

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: SEPTEMBURRR!

There is a definite chill in the air this September, but it won't be freezing the great things happening in the northwest! Crookston had it's third Kids at Castle event with an animal & barnyard theme. University of Minnesota—Crookston students brought sheep for kids to learn about, the Humane Society of Polk County lent a kitten to the event, and many incredible community members helped to bring a dog, goats, horses, bunnies, and a chicken. The lucky adventurers learned about the furry friends, had horse back rides, and were able to play to their hearts content.

This month is the annual Northwest Minnesota Water Festival as well. Fertile is hosting one day of the event where fourth graders will come out to learn about our water systems, protection, and how to protect that incredible resource! It should be a fun day for all involved.

Alysa is also working with the Fosston Library this month on the reading program. The branch manager was a former information officer with DNR, so it should be a fantastic collaboration. Learning and the outdoors have always been great associates; books and the outdoors are natural allies as well. Pairing reading and outdoor activities is a great way to get kids thinking about the outdoors in different ways and allow a chance for different learning types to connect in their own way as well. This reading program will be great alternative for rainy days, quiet time, or for a change in activity.



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Skyline Towers
- Centennial Lakes Maze
- Fall Activities



BE A-MAIZE-D! MAZES ARE FUN FOR ALL

At the last Project GO club outing in Edina, the kids raced around this stone-path labyrinth at Centennial Lakes Park. Not only did it provide great exercise and a challenge to conquer, the kids got to simply enjoy the beautiful day as well.

Fall is the perfect time to find a local maze to explore. Check out places that may have corn mazes, hay bale mazes or stone paths like the labyrinth we found for a similar experience. If you have a field or a large area with tall grass, simply mowing a meandering path is fun for kids to run along as well.

As a child, I loved to race through fields of grass waist high and let my

imagination run wild—literally! From leaping like a deer to crouching like a tiger, creative play would take off. Mazes may be a challenge to complete for some, but for other children it is more about the adventure and not knowing where the next turn will lead you.

Unexpected surprises lie behind every curve, whether it's a friend you thought went the wrong way, a dead end, a straight section to sprint through, or the end signaling your success.

Whether you know a child, have a child, or are a child at heart, I challenge you to find and visit a maze near you. ~Amy

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.

SITE HIGHLIGHT: SKYLINE TOWERS

Skyline Towers partnered with Project GO to become our pilot site in the Twin Cities in 2013.

As part of the larger organization called Common Bond, residential buildings such as this one offer affordable housing for low-income individuals and families. Residents can stay as long as they need or want and have benefits such as programming through Advantage Services. In addition to homework help and after-school activities for youth, Project GO works with their staff to provide outdoor, nature-based activities as well.

We look forward to continuing to connect residents to local green spaces they can explore !

ST. PAUL AREA: LIFE ON THE RIVER

Big River Journey is here again! For the last two weeks of September, middle school students from schools around the metro hop aboard a riverboat to learn more about the great Mississippi River. Amy will be helping to run the Adopt a River Crime Lab station where youth get to don a pair of gloves and investigate river evidence. Where did this litter come from, who put it there, and how did it get to the river are all questions they must solve to get to the heart of the mystery. Students learn just how connected they are to their water and what they can do to keep it clean.

On another note, we are very happy to highlight the grant we received from the Mayo Clinic for our Early Childhood Initiative in southeastern Minnesota. Funding like this helps to reach new audiences and spread our mission throughout the state starting in one community at a time. We look forward to the effects this will have. Thank you Mayo Clinic for helping us continue our mission!

While we are expressing gratitude, we would like to send a warm-hearted thank you to our Program Coordinator Andy Wendt who recently moved on from his position with Project GO. His support and oversight was much appreciated and will be missed. Wishing you the best in future endeavors Andy!



Amy and Alysa visiting the Conservation Corps of MN booth at the State Fair, August 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:

Autumn brings crisper air, shorter days, and the changing of leaves! Celebrate the Autumnal Equinox on September 19th, to celebrate these changes!

Taking a nature walk is a great way to observe fall changes. What types of trees' leaves change first? Are there signs of animal's wintering dens? What animals are migrating? Take pictures along the way and make an album. Or collect nature trinkets and make a collage.

Check out these books to further the fall connections:

Hibernation
by Robin Nelson

A is for Autumn
by Robert Maass

The Autumn Equinox
by Ellen Jackson

Why Do Leaves Change Colors
by Sylvia A. Johnson

Monthly Events	When	Where	Need Volunteers	Activity for kids	Project GO Contact
Kids At Castle	September 8	Crookston, MN	✓	✓	Alysa
Natural Play Space Exhibit	August 21-September 1	State Fair Grounds, St. Paul		✓	Alysa and Amy
Big River Journey	September 22-October 2	Saint Paul, MN		✓	Amy
NW MN Water Festival	September 23	Warren, MN	✓	✓	Alysa
NW MN Water Festival	September 24	Fair Grounds, Fertile	✓	✓	Alysa
Children's Water Festival	September 24	State Fair Grounds, St. Paul		✓	Amy
MN Zoo Training	October 7	Apple Valley, MN	✓		Amy

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

