



## Armstrong Scholars Program, July 25 - August 7, 2021

### Application Information

#### Overview

The Armstrong Scholars Program brings selected participants together for an educational adventure in the spectacular Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. This extraordinary program seeks to inspire all young women, trans-inclusive, ages 15-18 to reach their highest potential and develop a stronger sense of self, community, and connection to the natural world. Individuals from different cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, LGBTQIA+, and socioeconomic communities come together to embark on a 12-day wilderness backpacking expedition that demands participants to challenge themselves both physically and emotionally. Participants hike 5 to 10 miles a day with a backpack that may weigh up to 50 pounds, over challenging terrain such as rugged trails, boulder fields, high mountain passes, and snow slopes. The self-transformation of each participant through these challenges is well supported by our curriculum and highly skilled women educators.

This program is inspired by and in memory of former NatureBridge environmental science educator Joie Armstrong. Joie had a tremendous enthusiasm for life and teaching along with a desire to give of herself for the betterment of the world. NatureBridge established the Joie Armstrong Memorial Fund in 1999 to honor her. The memorial fund sponsors the Armstrong Scholars program, providing a \$2,400 scholarship to each student. Students pay \$150 to participate in the program.

#### Sample Day

- 6:00 am Wake up/cook breakfast
- 7:00 am Eat, stretch and pack
- 8:00 am Depart camp with loaded backpacks
  - Hiking discussion on theme of the day: "We are part of something bigger"
  - Lunch on the trail, fix blisters, get water from a mountain stream
  - Travel over a steep mountain pass at 11,000 feet in the afternoon
- 5:00 pm Set up camp/journal/group discussion
- 6:00 pm Prepare dinner
- 7:00 pm Eat dinner
- 8:00 pm Evening meeting, sharing high and low moments, expectations for the next day, and a game, song or reading
- 9:00 pm Go to sleep under the stars or in shelters you have carried with you

*"Once we got to the switchbacks before Miller Lake, the going really got tough. We climbed 500 to 600 feet in elevation in a relatively short distance. It was getting later. But finally Betsy yelled, 'I see the lake!' The tangible relief in our group was obvious as we neared closer and closer to the lake and anticipated the relief of our packs from our backs..."*

During this 14-day adventure, participants of the Armstrong Scholars Program spend one day at our Crane Flat Campus in Yosemite National Park, 12 days backpacking in the High Sierra, and one day in Yosemite Valley, conditions allowing. While trekking through the wilderness, participants explore topics such as identity and strength of women, communication and leadership, wilderness skills and natural history, social, racial and environmental justice.



Ten individuals will be selected to participate in the program. We are seeking applicants from a variety of cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, LGBTQIA+, and socioeconomic communities. Participants from past years found the diversity of life experiences represented in the group to be a significant strength of the program. Demonstrated academic success is less important than a clear sense of how the program will truly benefit the individual.

## COVID-19 Modifications

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, NatureBridge is implementing the following risk management measures this year.

- The program will start and end in Yosemite National Park.
- Participants must arrive by car. NatureBridge does not have the ability to transport students from the airport to campus with CDC recommendations. Transportation to and from the program will be at the participant's expense.
- Participants will be asked to refrain from spending time in groups and crowded public spaces outside of their immediate family groups the 14 days prior to the program start date.
- Participants will be required to submit negative results from COVID PCR tests taken within five days of the program start date. They may also need to have a rapid COVID test upon arrival.
- COVID-19 vaccination is highly encouraged prior to program participation, but not required. If vaccines are available to our staff demographic, NatureBridge educators will be vaccinated prior to the program.
- Applicants will need to comply with any COVID-19 regulations in place in California at the time of program. You can find those here: [California Department of Public Health](#)

## Application Process

Please submit the following items no later than 8 a.m. on Friday, April 30, 2021. Selections will be announced by Tuesday, June 1, 2021.

- A brief biography including, but not limited to, name, age, email address, current address, phone number, and your outdoor experience.
- The name, phone number, and email address of at least one of your parents or your legal guardian (also include their physical address if it is different from yours).
- The Registration, Health Screen and Participant Agreement, completed and signed by a parent or guardian (pages 1-8). We recommend having a medical professional complete and sign the Medical Examination form for you (pages 9 & 10), but we will not require it for participation this year due to COVID-19. If you are able to have an exam, please submit all ten pages of the Registration, Health Screen and Participant Agreement with your application.
- Two recommendations from community leaders in your area who can speak to your qualifications for this program. They may include a letter with the recommendation form.



- Typed or printed concise responses to the following questions. Please limit your total responses to no more than two double-sided sheets of paper. If there is a different medium that better allows you to express your responses, you are welcome to submit your answers in that format instead, as long as you address each of the questions.
  1. What attracts you to the Armstrong Scholars program?
  2. What draws you to a wilderness-based program in particular?
  3. What unique perspective might you bring to the group?
  4. What skills or strengths might you contribute to the group?
  5. What do you hope to gain from participating in Armstrong Scholars and how might that benefit you in the future?
  6. What issues do you see, if any, with your ability to self quarantine prior to the program?
  7. What else would like us to know about you?

Please submit application materials via the [online application form](#) or email them to: [armstrongscholars@naturebridge.org](mailto:armstrongscholars@naturebridge.org)

Alternatively, you can mail your application to:

NatureBridge  
Attn: Armstrong Scholars Application  
% Kim Laizer  
PO Box 194,  
El Portal, CA 95318

OR fax it to:  
(209) 379-9510

Still not sure if Armstrong Scholars if for you? For more information, visit our website at [naturebridge.org/armstrong](http://naturebridge.org/armstrong) or contact Kim Laizer at [armstrongscholars@naturebridge.org](mailto:armstrongscholars@naturebridge.org).