



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.

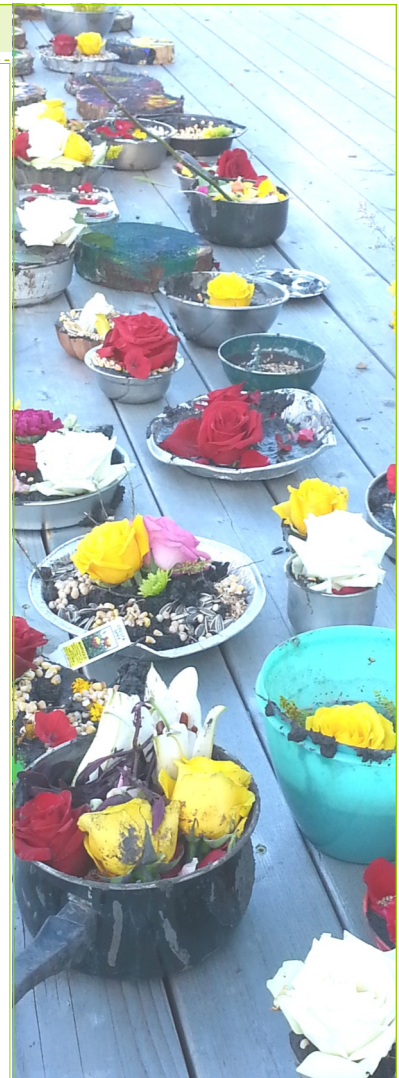
NORTHWEST REGION: DIRT DON'T HURT

There have been many activities happening in the northwest region of Minnesota. Crookston has been keeping summer interesting with it's many free activities for kids to get down in the dirt! Kids at Castle started their summer off with their first event being a mud pie and tree cookie day. It was fun to see the evolution of kids' opinion of mud. Many started off tentative, calling it "icky" (even a little crying when accidentally falling into it), but by the end of the event they were more than happy to dive in. They created masterpieces (picture above) with flowers, seeds, and leaves. They also painted tree circle-cuttings (tree cookies) to assist in decorating the natural play space, Castle Park. Another event proving that learning, art, and nature bind beautifully.

Project GO hosted a Paws to Read event at the Crookston Public Library. There were many stations that featured fun, outside, and hands-on projects. Stations consisted of tipi making, leaf and flower art, mud sculpting, an obstacle course, solar stations, a water station, and a fun cooperation. It's hard to say whether the kids or volunteers had more fun! One thing is for sure, kids and adults alike reconnected with our natural elements and were able to let their inner child run wild! All of these activities were examples of easy things to do at home, and were chosen with the hope of passing these ideas on to parents to repeat when the inner child calls. A special thanks goes out to community establishments that helped make the program run smoothly—Montague's Flower Shop, Crookston Floral and Antiques, Kids at Castle Committee, Crookston Public Library, and City of Crookston's Park and Recreation. Thank you to our volunteers from Conservation Corps, University of Minnesota Extension, RREAL, and Rydell NWR!!

The Mahnomen area has been busy as well with a County Fair and the culmination of the White Earth Academy of Math and Science. The Polk County Fair was a sight to see with all the events and competitions! Everyone worked hard to put on a good show and take the winning prize home. The grand opening of the brand new Natural Play Space (NPS) was revealed as well! 4-H and community supporters worked hard to get the NPS started and ready for the fair! The Academy of Math & Science was another successful year! With classes focusing on climate change and invasive species, the kids gained vast skills and learned real, applicable lessons! It was a pleasure for Project GO to play a small role in assisting with these grand events!

"Experience, Explore, & Get Outdoors!"



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Beans on the Boulevard
- Meet Ben Moburg
- Cultural Training Initiative
- Opportunities to Get Involved!



CLEAN-UP, CLEAN-UP, EVERY COMMUNITY DO YOUR SHARE!

Once made famous by a popular kids’ TV show, we are reminded that everyone must partake in cleaning up their community!

