

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: STORIES & BIRDIES

The reading program has come to fruition with the invaluable help of Fosston Branch Librarian, Tammi Jalowiec. Tammi has an environmental background, previously working with the Department of Natural Resources, and is excited to be able to help Project GO get our reading program going. She has helped with getting a book list and has even started a pilot program with her Storytime group. Storytime is a library program for pre-k aged children connecting books and activities. She has started to implement some of the outdoor/nature elements to her book selection and activities. Thank you Tammi for your magnificent help!

As the Kids At Castle events have come to an end this year, planning is already underway for next years events. Leah Winjum, Kids At Castle Coordinator, and Alysa met to talk about how Project GO can best help next year's events. Among the many great things discussed, the idea to have a couple programs in the colder months was reviewed. In the very cold north, there's still lots of activities and opportunities to do outside and inside (and still connect to nature). Winter events would highlight a few activities, while also helping kids get outside and giving parents ideas of what they can do as well.

As for projects, the Crookston Parks and Trails brochure is officially completed! It's been a long road for Gina Gunderson, Early Childhood Initiative Coordinator for Crookston, and Alysa. Alysa & Gina are so appreciative of the help they've received from many individuals and organizations in Crookston to make the brochure possible. Stay tuned for next month's newsletter to learn where you can download it or pick up a copy!

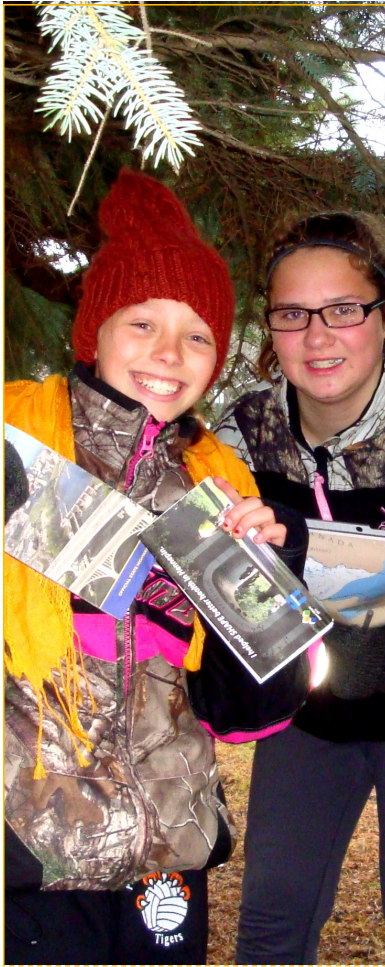


INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NW Region Update	1
Weather outside	2
St. Paul Update.....	2
Kid's Activities.....	3
Upcoming Events	3
Get Involved	4

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Kids at Castle
- Pictures of boat building and MN explorers



WHETHER TO WEATHER THE WEATHER

Outdoor educators are often faced with the conundrum of whether the weather outside is suitable for an outdoor program or not. It happens every year in every season. Whether it is too hot or too cold, too windy or too rainy or wet, or too great of a chance of unfavorable conditions to spend precious learning time outside, the decision is never easy. To practice what we teach, we want to spend as much time outdoors as possible, but that also requires time to don appropriate clothing, walk outside and acclimate to the weather. In my experience, most kids are very pleased with the opportunity to breathe fresh air, see a change of scenery (the afternoon sun is a welcoming sight outside the classroom) and stretch their legs. This break helps refocus their attention when they have to sit inside the rest of the day. With that being said, prepping the kids and parents to plan ahead and pack extra clothes can go a long ways and help them be comfortable outdoors.

Early November we took 5-7 graders outside for a short activity. Although it lightly rained on us and there was a chill in the air, we wanted them to run around in the fresh air for our activity. Some groups complained and others did not, but my favorite part was when it got too wet to take the last group outside, a student asked why they didn't get to go outside. I simply said it got too wet—mainly to write on their activity sheets—and he said "So?". In that brief moment I felt bad that although they were doing the same activity, their experience would be mildly different and they wouldn't return to class refreshed by time spent outside.

For the purpose of ever-changing weather, it is always smart to have a back-up plan indoors even if the experience will be different. However, building comfort in different seasons is also very important. Remember, there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. ~Amy

Study nature, not books.

