



*“I love Nearby Nature classes, but I hate walking to the yurt.”*

*“I love the walking, dude, you are wrong. It gets me outside. I get to be in the woods. I get some ‘me’ time. No other school lets you do that. Walking is like a life skill, too.”*

December 2024

Dear Friend,

When I overheard the conversation above between two students in my Animal Minds class this fall, I was so happy. My walking advocate is not a stereotypical “nature lover.” So to learn that their time outdoors was fulfilling *now* – and better yet, to hear them predict it would be fulfilling in the *future* – was very gratifying. This is exactly what we hope for in our work with Network Charter School (NCS) teens – to have a **lasting, meaningful impact**. And now more than ever, anything that improves the lives of adolescents is a huge plus.

*Over the river and through the woods...*literally. That’s where our NCS students walk on their way to classes at our yurt in Alton Baker Park, rain or shine, Monday through Thursday, September to June.

If you didn’t already know, Nearby Nature first started working as a partner with NCS over 20 years ago, when the school opened in 2003. At the time, we were serving young children through daycamps and school nature walks, but we were not consistently reaching teens. By collaborating with this unique new school, we could finally fill that service gap.

From water quality testing to fishing for rainbow trout, from organic gardening to urban hiking, **our NCS teens now spend 6,000+ hours outside every year immersed in nature nearby**. And when they need to be inside at our Alton Baker Park site, our cozy yurt serves them well, with custom-designed desks for project work, fast internet for research, and big windows that remind them that the healing space of nature is just a step outside the door.

I can still remember the first year I taught NCS classes at Alton Baker Park, when our beautiful Learnscape was only a dream, our chairs were hay bales, and our roof was a pop-up tent. We’ve come SO far since 2003! **As NCS celebrates 20 years as a school and a community, Nearby Nature is right there at the table cheering.** The school’s students and staff have grown so much as people and partners along this journey, and I’m proud to have been a part.

**During this season of giving, you can help Nearby Nature continue to provide NCS teens, as well as so many others, with opportunities to discover, learn, and grow in nature.** Check out the coupon below and see [nearbynature.org/contribute](https://nearbynature.org/contribute) for the many ways you can support our work in 2024.

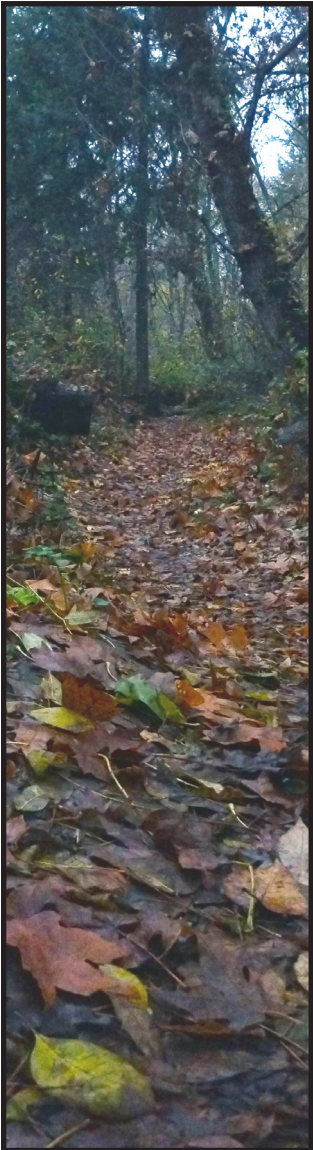


Students love the Edible Schoolyard.

And remember, we’re just **over the river and through the woods**, so we hope you’ll come visit soon!

All the best,

Wendy McKenzie, Nearby Nature-NCS Lead Teacher



Thanks to students for photos of their winter walk to the yurt.

**Help teens discover, learn, and grow in nature nearby!**

**General Donation:** ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100  
☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

**My Ongoing Monthly Donation:**  
☐ I’ve set an ongoing donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_/month at [nearbynature.org/contribute](https://nearbynature.org/contribute) (be sure to click I would like this donation to automatically repeat each month)

**Community Friends Membership Donation:**  
☐ \$60 Donate a membership to a family in need.

**My Membership Donation:** New ☐ Renewal ☐  
Get program discounts throughout the year!  
☐ Supporter \$60 ☐ Builder \$500  
☐ Sponsor \$75 ☐ Sustainer \$1,000  
☐ Collaborator \$150

**Every Child Outside (ECO) Fund Donation:**  
Help pay for scholarship aid for families and schools.  
☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$500 ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

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