

MRBN

news & updates

October | 2022



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Spotlight: The Importance of Green Space

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NATURE

When children play in natural spaces, they're far more likely to invent their own games than in more structured settings – a key factor in becoming self-directed and inventive adults later in life.

Richard Louv, Author

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder

Dear Kini-Ana,

Compelling data recently released by the Maine CDC in the [Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey](#) shows that we have work to do in Maine to improve the health and well-being of our youth.

The MRBN team spent a beautiful September day with students and advisors at this year's [Teens to Trails Outdoor Leadership Conference](#), presenting interactive workshops on *Youth Mattering*.

[Teens to Trails](#) executive director Alicia Heyburn: "MRBN has helped us see the many extra ways we can foster a sense of caring, valuing, and mattering through our actions and where we place our eyes,

At Teens to Trails, we know that experience in nature with peers is critical for teenage development. It creates love and care for each other, ourselves, and our planet.

Alicia Heyburn, Executive Director

The biggest takeaway from the morning workshop was that relationships support access to the outdoors

ears, and attention. I am hopeful that Maine youth will know that we care about them and that they spend time outside together to care for themselves."

As MRBN continues its mission to promote resilience, we encourage communities to talk to diverse groups of young people to learn what it is they want in their environments that support social connections. The positive effects of spending time outside in nature as a young person are profound. The investment by community groups and boards to listen to youth and create with them year-round safe and welcoming green spaces to gather and explore benefits all.

With that in mind and our hearts, this newsletter spotlights nature and youth development.

With gratitude,
Kini
Executive Director



Scientific American Article Features MRBN & Teens for Trails

"Trailblazers in some communities are focusing on the importance of mattering for young people. Kini-Ana Tinkham, director of the Maine Resilience Building Network, points to Maine's 2021 Integrated Health Survey. It found that 49 percent of high school students and 45 percent of middle school students believe they do

more than planning the perfect trip.

Melissa Doyle, MSW, MRBN

At the end of my session with young people discussing youth mattering, we were lucky to see an eagle about 25 feet from us swoop into the water, grab a fish and fly off. We were all amazed and awed by the sighting. It grounded our discussion about the indigenous cultural practice of seeing ourselves as part of nature rather than thinking of nature as a separate entity.

Sultana Khan, MRBN

not matter in the communities where they live. In response, the Maine Resilience Building Network launched a mattering awareness initiative."

SPOTLIGHT - THE IMPORTANCE OF GREEN SPACE

Access to outdoor spaces and opportunities was one of the important reasons that my family and I moved to Maine several years ago. Growing up in New Hampshire and living in British Columbia and Washington state, I enjoyed opportunities to be connected to woods, waters, and the winds. It was part of our family culture to camp and hike and canoe, and while I may not have always appreciated it as a young person, it is, without question, one of the greatest gifts my family offered.



Young people spend less time outside despite improved mental and physical health when engaging with the outdoors[1]. While Maine youth have the highest rate of anxiety in the country, with over 34,000 kids in the state experiencing anxiety [2], one of the opportunities to impact those numbers - being outside - is proving more and more challenging. Despite evidence that indicates that both urban and rural youth benefit from greenspace and outdoor opportunities[3], fewer kids are engaging in time outside and for less time.

At the Teens to Trails conference, we asked a group of educators and community members supporting Youth Mattering: **"What was your introduction to the outdoors, and by whom?"** People spoke about family involvement, mentors, and community members who connected them with spaces ranging from their backyards to the canyons of the Southwest. From camping under tarps to extended backpacking trips, it was the sincere desire of everyone in the group to pass along the profound experiences of simply being outside and engaging with nature.

Following this conversation, I had the privilege of heading north to climb Mt. Katahdin, joining a friend and her 15-year-old son on this adventure. It allowed me the opportunity to not only do something I love but also be a part of a young person's engagement with getting outdoors. **Though he kindly lamented our**

middle-aged pace, we enjoyed conversation and stories that would only have happened in this setting where we had many hours to climb, talk, and share. I am profoundly grateful to have shared this experience with a young person.

Individual and family barriers like time, especially unstructured time without organized activities, and societal inequities like access to safe and appealing outdoor spaces all contribute to lower uptake of nature-based activities. The learning from outdoor club leaders, student leaders, and community members led us to understand that there is collective interest and dedication to getting kids outside and being the mentors for others that these leaders had in their childhood.

We hope that you use this month to be outside yourself and share it with someone who may not love it today but will be grateful for the opportunity in the future.

Upcoming Events At A Glance

To learn more about MRBN's educational offerings or to schedule training for your business, group, or organization, contact training@maineresilience.org.

Fostering Resilient Environments **October 14, 2022, 12-1 pm**

Foundations of ACEs & Resilience **October 20, 2022, 3 - 4pm**

Fostering Resilient Environments **October 25, 2022, 9 - 10 am**



Maine Resilience Building Network | PO Box 333 , Manchester, ME 04351

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