

# People. Purpose. Parks.

A group of hikers with backpacks walking on a dirt trail through a lush green forest. In the background, there are rocky mountains and a valley. The hikers are wearing various outdoor gear, including jackets and hats.

**2015-2016 | ANNUAL REPORT**



# Dear Friends...





**R**ecently, NatureBridge graduated our one millionth alumnus. While that milestone is compelling, we recognize that one million environmental stewards are not enough to solve the challenges facing our planet. Strong leadership and engagement from youth as diverse as our country are prerequisites to meaningful change.

We understand the increased relevance and urgency associated with our mission, fostering environmental literacy to sustain our planet, demands bold action. This past year we rose to the challenge. The results? We expanded our environmental science programs to more diverse audiences, awarded a record \$1.2 million in scholarships, and strengthened our finances and leadership in order to create the legion of environmental stewards that our nation so desperately needs.

In this annual report to the community you'll learn about Selma Ruiz, NatureBridge's 2016 Student of the Year. Selma inspires us with her passion and poise. Her story is emblematic of so many NatureBridge students, and it motivates us to enable more transformative experiences in our national park classrooms.

You'll also read about our success engaging NatureBridge students directly with President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama in Yosemite National Park. This encounter highlights our leadership and efforts to demonstrate that environmental science education in nature's classroom is a necessity for all American youth.

We recognize that there is a pervasive disconnect between nature and humans in today's world. At NatureBridge, we work tirelessly and creatively to reestablish that connection and introduce youth to the beauty, resiliency, and fragility of our planet. We believe that launching the next generation of environmental stewards and leaders requires a unique educational experience. It is thanks to our superb educators, staff, partners, and donors that we're able to provide these experiences and lead this movement for remarkable and positive change.

Thank you for your longtime volunteerism and investment. We are honored to earn your continued support.

**Ian Yolles**  
Board Chair

**Phillip Kilbridge**  
President & CEO

 MEET

# Selma Ruiz

## NatureBridge's 2016 Student of the Year

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NatureBridge students spark our curiosity, motivate others to care for the environment, and become the future stewards of our natural world. Nothing is more inspiring and affirming of NatureBridge's mission than individuals like Selma Ruiz, our 2016 Student of the Year.

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“

*My favorite adventure was our challenge hike to Columbia Rock.*

*When we reached the top it revealed a beautiful view of the entire valley. I will never forget the sense of accomplishment I felt standing on the top.*

”





**S**elma is an engaged, adventurous, and inquisitive young woman and student of the outdoors. She is one of 30,000 students who in the last year wrote their own unique NatureBridge story, but Selma's is a special one. During Selma's NatureBridge trip to Yosemite, she discovered her passion and love for nature:

"Our educator, Andrew, was the one who opened a possibility in my life I didn't even know existed. His endless knowledge of nature not only inspired me but also changed my entire family's lifestyle. We now make a conscious effort to get into nature more often, hike together every weekend, and agreed to a family goal of hiking to the top of Mount Whitney!"

Now Selma wants to become a park ranger. We believe she can rise to be a leader in our national parks. She radiates the intelligence, enthusiasm, and wonder that NatureBridge programming ignites in today's youth. The introduction to nature was striking for Selma, a resident of Newbury Park, California, where the coastal landscape is mainly desert. The lush, pine-laden woods of Yosemite made a big impression on her.

"The amount of awe I felt driving into the park on my first trip was indescribable. Just the difference in the environment itself was enough to give me a different perspective of the world."

Like many youth, Selma was required to make sacrifices and work hard to take the trip to Yosemite because of financial constraints. To support students like Selma and ensure that kids from all backgrounds are able to attend our programs, NatureBridge, with the support of our donors, awarded \$1.2 million in scholarships in the 2016 school year. Meanwhile, Selma also personally raised funds to make this NatureBridge trip happen.

"Paying for the trip meant lots of determination from my whole family. I sold coupon cards to neighbors, gathered sponsors for a hike-a-thon, helped in a car wash, and my family also had a yard sale! Just driving into Yosemite itself was a shock, and I instantly knew all the hard work my mother and I did to get me there was worth it."

It's no question that Selma is inspiring classmates, peers, and community members to join this movement for our environment. We at NatureBridge are thrilled to be a part of her journey.



Selma Ruiz with Phil Killbridge, President & CEO, and Barbara Semedo, NatureBridge Board Member, at the 2016 NatureBridge Gala.

# OUR Program



Learning is influenced by place (national park), pedagogy (grounded in our Core Educational Framework), curricula (designed by our experienced educators), and teacher input (to complement and enhance classroom instruction).



School teachers bring their students to a NatureBridge campus in a national park.



Students learn from our professional, highly trained educators during **three- to five-day** overnight programs.