~ Jean Louis Agassiz

SITE HIGHLIGHT: KIDS AT CASTLE

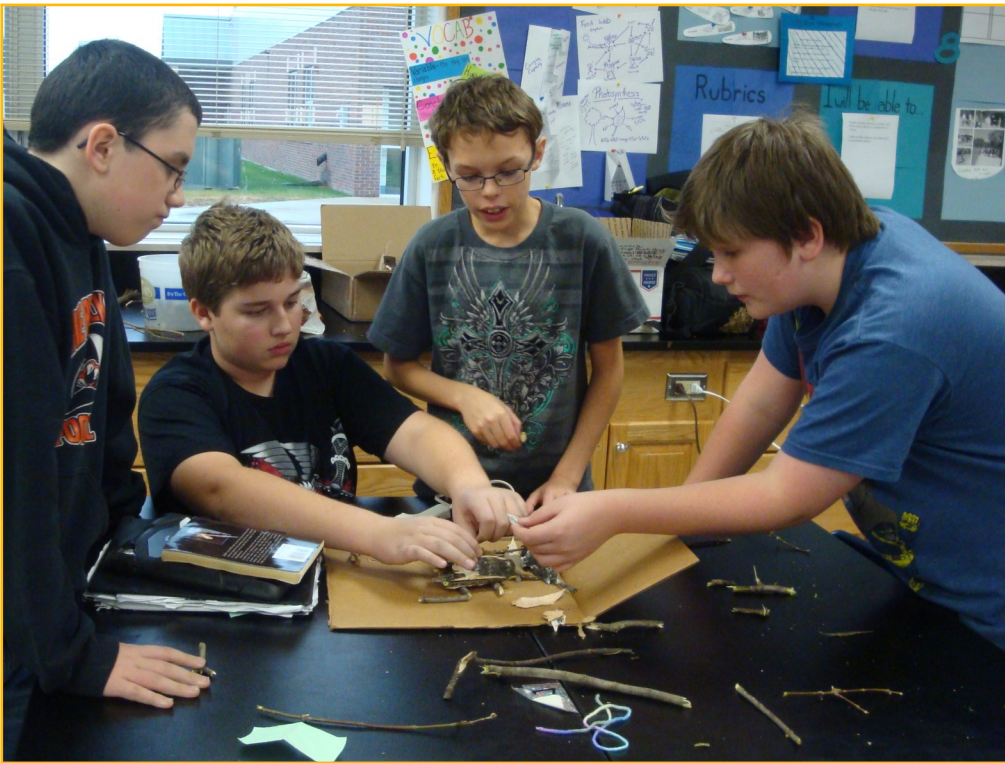
Kids at Castle has been a wonderful addition to the City of Crookston. This wonderful program gets kids out to their "natural play space" - a playground made from only natural materials such as large logs, boulders, a sand pit, and other loose materials.

Kids At Castle events are planned by a committee made up completely by volunteers. These are people invested in the health and wellbeing of children and families, and willing to donate their time and resources to offer fun outdoor programs. A bajillion thanks to those wonderful individuals making lives better!

ST. PAUL AREA: A REASON TO GIVE THANKS

Mahadsanid! Danke! Gracias! How can we express our gratitude? From the bottom of our non-profit heart to yours, we would like to say **Thank You!** Thank you to the Conservation Corps, UofM Extension, the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Zoo, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Common Bond Communities, board members, interns and volunteers and many, many more who support Project Get Outdoors. Together we form a stronger network encouraging outdoor play and learning. If you have not considered it yet, November 13th is Give to the Max day and we are participating again this year. Thank you in advance for any and all donations to keep the work we do alive!

Other exciting news is that expansion is on the way! Starting next January, Project GO will host a third Conservation Corps member housed in Rochester. This member will work to further connect family daycare providers and early childhood centers with nature activities and time spent with kids outdoors.



One team building boats made of natural objects.

KID'S ACTIVITY:

Ready or not, winter is here! Minnesota is the land of early winters that stay way passed their welcome, but that doesn't mean we can't appreciate the exciting whimsical feeling of that first snowfall! Here are a few activities to get you in the wintery-mood and your kids outdoors:

- * **Snow-painting:** grab a few spray bottles and your favorite mix of food dyes. Mix water and dye in the spray bottles and let the kids create master-pieces by spraying the colors onto the snow!
- * **Get a-buildin':** Help your kids build forts, snowmen, or snow animals outside! Usually the first snow-fall is wet and sticky—perfect for molding and shaping to your hearts desire.
- * **Check out a park:** Needing to get out of the house? Look at the events page of your favorite state park! Many activities are free and can range from snow-shoeing to learning about winter animals!

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/events/index.html>

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!

Monthly Events	When	Where	Need Volunteers	Activity for kids	Project GO Contact
GO in the Schools	November 7	Pine River, MN		✓	Alysa and Amy
Family Fun Event	November 8	Crookston, MN	✓	✓	Alysa
Library Storytime Program	Every Friday	Fosston, MN	✓	✓	Alysa
MN Zoo Program	January 5	Minneapolis, 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

PO Box 414
Preston, MN 55965

For Crookston Area email:
Alysa Zimmerle—zimmes583@gmail.com

For St. Paul Area email:
Amy Flatten—aflatten13@gmail.com

For updates in all areas, like us on Facebook at:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Get-Outdoors-Inc/137770441949>



Sponsors and Partners