I’d like to highlight the great community-run organization called Beans on the Boulevard. I helped a group of people weed, sweep, and prep beds for planting edible gardens in a popular community gathering area in West Saint Paul. “La Placita” fits nicely in between businesses and once planted and maintained by community volunteers, its edible foods will attract even more residents outside. As I took a water break, I started chatting with a stranger passing by. No sooner had I wished him a good day than I turned around to find him grabbing a shovel

to help. Many hands made light work that day—I hope to return to see it used later this season!

Beans on the Boulevard also has erected bean poles around the neighborhood to be cared for by residents and enjoyed by all! The picture to the left is of a kids’ program at the library where they read *Jack and the Beanstalk*, helped dig out an area on site to place a bean teepee, and plant and water bean seeds. These children look forward to returning and observing these seedlings grow.

Thank you Beans on the Boulevard for putting on such a wonderful program and keep up the awesome community work you’re doing!

~Amy

Dirt Is Extreme!

~ Brianna, Paws To Read Participant

INTERN HIGHLIGHT: BEN MOBURG

Ben has recently joined our forces as a graduate intern from the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities. He has majored in Youth Development and has much experience with children through the YMCA. Ben enjoys ultimate frisbee, kickball, and many other outdoor games! He has led a geocaching event already and has been involved with Common Bond GO programs. His cheery disposition and happy-go-lucky spirit has already earned him respect from the kids and the nickname “Ben Ten”. Thanks Ben for your efforts in getting more kids outside!

ST. PAUL AREA: BRIDGING CULTURE

July brings forth festivities! As Americans celebrate our nation’s independence with fireworks, grilled food, picnics, and outdoor games, there are other holidays to be celebrated this month. Ramadan begins the month-long fasting for Muslims and concludes with Eid. Why should we care about these holidays, religious or not? When planning for programs, it’s good to keep in mind what is culturally important and limitations that these customs may have on your program. Knowing whether participants are fasting or observing other restrictions gives you a better idea of how energetic or lethargic they may be, when best to hold programs, what activities may help them relate to nature while still celebrating their holiday and allows you to better connect with them. That’s why Project GO is working to establish a cultural training for our volunteers. It’s all about having an open mind!

As for programming, Skyline’s indoor window garden is up and growing! Last time, site leader Arbor anticipated the change in weather and chose to lead outdoor games and chalk art on site. Great job Arbor on connecting kids with the outdoors, and way to adapt!

In other news, Conservation Corps members Alysa and Amy also presented at the Minnesota Association for Environmental Education Conference themed “Rooted in Diversity”. A wonderful conference with terrific new people to meet! Thanks to MAEE for putting it together!



Amy & Alysa attended and presented at the Minnesota Association for Environmental Education Conference at the Audobon Center of the Northwoods, June 20-22.
 Left-Right: MAEE President John Smith, Alysa Zimmerle, Amy Flatten

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:

This summer is off to a slow start, but it's time to prepare for the inevitably toasty days that are bound to happen! Create a water wall! A water wall is made by connecting recycled plastic bottles, hoses, or anything you have spare of in the house. These are nailed or taped to a sturdy surface where a basin collects water at the bottom. Kids scoop the water and pour it down the wall, where they can learn about how rain disperses or why watersheds can be so large!



Upcoming Event	When	Where	Need Volunteers	Activity for kids	Project GO Contact
Skyline GO site	Mondays June-Aug	Skyline Tower, St. Paul		✓	Amy
Kids At Castle: Mud Pies & Tree Cookies	July 14	Castle Park, Crookston		✓	Alysa
Yorkdale GO site	July 17	Yorkdale Townhomes, Edina		✓	Amy
PAWS to Read	July 23	Crookston Public Library	✓	✓	Alysa
Day at Lake Phalen	July 30	Lake Phalen, St. Paul	✓	✓	Amy
Rural Design Conference	July 30-31	U of M, Crookston	✓		Alysa
Kids At Castle: Peace in Nature	August 11	Castle Park, Crookston	✓	✓	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

