National Park Trust, Outdoors Alliance for Kids Receive The North Face 2016 Explore Fund Grants

NPT’s Buddy Bison Program funded to increase access to the outdoors for youth in 5 urban cities.

Washington, D.C. – June 30, 2016 – In this Centennial year of the National Park Service, National Park Trust is pleased to announce that The North Face has awarded two 2016 Explore Fund grants to benefit our national Buddy Bison School Program. The Buddy Bison program was created in 2009 with the goal of getting kids from under-served communities engaged with our nation’s parks and public lands to experience outdoor recreation, education, and service opportunities. Currently 53 Title 1 public, public charter and private schools across the country -- spanning grades 2 through 8 -- are participating in the program.

In partnership with the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK), the first grant, Buddy Bison Gets 4th Graders Park-ing, will be used to kick off the second year of President Obama’s Every Kid in a Park initiative in 5 cities including Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco. OAK is a national strategic partnership of over 85 organizations from diverse sectors advocating for equitable and readily available opportunities for children, youth and families to connect with the outdoors. Fourth graders from Title 1 schools in these cities will participate in marquee events with The North Face, National Park Trust, OAK and alliance members and be welcomed into the Buddy Bison School Program with funds from the Explore Fund providing park trips to national parks that promote outdoor recreation and align with their school curriculum.

“The Outdoors Alliance for Kids is answering President Obama’s call to action to get every kid in a park,” said Jackie Ostfeld, Co-Founder and Chair of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids. “We’re honored and thankful that The North Face has made such an important investment to ensure more and more children are able to have a park experience, and we look forward to growing our partnership.”

The second grant, Buddy Bison in the Big Apple, will be used to engage children from K through 8th grades residing in homeless shelters in New York City. Dare2BNYC, a non-profit based in New York City that works to break the cycle of poverty and improve homelessness, will once again work closely with NPT to provide access to parks for these youth. For these students, the Buddy Bison program will emphasize not only outdoor recreation and education, but also career opportunities that support our national parks and public lands. Students will have the opportunity to participate in 4 park experiences and meet with career professionals that support the parks as well as volunteers from The North Face store in Manhattan.

“As we approach the 100th birthday of the National Park Service, we are delighted to share the great news about our expanded partnership with The North Face to provide park experiences for hundreds of students from underserved communities. The Explore Fund will allow many of these students to experience their first park trip where they will enjoy fun outdoor recreation, and learn about STEM, history, park stewardship and career opportunities that support our national parks.” stated Grace Lee, executive director, National Park Trust.

Both of these grants will be used starting this fall and throughout the 2016-2017 school year.

The North Face selected 45 nonprofits that engage their participants in opportunities that inspire a lifelong love of the outdoors. Selected programs use outdoor exploration as a catalyst for positive personal or societal change, to encourage participants to try new outdoor activities, and promote environmental stewardship values.
“Encouraging people to experience and enjoy the outdoors has been our mission at The North Face since we were founded 50 years ago,” said Ann Krcik, senior director of Outdoor Exploration at The North Face. “We are proud to support these outstanding programs that expose participants to the beauty and joy of the outdoors. Through these Explore Fund grants, we are building a community of outdoor explorers and inspiring people to love and protect the places where we play.”

As part of its mission to start a global movement of outdoor exploration, The North Face introduced Explore Fund (www.explorefund.org) in 2010 and the program has since provided more than $2.2 million in grants to organizations committed to inspiring people to explore the outdoors and care for the environment.

About The North Face®
The North Face, a division of VF Outdoor, Inc., was founded in 1966. Headquartered in Alameda, California, the company offers the most technically advanced products in the market to accomplished climbers, mountaineers, snowsport athletes, endurance athletes, and explorers. The company's products are sold in specialty mountaineering, backpacking, running, and snowsport retailers, premium-sporting goods retailers and major outdoor specialty retail chains.

About National Park Trust
National Park Trust, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is dedicated to preserving parks today and creating park stewards for tomorrow. Since 1983, NPT has completed more than 100 park preservation projects benefiting 49 national parks and other public lands in 33 states and Washington, D.C. Since 2009, our Buddy Bison School Program and Kids to Parks Day have engaged nearly 2,000,000 students across the country with our national parks, public lands and waters.

www.parktrust.org

About the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK)
OAK is a national strategic partnership of organizations from diverse sectors with a common interest in connecting children, youth and families with the outdoors. The members of OAK are brought together by the belief that the wellness of current and future generations, the health of our planet and communities and the economy of the future depend on humans having a personal, direct and life-long relationship with nature and the outdoors. OAK brings together more than eighty businesses and organizations, led by a steering committee which includes representatives from the Alliance for Childhood, American Heart Association, Children & Nature Network, Latino Outdoors, National Recreation and Park Association, National Wildlife Federation, NatureBridge, The North Face, Public Lands Service Coalition (a program of The Corps Network), REI, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and the YMCA of the USA to address the growing divide between children, youth and the natural world. For more information: www.outdoorsallianceforkids.org

Media contact:

Caren Bell
On behalf of The North Face
510.748.2742
Caren_Bell@vfc.com

Grace Lee
National Park Trust
grace@parktrust.org
301-279-7275, ext 14

Brenna Muller
Outdoors Alliance for Kids
Brenna.Muller@sierraclub.org
202-548-4581