INSPIRE. EDUCATE. EQUIP.

We Remove Barriers and Create Access to Outdoor Experiences.
In October 2019, I was given the amazing opportunity to join the Venture Outdoors team. This organization has long been one I’ve held in the highest regard since moving to Pittsburgh 12 years ago and it’s because of you! Together, volunteers, members, staff and board members have worked tirelessly for almost 20 years to bring equipment and knowledge into communities, facilitating all kinds of outdoor experiences. Since our beginning in 2001, we have created over 800,000 experiences. We put kayaks on our lakes and rivers; we’ve introduced many to caving, climbing and fishing; we’ve hiked every inch of Southwestern Pennsylvania; and we’ve expanded and adapted our offerings to ensure kids and seniors are able to get out and get moving!

Now, our work is more important than ever as we all work to strengthen our communities through the COVID-19 pandemic. Being outdoors in fresh air, moving and exercising, meditating and practicing mindfulness are key to keeping stress levels down and wellness top of mind. The Venture Outdoors staff and volunteers continue to adapt to our new environment creating online and socially distanced experiences to help you do just that!

Venture Outdoors has also faced many challenges this spring as major revenue sources have halted during the pandemic while we simultaneously learned new skillsets and technologies to keep bringing outdoor experiences to our community. Members, donors and sponsors have been instrumental in helping to keep our programming up and running and we couldn’t be more grateful!

So, to all our Members out there, THANK YOU! Thank you for your volunteerism, cheerleading, participation and outpouring of support. We’ll see you outdoors!

Valerie Beichner
President & CEO
Outdoor Inclusion Coalition:

Diversity. Equity. Inclusion. Justice. We stand with the Black and Brown communities. Everyone has the right to wellness through outdoor experiences.

Unfortunately, many community members cannot exercise that right because of barriers like fear of safety, financial inequities, disproportionate access to local green spaces and more. At Venture Outdoors, we acknowledge our position of privilege and are taking steps to ensure we are delivering services and programming to community members most in need. COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the Pittsburgh region leaving the most vulnerable members even more so. Venture Outdoors programming works to bring outdoor experiences and wellness to those community members, helping to alleviate stress, practice physical and mental wellness, and provide an opportunity for community members to have a voice. In 2020 and 2021, we will work with community partners to host listening sessions throughout the Pittsburgh region to hear firsthand the barriers individuals face, our shortcomings organizationally, and community interest we can assist with to facilitate a more inclusive outdoor experience.

Even more so, Venture Outdoors is the host of the Outdoor Inclusion Coalition; a coalition of several dozen local outdoor industry nonprofits working toward equity and inclusion in both outdoor participation and employment. This coalition will focus efforts examining internal nonprofit policies and procedures as well as creating a space for mentorship and employment within the industry by providing young people with the development of industry-specific technical skills, guidance on industry opportunities, employment networks, coaching, and advancement opportunity.

We are committed to a just community that lifts all members up in wellness. Learn more about our commitment at www.ventureoutdoors.org/outdoorinclusioncoalition.

We are also committed to strengthening Venture Outdoors from the inside out, focusing on evaluating internal policies and procedures for employment, program development, fundraising, external communication, leadership development, board development, and more.
If there’s one thing we’re known for it’s KAYAKING!!

In 2004, Venture Outdoors introduced Kayak Pittsburgh offering kayak rentals for the very first time along Pittsburgh’s rivers. Now, with three locations, we help introduce thousands of individuals each year to the joy and wellness that comes with kayaking. Over 32,000 kayaks were rented in 2019 and that number has grown year over year!

Kayak Pittsburgh is currently open at both our North Park and Aspinwall Riverfront Park locations taking great care to ensure all equipment is properly sanitized and folk are appropriately socially distanced during their outing.

Reserve your kayak today at www.ventureoutdoors.org/kayakpittsburgh

Celebrate with Venture Outdoors!

What’s better than celebrating your birthday, anniversary or engagement with friends? Doing it OUTDOORS!

Did you know you can celebrate your special event with your very own custom kayaking trip, hike or meditation event? Well you can and our team has all the equipment and expertise to help you have a great time and celebrate while doing something great for your mind and body! AND your celebration helps to provide akin outdoor experiences for others within our community.

Contact us today to learn more and schedule your event! www.ventureoutdoors.org/celebratewithVO

Unique Gifts:

And while we’re at it, don’t forget to get your loved one a piece of Pittsburgh nostalgia! Now you can purchase a handmade corn hole game made from one of our retired kayaks. There are limited quantities, so if you are interested, email us at info@ventureoutdoors.org

Support:

While we continue to provide much needed outdoor experiences, we are also in a time of great need. The COVID-19 global pandemic has not only changed the way we help get you outdoors, but drastically effected our revenue sources as we face an almost $500,000 income shortfall in 2020.

If you are in a position to do so, please consider joining Venture Outdoors as a Member or providing an additional donation. These dollars support all our programming giving individuals a chance to get outside, practice wellness and enjoy what the Pittsburgh region and our three rivers have to offer all at low or no cost.

Visit www.ventureoutdoors.org/support or return the enclosed envelop with your check or credit card information.

Membership Levels:

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<th>Children</th>
<th>General Admissions</th>
<th>Banff Film Festival tickets</th>
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Consider a Sustaining Membership starting as low as only $7/month and help provide outdoor experiences year-round! Memberships are considered a donation to Venture Outdoors and are tax deductible.

