall Activities



MOATS AND BOATS, AND RIVERWAYS!

Water, especially moving water, always captivated me as a child. As an adult, I am no less captivated, but I would argue much more mesmerized knowing all the intricacies and duties water performs. The MN State Water Trails Tourism Summit was very much a celebration of MN's bountiful blessing of water ways, as well as a resource for those interested in sharing the wonder and beauty of our water trails.

The two-day event included networking, sharing success stories, learning sessions, and hands-on experiences! As a participant I was able to tour the Mississippi river in a canoe and learn about the different things that take place on that river from historical education, recreation, and even fishery research.

A big take away for me was the *Connecting Youth to Outdoors and Water Trails* breakout session. In my current position working with lots of kids and encouraging them to get outside, I know how hard this work

can be. I also might take for granted that I have a natural interest in waterways, which others might not. The speaker, Josh Garubanda, really laid out some important things to think about working with children. One that I hadn't even thought of is the fear. The fear not only of the kids, but of adults and even school faculty. He said it's important to get across clear and consistent messages. As well as speaking that person's language and addressing those fears.

Another great part was successful stories. It was enlightening to hear what stories of towns making huge changes against all odds. Changing perspectives about the way we see things is hard work. It takes persistence and passion. Things that help change the tide (pun intended) having signage, access, learning centers or museums, and a welcoming bunch of people.

~Alysa

"I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers"

~ L.M. Montgomery—Anne of Green Gables

SITE HIGHLIGHT: MAHNOMEN BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

The Mahnomen efforts have a great deal to do with the inspiring lead of Boys and Girls Club, Brenda Weaver. She has a huge job overseeing the happenings of the club and it's many attendants, but her passion and love for those kids have led her to take on the project of getting outdoors. Thank you Brenda, for taking the initiative of adding Project GO programming to your club!

The last outing involved flags and bandanas for a feisty game of capture the flag! The picture above features a star player getting the glorious green flag for his team!

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ST. PAUL AREA: SUPPORTING OUTDOOR PLAY

October has somehow quickly sprung upon us and with it, a gorgeous array of fall color! Also happening this month is more planning for trips to the upcoming nature play area at the Minnesota Zoo. There was a training on October 7th that Amy and a handful of other GO cohorts went to that highlighted the importance and benefit of kids playing with nature. These conversations and trainings are a wonderful way to gain new ideas of how to encourage kids to play outdoors. Instead of having a pristine yard where kids do not feel welcome to play as they would like to, add moveable parts, places to dig, things to climb or hop on to, and maybe even a small water feature. Playing is child's work, and if you would like to check out some places where kids already come to "work", some are listed on the DNR's website: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/arbormonth/areas.html>. More are in store for our state – even at state parks!

Think like a child – what were your favorite activities outdoors as a child? What are some of your fondest memories as a kid that you would like others to try? Amy is looking to share some new ideas and would love to hear your insight! Whether it's squishing mud between your toes while helping in the garden or making a dandelion headband, all ideas are game! Please email her or post them to our facebook page. Thanks!



Amy and Paul presenting “evidence” at the Adopt A River Crime Lab, September 2014.

MONTHLY 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:

It’s that time of year again where witches, bats, vampires, and ghosts take the main stage. It’s also the time to do some leaf pile hopping, apple picking, and pumpkin carving! Check off as many activities as you can this fall:

- Plunge into a pumpkin!** Help scoop out the innards of a pumpkin. How does it feel? Cold? Slimy? Sticky?
- A-hunting we must go!** Hunt with your eyes for as many animals as you can in your backyard. What are they doing? How many do you see? Where do other animals go during winter?
- Bombs Away!** Help rake up leaves in your yard into a big pile, then jump on in! Can you completely cover yourself?
- Frosty mornings.** Start looking for frost on the ground while waiting for the bus. Can you see your breath yet?

Monthly Events	When	Where	Need Volunteers	Activity for kids	Project GO Contact
MN Zoo Training	October 7	Apple Valley, MN	✓		Amy
Kids At Castle	October 13	Crookston, MN	✓	✓	Alysa
Storytime	October 24	Fosston, MN	✓	✓	Alysa
GO in the Schools	November 7	Pine River, MN		✓	Alysa and Amy
Family Fun Event	November 8	Crookston, MN	✓	✓	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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