## Our Impact

Students learn about and grow to love the environment, transforming them into the stewards of tomorrow.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**676** participated in NatureBridge programs  
**SCHOOLS**

**29,335** environmental science students

**\$1.2** awarded in scholarships  
**MILLION**

**39%** received scholarship support  
**OF SCHOOLS**

**52%** students of color

**43,422** total program participants

## OUR CAMPUSES



### YOSEMITE

- One of the world's most stunning geologic wonders
- Students learn about glaciation while hiking to the top of a waterfall in the path of a glacier itself, and ecological relationships from the point of view of a 2,000 year old giant sequoia tree
- Future site of the National Environmental Science Center, where students will live and learn in state-of-the-art facilities



### GOLDEN GATE

- Sixty miles of coastal hillsides rich with beaches, cliffs, estuaries, chaparrals, and woodlands
- Students collect and identify macroinvertebrates in Rodeo Pond and study the adaptations of tide pool creatures in our intertidal Marine Lab
- Students learn about cultural history by studying the Coast Miwok people and by exploring Nike missile sites that were operated during the Cold War



### OLYMPIC

- Nestled in an old growth forest on the shore of glacially carved Lake Crescent
- Three ecosystems—marine, alpine, and old growth temperate rainforest—spread across a million acres
- Students learn about environmental restoration and recovery at the Elwha River dam removal sites



### SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

- One of the few Mediterranean biomes of the world
- The country's largest urban national park
- Students learn about ecological diversity in this home to over 1,000 plants and 500 animal, bird, reptile, and amphibian species



### PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST

- The largest green space in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area
- Students stay in historic timber cabin camps built in the 1930s
- Students monitor water quality in one of the last intact piedmont forests in the Chesapeake Bay watershed



## connects students to the wonder and science of nature.

“*The beauty of the national park system is it belongs to everybody. It is a true expression of our democracy. Something we have in common, something we share. A place where we connect with each other, and connect to something bigger than ourselves.*”



**O**n June 18, 2016 President Barack Obama spoke these words in front of Yosemite Falls. Among the crowd gathered to hear President Obama speak was a group of San Francisco fourth graders on a NatureBridge program who had the thrill of a lifetime high-fiving, hugging, and speaking with the president and first lady.

This day marked the first presidential visit to Yosemite since 1962 as the Obamas paid tribute to the National Park Service's centennial, delivering an urgent call to connect our nation's youth with nature:

“*We've got kids all across this country who've never seen a park. There are kids who live just miles from here who have never seen this. We've got to change that.*”

All youth should have opportunities to experience and learn in our national parks. In order to realize this vision, NatureBridge serves as a national leader in environmental education, a partner to other organizations in the field, and the nation's strongest advocate for science learning in national parks.





NatureBridge was recognized for this leadership and advocacy in October 2015 when the White House invited us to help create a new initiative for youth, especially those in urban areas, to connect with nature. NatureBridge highlighted three lessons learned from 45 years of experience in the field:

1

**Outdoor learning complements classroom learning.** Programs like NatureBridge offer profound academic and social-emotional development and are a complement to traditional classroom learning.

2

**A continuum of outdoor experiences is vital.** Children are more likely to become environmental stewards if they have been exposed to multiple outdoor learning experiences.

3

**Increased diversity and gender equity in outdoor leadership is urgently needed.** We must create more opportunities to develop a new generation of leaders who reflect and welcome the growing diversity of the U.S. population.



President Obama's visit was a call to action—we must do more to help our youth connect with national parks and wild places. With your continued support, NatureBridge's 45-year history and first one million alumni are only the beginning.

## The National Environmental Science Center

**N**atureBridge is building a permanent, sustainable campus in Yosemite National Park. This visionary facility will serve as a national beacon for environmental science education and will cultivate the next generation of scientists, conservationists, and community leaders.

The National Environmental Science Center will be a 16-building campus for NatureBridge students and a state-of-the-art facility for convening scholars, partner organizations, universities, and teachers. Construction is well underway with the administrative and maintenance buildings complete and the bathhouse and two student cabins taking shape. When finished, the center will accommodate 224 participants and will include a dining hall, a classroom/laboratory building, an amphitheater, and a fire station that will support the study of fire ecology. The center integrates the latest design and energy efficiency concepts to provide a model of sustainability students can interact with and learn from firsthand. The center is designed to meet the LEED Platinum level, will be universally accessible, and will be a net-zero-energy facility.



A sincere thanks to our many supporters, including those investing over \$100,000: Anonymous (2), The Anders Foundation, Matthew A. Baxter, Jr., S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Mark Benjamin, Susan S. Boren & Steven G. King, David & Maureen Brown, Eucalyptus Foundation, Randi & Bob Fisher, The Flora Family Foundation, John French, Theodore & Frances Geballe, Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund, The Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation, The Kendeda Foundation, Stephen H. Lockhart & Karen Bals, National Park Service, The Packard Foundation, Sand Hill Foundation, Keith Swayne, and Will Thompson.

2015-2016

# Financials

The financial results depicted are derived from the NatureBridge audited financial statements from June 30, 2015. These contain an unqualified audit opinion of Hood & Strong LLP.