Other membership options are available online.

Interested in Sponsorship? Contact Ebony Montgomery at ebony@ventureoutdoors.org
Junior Jo Presented by NOVA Chemicals:

Developing a special and lasting relationship with the outdoors is key to maintaining wellness. And that relationship starts in childhood.

But not all children have the same access to inspiration, equipment, education or information about the outdoors. That’s where we come in! Venture Outdoors has been providing Junior Jo youth experiences for five years. That’s over 39,200 unique youth experiences for kids ranging in age from 0 to 18! This year, we did things a bit differently to ensure kids were still able to learn about the outdoors and have some fun in the COVID-19 environment.

- We created online and virtual experiences with the Button Series and Outdoor Leadership Series allowing kids and their families to explore the outdoors together from their own yards!
- We introduced summer camps for the very first time focusing on week-long camps delivered virtually with family-focused kits mailed to each participant!
- We partnered with Pittsburgh Public Schools and camps in the Hilltop neighborhood to offer virtual lessons!
- And we created and delivered parent and educator webinars to help caregivers keep the fun going!

Junior Jo programming is FUN, but we also take it very seriously.

We work to ensure the value of our programming isn’t just for the fun of the outdoors, but for individual social, emotional and physical wellbeing. Surveys and focus groups with the participants help us learn more about the impact Junior Jo has in the community. Of the participants surveyed, we found that they reported significant positive impacts on their appreciation of themselves and other people, appreciation of the outdoors and the environment, and change in their behavior and outlook toward a healthy lifestyle!

Check out all the fun happening at www.ventureoutdoors.org/JuniorJo.

“I have been doing Venture Outdoors for four years now. Venture Outdoors means so much to me – words cannot explain it.”
— Junior Jo Youth Participant

“Thank you so much for facilitating the webinar! I really enjoyed it and learned some great stuff! I especially liked the apps, I’ve downloaded and used two of them already.”
— Parent Webinar Participant

“We have two kids. This packet of activities has been very helpful because we really enjoy being outside and our kids seem happier and healthier when we do.”
— Explorer Button Series Parent

“This program helps my child be more brave, an independent worker, and a team leader when needed.”
— Parent of a Junior Jo Youth Participant

WHAT DOES “OUTDOORS” MEAN TO YOU?

I LOVE TO PLAY OUTSIDE

www.VentureOutdoors.org
**Venture Outdoors Again:**

Again and again and again! Our relationship with the outdoors doesn’t have an age limit. That’s why we work to ensure individuals can participate at all ages and stages of life.

Through the Venture Outdoors Again program, we help local seniors continue to develop wellness through outdoor experiences. Our core senior programs are called Fit with a Physician and On the Move. With generous funding provided by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, we’re able to work with local volunteers (who also happen to be physical therapists!) to create safe experiences that work the body and mind. We also provide caregivers with valuable information about short, local walking trails complete with maps, points of interest and details about terrain through the Walks. VentureOutdoors.Org website.

Join hundreds of others and get Fit with a Physician (or a Legislator; or a Librarian; or a Furry Friend!) [www.ventureoutdoors.org/ventureoutdoorsagain](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org/ventureoutdoorsagain)

> “I enjoy the Fit with a Physician class because it provides me with worthwhile information on walking, balance, and exercise while having fun! The instructors are knowledgeable and have a great sense of humor. They do an exceptional job of exploring and expressing the beauty of our parks.”
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>  
>  
> — Senior Participant

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**College Experiences:**

Learning doesn’t just happen in the classroom, it also happens along our three rivers, in caves, along rapids and on the trails! At Venture Outdoors, we work with our local College and University partners to bring outdoor experiences to area college students. Last year, over 1,100 students were able to get outdoors in all new ways! We provide the gear, guidance and opportunity to show them what our area has to offer. Students are able to try new experiences, make new friends and see the community from a whole new vantage point. Thanks to generous funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, we’re able to provide these experiences at a greatly reduced cost.

Check out what our students can do at [www.ventureoutdoors.org/collegeexperiences](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org/collegeexperiences).

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**Community Programming:**

Programming nearly every day of the year! That’s right, at Venture Outdoors, you’ll never find a shortage of outdoor experiences to enjoy with your family, friends and coworkers. In 2019, we offered over 350 programs ranging in easy and informative urban walks to more rugged experiences like long distance hikes along the Laurel Highlands Trail. There’s something for everyone whether you’re an avid outdoor enthusiast or venturing outdoors for the first time!

Look for upcoming outdoor experiences at [www.ventureoutdoors.org/communityprogramming](http://www.ventureoutdoors.org/communityprogramming).
‘Yaks of Kindness:

From a trip down the Allegheny to a hike in the woods...Did you know everything you do with Venture Outdoors creates a ‘YAK OF KINDNESS’?

‘Yaks of Kindness are the great things that happen when you join, volunteer, rent a kayak, register for a trip or refer us to a friend. All of the volunteer time and dollars earned supports the amazing programming that removes barriers and creates access to outdoor experiences and the wellness that comes with it. Want to join the fun? Visit www.ventureoutdoors.org/yaksofkindness to find out how.

Our Sponsors:

Our Funders: