

December 2019

Dear Friends,

Nature is good for us.

This surely is not news to you. Again and again research has shown that nature positively impacts emotional well-being, physical health, social skills, and intellectual development. At Prescott Farm, we celebrate and embrace this fact by creating opportunities for everyone – regardless of age and experience level – to create meaningful connections to the natural world.

Unexpected Leaders. Opportunities for Growth.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, rates of depression and anxiety in children have been increasing in recent years¹. At Prescott Farm, many children come together to learn and grow in nature, including kids who are struggling with anxiety. Last summer we witnessed the positive impact that a week outdoors at WildQuest Camp can have.

Meet Griffin.

Griffin* is a 7-year-old camper who experiences social anxiety and an intense fear of failure. On the first day of camp his mom advised WildQuest camp staff that he would need encouragement to get involved. As anticipated, Griffin opted out of the games and activities his peers found so engaging and fun. During the first two days of camp, he rejected every invitation to play, believing nobody would want to be his friend. Then Griffin met the 13- and 14-year-old campers in the Leader in Training (LIT) program.

This week's LITs showed incredible enthusiasm and a maturity far beyond their years. LITs typically spend mornings as a unit, tackling team-building challenges and learning leadership strategies while afternoons are spent practicing these skills by assisting in games and activities for younger campers. They embraced every activity, especially the opportunities to lead the younger camper groups. Although he wouldn't reach out to make new friends with campers his age, Griffin couldn't resist the outstretched hands and welcoming smiles the LITs offered. Because of their encouragement, timid, reluctant Griffin began to participate.

On Friday, the LITs led the opening circle of campers in a rousing performance of the beloved "Scat Song." You can imagine that in order to lead a song about how much they love and appreciate animal



More than 10% of children ages 3-17 struggle with anxiety or depression. Exposure to natural environments, like those available at Prescott Farm, is associated with mental health benefits.²

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, April 15). Anxiety and depression in children: Get the facts. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/anxiety-depression-children.html>

² Anxiety Centre. (2019, September 2). 20 – 30 Minutes In Nature Reduces Anxiety, Depression, and Stress. Retrieved from <https://www.anxietycentre.com/anxiety/research/20-30-minutes-in-nature-reduces-anxiety.shtml>

*We've changed the name for privacy.

waste, a young teen needs an incredible sense of confidence. These LITs were all-in and after a week of camp, so was Griffin! He shouted the words of the song's chorus to the upper rafters of the historic barn and threw his whole body into the movements, transforming from a reluctant loner to a boisterous dancer and singer.

Lasting Impact.

Kids lose their inhibitions at camp. In the softness and safety of the forest, they try on different ways of being. In the wide open fields, they're given the freedom to just be themselves. While observing wildlife interactions in nature, they make friends. And for kids like Griffin, they come away with a different sense of themselves and how they fit in the world. These experiences shape them long after the last note of the "Scat Song" is sung.

Griffin's story is just one of hundreds we could tell from 2019. Our WildQuest Camps, Fledglings Nature-based Preschool, Naturalist in the Classroom program, Field Trips, Community Connections programs and Volunteer opportunities challenge thousands of participants each year to step outside, awaken their senses, and explore the ways that nature connections inspire the mind and nourish the soul. Children and adults learn to care about the natural world which gives so much back to them and become community members who take personal action to protect our Earth.

It takes you.

To create these important milestones and memories, it takes the skillful hands and creative minds of our staff and volunteers. And it also takes *you*.

As a nonprofit organization, Prescott Farm seeks to make educational experiences available to people at all ages and stages of life and across all economic backgrounds. When you donate to Prescott Farm, you help us continue to make these life-changing programs possible.

Donate Today.

With your donation to Prescott Farm today, next year's stories will be even more numerous. We can't wait to witness them and share them with you.

With gratitude,



Jude Hamel
Executive Director

WILDQUEST FAMILIES SAY....

"She loved the daily adventure and was always smiling when I came at the end of the day."

"We know it is a safe, fun, very educational place where he will be nurtured and given the ability to have fun while learning."

"The ability to be outside in a great environment and the variety of activities he had was awesome. I heard he fed chickens, got to go ponding, found spiders and frogs, still had time to draw; it was a really cool week for him."

Your gift could be matched!

First- and second- time donors who make a gift before the end of 2019 will have their donations matched dollar-for-dollar by a generous anonymous funder. Donations will be matched up to \$1,500. Not sure if that's you? Don't fret... We'll let you know in your thank you letter!