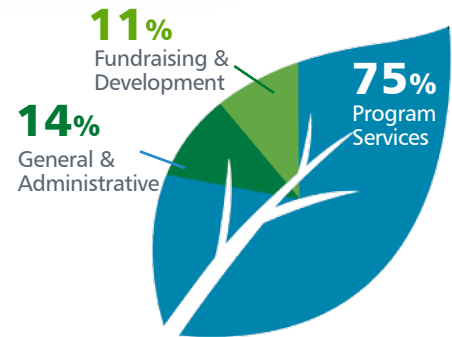
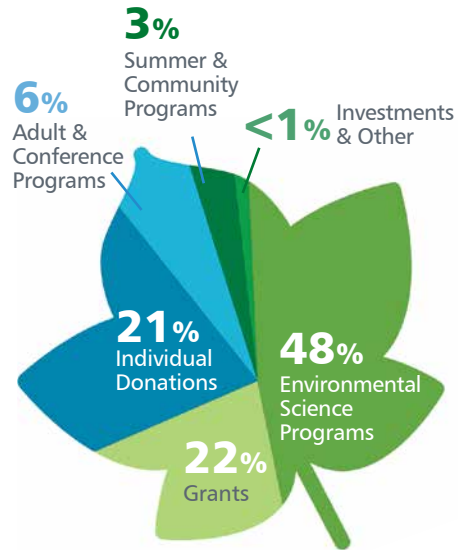
## Revenue

Environmental Science Programs	<b>9,409,497</b>
Grants	<b>4,138,129</b>
Individual Donations	<b>4,207,722</b>
Adult & Conference Programs	<b>1,214,729</b>
Summer & Community Programs	<b>566,836</b>
Investments & Other	<b>18,813</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,555,726*</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	<b>11,808,272</b>
General & Administrative	<b>2,147,154</b>
Fundraising & Development	<b>1,701,242</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,656,668</b>

\*Total revenue includes \$4,190,867 reserved for construction of the National Environmental Science Center in Yosemite National Park. These dollars were not available for operations in the current or future years.



The financial results depicted are derived from preliminary, unaudited financial statements from June 30, 2016. Complete NatureBridge audited financial statements can be found online at [naturebridge.org/financials](http://naturebridge.org/financials)

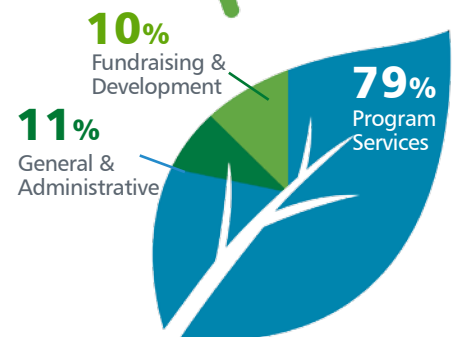
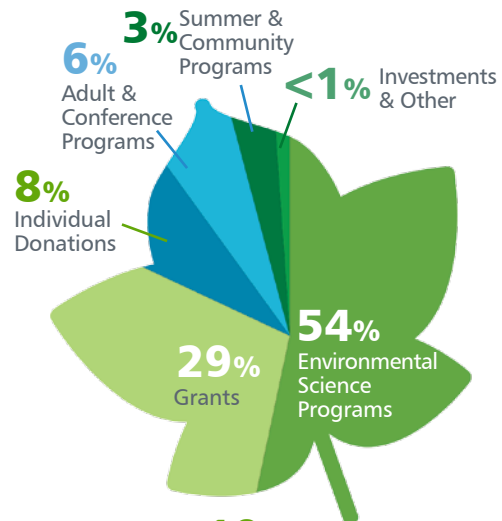
## Revenue

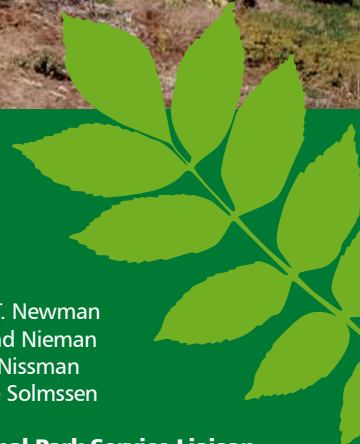
Environmental Science Programs	<b>10,267,628</b>
Grants	<b>5,478,234</b>
Individual Donations	<b>1,521,017</b>
Adult & Conference Programs	<b>1,209,555</b>
Summer & Community Programs	<b>530,908</b>
Investments & Other	<b>51,212</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,058,554*</b>

## Expenses

Program Services	<b>12,586,624</b>
General & Administrative	<b>1,782,921</b>
Fundraising & Development	<b>1,584,989</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,954,534</b>

\*Total revenue includes \$2,510,488 reserved for construction of the National Environmental Science Center in Yosemite National Park. These dollars were not available for operations in the current or future years.





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